

## **Networked innovations in guided tours**

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# Conference Proceedings

## 5th International Research Forum on Guided Tours



15 - 18 March 2017

Roskilde University, Denmark

Edited by

Jane Widtfeldt Meged & Dineke Koerts

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# Introduction

The International Research Forum on Guided Tours (IRFGT) is a mobile platform for research on guided tours and was initiated by academics in Sweden, with its first biannual Forum held at the University of Halmstad in 2009. From the very start IRFGT aimed to bring together academics and practitioners. During its five Forums (Halmstad 2009, Plymouth 2011, Breda 2013, Estoril 2015 and most recently in Roskilde in 2017) IRFGT has facilitated the meeting of academic researchers, students, tourist guides, educators, artists, performers, designers of audio and GPS tours, story tellers and others to discuss – and experience together – the past, present and future of guided tours, both in the “real world” of the streets, museums and heritage properties and in “virtual realities”. IRFGT was driven by the notion that guided tours have been under-researched yet highly important, continuously changing and multi-faceted phenomenon in the world of tourism. By approaching guided tours from multiple viewpoints, IRFGT aims not only to explore the remarkable diversity of tours, but also to locate their meaning and significance more precisely and richly through research, debate, contestation, sharing and mapping.

## Roskilde University & IRFGT 2017

Roskilde University is a public, research-driven university founded in 1972. The university builds on innovative and student-centered forms of learning, strong interdisciplinary research environments, and a shared focus on the great social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges in the world around us. The university employs 570 researchers and has 8800 students. Since 1989 Roskilde University has offered a Tourist Guide Diploma Program, and we proudly hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> International Research Forum on Guided Tours from 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2017

## IRFGT 2017 was organized by:

Jane Widtfeldt Meged & Susanne Haraszuk - Coordinators/ Roskilde University, Denmark  
 Charlotte Emmery – Roskilde University, Denmark  
 Henriette Kragh Jakobsen – Danish Heritage Tours  
 Miguel Brito - ESTHE, Portugal  
 Carla Braga – ESTHE, Portugal  
 Dineke Koerts - NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands  
 Vincent Zammit - Institute of Tourism Studies, Malta  
 Reidar Mykletun – University of Stavanger, Norway

## IRFGT 2017 Proceedings

IRFGT 2017 was a testimony to the current turbulence in the world of tourism. Over the course of three days 20 speakers - academics, tourist guides, entrepreneurs discussed a wide variety of issues as the program - printed below - demonstrates. The contributions also show that different methods and approaches, rooted in different methodologies, can be applied in researching guided tours: from literature reviews, participant observation and reflexive experiences to interviews and questionnaires in various forms and combinations. Tour guiding has probably never operated in such a volatile field as today, given the ever increasing numbers of people travelling, the urgency of climate change and need for sustainability, changing political and economic conditions, as well as on-going technological innovations, together with the still increasing influence of social media. IRFGT continues to respond flexibly and open-mindedly to these challenges, acknowledging that its` participants and audiences have much to gain through our respect for different approaches, inclusive subject parameters and flexibility of thinking to match those of guiding's changing circumstances and of guides' responses to them.

The contributions printed in **bold** in the conference program have been submitted for and are published in this publication and are presented in the order of the tracks. The keynotes are available in their full length as online videos via links. Finally, all abstracts of presentations are included.

We hope you will enjoy this diverse collection of papers and online keynotes, and we would like to thank all contributors for generously sharing their work, insights and approaches.

November 2017

The editors

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Malin Zillinger, Assistant Professor, PhD, Lund University, Campus Helsingborg, Sweden





# Conference program

**Venue: Roskilde University Universitetsvej 1, building 30 Room 30M-1 16**

<https://events.ruc.dk/5thIRFGT/external-login.html>

## Thursday 16th March

9:00-9:30 Registration and coffee

9:30-10:00 Official Openingceremony  
Welcome by conference host Jane Widtfeldt Meged, Associate Professor Roskilde Univeristy

Welcome by Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt, Professor and co-founder of the Tourist Guide Diploma Program, Roskilde University 10:00 -11:00

**Keynote: Guidance Matters: Being-With Things, Places and People by Soile Veijola, Professor, Lapland University.**

11:00 -11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 12:30 **1 track Challenges of professionalization and work between regulation and de-regulation**  
Chair: Dineke Koerts, Senior Lecturer & Researcher, PhD, NHTV University of Applied Sciences, Breda, the Netherlands

11:30 – 11:50 Yalcin Arslanturk, Assistant Professor, PhD, Gazi University, Turkey	Tour Guiding and Professionalism: Emerging Structural Issues in Turkey
11:50 – 12:10 Reidar J. Mykletun, Professor, PhD, Molde University College, Molde Norway  Gemma Ribalta Roca, MSc., Independent. Tjelta, Norway	Does governmental regulations relate to tourist guides' perceived levels of job stress, job satisfaction and career plans? Tourist guides in Catalonia and Norway compared
12.10 -12:30 <b>Areej Shabib Aloudat, Assistant Professor, Ph.D, Yarmouk University, Jordan</b>	<b>Being in the minority: the challenges of being a female tour guide in Jordan</b>

12:30-13:45 Lunch +activity

13:45 – 14:05 **2 Track Sustainable ecologies in guided tour**

Chair: Reidar Mykletun Professor, PhD, Molde University College, Molde Norway

<p>13:45 - 14:05 Berit Charlotte Kaa, Senior Researcher, Ph.D. University of Copenhagen, Denmark</p> <p>Jesper Holm Associate Professor Roskilde University, Denmark</p>	<p>Rethinking sustainability dimensions in guided ecotourism tours</p>
<p>14:05 - 14:25 Consuelo Griggio, Doctoral Candidate and research assistant Uppsala University Campus Gotland, Sweden.</p>	<p>Sustaining sustainability? Hidden and open tourism imaginaries in guided tours on the island of Gotland, Sweden</p>
<p>14:25 - 14:45 Eva Diekmann, Certified Guide, organic farmer, Roskilde Denmark</p>	<p>Sustainable ecologies in guided tours</p>
<p>14:45 - 15:05 Inga Kofoed Andersen, Geologist, local guide in Denmark, tour leader in Europe. Co-owner of Urban naturewalk Århus Denmark</p>	<p>How to make package tours sustainable</p>

Coffee break

15:30 Departure for Trekroner and Roskilde excursion

## Friday 17th March

9:00–10:00 **Keynote TOURISM RELATIONBITS by Ana Maria Munar,**  
Associate Professor, Copenhagen BusinessSchool

10:00– 10:30 Coffeebreak

10:30 –12:00 **3 Track Changing markets of guided tours and guides as  
changeagents**  
Chair Malin Zillinger, Assistant Professor, PhD Lund University,  
Campus Helsingborg, Sweden

10:30 – 10:50 <b>Cristina Carvalho, Associate Professor, PhD</b> <b>Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies (ESHTE), Portugal</b>  <b>Miquel Brito, Associate Professor, PhD</b> <b>Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies (ESHTE), Portugal</b>	<b>Tourist Guides as Educators and Changing Agents: The case of the Marquis of Pombal Palace, in Oeiras</b>
10:50 – 11:10 <b>Arzu Turan, PhD student and assistant researcher</b> <b>Anadolu University Faculty of Tourism Yunusemre Campus, Turkey</b>	<b>The Eye-Opening Role of Tour Guides in the Slum Experience</b>
11:10 – 11:30 Fulden Nuray Kucukergin, PhD Student Gazi University, Turkey  Yakup Kemal Ozekici, PhD student Gazi University, Turkey	Tours to thanatouristic places; opinions of tour guides.
11:30 – 11:50 <b>Duygu Yetgin, Lecturer and PhD student Anadolu University, Yunusemre Campus, Turkey</b>  <b>Aysel Yilmaz, Lecturer and PhD student</b> <b>Anadolu University, Yunusemre Campus, Turkey</b>	<b>Assessment of the Potential of Thermal Tourism in Eskisehir through the Perspective of Tour Guides</b>

11:50 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 14:30 **4. Track Challenges of professionalization and work between regulation and de-regulation**

Chair. Cristina Carvalho, Associate Professor, PhD, Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies (ESHTE), Portugal

<p>13:00 – 13:20  <b>Reidar J. Mykletun, Professor, PhD, Molde University College, Molde Norway</b></p> <p><b>Chiara Isola, Civil and Environmental Engineer, independent, Molde, Norway</b></p> <p>Bernadette Herzog, Diplom- Kulturwirtin, Molde University College, Molde, Norway</p>	<p><b>The future of the Tour Guide profession in Norway: status, regulations and ethics</b></p>
<p>13:20 – 13:40  Kristian Bredby, Chairman of the Norwegian Tourist Guide Association</p>	<p>The Norwegian Tourist guide Association: Presentation of a survey among local Guide Associations to map key information on members, their legal status, employment and other important issues.</p>
<p>13:40 – 14:00  <b>Duygu Yetgin, Lecturer and PhD student Anadolu University, Yunusemre Campus, Turkey</b></p> <p><b>Serap Belingiray, Professor, Anadolu University, Turkey</b></p>	<p><b>The Variables that Affect the Occupational Commitment Levels of Tour Guides: The Case of Turkey</b></p>
<p>14:00 – 14:20  Carla Braga, Lecturer and PhD student. Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies (ESHTE), Portugal</p>	<p>In which way can guides manage to be national guides in own countries and foreign countries with same group of tourists?</p>

14:30 Departure Excursion to Copenhagen and conference dinner.

## Saturday 18th March

9:30 – 10:30 **Keynote : Researching tour guides and guiding: mapping the past, charting the future by Rosemary Black, Associate Professor, Charles Sturt University, Albury / Wodonga Australia**

10:30--11:00 CoffeeBreak

11:00 –12:10 **5 Track The guide as entrepreneur in new and oldeconomies**  
Chair: Miquel Brito, Associate Professor, PhD. Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies (ESHTE), Portugal

11:00 – 11:20 Cristina Maria R Sousa F Leal chairwoman of the Portuguese Association of Tourist Guides and Tour Managers – AGIC	Challenges and solutions following the deregulation of the tourist guide profession in Portugal: the case study of AGIC's members
11:20 – 11:40 Malin Zillinger, Assistant Professor, PhD Lund University, Campus Helsingborg, Sweden  Jane Widtfeldt Meged, Associate Professor, PhD Roskilde University, Denmark	Networked innovations in guided tours
11:50 – 12:00 <b>Dineke Koerts, Senior Lecturer &amp; Researcher, PhD NHTV University of Applied Sciences, Breda, the Netherlands</b>	<b>Interpreting the City in "Free" Walking Tours</b>

12:00–12:40 Lunch sandwiches

12:40–13:40 Closing session







## Keynote Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March



**Soile Veijola, Professor  
in Cultural Studies of Tourism,  
Lapland University**

Link to video of keynote: [Soile Veijola](#)

### **Title: Guidance Matters: Being-With Things, Places and People**

The historical roots of guiding can be found in knowing and showing the way to a visitor to another place. In the early days it was customary for one person among the locals to lead and give a ride to the visitors to their next destination. Guidance was thus part of one of the key social invention of humankind – hospitality among strangers (Berking 1999).

Of course, also landmarks – rapids, rock formations and old trees – showed the way to new-comers. A horse, a dog or a reindeer might know the way, too, at least back to home. Roads, road signs and maps came along. Today we have google maps for geographical orienteering, and a profession of its own for guiding as paid work, recruiting people with a variety of backgrounds: from university degree on a culture and a language or a lifetime spent as a local inhabitant in a place to a short training for a short seasonal job.

A lot of attention in research has been given to guiding as new work that draws from intangible properties in person as sources of desired ‘audience effects’ through e.g. manageable gender performances (e.g.

Adkins 2005; Veijola & Jokinen 2008). However, after “the change of mind” in the scholarly community regarding human-centered viewpoints of science, now also matter matters (e.g. Latour & Woolgar 1979; Braidotti 2013). Other species matter (e.g. Haraway 1991). Things, animals, trees, rooms, buildings, landscapes, information technologies, snow and water, weather – all are part of the relational and sometimes also social event and experience of guiding and being guided.

