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,
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 foments. 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
guides had devised symbolic and behavioral strategies beyond interpretive work to appear both professional and to satisfy tourists’/passengers’ search for a “unique touristic experience” (1981, p. 377). Holloway’s pioneering work has helped illustrate the contingent nature of the vocation and has alluded to its inconsistent demands. For instance, while on the one hand, tour guides are expected to provide tourists with a number of authenticated facts and details so as to appear/be professional, on the other, they have to be manipulative in order to dramatise the tourist experience.

In parts of East Asia including Japan, Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and many parts of mainland China, researchers distinguish between a tour guide and a tour leader in the group package tour context. Research on Chinese group package tours commonly defines ‘tour guide’ as a site-specific interpreter who delivers interpretation of the historical, cultural and natural environments of a particular monument, town, place and attraction to the group of tourists arriving at the site where he or she works (Wang et al., 2000). The tour leader is distinct from the tour guide in that a tour leader receives the, often foreign, tourists at the airports, train stations, jetties and bus terminals and follows and coordinates the tourists’ entire tourism experience. In agreement with existing research on tour guiding in Macao, a ‘tour guide’ is defined as a tourism worker leading, coordinating and guiding a group of tourists (Mak et al., 2010). While considerable disparity and variety is experienced when we try to define the job of tour guides and the nature of tour guiding, few would disagree that a tour guide’s job commonly includes the interpretation of tourist attractions of a destination. In the case of Macao and other cities in East Asia, recent research demonstrates that the job of a tour guide usually includes the introduction and promotion of shopping and dining places (Mak et al., 2010; Tsaur & Wang, 2009). This is done for commercial motives, for any sales transacted will generate often lucrative commissions for tour guides and their travel agencies (Chang, Wang, Guo, Su, & Yen, 2007; Mak et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2000).

In this paper, we adopt such an expanded definition of a tour guide beyond that of site-interpretation and which includes the introduction and promotion of shopping and dining places. Research has also suggested that tour guides and tour leaders experience much stress from the emotional labour of the vocation (Holyfield, 1999). This review of existing tour guiding and interpretation work exposes the relative lack of commitment of existing scholarly efforts to the broader discursive and social environments of tour guiding (with the notable exception of, Cheong & Miller, 2000; Salazar, 2005). Cheong and Miller (2000) suggest that tourists are subjected to manipulation of their gaze by norms and regulations, including being subject to manipulation by tour guides. In this paper it is suggested that tour guides themselves are subject to manipulation by other, more powerful agencies. In Salazar’s (2010) tour guide ethnography, he uncovers the ways in which Indonesian and Tanzanian tour guides combine global and local discourses in their work and private lives. This leads us to the need for a critical understanding of tour guiding and power.

Power–knowledge and tourism: discourses, normalisations, governmentality and utopian visions

Since the early calls of Britton (1991), tourism researchers have been alerted to the workings of exploitative enclave tourism capital and businesses and pointed to some of their consequences in tourism. More recently, in Tourism, Politics and Power, Church and Coles (2007) argued for a greater engagement with issues of power in tourism. They argue that the field of tourism studies should confront and engage with power and “practically to be rewired more extensively into discourses and conceptualisations of power”. Some prior work has located such interrogations of power in discourses and tourism communication. In a collection edited by Jaworski and Pritchard (2005), the editors and contributors examined a series of tourism representations and texts including tourist postcards, promotional materials, television programmes and backpacker discourses and pointed to the ways power and identity works in tourism. These “discourses on the move” are also the concerns of Thurlow and Jaworski’s (2010, p. 5) contribution on tourism discourses. As often mobile people who also significantly contribute to the mobile discourses and experiences of tourists, the discourses that shape tourism workers’ work and life demand more scholarly attention from tourism researchers. Particularly, issues of domination and exploitation in tourism work as shaped through the use of worker-training and human resource practices are largely ignored. This paper seeks to work towards
an understanding of the discourses that shape tourism work by focusing on a significant group of tourism workers—the Macao tour guides.

In tourism and hospitality studies, Britton (1991) warned of the dangers of unregulated capitalists in the world of exclusive resorts and low paid local chambermaids, drivers and receptionists. It is also important to consider how these concerns travel beyond grand narratives and into concepts of space and place (Gregory, 1978, 1993) and explore how capital-worker relations project themselves in territories of social struggles (Bianchi, 2011; Ong, 2011). Observers have noted that it is in the work of Michel Foucault, particularly his concept of power-knowledge, that the knowledge dimension of power has been most systematically explored (Ang, 1991; Hollinshead, 1999). Yet, there is still little engagement with Foucauldian ideas in tourism despite Hollinshead’s (1999) call. In particular, Foucault’s concepts remain silent in tour guiding research.

