

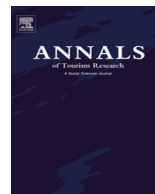


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Power-knowledge and tour-guide training: Capitalistic domination, utopian visions and the creation and negotiation of UNESCO's *Homo Turismos* in Macao

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers insights into the power-knowledge situations within tour guide training in Macao and queries the associated embedded capitalistic domination and utopian pressures. Drawing upon a tour guide trainer's autoethnography, ethnography within the classroom, life and work history interviews with tour guides, and critical discourse analysis of key training materials, it is observed that tour guide training in Macao encouraged capital-induced normalization processes relating to categorising and moulding malleable workers for the dominant and dominating tourism industry. UNESCO-endorsed training materials and their projections of utopian visions are found to promote a new 'breed' of self-regulating specialist tour guides the authors termed, the *homo turismos*.

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Introduction

Research into tour guiding and tour guide training has long been associated with marketing, managerial and vocational concerns (Io & Hallo, 2012; Wang, Hsieh, & Chen, 2002; Wang, Hsieh,

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Chou, & Lin, 2007; Weiler & Ham, 2002). Building on a niche strand of social science-informed tour guide (Cohen, 1985; Dahles, 2002; Holloway, 1981; Holyfield, 1999; Salazar, 2005, 2010) and critical tourism labour (Bianchi, 2009; Britton, 1991; Church & Frost, 2004; Ong, 2011; Turfs, 2006) research, this paper departs from the dominant business-focused genres to interrogate the workings and potential consequences of capitalistic domination, utopian visioning and the discursive creation of new subject positions in the production of tour guiding power-knowledge in Macao witnessed since the new millennium. Specifically, we examine how ideals of profit accumulation and niche cultural tourism variously shaped the Macao tour guide subject and the consequences that potentially foment. In 2005, UNESCO Bangkok (hereafter UNESCO), International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the Asian Academy for Heritage Management (AAHM) launched and endorsed their own brand of 'World Heritage tour guides' training. Named the Cultural Heritage Specialist Guide Course (CHSG), the training programme is arguably an attempt at shaping and constructing cultural utopias at World Heritage sites. Piloted at a tourism school in Macao and implemented in Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Macao, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand, the programme's utopian motivations can be seen in its aim to:

... produce UNESCO-certified Cultural Heritage Specialist Guides who will provide the highest level of visitor experience, raise awareness about conservation issues and foster the long-term sustainability of UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Asia-Pacific region. (2009, p. 351)

Designed as a catalytic project, the aim of the programme is to bring about culturally and socially sustainable development in World Heritage sites through the improvement of World Heritage tour guides' interpretive skills and professional ethics. A semi-autonomous special administrative region of China, Macao has an existing basic tour guide programme prior to this UNESCO intervention. Required for licensing, the basic tour guide course and guides were deemed inadequate since the city found World Heritage status in 2005.

This paper provides a critical examination of the discursive and social setting of tour guiding in Macao, and in doing so examines the above contentions. Specifically, it aims to look at the ways in which the tourism industry, UNESCO and its associates envision the ideal World Heritage site and the ways in which such utopian visioning fosters the formation and performance of specific tour guiding truths and their resultant desired subject-positions in actual social settings. It also examines how such utopian visions were complicated in and by longstanding concerns of the travel industry for profits based on price competition and cost-cutting. The contextual and conceptual significances of this paper are augmented and reinforced by contentions of the demise and decline of tourism labour in the real-world (Bianchi, 2011), the rise and salience of utopian visioning in specific quarters of the tourism world (Di Giovine, 2009; Salazar, 2005, Salazar, 2010) and tourism labour's relative marginalisation and neglect in tourism academia and education (Bianchi, 2009; Botterill, 2001).

Tour guiding: from managerial and marketing concerns to a critical social science approach

Tour guiding work has not been overlooked by tourism and leisure studies. However, much previous research centres on the immediate role, function and performance of tour guiding and interpretation. Indeed, early scholarly conceptualisations of tour guides in tourism research have centred mainly on the interpretive role (for example, Tilden, 1977) and function of the tour guide (Cohen, 1985). More recent research has focused on the tour guide largely as an essential but 'neutral zone' between host and guest, or the tour guide as an important service worker in the tourism offering: "the essential interface between the host and its visitors" (Ap & Wong, 2001, p. 551), the key factor in the successful conduct of a tour (Geva & Goldman, 1991; Wang et al., 2002) and the significant motivation in the choice of a charter tour (Mossberg, 1995). Emerging research strands have also considered service quality, methods of assessing tour guide performance and have suggested managerial guidelines (Mak, Wong, & Chang, 2010; Wang, Hsieh, & Huan, 2000; Wang et al., 2007).

Departing from the above-mentioned managerial perspectives, Dahles (2002) considered the political nature of tour guiding activity and profession in Indonesia. Considering the excursion guide's role from an interactionist perspective, Holloway (1979, 1981) argues that the tour guiding role in the 1970s was not institutionalised (and hence open to various readings and interpretations) and tour

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