In my talk I will take the human-shaped guides and tourists out of their institutionalized comfort zones in order to outline a possibility for more collective, engaging and disruptive forms of the guiding situation. I will demonstrate my arguments with an experimental guiding session with international and Finnish students, asylum seekers, and family visitors at a local heritage museum in Rovaniemi, Finland, in spring 2016.

**Bio:** Soile Veijola is Professor of Cultural Studies of Tourism based at Multidimensional Tourism Institute MTI, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland, in Rovaniemi, Finland. Her background is in sociology, cultural studies and feminist theories and her research has focused on gender, embodiment, tourism theories, and formations of the social in mixed team sports and mixed academia. She has led research teams on amenity landscapes and tourism as new work. Her current interests are the tourist dwelling, silence and slowness in tourism, camping, and mobile neighboring. Her hobbies have evolved from playing ball games in mixed teams to yoga and dancing Argentinian Tango and salsa.

Veijola's publications include several pieces co-authored with Eeva Jokinen, from *The Body in Tourism* (1994) to *Time to Hostess: Reflections on Borderless Care* (2012). Her latest book was a co-authored one based on a joint camping experience with Jennie Germann Molz, Olli Pyyhtinen, Emily Höckert and Alexander Grit, entitled *Disruptive Tourism and Its Untidy Guests. Alternative Ontologies for Future Hospitalities* (Palgrave 2014).

## Keynote Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March



Ana Maria Munar,  
Associate Professor,  
Copenhagen Business School

Link to video of keynote: [Ana Maria Munar](#)

### Title: Tourism Relationbits

Will tourist guides survive or will they be made redundant by digital technologies? Can we substitute the guide by an app or by a robot? Is a tourism experience without technology more or less authentic? And is our capacity to engage in human relationships and with a place threaten or enhanced by our digital gadgets? This talk will examine these challenging questions by looking at how digital technologies contribute to the construction of personal identities, our relationship to others and to place. It will challenge two popular beliefs in our understanding of technology: firstly, that digital mediated communication is a question about the self-directed relationship between an individual and a set of technological tools and platforms and secondly, that virtual media are something immaterial or less 'real'. To discuss how this complexity may impact in the development of guided tours, I will introduce a series of concepts of human-technology studies such as situated action, embedded cognition and ideological fields. Finally, I will combine these theoretical ideas with the insights of my research on social media and examine possible future scenarios for tour guides.

**Bio:** Ana María Munar holds a M.Sc. in Political Science and a Ph.D. in Economics and Business. Her research interests are in digital tourism, destination branding, epistemology, and gender and policy in tourism higher education. Her latest work provides insights on social media technologies and tourism, and it examines the role of digital mediation on cultural change and social reproduction. Her recent research project, "While Waiting for the Dawn", studies the impact of gender in the tourism academy. Ana is member of the Executive Committee of the Tourism Education Futures Initiative. She is member of the Center for Leisure and Culture Services.

## Keynote Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March



**Rosemary Black,  
Associate Professor  
Charles Stuart University,  
Albury / Wodonga Australia**

Link to video of keynote: [Rosemary Black](#)

### **Title. Researching tour guides and guiding: mapping the past, charting the future**

**Bio:** Associate Professor Rosemary Black's areas of expertise are in the fields of eco-tourism, sustainability, sustainable behaviours, tour guiding and environmental communication. This expertise has been developed over the past 40 years through both industry experience and research. Her current research interests and work are in tour guiding, community-based tourism and sustainable behaviours. She has published over 50 refereed publications including 25 refereed journal articles and conference papers, 16 refereed book chapters and 6 books. Her publications have been in a wide range of international refereed journals. She has been the Senior Editor for three books. Her most recent co-authored book is titled "Tour Guiding Research: Insights, Issues and Implications" by Channel View Publications. Rosemary holds a Ministerial appointment with the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service Southern Ranges Advisory Committee and is an invited member of Parks Victoria Science and Management Effectiveness Committee. She is a member of two international tourism editorial boards

# Researching tour guides and guiding: Mapping the past, charting the future

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## Abstract

*This paper systematically reviews peer-reviewed tour guiding literature from 1980-2016. An analysis of 140 empirical studies on tour guides and tour guiding during this period provides a basis for identifying patterns, trends and gaps in relation to methods and theory engagement. The analysis reveals little use of mixed methods and innovative data collection and analysis methods in tour guiding research. Engagement with theory is evident, particularly since 2010, however, while theory is being used by tour guiding scholars to inform their research, the testing, refinement and building of new theory is limited.*

## Key words:

tour guiding, methods, theory, review, tour guide

## Introduction

This paper systematically reviews how tour guiding and tour guide research makes use of research methods and how it engages with theoretical activity including trends over time. A review of the theoretical engagement of empirical tour guiding research has not been undertaken even though tour guides are recognised by many tourism researchers as key to the tourist experience and as key tourism stakeholders (Weiler & Black, 2015).

To date there are now nearly 200 published articles in peer-reviewed English-language journals that focus specifically on tour guides and tour guiding, thus it is now appropriate to explore the extent to which this field of investigation is theoretically-driven.

In this study we adopt Bramwell's (2015) definition of theoretical activity, i.e. "any level of explanatory approach that works with relatively abstract notions or ideas to explain the world" (p. 205) and include typologies, conceptual frameworks, conceptualising processes and relationships, looking at issues or concepts in new ways, and developing and evaluating concepts. A number of tourism researchers (Crouch & Perdue, 2015, Donohoe & Bricker, 2015) and tour guiding researchers (Weiler & Black, 2015) have suggested this field needs to embrace and use theory to a greater extent.

*The aim of the paper is to systematically review the use of methods and theory in empirically-based tour guiding literature.* Following an overview of the paper's methods, the findings are presented with respect to use of methods and theoretical engagement, followed by a discussion of the findings.

## Methods

This study reviews empirical research on tour guides and guiding from 1980 until 2016 published in English peer reviewed journals. A subset of the 196 publications that appeared in peer-reviewed journals was created using two criteria: papers *published in tourism-focussed and tourism-related peer-reviewed journals* and papers that *include empirical research*. A tourism-focused journal is one with the word of tourism, travel, destination or vacation in the title, for example, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*. A tourism-related journal has hospitality, leisure, recreation, park, interpretation, sport, museum, or environmental creation in the title, for example, *Journal of Hospitality and Leisure Marketing*. This subset of 140 empirical studies provided the dataset for this systematic review of research on tour guides and guiding. Each paper was coded with regard to its use of methods and theory (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Summary of system for coding empirically-based tour guiding research

Theme	Variable(s)	Label
Methods	Methodological Approach	Quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods
	Data collection	Specific data collection methods such as interview, survey, or focus groups
Theory	Engagement with theory	Whether 1) theory was used to inform/design, 2) theory was tested, 3) theory was refined/built
	Theory name	Name of the theory used

<sup>1</sup>*this table is for illustrative purposes and does not present the full range and detail of variable labelling and coding*



Assessing the methods used in the empirical research on tour guides and guiding involved systematically reviewing each paper. If all sources of the data from a study were quantitative (e.g. numerical survey data), the study was categorised as quantitative. If all sources of the data from a study were qualitative (e.g. open-ended responses from interviews; unstructured observational data), it was categorised as qualitative. If a study used a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, it was categorized as mixed. Actual data collection methods were also recorded. Each of the 140 papers was also reviewed and assessed as to whether one or more theories were used and named in the paper, then coded with respect to one or more types of theory engagement: (i) theory was used to inform the study, (ii) theory was tested, and/or (iii) the paper refined and/or built new theory.

There are some study limitations. Conceptual papers (e.g. Cohen, 1985) were not included in the analysis. Twenty-six papers in non-tourism journals were not included as they were viewed as being disconnected to the main tour guiding discourse. Papers published in edited books and conference proceedings were not included. Finally, this review is limited to papers published in English-language journals.

## Results

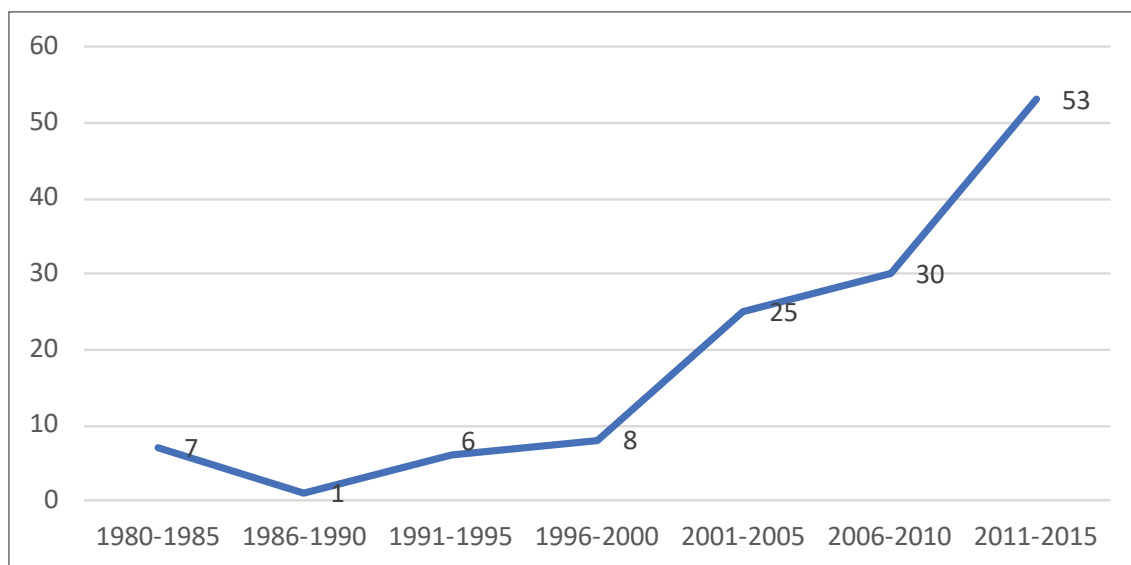
The results with respect to *methods used by empirical researchers* provide an analysis of patterns and trends in the use of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods by tour guiding researchers. The *theoretical results* provide an insight into tour guiding researchers' engagement with theory.

### ***Results: Use of methods by researchers undertaking empirically-based research on tour guides and guiding***

The number of publications on tour guides and tour guiding has increased over time with a steady growth since 1990 and peaking between 1991 and 1995, however this growth is from a small base (Figure 1).

Analysis of methodological approaches used by tour guiding researchers was undertaken, with studies coded as outlined in the methods section of this paper. Analysis revealed that 44% of empirically-based tour guiding studies were qualitative, 39% were quantitative, and 17% used mixed methods. There were no apparent trends over time in the use of methods (Table 2).

In quantitative studies, a questionnaire-based survey (typically conducted on-site, on-tour or post-trip) was found to be the most frequently used method for data collection, while in qualitative studies, interviews were found to be used most often. Various methods have been used in mixed-method studies, with surveys and interviews used most often. Methods used less often in tour guiding research include ethnographic methods, focus groups, Delphi and other group consensus techniques, and on-line surveys.



**Figure 1.** Number of empirically-based tour guiding studies over time, 1980-2016.  
*Note: January to June 2016\* is not shown in the figure because it is a 6-month period as compared to the 5-year block.*

**Table 2:** Methodology of empirically-based tour guiding research, 1980-2016

Quantitative	Methodology		Total
	Qualitative	Mixed Methods	
55	61	24	140
39%	44%	17%	100%

### ***Results: Engagement with theory in empirically-based research on tour guides and guiding***

An analysis of the 140 empirically-based tour guiding studies found that 62% (87) engaged with theory, while 38% (53) either made no mention of theory or did not engage with theory in any apparent way. *The majority (almost two-thirds) of empirical research on tour guides and guiding published in tourism journals engaged with theory.* Among the 87 studies, 74 were informed by theory; 33 studies tested theory and 29 studies refined theory. Individual studies could be coded in more than one of these categories so the total exceeds 87.