According to Foucault (1973), knowledge is one of the most crucial components for the workings of power in modern societies. Power, to Foucault, is not attached on or to objects. It exists in the discursive realms of talk, text, events and activities that articulate the processes of power. Power and knowledge then, to Foucault, are better seen as inseparable and intertwined (Hollinshead, 1999, p. 13). Through his ‘archaeologies’ (Foucault, 1973, 1994) and ‘genealogies’ (Foucault, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c), Foucault had wanted to identify dominations in western and Christian societies’ near past so contemporary individuals can learn to see past authoritarian visions and work around totalitarian ways. His later concept of “the technologies of the self”, for instance, is now used by scholars investigating the consequences for individuals of capitalism (and its associated rationalities and power-knowledge) (Bunnell, 2004; Ong, 1987).

This paper therefore traces the ways in which the authorities shaping tour guiding in Macao have shifted from an early use of technologies of domination where tour guides were subtly told to serve capitalist interests unthinkingly, to one (also emphasising the use of technologies of the self) where tour guides are motivated to realise themselves in ways sanctioned by UNESCO and its experts. This research argues that it is important to consider the above-mentioned governmentalities, or the shaping of tour guides’ conduct (Foucault, 1978, p. 219), and the cultural and capitalistic authorities fomenting these. Existing research, too, has pointed to the need to locate and address the utopian visions and cultural work of UNESCO (see for example, Di Giovine, 2009) and international tourism businesses (for example, Salazar, 2005) in cultural tourism. Issues of hegemony and governmentality resulting from such interventions are important for our understandings of the ways in which societies work (Gunn, 2006). This has been under-studied in tourism (Church & Coles, 2007). Accordingly, this research traces and examines how industry and expert-directed ideals attempt to shape and govern Macao tour guides.

Study methods

Described as an “art of the possible” (Salazar, 2010, p. xix), the fieldwork that this predominantly anthropological research is founded on a mix of methods. The strength of utilising various sources of data lies in the ability to crosscheck or “crystalise” findings to allow us to represent multiple standpoints on a phenomenon and reveal the partial, situated and fragmented nature of all truth claims (Ellingson, 2005, 2009). Fieldwork started in February 2006 when one of us relocated to Macao and was involved in the UNESCO World Heritage guiding project that was just prepared and pilot-tested in Macao. Permission was granted for the fieldwork. Names of the participants were replaced with pseudonyms to protect the identities of the individuals. The five-year fieldwork traced the curriculum development and delivery process as the project went regional in Asia-Pacific (from Bhutan to Indonesia) while at the same time as preparations were made to localise the project in Macao where it was first developed. The project was localised in Macao in June 2006 and fieldwork ended in January 2011 when it was possible to observe the ways in which the Macao tour guides make sense of and negotiate the new training programme and the effects it had on their lives. In doing so, the research methodology was geared towards capturing the process of World Heritage tourism discourse-making and tracing the ways the discourses were articulated, consumed, negotiated and/or resisted.

Specifically, the findings of this research are derived from three key research methods: (a) a writer autoethnography and tour guide training class ethnography conducted by the lead author, (b) fourteen
life and work history interviews with tour guides and (c) critical discourse analysis of key tour guide training manuals and the research design is structured around Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse (Fairclough, 1992, p. 73). In Fairclough's model, discourse operates at three mutually reinforcing levels. At the core of his model is seeing discourses as ‘text’. Text, in Fairclough's model, is the actual words written or spoken. In this research, tour guide training manuals inform this category. The autoethnography, ethnography and interviews allow this research to understand the ‘discursive practices’ and ‘social practices’. Discursive practices, to Fairclough, describes the ways discourses are circulated, distributed and consumed (or not consumed) and can be understood through the auto-ethnography, ethnography and interviews with key people who created such discourses. ‘Social practices’, according to Fairclough, relates to power and its consequences and is understood in this study via work and life history interviews.

Recognition for discourse analysis as a legitimate and credible methodological tool has been growing (Scribner, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2008; van Leeuwen, 2008). Discussions in discourse analysis more generally (Scribner, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2008) and critical discourse analysis specifically (Habermas, 1998; van Dijk, 2008) have revealed a wide-ranging array of studies from linguistically oriented studies of talk and text to approaches dealing with social practices. Critical discourse analysis of training manuals was conducted for two sets of tour guide training manuals—one before UNESCO’s intervention in Macao’s tour guiding industry and the other after UNESCO’s intervention upon the city’s inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. These textual spaces were examined for the ways in which they promoted and encouraged various tour guiding ideals and subject positions. Attention is also paid to the topics and issues these texts were silent on. Data were analysed interpretively and thematically, as in (Holliday, 2007; van Maanen, 1988) and only selected quotes and summarised notes were re-presented here in consideration of space.