An analysis of trends over time regarding engagement with theory in these studies found that there was less engagement with use of theory prior to 2010, and all three uses of theory have increased post-2010. *The trend is for empirically-based research on tour guiding research published in tourism journals to be increasingly engaged with theory.*

Finally, cross-tabulation analysis of engagement with theory and methodology in tour guiding research revealed there were no significant differences in the empirical studies

in relation to overall levels of engagement in theory and the use of different methodological approaches, though more quantitative studies engage in theory-testing (51%), while more qualitative studies engage in theory-building (16%).

## Discussion: Use of Methods and Engagement with Theory

### *The use of methods*

The finding that more quantitative studies engaged with theory-testing (51%) and that a third of qualitative studies engaged with theory-building probably reflects the general trend in research that quantitative studies often test theory and qualitative studies frequently build theory. If the trend toward more theoretical engagement continues, we can expect to see more of both types of research, and hopefully greater use of mixed methods, which are arguably underutilised in the field of tour guiding research.

### *Theory engagement*

The analysis found two-thirds of the 140 empirically-based studies published between 1980 and 2016 engaged in theory. This was surprising, as to date the literature has generally been considered largely atheoretical (Black & Weiler, 2015; Weiler & Kim, 2011). With most empirically-based studies that engaged with theory being published since 2010, it appears that theory-driven research in tour guiding is a recent trend.

The coding process and analysis revealed some authors simultaneously referred to a theory and a concept, or a theory and a model, suggesting these terms are sometimes used interchangeably and in an ad hoc manner. In other instances, some authors failed to include bibliographic references for the cited theories rather than citing the original source. Tour guiding scholars and others would benefit from clear identification of theories and citing of the primary source of the theory.

Most (74) of the studies were informed by theory (see for example Fine & Speer, 1985; Beedie, 2003; Ryan & Dewar, 1995; Io & Hallo, 2011; Salazar, 2005; 2006). In thirty-three studies, the researcher(s) tested theory (see Min, 2012; 2014). The findings indicate that theory testing, which may or may not result in theory building or refinement should be encouraged among tour guiding scholars to advance a more sophisticated body of knowledge.

## Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to critically review the use of methods and theoretical engagement in empirically-based tour guiding literature from 1980-2016. The fact that most studies used qualitative and quantitative methodologies and few used mixed methods suggests future researchers could utilise the latter approach and explore the use of a wider range of data collection methods.

An important result from the study was an increase in studies that have engaged with theory since 2010. This is significant, as until recently tour guiding research has been criticised as being generally atheoretical. These criticisms were certainly valid for many studies prior to 2010. The study findings have identified some of the limitations as well as opportunities for future research on tour guiding and tour guides that will ensure this trend in engagement in theory continues and broadens to all areas of tour guiding research. Our research suggests that future studies need to continue to engage with theory and that researchers need to be more explicit in outlining their engagement with theory. Further engagement with theory and use of a range of methodological approaches will strengthen this important area of tourism study.

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# Being in the Minority: the Challenges of being a Female Tour Guide in Jordan

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## Abstract:

*Tourism is a significant global industry and according to the World Travel and Tourism Council supports about 2.6 million jobs representing 8.9% of total employment across all industries, many of which are undertaken by women (WTTC, 2013). The tourism literature shows that women working in the tourism industry have the highest concentration in low status, and low paid jobs such as cleaners, cooks and hospitality workers. They are often underpaid, under-utilized, under-educated, and under-represented (Global Report on Women in Tourism, 2010). These working conditions create many challenges for the women. Yet limited research has been carried out to explore these challenges from the perspectives of female workers themselves. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the perceptions of female Jordanian tour guides. Using qualitative interviews, the findings of the paper offer insights into the phenomenology of female tour guides, addressing issues relating to their motivation to enter the field, self-image, colleagues' and family opinion, the challenges of the job and its impact on family life and commitments.*

## Keywords:

*Female tour guides, tourism employment, work-life balance, women, Jordan*

## Introduction

One of the most significant features of the tourism industry (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003) is its capacity for job creation. It is the world's leading employer, generating direct and indirect job opportunities (Tribe & Lewis, 2003). More importantly, the industry has a continuous escalating demand for tourism careers. It contributes one in every eleven jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2016).



In developing countries, tourism contributes a significant income to the country (Ekanayake & Long, 2012) and in countries such as Egypt, Qatar, Lebanon, UAE, Bahrain and Jordan, the tourism industry receives substantial governmental support. Jordan was ranked 9th out of 144 participating countries in the world in terms of the priority given to tourism by the national government and ranked first in the Arab World (Blank & Chiesa, 2013). The tourism sector in Jordan is a major source of employment. The number of people employed in the industry for the year 2015 was 49,096 accounting for 10% of the total labor force in Jordan, with the highest percentage employed in the hospitality sector, and an average increase of 9.6% for the years 2014/2015 (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2015, MOTA).

The tourism industry is a major employer of women, offering various opportunities for them to become self-employed, thus, generating an independent income and at the same time affecting women's lives in their communities.

Tour guiding is one of the tourism careers that appeals to females, though in the popular imagination a tour guide is usually a man. Possibly the nature of the job, - which may be stressful, and requires long hours spent outdoors is what makes it a male-dominated career. The studies identifying the stressful and demanding conditions of a career as a tour guide are limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by exploring the perceptions of Jordanian female tour guides. The study seeks to explore their own views of not only the work, but the broader life-style of the guide. Among the phenomenological issues in tour guiding the study sought to address included the female guide's motivation to become a tour guide, her self-image, her male colleagues and family perceptions, work challenges and the effects on family commitments of the choice of career.

## Literature Review

Employment in the tourism industry is generally characterised as requiring long working-hours and being stressful, periodic, seasonal, enjoying low status and having a great variety of remuneration (Birdir et al., 2003; Kusluvan, 2003; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2003; Tribe & Lewis, 2003, Houge & Kerr, 2013). These features make the exploration of working conditions of careers in tourism worthy of study, yet, little has been written on this subject matter (Magnum, 2009; Mulvaney, O'Neill, Cleveland, & Crouter, 2006).

Mulvaney, O'Neill, Cleveland, & Crouter, (2006) investigated the perceptions of three groups of hospitality workers in relation to the stress associated with working in the hotel industry. The three groups were: new entrants into the hotel industry, hotel managers, and their respective spouses. The study found that all the groups agreed that working in the hotel industry resulted in stress on themselves and on their families. Tiyce, Hing, Cairncross, & Breen (2013) investigated the effect of stress on employees, families and society. Their study showed that employment conditions, shift work, demanding work roles, and emotional labor, among other factors, are key stressors for hospitality employees ( Tiyce, Hing, Cairncross, & Breen, 2013). Another recent study

focused on revealing the relationship between stress and burnout for Turkish hospitality employees. The study undertaken by Koc & Bozkurt, (2017) found that negative expectations of stress shape future negative responses and cause burnout syndrome (Koc & Bozkurt, 2017).

The work conditions of tour guides have until now received little attention from tourism scholars (Melia 2012, Scherle & Kung 2010, McDonnell 2010, Weiler & Ham 2002, Aloudat, 2010, Meged, 2017), although, more than any other occupational group in the tourism industry, tour guides experience difficult conditions as a result of tour cancellations, extended tours, irregular work, delays, long working hours, and irregularity of employment. The tour guiding literature has generally taken an instrumental approach to investigating tour guiding with a managerial and operational focus (Holloway, 1981; Cohen, 1985; Pond, 1993; Weiler & Ham, 2002; Christie & Mason, 2003; Salazar, 2005; Macdonald, 2006; Jennings & Weiler, 2006; Scherle & Nonnenmann, 2008) and very few studies have considered the situational features of tour guiding particularly from the tour guides' perspective (Salazar, 2005; Aloudat, 2010; Ababneh, 2016, Meged, 2017).

An ethnographic study by Salazar (2005) researched the experience of Indonesian tour guides. He observed the cultural lifestyle of a small sample of five local tour guides in Indonesia and found the guides were key performers in the process of "glocalization", that is how the guides present and actively deconstruct local culture for a diverse global market and how this process is transforming local culture.

Aloudat (2010) has developed an understanding of a tour guiding as a career, where the study shed the light on issues related to self-image, job satisfaction, and the socio-cultural impacts of tour guiding on the private life of tour guides (Aloudat, 2010). Another study in the Jordanian tourism context by Ababneh (2016) investigated some of the challenges facing Jordanian guides and found that the relationship between the guides and their employers lacked structure and professionalism. The study revealed that the current legislation disadvantaged the guides in terms of social, medical security, and remuneration structures, (Ababneh, 2016), findings that agree with the findings of Aloudat's (2010) study. A more recent study by Meged (2017) disclosed an understanding of the working life of certified guides. The study showed how the guides craft the scope, tasks, and relations so as to sustain a positive self-image and a meaningful working life (Meged, 2017).

Few studies have been undertaken on the role of women employed in tourism. In particular, academic studies of tour guiding work conditions are extremely limited. More notably, there is a scarcity of reports on the working environment of female tour guides and on the human and social impacts their career has on their lives. This study addresses this lacuna by exploring the working environment of female tour guides and how it reflects on their family lives.

***Employment of women in tourism***

Women occupy two-thirds of the world's tourism workforce. This high participation was explained as being due to the "industry's low entry barriers and flexible working hours" for women (Pritchard, 2014:316).

The tourism industry seems to be a particularly important sector for women with 45% of the workforce being women, and the percentage being higher than in the workforce in general.

The employment of women in the tourism industry varies greatly from country to country (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). It is a culturally defined issue (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). It could be said that the culture and the level of maturity of the tourism industry in a given region are factors that affect the percentage of women employed in the tourism sector. For instance, women account for about half of the workforce in that field in South Africa with their employment largely concentrated in the hotel and restaurant sectors (Page, 1999). A similar percentage is found in the Philippines (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). According to the British Hospitality Association (BHA), approximately 60% of employees in the tourism and hospitality industries are women (Glover & O'Reilly, 2016). Tourism as creator of female employment has a special weight in developing countries as it eliminates poverty among women and in local communities (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). There is an increase in female participation in the tourism sector in countries such as Puerto Rico, Chile and Turkey that may be driven by the growth of the industry in those countries.

Women's involvement in the industry is enhanced by the existence of circumstances such as: "promoting development in economically marginalised regions, encouraging sustainable use of natural resources and enhancing the control of local people over development in their surrounding area". (Ampunuza, et al. 2008:4).

The tourism literature shows that that women working in the tourism industry are often employed in low paid jobs cleaners, waitresses, chambermaids, travel agents, flight attendants, etc. They are often underpaid, under-utilized, under-educated, and under-represented (Global Report on Women in Tourism, 2010). It was found that 90% of women are employed as servants, cleaners, travel agents, and tour guides and tour guiding is among the glamorous jobs for women (Baum, 2013). For instance, 54% of tour guides in the Republic of Korea are females.

Little attention has been given to women as tour guides in the tourism literature. Studies exploring this subject matter are extremely scarce. The single study found by the author was for Zafarghandi (2016) which disclose that there is an increase in the number of women interested in tour guiding job in Iran. They hold a positive perception towards their job and workplace. However, a negative perception was held by Iranian tourists toward their empowerment.

(Baum, 2013). No doubt tour guiding is a challenging and demanding career and the tour guides are expected to function in multiple and overlapping roles which include ambassadorial; managerial; promotional, and mediating roles (Aloudat, 2010). Their world involves a lot of overlapping requirements to be performed in a balanced way. These inseparable roles often cause pressure and worry for tour guides and they may be criticised unfairly. "tour guides may be the most maligned people in the world of travel" (Prakash, Chowdhary, & Sunayana, (2011:66). Accordingly, tour guides have to find a 'workable balance' so as to satisfy different parties including employers, visitors, local communities, and family. In view of this, it is a challenge for a guide to accommodate all of the conflicting demands and keep every party pleased.

The challenges caused by the working conditions of a career as a guide create various conflicts that may affect the female tour guides with family and social responsibilities more. Yet limited research has been carried out to explore such challenges from the perspectives of female guides themselves and addressing issues relating to their work conditions, self image, the perceptions of others of their role, and family obligations.

### ***Women employed in tourism in Jordan***

Women's participation in the local workforce is 16% and in 2014 it had decreased to reach a mere 12.6%. Gender discrimination exists in Jordan both in pay and status. This gap is 35% in the private sector and 44% in the public sector, according to the Ministry of Social Development (Ministry of Social Development, 2016). The Jordanian government has tried to empower women, and for instance, a new electoral law announced in 2016 provides a quota of 15 parliamentary seats out of 130 reserved for women in order to increase their representation

The participation of women in the Jordanian tourism sector is considered low, though this sector offers a variety of job opportunities for women in areas such as hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, and in the field of tour guiding (Samaan, 2001). A third of Jordanian women's representation in the tourism sector is in travel agencies, in airport jobs, and as air hostesses and the lowest representation is in tour guiding and in travel and transportation companies. This lack of participation may be due to the working conditions these jobs entail, requiring mobility and frequent absences from home.

Studies conducted to examine female participation in the tourism sector in Jordan have been extremely rare. One of these few showed that there is under-representation for women in the tourism work force in Jordan and this may be the consequence of cultural barriers and the negative perceptions held by society toward tourism careers as inappropriate for women (Majcher-Teleon & Slimene, 2009). Additionally, the work conditions such as long working hours, the need to work outdoor, and having to deal with visitors of other cultures are not usual for women job compared to more traditional occupations for women (e.g. teaching).

A study by Shakatreh (1992) found that there was a relationship between the level of women's participation in the Jordanian tourism sector and some demographic variables.

Women with a high level of education, single women and those in the 30-34 age range are the groups of women most represented in the tourism sector in Jordan (Shakatreh, 1992). Shdeifat, Mohsen, & Mustafa (2006) found that there should be more involvement by women in the tourism sector, especially in some kinds of services such as tour guiding and as salespeople in tourist shops (Shdeifat, Mohsen, & Mustafa (2006) .

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, females employed in tourism activities work mainly in tourism restaurants and hotels followed by those who work in rent -a car offices. The lowest number of women's participation is in the tour guiding service. The statistics also show a reversal of the representation of women as tour guides over time, with the majority being men (MOTA, 2016). A study by USAID showed that women are entering tourism-related training courses, though few enter the workforce due to cultural reasons (USAID, 2013).

In Jordan tour guiding as an academic major was taught at a certificate level by Yarmouk University between the years 1988-1990 and thereafter by Jordan University from 1991-1997. Tour guiding is now taught at degree level in the Hashemite University. After graduation, students who seek to qualify as registered tour guides have to pass two exams organized by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA) and the Jordan Applied University (JAU). One exam is to test their general knowledge of Jordan's archaeology and another exam is designed to measure the students' capabilities in a foreign language, and principally in English.

Currently, out of the total number of government approved tour guides listed in the Jordan Tour Guide Association (JTGA), there are 46 female guides while 1.077 are male (MOTA, 2016)

## Methodology

In this study, in-depth personal interviews were conducted with twelve female tour guides who shared their experiences and perceptions of the status of female tour guides in Jordan. The use of interview seems to be the most fitting method to provide information about a new subject. The interviews took five months: from 15 March to 22 August to complete. The duration of the interviews varies from 25 minutes to 70 minutes, which is the longest.

The sample size represents 25% of the total population of 46 female tour guides (MOTA, 2016). Additionally, three interviews with male tour guides were conducted to reveal their views towards and experience with their female counterparts. The initial strategy was a purposive sampling. Two interviews were conducted with two female tour guides known to the researcher, and thereafter the snowballing technique was used. Thus, names and telephone numbers of female tour guides were provided by the previously interviewed tour guides. The latter strategy was suitable for finding subjects among women tour guides to participate in the research, given the fact that their number is so

small. All the interviews were recorded after receiving permission from the interviewees, then transcribed and subsequently translated into English.

The main topics of the interviews consisted of the interviewee's personal and professional details (age, education, marital status, and years of experiences, foreign languages spoken) as well as motivation, work conditions, self-image, colleagues' and family opinions, work challenges and their impact on family.

Table 1 represents the main characteristics of the respondents of this study. Twelve interviewees were female and three were men. The age ranged was from 39 to 55. All of the interviewees were married and with the exception of one female tour guide, all had children. All the tour guides interviewed hold a first degree in subjects as varied as English Literature, French Language, and Archaeology. By law, a person who wants to be a tour guide in Jordan should have a first degree and be able to speak at least one foreign language (MOTA, Legislations, 1998).

The interviews were analyzed to identify and refine emergent themes. The data analysis was accomplished using the coding system applied in the grounded theory methodology. The data analysis commenced with open coding to break down the data into smaller analytic pieces (Glaser, 1978). This process allowed the identification of key concepts, their properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The analysis was microscopic in nature, line-by-line and sometimes word-by-word. The aim of this process was to identify potential categories and subcategories. After defining the categories in the open coding process, connections between the categories and subcategories were identified through a process of axial coding. Using open and axial coding a skeleton of the theoretical structure began to emerge. This skeleton was extended and further refined through a higher level selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this stage, higher levels of conceptual categories are identified as core categories. The final process of coding created the narrative through which the story of female tour guides could be told (Gray, 2004). The questions asked included: Are you satisfied with this job?

Would you elaborate on why you're satisfied/dissatisfied?

How was your first year?

How were your conditions after that year?

What changes have made you satisfied/ dissatisfied?

How do you evaluate your professional status?

What are the personal and private effects of tour guiding on your family and social relations?

How would you describe your relation with male colleagues?



## Findings and Discussion

The data obtained from the participants encompassed more than the professional demands and the work conditions involved in working as female tour guides. It included the subjective view of the women tour guides in relation to their family life. The data offered an understanding of how the female tour guides perceived their status in the tourism industry and on the impact of tour guiding on family relations. Specifically, the findings identified issues related to their motivations in becoming a tour guide, their working conditions, the challenges which their career posed for family life, and perceptions of their families and male colleagues of their role.

The findings revealed three key themes, namely: (1) motivation and career choice, (2) working conditions and their effect on family life, and (3) perceptions of self, family, and male colleagues. These are discussed in the following section.

### *Motivation and Career Choice*

Individuals possess many motivations for working and they can be both intrinsic and extrinsic (Hall, 1994; Thomas, 2002). The former are internal factors that influence the person's desire to work in a job and these can include the attributes that relate to an

**Table (1)** *Respondents' main characteristics*

Acronym	Gender	Age	Years of work experience	Education	Marital status
Guide 1	F	55	28	BA in English	Married
Guide2	F	40	5	BA in Translation	Married
Guide 3	F	45	18	BA in Modern Languages	Married
Guide 4	F	50	10	BA in English	Married
Guide 5	F	44	12	BA in English	Married
Guide 6	F	49	15	BA in Translation	Married
Guide 7	F	40	7	BA in Archeology	Married
Guide 8	F	43	21	BA in French	Married
Guide 9	F	38	6	MA in Archeology	Married
Guide 10	F	42	16	MA in Tourism Management	Married
Guide 11	F	40	7	MA in Archeology	Married
Guide 12	F	39	5	BA in English	Married
Guide 13	M	45	23	BA in Modern Languages	Married
Guide 14	M	43	20	BA in English	Married
Guide 15	M	50	23	BA in French	Married

individual's psychological makeup and their personal interests and preferences. The latter represent the external influences on that desire which include pay and other economic benefits, job security, and autonomy.

The findings from this research suggest the female guides initially choose guiding as a career for many reasons, including the promise of a good income, freedom, putting their qualifications to good use, and their fitness as females for the career. Income was one of the chief factors affecting career choice and the comparative advantage in was a major reason for selecting this career. It is difficult to precisely quantify the income of Jordanian tour guides because of their status as freelancers, but an average guide, assuming they work 25 days a month may earn 1000 to 2000 Jordanian Dinar (JOD) (US \$1400- 2800). In comparison, a teacher in Jordan earns between 300 and 400 JOD per month (US \$420-560) (Civil Service Bureau, 2017). These calculations are based on a minimum daily income of 50 JOD for the tour guide. The respondents showed that financial independence and good education have led to increased self-esteem in women working as tour guides.

*... we all work to get money, it is a career with good pay, this career is a good source of income... some female guides are either widows or divorced and they are the breadwinners, just as male tour guides- they both have family responsibilities...*  
(Guide 4, with ten years' experience)

Some of the guides expressed satisfaction with working as a guide because of the freedom of the working conditions. Since they are freelancers, the tour guides are not restricted to working in crowded offices or under the scrutiny of managers.

*...this career is really nice. Once you enter it you can't leave it even if you encounter problems...but sometimes it is difficult to stay working on back-to-back shifts, so high season is a problem for all of us as female or male tour guides, but I like it. You are free from top managers; you are responsible for your own performance*  
(Guide 2 with six years' experience).

The use of foreign language skills were among the reasons that led Guide 7, who holds a BA in translation, to work as a tour guide. She talked about entering the field as follows:

*... actually after my graduation I worked with the UNDP as a translator. My work was to deal with foreign people who came to Jordan and then I started to think about working with tourists so I started to think about being a tour guide as my language skills are good enough to be a good guide. Although I was very shy at the beginning, I challenged myself ... but to be honest with you, it took one year for me to take my decision* (Guide, 7 with seven years' experience)

Another guide, whose subject in university had been French, concurred:

*...I studied the French language... I was looking for a job and worked in hotels in Amman so I saw the tour guides when they came in with groups, and liked the idea and then I turned to tour guiding (Guide 10, female with sixteen years' experience)*

These respondents showed the suitability of tour guiding as a career for women. They perceived themselves as being particularly suited to it, because of their feminine characteristics and tended to be interested in traditionally female occupations. This perception is reflected in one respondent's statement that:

*...Guiding as a career is a job that needs hospitality: it is a smile, emotion, and empathy with others and these are feminine attributes....(Guide 3 with eighteen years' experience.)*

Another tour guide was very firm in her judgment of the suitability of women as tour guides. She pointed out:

*... I am sure that if working conditions were easier, I would say that out of 1000 guides there should be 800 females and 200 males because it is a career of hospitality, it is like hosting your guests and who does this better? ... women ! (Guide 5, with twelve years' experience)*

This suggestion that women might in fact be better than men was also supported by another woman respondent:

*... We have some things in common. We share the same career problems but we can't ignore the fact that there is competition between males and females. I can say that we are not accepted by male guides. My view is that when we work we carry out our job professionally ... (Guide 8, with twenty- one years, experience.)*

The series of reflections above offered an unusual perspective, in suggesting that women's traditional role in Jordanian society makes them more, not less, suited to working as guides who welcome and host tourists, because the two roles, that of a homemaker and hostess and of a guide involve the same womanly qualities and skills.

The female tour guides also consider themselves to have entrepreneurial and management abilities that are, according to them, under-utilized and should also be applied within larger firms and organizations. One female tour guide said:

*...My role now is to train novices. I give courses to new guides... I give everything I have but unfortunately they rarely depend on female tour guides to give training courses to beginners, they are excluded. (Guide 3 with eighteen years' experience)*

***Working conditions and impact on family life***

Working conditions can be defined as the physical environment of work, the time and the facilities available for doing work (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 2010).

The female tour guides talked about the environment of their work in terms of preparations, challenges, and constraints. The interviewees expressed their commitment to being knowledgeable and informative tour guides. Guide 6 showed her how concerned she was to be well- prepared when she meets her group. This entails not only keeping her knowledge up-to-date by reading, but even by traveling abroad to nearby destinations.

Her passion to know more was expressed in the quotation below:

*..... I went to Sinai [in Egypt] because the tourists who come [to Jordan] know Sinai and therefore, I must know it and know the route Moses took. I went once alone and once with a group....I also went to Turkey to Cappadocia. I asked myself why the tourists when they come [to Jordan] compared Cappadocia with Petra and it's rocks and geography so I went there to find out and I saw that its rocks are similar to Petra's rocks... (Guide 6 with fifteen years' experience)*

The previous extracts reveal how the respondents care about the quality of their performance. The extraordinary degree of resourceful commitment to the guiding role reflected in this comment is probably one for which it would be difficult to find any equivalent in respondents from other occupational roles. It also possibly reflects the phenomenon found when talking to employees in the tourism industry, that despite the low status, enjoyment of the work itself remains a magnet that keeps people in this industry, as Burns (2010) found that they like to learn more, meet people, and experience different cultures through their life.