The autoethnography and ethnography were carried out in two different roles: first as a team member in a UNESCO team developing the Cultural Heritage Specialist Course and training its first classes of students, and second as an observer in a tour guiding course at a tourism school in Macao. Autoethnography facilitated the study of the power-knowledge formation process of the CHSG programme at the heart of its creation. The ethnography was conducted to understand how tour guiding knowledge was distributed and consumed, or not consumed, in the classrooms of the tourism school. Autoethnography is a reflexive form of interrogation that has blossomed within the North American qualitative academic sphere during the last decade and is a highly personalised text that taps into the experience of the writer and researcher for the aim of extending understanding of the social world (Ryan & Gu, 2010; Sparkes, 2000). New vantage points for the discovery of new insights and contribution to knowledge could be found in the intersection of the personal and societal (Laslett, 1999) common in autoethnography and ethnography. This combination of autoethnography and ethnography drew upon such strengths and possibilities to provide the links between the personal and the familiar with the broader concerns of the tourism world that individuals live and work in, and to consider the questions tour guide manual writing and tour guide training raise about teamwork, emotional labour, work and power in the tourism world.

Life and work history interviews, geared at allowing tour guides to reflect upon their job and situations, were key to understanding the tour guide settings. The interviews were often unstructured to allow for capture of the complex sets of meanings and behaviours. According to Fontana and Frey (2005, p. 706), these interviews help researchers “understand the complex behaviour of members of society without imposing any a priori categorisation that may limit the field of inquiry.” Ladkin (2004) asserts that while life and work history interviews find a range of diverse applications in other disciplines, their use in tourism is still nascent.

In this study, the life and work history interview is the only way to access certain fragments of history and individual truths as the researcher cannot go back in time to observe, speak to and record occurrences and experiences (see also, Bunnell, 2007). The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way. For work history interviews, tour guides were invited to reflect on their work experiences (‘please tell me about your guiding experience’) and in life history interviews, tour guides were asked to reflect on their lives (‘please tell me about yourself, your childhood, your youth...’). Interviews with veteran or long-serving tour guides allowed us to see and study the conditions of tourism work and tour guiding during the pioneering and heady days of Macao’s tourism
development, while similar interviews conducted with less experienced (less than 5 years in the job) and younger tour guides helped cast my analytical lenses on varying time phases of Macao’s tourism development. Tour guides for the interview were sampled based on convenience sampling. All key groups of tour guides were interviewed including tour guides of various age and seniority in the profession and different language groups, and both package/mass tourist tour guides and those undertaking niche cultural tours. In view of protecting their identities, we replaced names with pseudonyms when re-presenting them in this paper.

The creation of old and new tour guiding ideals and the consumption and/or negotiation of capitalistic and expert visions

From mass-production of homo docilis to the birth of the homo-turismos

In this section, autoethnographic and textual analysis of Macao tour guiding are presented to illustrate the ways in which new and old forms of tour guiding subject-position were constructed in Macao. In particular, the creation of a new tour guiding ideal and its corresponding subject-position will be discussed. This new ideal and subject-position are shaped by the utopian imaginings of cultural heritage experts. Autoethnographic observations from the vantage point of a curriculum developer, writer and trainer for the tour guide training programme (from which this new nexus is argued to have been derived) are used to illustrate the negotiated and contingent nature of the construction of such an expert-endorsed ideal and subject-position. This new subject-position stands alongside and in juxtaposition with an existing ideal of tour guides as docile customer service workers whose role in tourism is to ‘please’ tourists.

The customer service-oriented tour guide ideal favoured by tourism businesses can be observed in tour guide training programmes and their associated training manuals written before UNESCO’s intervention in Macao. In a similar vein to Ong’s (1987) docile and ‘nimble-fingered’ factory women in Malaysia, tour guides in Macao were to be moulded into courteous, disciplined and submissive subjects for use in an exploitative global economy dominated by ‘oft-greedy’ capitalists and ‘ever-demanding’ tourists, as a front-line hospitality staff, a tour guide is in definite control of the movement of the tour, and his/her sense of responsibility is the main key to success. Courtesy with enthusiasm, together with a sense of consideration, allows a tour guide to provide customers with excellent services, which in turn makes them happy and satisfied (Macao Intensive Tour Guide Course Manual, 2003 Chapter 4, pp. 1–2).