Most of the women were confident that equal opportunities exist within the company they currently work for. They highlighted that jobs are frequently awarded for merit and not based on gender. However, some interviewees were less confident about equal opportunities in the industry. This perception is reflected in one respondent's statement that:

*...we can't ignore that there is competition between males and females. We are not welcomed by male guides, when we work, we do our job properly, we do it very well... because we are a minority, we are not accepted (Guide 4 with ten years' experience.)*

Constraints and challenges were related to the stress caused by the job. The respondents highlighted the job anxiety and the worry they face as tour guides. It is recognized that tour guiding involves a lot of overlapping requirements and roles that should be guides have to find a balance. The respondents specifically concentrated on their efforts to finding workable balance in satisfying their families' needs. Guide 9 specified that

travelling and staying away from home is a point that may cause a dilemma for female tour guides. She said:

*... If a woman wants to be a tour guide and needs to stay three or four nights away from home who will take care of the house and the kids? To be honest it is difficult to be a woman tour guide... (Guide 9 with six years' experience.)*

Guide 5 said that she start working as a guide until her kids had grown up. She said:

*...At the beginning I didn't work. I waited until my kids grew up and then I started to take the work with fewer nights away from home and now my kids are at university ...but I am an organised person. I try to take care of my kids as much as I can... (Guide 5 with twelve years' experience.)*

One of the respondents who currently trains new guides, reflected in an original and idiosyncratic way upon married women working as tour guides. Guide 4 who is married but has no children, said:

*...if I have kids it will be difficult to take care of them, we have lost a lot of very professional female guides because they breast feed their babies and have small kids... (Guide 4 with ten years' experience.)*

Another guide expressed the same idea and said:

*...some married guides quit the job to take care of their child and then they return to the work. (Guide 3 with eighteen years' experience.)*

Guide (5) showed the broader effects of tour guiding on their social network, t going beyond the nuclear family. She said:

*... Our work takes us from the community, our social relations are finished...my work takes me from everything, sometimes I can't see my parents, my children, I can't see them....(Guide 5 with twelve years' experience.)*

The narratives of the respondents showed the consequences of tour guiding and its impact on their social life and commitments. The job affects the social and family networks of the female tour guides. However, they try to achieve a balance a work-life balance with their social commitments at both the macro and micro levels of their familial relations.

### ***Perceptions of self, male colleagues, and family***

Respondents were proud of their work. They felt that they represent Jordanian and the Arab women positively. The interviewees perceive themselves as cultural brokers; they showed their passion in delivering a message about women in the Middle East and about Muslim women in general, especially those guides who wear head scarves. For instance, Guide 2 said:

*"I am very proud of myself, I deliver a message to the tourists about us, I always have an English copy of the holy Quran and always explain a lot of matters regarding our religion to the tourists. As a female tour guide with a Hijab, it is a challenging job for me....(Guide 2 with six years' experience.)*

The professionalism of female tour guides makes them less accepted by their male competitors. A respondent raised the issue of job competitiveness. She suggested that women might in fact be better workers than men. She said:

*...Maybe the male guides don't like us because they know that when we take the work we succeed, we are competitors... (Guide 1, twenty-eight years' experience.)*

Another guide explained her relation with male tour guides as very limited because she thought that she wasn't accepted by them. She described them as backward. She told the researcher:

*I always deal with them [male guides] in a limited way. I don't deal with all of them... (Guide 5 with twelve years' exp.)*

One male guide, with notable candor, admitted that women might be excellent at the job, but still felt that they didn't fit within the industry:

*...From the examples that I see in my work, women who work as tour guides are all successful; none of them fail ... but the career is more suitable for men, because you know that the tour guide is always travelling and sleeping away from home, which is not an easy thing for women to do. Also she can't stay three or four days walking in the desert which needs a high level of physical effort, though some of them [female tour guides] are good walkers... But as for me as a colleague I don't like to have much contact with them... (Guide 14, male, fifteen years experience)*

Guide (13) stated that tour guiding is unsuitable for women because of family commitments. He said:

*...I think that it is difficult for a woman to work as a tour guide. A woman is more emotional and if she faces a problem she may break down and not be able to solve it. If she wants to get married and becomes pregnant this is not suitable for her, but as long as she is not married it is ok... (Guide 13, male with eighteen years experience.)*

Another guide expressed his reservations on the appropriateness of a career as a tour guide for women.

*...who will take care of the house and the kids? I am not in favour of the woman who works as a tour guide... (Guide 15, male, with 6 years' experience.)*



The previous quotations from male and female tour guides revealed that there is a sort of rivalry between the two groups. In the cultural context this may be interpreted as the oriental men assuming that the priority for the woman is to take care of her family and that this sort of job would not be suitable for her. In the tourism context, this antagonism may be seen as a sort of career competition taking into account the effects of seasonality, hence irregular work, therefore, female guides are strong competition for males especially if professionally they achieve the purpose and fulfil the role fittingly in this career.

Interesting observations made by female guides on their perceptions of the tour guide career in relation to Jordanian society. They felt that the community in Jordan does not accept this job for women. The Jordanian society is a conservative one and men are dominant at home. One tour guide reasoned the negative perception held by the community is due to lack of unawareness of the nature of the job. She said:

*...the community doesn't know enough about it in order to judge if this job is suitable for a man or a woman...(Guide 11 with seven years' experience.)*

In a similar way, her colleague, Guide 10, described the perception of society towards a tour guide as follows:

*...They [local people] think that whoever works in tourism is a non-conformist, and will do anything. I have been working in tourism for 16 years now and I still respect the traditions and customs more than (if I had been working) in any other job... (Guide 10 with sixteen years' experience.)*

A female guide also reflected on the poor status the guide's role has in the opinion of local people, but was nevertheless proud of her job.

*I don't care about them, absolutely not, I am very proud of myself ...but I have noticed recently that the community has changed a little bit because the people travel abroad more than before and see guides there so they have begun to respect and appreciate the job... (Guide 3 with eighteen years' experience.)*

Another respondent remarked on the change in society's view saying:

*...they don't like to let their wives or sisters work as guides but recently I can say that there is some acceptance by the community...(Guide 1 with twenty- eight years' experience.)*

In Jordan, and in almost all Arab countries, the woman's prime role is the traditional one which is to take care of her family and to bring up her children. In addition, she can get an education and work, but there are restrictions on the kind of work that is considered suitable (e.g. there are barriers to women being drivers, technicians, construction workers, or to do any work that needs physical effort). Tour guiding is an uncommon

career for Jordanian women. Nevertheless the view of society has started to change and women can be seen work outside of the typically acceptable jobs. This finding is borne out by a new study that investigated the perceptions of students majoring in Tour Guiding. The students perceived that a tour guiding career is highly regarded by their families and the wider community in Jordan (Aloudat, 2017).

## Conclusion

The findings of this paper offer insights into the phenomenon of female tour guides, including issues related to: motivation for becoming a tour guide; self-image; and the perceptions of male colleagues and family members, as well as the impact of guiding on family and social relations. Information about the situation of women as members of the workforce in the tourism industry, specifically as tour guides, has been presented in twelve case studies from Jordanian female tour guides.

The narratives of female tour guides revealed that the profession of tour guiding presents professional and personal challenges in terms of female guide's private lives and it is difficult for them to achieve a work-life balance, especially for those who are married. The findings showed that females are attracted to a career in tour guiding: they regard it as a good, well-paid job. The perceptions of female tour guides were positive about their abilities, skills, and capacity to handle the responsibilities of a tour guide. They perceived themselves as hard workers, reliable guides, and entrepreneurs. However, some cultural barriers were revealed in the negative perceptions held by the community about this career and the fact that it was regarded as an unacceptable job for women in a conservative community such as the Jordan one, therefore the tourism sector remains culturally hostile to female workers. Additionally, male co-workers think that women aren't fit for tour guiding due to the nature of the job that is in conflict with their traditional motherly role. The comments also showed the competition and the threat the female guides would pose to men if accepted on an equal basis into the field. The study adds further literature on the status of women in tour guiding and in the tourism industry, since it hints at factors and perspectives relating to gender roles that have not been explored previously in a Jordanian context and not to any great extent in other places. The study has revealed the possibility that women in the tourism industry may be equipped to step forth as models of competence and to be successful breadwinners, who may thus be able to secure benefits for themselves and their families, rather than only featuring as the exploited victims of inappropriate tourism development (Scheyvens, 2002:122). The findings have implications for the tourism industry, and in particular for employers who need to value female tour guides specifically as professionals and provide more rewards and assist them in achieving a work-life balance.

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# Educators as Change Agents:

## An Interpretation proposal for the Marquis of Pombal Palace, in Oeiras

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### Abstract:

*The authors are both lecturers at Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies and tourist guides in Portugal. One of the visits they usually perform with the students in the context of their lessons is exactly to Pombal palace, an 18<sup>th</sup> century Baroque summer residence located in Oeiras, 10 km away from Lisbon.*

*This paper starts with a theoretical approach on interpretation, followed by an historic presentation of the palace and its main areas, and some suggestions for the interpretation of palace and gardens. Therefore, the article aims at granting propositions that might be applied to assist guides, tour operators and the venue's managers to prepare (complementary) general and theme tours, and host niche markets to fully grasp the cultural resource's charisma and ambience.*

*Weiler and Black (2015) claim that guides resort to many interpretative media, such as drama, storytelling and narratives, in order to create more persuasive tours. All in all, both interpretation narratives and techniques leading to mental time travel are key to the clients' understanding of a site's evolving identity, especially when complemented with the teasing of the visitors' senses as one shall reveal.*

*Conclusions stress that appropriate and effective competence on interpretation techniques allied to professional practice and theoretical background during the education of students are pivotal to shape the future of guided tours.*

### Keywords:

*Heritage Interpretation, Oeiras, Pombal Palace, Tourist Guides, Education.*



## Introduction

The present article is based on the authors' experience on heritage interpretation both as certified guides and lecturers at the Higher Institute of Tourism and Hotel Studies, in Estoril, where they teach tourism information, heritage interpretation and foreign languages. In the last few years both authors performed several visits with graduate students to the Palace of the Marquis of Pombal, in Oeiras, a town located 10 km away from Lisbon.