Tour guide training programmes are arguably the means for aspiring tour guides to investigate the profession, the role they are expected to play and develop knowledge about the person they may become. The relationship between role and person is complex, especially perhaps between the moderate person versus the ‘professional person’ they may become. As such, they approximate to what Foucault calls “specific truth games” (1982, p. 224) and these truth games are related to a tour guide trainee’s discovery of themselves and their would-be potential subjection to the sets of power in tourism. According to Foucault (1982, p. 225), “technologies of power, [one of the four matrixes of power,] determines the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination”. Hollinshead (1999) sums this up succinctly in his concept of the homo docilis—“an obedient, conscience-ridden, pliable and ‘appropriate’ subject in relation to power-knowledge configurations. To describe the tourists, words such as ‘happy, satisfied customers’ and an intended choice of words describing the tour guides: ‘positive service attitude, front line hospitality staff, definite control, sense of responsibility, courtesy with enthusiasm’ were used. The lexical strategy positions the tour guide as a service provider and the tourist as a customer, a far cry from anthropological definitions (see for example, Katz, 1985; Nash, 1978; Turfs, 2006) of the guide and tourism worker as ‘host and mentor’.

A new form of tour guide ideal was created through UNESCO’s interventions in Macao as a result of the city’s inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list and its participation in the development and implementation of a new specialised tour guide programme, the CHSG. Previously defined above, the CHSG...
texts demand that trainees become equipped with basic urban heritage conservation knowledge. Deriving from the Burra Charter, a set of internationally recognised guidelines for conservation of cultural heritage assets to be read by conservationists and site managers, it tries to introduce basic definitions of conservation intervention techniques available. For example, graduates from the course are expected to distinguish and discuss conservation measures in place and to be able to identify conservation best practices to tourists and visitors using professional terms such as “restoration” and “reconstruction” (CHSG Core Manual, 2006 Unit 3, pp. 3-5, 3-6). Again, this is built on utopian imaginings of a cultural tourism full of curious and receptive tourists and a tour guiding landscape of well-educated tour guides. In these post-UNESCO manuals, tour guides are seen simultaneously as ambassadors and activists. They are to be critical of the negative impacts of tourism, especially those of mass tourism. They are also seen as spokespersons advocating social justice and equity at World Heritage Sites.

Heritage guides should also take note of the level of intrusion visitation brings to the heritage sites and the community and should endeavour to limit the number of visitors in their guided tours at the levels deemed acceptable by the community. At many World Heritage Sites, surging tourist arrivals and visitations have displaced local residents and disrupted local lifestyles… Heritage guides also have a key role to play in terms of equity at World Heritage Sites… This is not an easy ideal to achieve, but heritage guides can help facilitate this by avoiding discrimination and by helping to safeguard heritage assets… (CHSG Manual, 2006 Unit 6, p. 6–3).

While such visions of community advocacy and empowerment are noble and well-intended, arguably, they obscure the unequal labour relationships to which many tour guides are subject. For these idealistic visions to work, the tour guide has to be emancipated from the operations of conventional travel agencies as these business setups are primarily concerned with the running of mass bus tours and compete with each other based on price strategies.

The texts frame tour guides as active contributors to the process and even envisage them in a leadership role (CHSG Manual 2006 Unit 6, p. 6–4). Furthermore, tour guides are expected to take on an activist role to help organise local communities to help defend the sites from unauthorised or inappropriate developments. Put together, tour guides are to become idealistic change-agents in the places they are guiding and help redistribute income from tourism to help prevent economic leakages.

Cultural heritage guides can also become change agents for the community. In many World Heritage Sites, tourism dollars and receipts are often found in the hands of large multinationals. Very little or none of these earnings find their way to local hands. Cultural heritage guides can help change this situation by encouraging the sharing of tourism benefits within the framework of sustainable community development. This can be done by encouraging local entrepreneurship and sustaining traditional industries. (CHSG Manual 2006 Unit 6, p. 6–4, 6–5).

However, the absence of the various public agencies in regulating mass tourism at key sites and in protecting industrial heritage compounds the problem. Can tour guides really shoulder these responsibilities of creating and generating interest amongst the local and tourist communities when the economic, corporeal and emotional aspects of their employment are no better than casual workers in the informal economy?

Endorsed and commissioned by UNESCO, the manual writers crafted a text meant for an ‘ideal tour guide’, training in an ‘ideal world’. This ideal guide embodies the virtues and ideals of cultural tourism as spelt out by international charters and guidelines such as the Burra Charter and the Hoi An Protocols and is essentially a high-performing guide capable of living up to such lofty utopian standards while being immune or beyond the daily grind of the rank and file guides. A departure from Hollinshead’s (1999) concept of the homo docilis or Ong’s (1987) submissive and ‘nimble-fingered’ electronics factory women in Malaysia, this idealised guide is a critical and thoughtful super-performer and occupies a subject position not envisioned in pre-UNESCO Macao tour guide training. We call this idealised guide the homo turismo. More than just the docile and compliant worker Hollinshead (1999) described, the homo turismo is a tour guide who is able to mediate the exacting demands of both the exploitative tourism business environment and the utopian visions of international cultural organisations such as UNESCO and ICCOMOS. The homo turismo is, thus, a tourism derivative of Thrift’s “fast subjects” (2000, p. 674) and “homo silicon valleycus” (2004, p. 688).
Having discussed Macao’s tour guide manuals as textual spaces refracting and reflecting the ideals and intentions of its writers and the institutions endorsing them, the later part of this section proceeds to look at the actual writing and teaching of these courses. This is done by employing an autoethnography in the role of a member of a UNESCO writing and training team developing and delivering the CHSG programme, and using notes made during the implementation of the training programme. This is presented in italics with indents to differentiate it from the main academic writing.

Consultants, experts and participants at the meeting were provided the draft version of the manual for reading prior to the meeting and two main schools of thought emerged. Some academics, wanted a further lengthening of the manual and further expansion of specialised terms to distinguish this expert course from the usual and existing tour guiding courses. They wanted all the units in the manual to resemble Unit 5 (the longest unit) in word length, case studies used and depth. Unit 5 is also the unit that went over the initial word limit and scope authors agreed upon. However, the academics present and UNESCO staff preferred this more scholarly approach. Professionals in tour guide training, however, argued for a simplification of the manual. They found the manual too heavy in content. They also found the writing style and concepts too inaccessible. What kinds of tour guides were we trying to produce? Frustrated with the varying and ‘low’ expectations industry representatives have tour guides, the Director made a decision for the course and its materials to pursue a more scholarly approach.

The autoethnography conducted by the first author has shown the ‘messiness’ of a typical UNESCO meeting. It was within such contested meetings that the new subject position of homo turismo was created and promoted. It was also in these meetings where advocates of a more business-driven role of tour guides as customer service oriented workers was rejected by higher-ranked members in the meeting. Framed by a more industry-driven vision, some were contented to have tours guides as industry-serving and compliant homos docilis and were fearful of the more conceptually challenging materials in the training manuals and especially more academically-written Chapter 5 which was discussed in the above-mentioned meeting.

Building upon film theorist Christian Metz’s (1975, p. 19 cited in Ang, 1991, p. 17) conceptualisation of the cinematic audience problem, Ien Ang (1991, p. 17) commented perceptively of the cinematic audience as ‘the problem of institutional reproduction’ and that what ideology-projecting and message-sending agencies risk losing is their grasp or the lack of it ‘over the conditions of its own reproduction’. Like Metz’s and Ang’s media audiences, a tour guide training course in Macao risks not drawing enough students to fill the seats in its classrooms and courses, and their associated training manuals would have to appeal to its audiences as well. Such institutional reproduction anxieties translate to the personal level (Ang, 1996). As shown in this autoethnography, writers for the tour guide manual think and worry about their audiences and such production of power-knowledge is in turn constituted in broader frameworks of ideologies and other discursive formations too.

Too often, teams working for, or in, international organisations are represented as unified and singular entities in academic (see for example, Di Giovine, 2009, p. 33) and popular imaginations (for example, websites of NTOs describing the World Heritage nomination process) and this limits our comprehension of their production of cultural ideals, visions and aspirations for specific cultural places. Building on efforts to research elites and groups in power and how power works in these teams (Baez, 2002; Conti & O’Neil, 2007; Galliher, 1980; Wiles, Charles, Crow, & Heath, 2006), we have tried to show how an expert team copes with utopian-making projections and intentions and how that could be a challenge to maintaining a democratic process (Conti & O’Neil, 2007). The disagreements in the meeting were suppressed when the Director dictated the proceedings and reiterated the aims of creating specialised expert guides—the desire for a homo turismo rather than a homo docilis via the project. Negotiations and conflicts also happened in the delivery and communication of the utopian visions. Below, the myriad of ways in which such internalisation and contestation took place will be examined.

Communicating, consuming and negotiating capitalistic and expert visions

We had aimed at conveying concepts of culture and heritage and related themes in an open and democratic way and being appreciative of different worldviews. Our view of things is presented as lectures
but trainees are encouraged to discuss and debate these during group discussions. The trainees have been given the 378 page training manuals in advance of the workshop and were supposed to reach some level of familiarity with them. However, this did not always happen. Many came without reading the materials and regarded the workshops as retreats from their office and usual space of work. For these distracted trainees, glances out of the workshop venue—at beautiful landscapes or the more mundane hotel swimming pool, were common. There were also cases of resistance from trainees who were already regarded as specialists in tour guiding and interpretation. Some trainees rejected our homo turismo concept of the tour guide and insisted that tour guides should merely convey apolitical ‘facts’ about the site. These trainees demanded more facts they can bring home with them. There were others who did the converse. While invited to serve as local advisers and resource people, they volunteered their participation in the exercises, excursions and attended the classes.