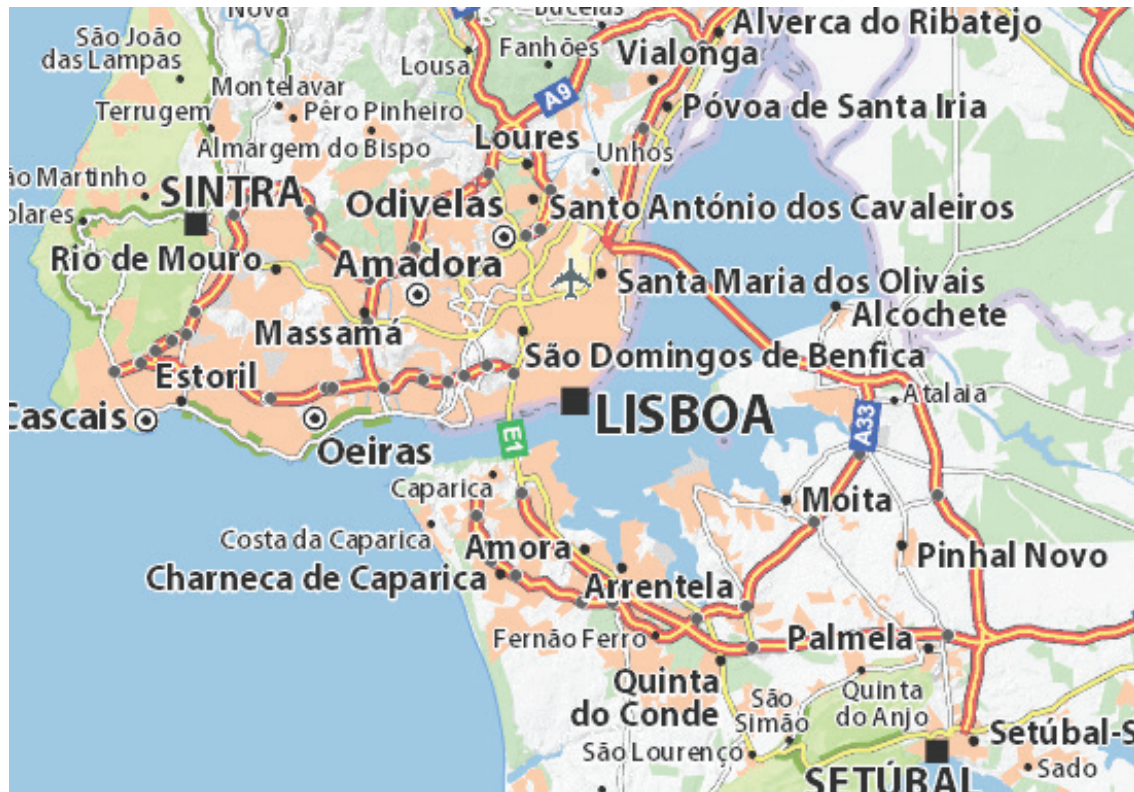
The object of this study is the Palace of the Marquis of Pombal. The goal of the researchers is to propose a creative interpretation of both palace and gardens, and to bring an innovative but professional perspective to cultural heritage interpretation:

1. Innovative because instead of the common guiding speech, the authors propose several interpretation techniques to provide a deep significance to the heritage site, leading to its full comprehension, appreciation and preservation.
2. Professional because well-trained guides are conscious of their interpretation techniques, and of their roles as guides who facilitate the understanding of the site as hosts, ambassadors, leaders, and educators (Pond, 1993).

Other aims can be pointed out such as to convey the 18<sup>th</sup>-century atmosphere of the estate, its everyday life, decorative arts, and cultural *ambience*.

The research method is characterized as bibliographical and documentary. According to Gil (2010), the bibliographic research was elaborated from the search for clarification and discussion based on material already published. Examples include printed materials, legislation, such as books, magazines, newspapers, theses, dissertations, and annals of scientific events. Other types of publications can be added, such as disks and all material made available on the Internet. The above mentioned sources were used for the construction of the theoretical framework, interconnecting them with the practical part of the work. According to Severino (2007), documentary research was performed through the use of several types of documents as data source. Documentary research is the collection of data in primary sources, either written or not, belonging to public archives; private archives of institutions and households, and statistics.

The paper starts with a theoretical approach on interpretation and continues with a section dedicated to a brief description of the venue and its historic, cultural and artistic relevance. The execution of the study was only possible due to the personal and professional experience of the authors. At the end of the second section some theme tours will be suggested.



**Map 1** Greater Lisbon (with international airport) and Oeiras' location.

([https://map.viamichelin.com/map/carte?map=viamichelin&z=10&lat=38.70701&lon=-9.13564&width=550&height=382&format=png&version=latest&layer=background&debug\\_pattern=.\\*](https://map.viamichelin.com/map/carte?map=viamichelin&z=10&lat=38.70701&lon=-9.13564&width=550&height=382&format=png&version=latest&layer=background&debug_pattern=.*))

## Theoretical Approach on Interpretation

A contemporary definition of interpretation can be found in the website of the American National Association for Interpretation (NAI). According to NAI interpretation is “a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and meanings inherent in the resource.” In this definition we find the idea of «mission», as the aim and the reason for interpretation, associated with emotion, knowledge and intellect, which are fundamental to understand heritage and deliver a message about it. Additionally, tourist guides have the important mission of conveying positive messages, changing and improving the tourist behavior in order to contribute to a better and more sustainable world. Tourist guides contribute for the preservation of world heritage and make tourists understand that, if they are visiting a world heritage natural or cultural site, that site is also the tourist's heritage, not only the guide's; the heritage site is also part of the tourist history, therefore they should contribute to its preservation. How? Well, to understand is to appreciate; appreciation leads to protection and care. Arguably, instead of overusing, damaging and despising, tourists may help preserve and promote culture, knowing that a tourist site is also part of their heritage and advertising it through the word-of-mouth process. Moreover, they can also buy something about the monument and contribute to the economic sustainability of the resource and the local community (Brito, 2010).

Interpretation is a form of communication in which data flows between the parts involved. According to Oschell (2009), it can be a one-way, two-way, or circular process involving sender, receiver, medium and message. Interpretation is different from information, because the former is about the «how» whereas the latter is about the «what». In guiding, the most important element of the communicative component is interpretation that must be adjusted to the audience's knowledge of the resource. According to Figueira (2013) we can distinguish four levels of interpretation:

1st level – Initiation

Intended for publics that are not related to the object of visit and with a basic level of complexity (under/up to compulsory schooling)

2nd level – Disclosure

For publics with capacity to accommodate the medium complexity (corresponding to secondary schooling or equivalent)

3rd level – Deepening

Aimed at publics with higher education or equivalent, with a need for a deeper interpretation (corresponding to graduates, postgraduates, and self-educators with skills equivalent to these levels of academic training)

4th level – Research

Which will focus on the scientific and technical publics operating in the domains where the objects of visitation can be contextualized. It takes shape in what can be called technical-scientific visits.

The job of the guide is to finely-tune his/her discourse to the audience, so that the resource meaning can be perfectly understood and the interpretation can be enjoyable. This is actually the distinctive element of the trained tour guide professional quality that can make the practice of tour guiding more enjoyable (Weiler and Black, 2015b). The guide has to speak in such a manner that it will take the tourist to hear him/her, activating communication and causing the interaction between the tourist culture and the local culture: "The guides' cultural brokering role revolved largely around communicating and interpreting local cultural values" (Weiler & Black, 2015a: 367).

Several authors (Ham, 1992; Pastorelli, 2003; Pond, 1993) refer the importance of having a theme as a message that the tourist will take home and also as a thread of the tour, i.e. the link between the several elements that reveals what is unique and relevant. Thus, the audience will be able to easily assimilate the main ideas and messages that the guide conveys, although according to Brochu & Merriman (2002) most people will only remember about five ideas at the end of the tour.

During a tour there are three phases: the welcoming, the intermediate phase and the conclusion of the tour. In the reception phase, the guide warmly greets customers and explains in general the itinerary and how s/he will run the tour. The conclusion is the phase in which the guide bids farewell to customers, compares what they knew to what they know now, invites visitors to return and wishes a good trip and a good stay. The comment is pronounced in the intermediate part of the tour and is regarded as the interpretation of tourism resources, which is delivered by the guide to the audience. Because there are many professionals with different backgrounds, different types of tours and different audiences, there are also many types of comments and themes.

According to Brito (2010), interpretation is personal. Each interpreter has a unique way of interpreting, depending on his/her style, background and passions (which are shown on the enthusiasm and the voice), his/her knowledge and training and the audience that is ahead of him/her. Interpretation has to meet four requirements: be enjoyable (to keep the listener attentive), relevant (significant and related to the listener), organized (with an introduction, a development and a conclusion) and thematic (must have a sequence and a message). In addition, it must be intercultural, meaning that it has to establish a link between the culture of the host and the culture of the tourist. In order to achieve this aim, it includes connections between the object/resource and universal concepts, which are intangible, appealing to the attention and understanding of everyone, regardless of their personal experiences. Examples of intangible concepts are family, death, prejudice, love, friendship, beauty, culture, faith, home, tradition. The best interpretation combines tangible and intangible elements, i.e. it gives meaning to an object.

Thus to interpret is not simply to inform or describe. If a guide says «This is a cork oak» s/he is giving basic information; but if s/he says «the bark of the tree is used for various purposes, such as heat, humidity and vibrations insulation and manufacturing stoppers» s/he is interpreting (Brito, 2010). The information must not only be interpreted but also centered in the receiver, i.e. it must be different according to the audience. Therefore, for an American audience the idea that «NASA uses Portuguese cork as insulation in spaceships» should be added to the discourse. The advantage is that the public feel involved in some way or identified with the resource, which becomes more familiar, thus creating a link with the country. In this manner, communication is improved and interpretation becomes intercultural, because a cultural link is established between the culture of the host and the one of the guest reducing uncertainty. The use of intercultural interpretation techniques implies proficiency - a deep awareness and understanding of the tourist culture (Brito, 2010).

According to Weiler and Black "Many of the techniques used by guides to foster understanding and appreciation are well-known interpretive techniques such as non-verbal communication, asking questions, making use of anecdotes, examples, analogies and personal references, and using props (e.g. artefacts and photos from the past)" (Weiler and Black, 2015a: 367). In heritage interpretation we can consider rhetoric techniques and strategies. They are used by guides with three specific aims: to convince, delight

and educate visitors. Rethoric techniques are only produced through the guides' oral communication, whereas interpretation strategies also include an action, body language and non-verbal communication.

As far as discourse techniques are concerned we may distinguish *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*. *Logos* appeals to reason and logic and consists on narratives based on facts, numbers, dates and logical explanations as well as in the use of paradox, humour and irony. It also includes the use of questions. Some examples frequently used in guiding: «Do not forget this date - 1755. At the end of the tour, anyone who doesn't remember this date will have to do the whole tour again!»

*Pathos* is related to feelings, emotions and passion. It is defined by the use of superlatives, hyperboles and colourful descriptions, such as «King John V had one of the three richest courts in Europe.» The five senses can be used by guides to tell stories, provoke the tourists and illustrate the sites. For instance: «Belém custard tartlets are topped with cinnamon powder, a spice that came to Lisbon with the 16<sup>th</sup> century discoveries? Hum... they are delicious.» Storytelling is another technique, which aims at suggesting rather than saying/disclosing. Stories cause strong feelings in the people, because they are a way of letting them imagine situations and characters as they like, besides being a way of feeling different experiences, creating a unique opportunity to enrich a tour. If storytelling is used together with drama it becomes a discourse technique and a strategy at the same time.

*Ethos* appeals to ethics and morals, values, norms and consciousness. Appealing to ethos causes more attention and participation in the tour. For instance: «In Portugal we always eat with fork and knife.»

The use of non-verbal communication, props and drama are the main interpretation strategies. Non-verbal communication techniques such as smiling, friendly body language and eye-contact are often used to get the attention of the audience (Weiler and Black, 2015b). Nevertheless, they can have different meanings according to the culture of the people: A stare can be understood as evidence of interest, but in another context it can mean threat, provocation.

Props are rarely used by most guides, but they are a very useful strategy to explain what cannot be seen or illustrate how a certain space or object was/will be in a different time. The most common props are maps, drawings, schemes, postcards, historical photographs, artefacts and crafts. Eco and nature tour guides often use examples of plants and natural materials during their tours, as well as mirrors to reflect sunlight and use it as a natural focus, pocket flashlights, binoculars and lenses. Other props are books, music and instruments.

Drama is created by the use of illustrative costumes, but sometimes a peculiar and symbolic object like a hat or a pair of glasses can be enough to illustrate a time or exemplify



a character, cultural practices and traditions. Many guides change their voice when they are telling a story as a simple way of dramatizing, while some tour operators hire volunteers or professional actors to perform a story or event. They sometimes perform a character themselves, or sometimes prefer to tell a story in the third person.



**Figure 1:** *The elegant stairway that leads into Oeiras' palace. (Authors' collection)*

## The Marquis of Pombal Palace in Oeiras

### *Carvalho e Melo's Life & Estate*

Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo was the 1<sup>st</sup> Count of Oeiras and Marquis of Pombal. The reforms of Joseph I's Secretary of State changed Portugal's economic, intellectual and administrative features, while Lisbon (then capital of empire) rose from the ashes after the 1755 earthquake. Although unappreciated by the late King John V, Carvalho e Melo's negotiating skills led him as ambassador to England and Austria, there getting acquainted with the latest ideals of the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment periods.