The projection of the idealised homo turismos subject position was consumed, negotiated and contested variously in regional workshops. The notes illustrate the problems relating to the transference of a utopian ideal crafted away from the hustle and bustle of everyday tour guiding. Some rejected our visions as naive and unrealistic. For these trainees, the role of experts and expert-led workshops in tourism lays only in the provision of yet more apolitical but interesting facts for tour guides to ‘absorb’. Tour guides who attended the workshops found little time available outside their day-to-day work to read a massive training manual. Local tour guide trainers who attended the workshops in preparation for leading subsequent training sessions often have very differing views of what a good tour guide is and what such a workshop means to them. Some saw the workshop as their chance to be away from their routine work and to be a tourist as the workshops were usually held in World Heritage sites. Having said that, not all who wanted a tourism experience performed in ways deviant from our homo turismos ideals. Some advisers and resource people (usually local historians, archaeologists and cultural tourism experts) described above, who volunteered to join the training—participating in the classes, exercises and fieldtrips, were curious and passionate advocates for cultural tourism. They were intimately aware of the demands of the local tourism industry but were also keenly aware of how a more utopian version of tourism may be possible. In this sense, these touring experts and other “mindful” tourists (Moscardo, 1996) constitute homo turismos as well. Hence, while the homo turismo is conceived as an idealised subject position for tour guides, such UNESCO-endorsed visions may be realised more readily elsewhere—in the spaces of the experts. Turning to the training rooms of Macao, the programme was also negotiated and consumed as leisure spaces for Macao tour guides and how ‘globally’ crafted concepts such as “heritage interpretation” and “cultural significance” were made relevant in a ‘local’ class.

Emily continued, emphasising the importance of collecting and using local tales to augment heritage interpretation. That, she said, should be interesting to tourists as they seek to understand Macao’s past. “Something related to our daily lives!” Emily stressed.

She went on to share how Macao used to be entirely reliant on Zhuhai for its water supply and how water cuts were part and parcel of urban living in the Macao of the 1970s and how that can be related to interpreting the Lilau Square (site where Portuguese sailors first collected fresh water).

Lilau Square, a key World Heritage attraction in Macao, is one of the key Macao sites. Instead of reciting prepared narratives for their exams and eventual actual guiding, tour guides in the CHSG course had to attain the UNESCO standard of preparing their own narratives. These narratives must be both engaging and historically/culturally important. Such exercises in ‘heritage interpretation’ and ‘communicating cultural significances’—concepts crafted by global academia, were made more grounded when Emily demonstrated how linkages can be drawn to their collective nostalgia for Macao’s more laidback past when the importance of water supply to the city were made clear, ironically, by its then frequent disruption and cuts. The class learnt that Lilau Square, with its natural spring, was equally vital to early Portuguese seafarers who pioneered and operated the trading routes—the enduring encounter which Macao’s World Heritage status was founded on.

Tour guides who attended the classes were also commonly subjected to pressures of having to attend classes at night on top of their day time guiding work. Observations in class revealed they coped with this by transforming training spaces into largely jovial and leisurely ones. While not all
of them were inherently interested in history and culture as academic subjects, course instructor Emily’s use of the near past and local tales helped instil interest via nostalgia and helped ground what can be argued to be globally-shaped academic terms and concepts into locally-relevant ones. In the work and life history interviews, Sarah revealed that although it has never been easy coming to classes at night, she had always looked forward to them as it gave her a chance to relax while learning new things. Compared to serving tourists, the role of a student and trainee was an easier one for Sarah. Michael echoed Sarah’s views on the jovial and collegial atmosphere of classes but added that his love of reflecting and reminiscing the past had helped him ‘get through’ the classes.

While Foucault has given academia the concept of governmentality or “the conduct of conduct,” Foucault and Foucauldian-inspired scholars also argued that governmentality is never complete and total (Bunnell, 2004; Foucault, 1990a; Ong, 1987). Specifically, there exist a population of guides who did not believe in what the experts have said and certainly did not shape themselves in UNESCO-endorsed ways. For example, Fernando is a veteran part-time guide. A self-professed proud man, he felt during the time of the interview that he has always been a naturally-gifted tour guide, and he had learnt little from the UNESCO-endorsed courses because he “already knew the facts.” He felt the CHSG course was too easy. More importantly, he felt the ‘UNESCO-speak’ had done little to help Macao guides because unethical industry practices “are still rampant” and Macao tour guides were still severely exploited. Such sentiments were echoed by a few tour guides interviewed, including Lam, Wu and Belinda. Lam, for instance, argued that the course was too lofty and “too high up there” while Wu felt “it was not relevant”. Belinda, a guide for more than 15 years, commented:

The idea is nice. We understand why UNESCO wants to do this but they have to think about how we can do it. I mean, we have to see what kinds of tourists we have first. We can learn the knowledge and read more but do they want to listen? Or do they just want to take some pictures to ‘prove’ they are not here only for gambling and shopping and head straight for the casinos and shopping? For some we can do that, but not for many. Also, if we want to go for these courses, who pays? It is difficult. We don’t earn much. We are not university professors. We cannot invest so much in courses and workshops. Also, my agency will not reward me for doing the investment—they pay me the same rates. It is better to just do more normal guiding and then earn more and save more for old age.

Belinda’s comments point to the fact that while some guides in Macao feel that the project is generally well-thought out and beneficial, there is a need to provide some direct incentives and mitigate financial losses associated to training to make the programme work. Safeguards to the profession such as a higher minimum wage, training and retirement funds and a much higher pay scale endorsed by public agencies for better qualified specialist guides could help reconcile the tensions between the ideals of supranational expert advice and on-the-ground guiding realities. If concerted efforts are being meted out in establishing the career track of the cultural heritage guiding profession and with the provision of financial safeguards, it would enable the cultural heritage tourism industry to look less of a cosmetic cover for the less savoury gaming and sex tourism in the SAR.

Some, however, navigate the terrains of UNESCO and expert endorsed normalisation process better. A long-term tour guide with a museum studies background, Wai asserted:

Basically the situation of Macao tour guides is linked to the ‘quality’ of the tour guides… It very much depends on our own personal qualities… take for instance, I come from a cultured background and that makes it easier… Tour guides of a certain standard (the normal average standard, not ‘cultural’ expert guides) may find their incomes halved now… The problem lies with the orientation and approach of the tour guides themselves. The standards are higher now and these tour guides can’t keep up… Many years ago, the biggest markets for Macao, the Chinese outbound tours, are simpler. Tour guides just bring tourists around to take a quick look and do some shopping. It was not as complex and it was easy to cope then. Now, it is different as Chinese tourists have become familiar with Macao.

As demonstrated in Wai’s situation, utopian visions, ideals and aspirations in Macao tour guiding are likely contingent on personal concerns and individual personality as much as expressions of the workings of power-knowledge. A better educated or well-read tour guide like Wai may find the idealised
**homo turismo** position an easier target to attain while less prepared ones such as Belinda, Wu and Lam found it difficult and inappropriate. At the same time the study also illustrates that states of tension, implicit and explicit, exist as the tour guides create their own interpretations and acts of resistance. As in the case of some trainees who insisted that there is just one way of performing tour guiding, they are almost unknowing acts of resistance by failing to perceive a problem, or alternatively as in Belinda and Fernando’s case, they are knowing as they modify and adapt to their own situations. The classroom and its ideals exist within its own power-knowledge domain, removed but interacting with the commercial realities of guides faced with tourists, who also have their own modes of role-enforced resistances.

**Conclusion**

Through an analysis of an autoethnography, ethnography, training texts and work and life histories, this paper has offered insights into aspects of the power-knowledge situation within tour guiding in Macao. While this paper has not focused on tour guide practices on-site on actual tours, the research uncovered ideals and subject positions promoted and endorsed in the training of guides—individual and societal reference points against which they are evaluated and self-regulate. Specifically, it has drawn on Foucauldian concepts and observed that past tour guide training in Macao promoted and reinforced capital-induced normalization processes relating to categorising and moulding malleable and cooperative workers for the dominant and dominating tourism industry. The findings also point to the promotion of a new ‘breed’ of self-regulating specialist tour guides the authors termed, the *homo turismos* in more recent UNESCO-endorsed training. This is the result of the projections of utopian visions by UNESCO’s experts and their associates. From the textual spaces of the key training materials written before and after UNESCO’s involvement in the training of tour guides to the physical spaces of regional workshops and board room meetings where transnational connections of the CHSG programme attempted to shape and reshape Macao tour guiding, this research has endeavoured to trace the formation and negotiation of ideal tour guide subject positions in the then newly-inscribed World Heritage city.

This paper has firstly presented and discussed the findings of a critical discourse analysis of tour guide manuals in Macao. These texts and their analysis are important as would-be tour guides experience these in immediate and direct ways. Using actual text from the manuals, we illustrated an emergence of a more analytical *homo turismo* subject-position alongside a more descriptive *homo docilis* one. In addition to passively memorising and rehearsing tour guiding scripts focused on describing heritage monuments, tour guides are now encouraged to construct their own interpretation of heritage places and reflect upon their social and political roles in tourism. Data analysis first revealed that, before UNESCO’s interventions in 2007, the manuals were written with the aim of producing vast numbers of tour guides to fulfil the needs of the travel industry—Hollinshead’s (1999) *homo docilis*. The emphasis then was on creating professional and ethical tour guides who would work with the travel agencies within the limits of the law. These law-abiding tour guides were expected to endure difficult work conditions and exploitative labour relations and see these conditions as part of the job—something you endure and ‘get on with’ if you are passionate about or possess true calling for the job. Expectations for tour guides to be well-versed in descriptive attraction, cultural and historic knowledge, especially information that promoted tourism marketing of Macao were also revealed.