While in Vienna he married his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife and may have become a Free Mason. After his return to Lisbon, what was still a majorat owned by his family was to become a lavish estate with two sections. Its accomplishment was only possible after a pact forever recalled in the current building's Agreement Hall's ceiling where one admires the brothers who strove to fulfil the dream; the canvas' pictorial elements also reveal hints of their links to Free Masonry (Gonçalves, 2005). In the early 1750s Oeiras majorat was a



discreet farm set between the royal road to Lisbon and the coastline, with the Palace's initial section preserving its Baroque glazed tiles of battle scenes on the skirting boards of the Grand Hall. The room's current designation was granted after the building's enlargement, when the ceiling's stuccoed medallion with an allegory to Bounty (and Oeiras' lands) was added.



**Figure 2:** A ceiling embellished by the brothers' pact. (Authors' collection)

Had it not been for the 1<sup>st</sup> November 1755 earthquake that reduced Lisbon to ashes, and one would not be writing about Carvalho e Melo and his Oeiras' estate. The then Minister of Foreign Affairs's prompt response to the catastrophe contrasted with the Sovereign's, and soon Carvalho e Melo was to overpower Joseph I, which actually worked as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the country was to be swept away by winds of (political, economic, scientific, social and intellectual) change; on the other, the timeless *status quo* of the aristocratic families was to be disturbed by Carvalho e Melo's arrogance (the Minister was but an esquire until 1759). Educated in Classical and contemporary authors alike, the depiction of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*' episodes might be found across Oeiras' Palace in areas like the Music Room's ceiling, the garden's cascades and tiled stairways.



**Figure 3:** *Orpheus playing the lyre that enchanted all creatures. (Authors' collection)*

His cosmopolitan taste explains the naming of the Hungarian Karl Mardel as the architect for the estate that articulated productive and leisure areas, besides taking advantage of flowing brook and viewpoints that once allowed force lines, linking Sintra and Arrábida mountains. As Dias (1993) sustains, Mardel “was inspired by the landscapes of Vaux le Viconte and Versailles (...) and the philosophies of André Le Nôtre – grand architect of Louis XIV (...). Naturally Oeiras is smaller” (19). Other important artists included the Italian stucco master Giovanni Grossi, and the Portuguese (sculptor) Machado de Castro and (painter) André Gonçalves. Grossi’s stuccoes are everywhere: from the chapel to the Grand Hall, from intimate leisure spots like the Music Room (where lessons for the children and *soirées* for the family were organised) to Carvalho e Melo’s study (whose ceiling reveals Mercury flying over a building site, an allusion to Lisbon’s reconstruction works, but the guide might recall the Minister’s fine lacquered desk). Grossi’s artistry meets Castro’s skills in the Dining Hall, where the stuccoed groin vault is embellished with Carrara marble statues, besides Rococo glazed tiles with scenes of 18<sup>th</sup>-century indoor and outdoor meals. There the guide might lead visitors to find the pannel were coffee and chocolate are being served, or the stucco *cartouche* where a servant wearing a turban waits on a lady.

The estate was a model of efficiency in its articulation between upper and lower areas (meaning, productive and leisure sections), the blending of the latest building and decorative techniques, Classical references found everywhere, and effectiveness of the brothers that in two decades developed the family status (Pinto, 2006).

Joseph I’s death, the growing animosity between Carvalho e Melo and the aristocracy that he persecuted, and young Mary I’s unstable mental condition sealed the Minister’s





**Figure 4:** Tiles depicting 18th-century exotic beverages served in the Dining Hall. (Authors' collection)

fate. The already known as Marquis of Pombal was sent into exile to the namesake territory in central Portugal, but in the 1830s the victory of liberal principles would praise his reforms. By the early-20<sup>th</sup> century his offspring sold Oeiras' estate to Artur Brandão, a businessman who split it into three sections before selling them. For decades the silhouette of the mighty palace resembled a ghost of Ages past in the quiet panorama of the downtown area, until the early-21<sup>st</sup> century. Decades of mismanagement took its toll on palace and gardens, hence the continuous renovation works at hand, especially considering the "many tile panels from different periods of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and of great artistic and historical quality that presented several frailties and pathologies (...). Therefore, to preserve (...) is to carefully save and maintain in good condition our heritage". (Fernandes, 2016: 41)

### **Theme Tours**

Despite being open to the public, the venue now mostly receives spontaneous and national visitors. However, the proper planning of hosting, promotional and interpretative strategies could be accomplished, not only to revive its faded charisma, but also to assist in the municipal seat's economic boost in these days of economic backlash. Among other possibilities, considering nationalities, age groups, and cultural awareness, one shall present a few possible theme tours to interpret this venue:

1. Carvalho e Melo: National Reformer & Regional Landowner;
2. The 18th century Cultural and Economic Reality;
3. Meeting Ovid in Oeiras' Pombal Palace;
4. Wine & Dine with the Marquis of Pombal;
5. A ghost story in the Palace: children's tour.

**Table 1:** *Theme tours in Oeiras' Palace and tourist guides' interpretation*

The guided tour	The interpretation
1) Carvalho e Melo: National Reformer & Regional Landowner	1. Comparisons, props and drama
2) The 18th century Cultural and Economic Reality;	2. Silent tour with non-verbal and sign language followed by questions and remarks.
3) Meeting Ovid in Oeiras' Pombal Palace;	3. Storytelling
4) Wine & Dine with the Marquis of Pombal;	4. Five senses, <i>ethos</i>
5) A ghost story in the Palace: children's tour.	5. Storytelling, humour and emotions

Source: authors

The 1<sup>st</sup> proposition targets anyone who wishes to know both venue and its owner, on a basic approach to timeline and character that might be available for groups previously booked and for random visitors. The latter simply have to wait for the hour scheduled for the visit to begin, and its definition by the equipment's managers should take into account the timetable of trains reaching Oeiras' station. Visitors' might be both seduced and teased with the guide resorting to props, body language, and irony.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> suggestion broadens the visitors' Knowledge on the 18<sup>th</sup> century lifestyle by providing references to Portugal's and other European courts' trends, and recalling travel writing reports of then foreign visitors. Historic and artistic episodes linked to the niche market that booked this tour in advance should be conveyed, thus strengthening the intercultural role of the guide as a «go-between», who might use comparisons, blended with the narrative and questions asked to the clients.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> idea might be booked by adults, children, or families, with the guided tour being led by the Classical author, or one of his own characters. Storytelling, eye-contact, body language and (vocal) emotion should be applied.

These suggestions would also include, not only the already-common children's birthday parties on the weekends, but once a month in the Summer (e.g. on a Wednesday at 9 PM) there could be telescopes (of parents and teenagers) set in the gardens. The latter proposition would firstly encompass the guide's presentation of Mardel's force lines and key elements scattered across the landscape at Sunset, and as night falls astronomy lessons conducted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Planetarium's scientists might happen; the fee charged on this activity should include an evening snack of grape juice and Oeiras' biscuits. Both activities should have items



sold at the palace's souvenir shop from cloth dolls to miniature tea sets, and junior astronomy kits.



**Figure 5:** *One of the authors'/Guides near the Classical Poets' Cascade. (Authors' collection)*



**Figure 6:** *Another author/Guide interpreting the venue under mystical lenses. (Authors' collection)*

## Final Remarks

When in 1777 Carvalho e Melo fell from grace after Joseph I's death, his enemies sought to influence Queen Mary I's unbalanced judgement to make sure he was to be erased from History records. Carved in stone, Oeiras' Pombal Palace is the lasting vestige of its remarkable owner's vision and travels. Set halfway between the capital city, Cascais and Sintra, and served by a fine network of roads and motorways, Oeiras' "Sleeping Beauty" awaits. All being well, International Tourism might arrive through efficiency and promotion. It takes more than the organisation of random events to firm the image of a tourist asset such as this, which is why the paper's authors resorted to their scientific and technical expertise as certified tourist guides and teachers to propose a few theme tours that might revitalise both venue and downtown, by fostering a sense of partnership between the community and the venue's managers and stakeholders.

Certified tourist guides are agents of change when presenting novelties like this cultural equipment to Tourism students, and these theoretical theme tours to the venue's official managers. But they are also adaptable agents when interpreting such an outstanding heritage in many possible ways and still succeeding in conveying the right message, thus keeping the lines of intercultural communication open. As Pond (1993) sustains,

*Powerful interpreters who can capture the essence of a place, person, or idea and infuse it in others abound in many fields. (...) Like master artisans, seasoned guides conduct themselves with seemingly little effort and a palpable sense of joy, so that anyone observing them feels drawn to the place, the experience, and the guide themselves. (p.138)*

Alongside an appealing menu of *a la carte* theme tours available, venues like this object of study require a pragmatic management strategy and marketing plan. As examples of the former the availability of proper parking lots, traffic control, street signs, toilets, inclusive tours, and certified guides are mandatory. On the latter, elements like official website and booklets/guides in languages like Portuguese, English and Spanish, the hosting of Tour Operators' and Portugal's Tourist Authority's (*Turismo de Portugal*) collaborators invited to enjoy two or three of the tours listed, invitations directed to the tourist and/or cultural departments of diplomatic delegations set in Lisbon, and the creation of a package combining train ride, guided theme tour and meal (whether lunch or an afternoon snack) should be implemented. The latter could offer as options an afternoon visit to *Casal da Manteiga* where the Carcavelos wine is produced (and tasted), or to Oeiras' historic centre and key 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century landmarks.

In recent years Portugal became an appealing destination to international flows as statistics and awards reveal. On the other hand, scholars like Bramwell (2004) claim "Alternative' [tourist] products are often considered better adapted to the changing tastes of consumers, who, it is suggested, are increasingly looking for more specialist and customised holiday experiences" (p.3). The authors' propositions offered to the future management of Oeiras' Pombal Palace might be applied in any other monu-



ment, museum, or cultural resource where guided tours can be conducted by certified professionals. One focused in Oeiras Palace's uniqueness, and the same spirit should lead similar cultural and promotional initiatives aiming at interpreting heritage to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century visitor. As Salazar (2010) defends, in these days of globalised operations and services, it is the local distinctiveness of an attraction that succeeds in the growing competitive reality of tourist destinations.

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# The Role of Tour Guides in Opening the Eyes of Tourists During a Slum Experience

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## Abstract:

*Slum tourism, which has always been a matter of debate although it has become one of the most rapidly-growing types of tourism after 2000s, has been analyzed in this study. While slum tourism is supported due to its potential to lead the middle and upper class to help poor population in the suburbs through touristic purchasing activities, it is also criticized by others since it is an exploitative, voyeuristic, and imperialist approach to human life. This study has been conducted to reveal the thoughts of people on “slum experience”, who experienced slum tourism activities in Delhi, India, a popular activity especially among Western tourists, and the role of tour guides in formation of those opinions. In line with the purpose of the study, the tourist comments on slum tourism on Trip Advisor have been reviewed and descriptive analysis has been carried out on these comments. Thus, the thoughts of people, who had “a real slum experience” in Delhi, where poverty became a personal/private show, and the role of tour guides in formation of those opinions have been revealed. In consequence of the analysis, it is observed that especially the regional tour guides had a significant role on formation of thoughts and although many tourists have concerns about visiting this region, tour guides are important in making them believe that ‘they are doing something good’ by visiting this region and participating in slum tourism.*

## Keywords:

*Slum tourism experience, tour guides roles, voyeurism, Delhi.*

## Introduction

The word ‘slumming’ was first registered by the Oxford Dictionary in 1884, coinciding with a rising Victorian preoccupation that mixed philanthropy, social paranoia, and voyeuristic titillation. Respectable middle-class Londoners would visit seedy neighborhoods such as Whitechapel or Shoreditch, while wealthy New Yorkers roamed the Bowery and the

Lower East Side to see “how the other half lives”. By the turn of the century, this tourist practice had begun to decline (Saint-Upéry, 2010). However, in the mid-1990s, slum tourism became popular again in globalized cities of developing countries. If one visits Jakarta, Johannesburg, Mumbai, or Rio de Janeiro, one will most likely book a fairly decent hotel, eat well, immerse him or herself in the country’s culture for a little while and come back home full of pleasant memories. But some visitors – mostly westerners visiting developing countries – will want to have an “edgier”, “more challenging”, more “real” experience of a city. For that, they will go on so-called slum tours, a.k.a. tours of the poorest, most deprived areas of a town, armed with cameras, insatiable curiosity, and fairly good intentions (Salter, 2012). Visiting the most disadvantageous parts of these towns is the most typical characteristic of this new type of tourism. Many of these guided tours are marketed by professional companies. Primary target group of these tours are international tourists (Rolfes, 2010, p. 421). Through these slum tours, poverty and prosperity, unhappiness and entertainment get together in an interesting way and become an object of touristic consumption.