After UNESCO’s interventions, the cultural tourism discourse that UNESCO and its team espoused shaped much of the writing of the manuals leading to what we will describe as the new subject position endorsed by the cultural authorities—the *homo turismo*, this paper’s short-hand for such idealised reflective and critical tour guides. Tour guides are now expected to reflect on their roles in making tourism sustainable. To do this, the texts instruct them to seek ways to become cultural experts and to become local cultural champions or ambassador-activists. This paper had also reflected on UNESCO’s intended shift from a more descriptive tour guide training text to a more analytical or tour guide-subject-focused tour guiding. To engage with such analysis of Macao tour guide manuals, however, is not to suggest readers of the manuals are captive audiences or passive subjects manipulated by these cultural authorities. The authors and curriculum committee of such a training programme had
been found in this study to display anxieties over its reception by its intended audiences. While it could be argued that both sets of manuals were relatively silent on exploitative practices within the travel agency and tour guide industry, the post-UNESCO manuals were seen to provide a platform for tour guides to reflect on their careers, selves and roles. Thus, these post-UNESCO manuals are attempts at empowerment as they seek to generate awareness amongst the tour guides. However, their use was, and still is, not without problems.

To construct an assemblage of power-knowledge enrolling ideals and aspirations whose centres lie beyond the everyday concerns and circumstances of Macao tour guiding and in the expert realms of UNESCO’s cultural heritage management, means our informants and other Macao tour guides are constantly pulled and regularly consume and/or negotiate both the myriad demands of the *homo docilis* and the aspirations of the *homo turismo* subject positions. While this has been intended as a step towards professionalising and improving the skills levels of Macao tour guides, the lack of support for skills upgrading and protection of basic work conditions signal a much deeper form of exploitation and domination. A penchant for inventing academic terms aside, our identification of the *homo turismos* and their co-existence alongside Hollinshead’s ‘docile’ and malleable counterpart derives also from our political intention to support and improve conditions for workers caught in between such limbos between the two subject positions and the liminal experiences and spaces of their work in Macao, in tourism and beyond—as evidenced in work and life history interviews (to be reported elsewhere). The more unified UNESCO text and its associated discourses also potentially suppress alternate forms of heritage knowledge, including localised ways of deploying established tourism imaginaries and forms of Otherings (Salazar, 2014).

This paper has also uncovered the contingent and negotiated tendencies in the utopian visioning process within the UNESCO team and their affiliates. Very often, teams working for, or in, international organisations are represented as unified ‘black boxes’ in academic and popular imaginations and this limits our comprehension of their production of cultural ideals, visions and aspirations for specific cultural places. More could be done to research the elites and groups in power and how power works in these teams. Such forms of ‘studying up’ have a potential to shed light on how an expert team can adjust utopian-making processes to be more democratic, accessible and successful (Conti & O’Neil, 2007). From the lead author’s position as author and team member of the UNESCO team, this paper paints an autoethnographic picture of how the utopian visions came together in practice and the structures of power that shaped the team’s actions and intentions. This paper has also paid attention to the ways in which individual tour guides and tour guide trainers negotiate expert visioning through individual tactics of transforming training rooms into leisure spaces, accepting and internalising the discourses, resisting the ideals and/or by simply ignoring the experts.

The approach here differs from existing efforts in tourism studies which seek to understand tourism labour and capitalistic domination and exploitation from a class-based analysis (Bianchi, 2011; Ong, 2011). This research has sought to understand the more nuanced and complex ways in which individuals, through the workings of power-knowledge construction and the consequent projections of idealised subjects, may be shaped in ways that favour continued capitalistic advantage and to the emergent utopian visioning in the Chinese territory. The identification of an idealised *homo-turismo* subject as an intended ‘ideal type’ highlights the ways in which normalisation and governmentality of workers may have changed since the docile and ‘nimble-fingered factory women’ (Ong, 1987) and other *homo docilis* (see Bunnell, 2004 for example on ‘intelligent’ workers in Kuala Lumpur) that had captured academic and popular attention since the more Fordist era of the newly industrialised or ‘Tiger Economies’ of 1980s East and Southeast Asia. In doing so, this paper charts and critiques the complex terrains of power-knowledge within tour guiding in Macao and contributes to an understanding of normalization and governmentality in tourism and the ways in which such power-knowledge shaped and wrought tourism labour. Finally, it may also be commented that the utopian is not wholly divorced from the grubbier aspects of tour guides being both exploited by and exploiting the tourist. As this paper was being finalised, changes in Chinese legislation that have come into effect on 1st October 2013 may have established the foundation for more transparent tour arrangements and the payment of proper salaries to guides. Such impending changes may have further implications for the formation of *homo turismos*. 
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