Although slum tourism is referred to as a new type of tourism in many studies, this experience dates to 19th century. Today, when we take a look at slum tourism, it could be discussed within the frame of the tradition of *slumming* in Victorian Era. Koven (2006, p.1) shows that in Victorian London during the 1890s, “slumming” was already a popular activity for the English upper class. By visiting the urban poor in London’s metropolitan slums, firsthand experience was gained in order to be in a position to speak about social problems. Districts such as Whitechapel and Shoreditch were even represented in the important Baedeker travel guide. The center of this approach is the consideration that especially a towns’ poor, other or dark side is set at the center of leisure or touristic activities. Their assessment is that this again expresses the desired experience of reality and authenticity (Rolfes, 2010, p.422).

Just like the relationship between the middle class or the upper-middle class and the poor in agricultural-origin or liberal societies is maintained by developing a principle of philanthropy, the same principle is brought into view while marketing these tour programs. Staying, eating, and purchasing souvenirs from these slum neighborhoods mean contributing to their lives. They even stereotyped these tours as a way of personal development, where “desperate and downtrodden” lives can be openly watched. While the disputes about slum tourism still continue, it particularly attracts Western tourists in certain regions of the world. Considering the most criticized aspects of slum tours, it could be concluded that these criticisms mostly focus on the following problems. The people are turned into subjects of observation as if they are animals in a zoo. The visitors keep their communications with the local residents at minimum levels and they are not necessarily interested in the meaning of interaction. The local residents receive the lowest share from the income, the travel agencies fill their pockets and fail to accomplish overly-bragged safeguarding the public interest, using poverty to make more money through these tours instead of thinking over finding a solution for poverty, violating the privacy of people by turning their daily lives into a matter of amusement.

Even though the residents appear as the hosts, they are paid very low, and they are even exploited, tarnishing the image of a country by advertising the slums, and these tours turn poverty into an element of exoticism (Tunca, 2011).

The slum tours reviewed in this study are: Slum Walks in Delhi, Private Slum Walks in Delhi, Ve Slum and Art Walk in Delhi. On Slum Walk, a local guide will take anybody through the maze of alleyways of guide's neighborhood in one of Delhi's largest slums. The tourists complete their tours within two hours and they particularly visit the children, women, and local schools. These tours provide the tourists with the opportunity to experience the 'other side' of Delhi. In Private Slum Walks, a group of less than 5 people, or a single person is taken from a place of their choice, and taken to the tour. Lastly, Slum and Art Walk was introduced to promote different artists as well as musical performances of their traditional singers and dancers, which also have performed at festivals in the United States and Europe. Watching these was also the favorite leisure time activity for the kings and queens of the past and these songs and dances are still famous all over the world. On this walk they especially welcome guests from cultural and art departments and those who are interested in seeing the artistic side of India. This walk helps them to provide jobs for the local artists so that they can feed and house their families. On this walk tourists will see singers, dancers, magicians, and puppeteers. During the walk many opportunities will come to see the products made by local people, which tourists can buy directly from the local people if they wish (<http://peteindia.webs.com/slum-walks-in-delhi>).

## Slum Tourism and Tour Guides

### *Slum Tourism*

Slum tourism emerged in mid-1990s in Rio de Janeiro and spread across seven major metropolises on four continents. The fact that these tours have a unique place among traditional cultural tours, and that they are frequently talked about in mass media had a major influence on this rapid spread of slum tours. Many studies were carried out since the first article published in New York Times in 2008 about slum tourism, and these studies continue bidirectionally. First, many of these slum tours are organized by profit-oriented companies and the money never goes to people living in the ghetto. Second, the lives of slum residents are displayed to the Western tourists in an insulting way. Consequently, these slum tours are often referred to as exploitative, voyeuristic, and imperialist. (Ma, 2010, p.3-4).

Others again call tours through disadvantaged urban areas 'slumming' or 'negative sightseeing' (Rolfes, 2010, p.2) references referring to the critical and doubtful impact of the valorization and marketing of informal or marginal settlements in order to attract tourists. Koven (2004, p.9) defines slumming as "visitation of slums, especially for charitable purposes", a definition provided by the Oxford English Dictionary. Multiple terms are used to describe tours through impoverished areas which are marketed by

tour operators as “authentic”, “off the beaten path” and including “interactive features” highlighting the opportunity of exchange with locals. Denominations mostly used are poverty tourism and poorism, slum tourism, slumming and negative sightseeing, reality tours and social tours, sometimes even pity tourism, justice, political and revolutionary tourism (Rolfes et al., 2009, p.11). In general, while the terms ‘poverty tourism’ are used by scholars and ‘poorism’ by journalists, the term slum tourism is rarely used in the scientific literature and only recently did Hannam and Diekmann refer to Mumbai slum tours as slum tourism calling it the most present form of everyday cultural tourism (Hannam and Diekmann, 2010). However, some travel websites for India and Africa start to employ the term ‘slum tourism’ when referring to tours through Dharavi, Kibera and Soweto. The term poorism has been defined online as “a form of travel, originating as a term in the year 2000 to describe tours of some of the poorest and most economically deprived areas of the world. (Klepsch, 2010).

Rolfes (2010) states that the offer in slum tourism is mostly based on the interest of international tourists with only few domestic tourists being interested in seeing and visiting poor areas of their own country. Rolfes (2010, p. 3) claims that tourists are mainly motivated to see poverty but they are also motivated to experience the diversity and complexity of a host country, the authentic culture of a country and the real living conditions of poor people. Culture is perceived as a “mode of observation for the observance of differences as cultural differences” (Rolfes et al. 2009, p. 19) which is thus perceived as “a social construct of the observer” (Rolfes et al., 2009, p.11). Selinger and Outtersson (2009) affirm that tourists want to get in touch with community, homes, and dignity amidst poverty (Klepsch 2010).

Hannam and Diekmann (2010) argue that slum tourism can nevertheless be potentially damaging for both visitors and residents if it happens on a superficial, commodified, and non-mutual basis. Rolfes (2010) claims that there is only one professional and regular slum tourism operator in Mumbai, which is Reality Tours. Thus, Rolfes’ (2010) analysis of tour operations in Mumbai is based on one tour operating business and might be too one-sided (Klepsch, 2010). He is one of the first to have mentioned the questionable morality that is involved once tourists come to see poor people in Third World countries already assuming the participative “voyeuristic consumption of poverty” (Hutnyk, 1996, p.11) because the poor are always and unavoidably the subject of tours in India, whether consciously or subconsciously.

### ***Tour Guides***

Tour guides accompany the visitors throughout their tours, facilitate their trips, make sure that the visitors spend a trouble-free and enjoyable vacation, and provide accurate information about the places visited. Although tour guides offer these services, while they determine the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the visitors, they also ensure that the visitors form opinions about the residents and the region by acting as a role model with their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. As is well-known, a tour guide is the most significant connection between a destination and the participants of

the tour, and has a major influence on overall impression and satisfaction of the visitors with their services. The presentation of the tour guide may either fit the purpose of the tour or disturb the harmony of the tour.

When considered in terms of slum experience, the perspectives of life of the participants “change positively after this experience carried out in a quite disturbing misery thanks to the presentation of the tour guide. According to Dahles (2002, p. 785), the tour guides are informative, fountains of knowledge, teachers, advertisers, motivators, ambassadors, missionaries, animators or analysts, leaders, and chiefs of the group. The tour guides are not only mere translators of a couple of sentences, they are the people, who make sure that the tourists experience new cultures, and see, hear, smell, taste and feel other cultures.

According to many researchers, the performance of the tour guide influences the experiences of the tourists fundamentally. For example, the tour guides may have an influence on where the tourists would go, what they would deal with, and in what way they are exposed to the culture of the destination. In addition, the foreign tourist groups also depend on translations of tour guides. Tour guides should redress the intercultural balance, and should act as a mediator in the interaction between the social structure of the hosting society and the group. Therefore, tour groups traveling to different regions broadly experience these regions – structured and interpreted by the tour guides – thanks to their tour guides (Yu et al., 2001, p. 76–77).

## Methodology

In general, slum tours are carried out in company with a tour guide for three hours on foot or by car. Many travel agencies provide an opportunity for the tourists to enter into the workplaces or homes of the slum residents together with an English-speaking tour guide, and make sure that the tourists experience the slum life. Because of language barriers, the tourists cannot communicate directly with the slum residents, and they either do not communicate with the residents or communicate through the medium of a tour guide (Bob, 2010, p. 4).

This study is about regional tour guides, who work for an organization company named Providing Education to Everyone that conducts voluntary works for people living in slum areas in New Delhi. The comments on Tripadvisor.com shows that there are three slum tour guides working for this company, which has been in around since 2012. The names of the guides are given in some comments (Laxmi, Togi, Jhon), but names of the tour guides are not given in many other comments. Thus, the real number of tour guides in slum areas is unknown. In this study, a qualitative research method was adopted to investigate the roles of tour guides in tourists’ perceptions of slum tours as eye-opening experiences in the Delhi, India. Thus, the roles of tour guides in making tourists believe that they are “doing something good” during these slum tours, which are severely criticized in many previous scientific studies, will be revealed in the light of symbolic interactionism theory.



Three different methods are recommended in qualitative data analysis: The first method is to present data to the readers by adopting a descriptive approach, by adhering to the original form of the data obtained as much as possible, and by directly quoting from the statements of the participating individuals, when necessary; the data and the results are quite similar with each other in terms of narration. For instance, long citations from the interviews can be deduced, and the observation notes can be described analogously with their original form. The second method is to carry out a “systematic analysis” to reach some causative and explanatory conclusions comprising the first approach. The data are presented in a descriptive manner and some themes and the relations between these themes are determined. In this approach, the researcher takes data analysis a step further and provides some additional analysis that may help the reader. In the third method, the researcher selects the first or the second approaches as a baseline, and includes his/her own interpretations in data analysis process (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013, p. 253).

In this study, the tourists’ comments on slum tourism on Trip Advisor have been reviewed and content analysis (on Maxqda 12) has been carried out on these comments. These are written between 07.2012 and 02.2017 on Tripadvisor.com under Slum Walks in Delhi title. There are 255 tourist comments (coded as C1 – C255) about slum experiences on Tripadvisor. 126 of them are directly related to slum guides. Thus, tour guides’ roles in tourists’ understanding and interpretation of the region are revealed. Within the scope of this research, the comments of 126 tourists were evaluated through descriptive analysis. Firstly, each comment has been coded and categorized, and then thematized separately. Thereafter, the themes related to “eye-opening experience” and “tour guides” have been reviewed.

## Findings

A tour guide is the most significant connection between a destination and the participants of the tour, and has a major influence on overall impression and satisfaction of the visitors with their services. The presentation of the tour guide may either fit the purpose of the tour or disturb the harmony of the tour. The performances of the tour guides may influence the image of their travel agency, customer loyalty, or word-of-mouth communication (Wong and Wang, 2009, p.249). As it is seen in slum tours in Delhi, India, almost half of the comments made on Tripadvisor.com refer to the tour guides offering service in that region, and thus, the roles of tour guides in tourists’ understanding and interpretation of the destination are revealed. In line with the purpose of this study, the comments, which reveal the eye-opening roles of the tour guides in slum experience, and which cover the perceptions of the tourists regarding their slum experiences will be included. The findings are given in the following section.

## Eye-Opening Roles of Tour Guides

In the following section, the comments about the influence of tour guides on the eye-opening roles in the slum experience and tourists' perceptions of their slum experiences will be discussed in line with the purpose of this study. Almost half of the comments about slum experience include opinions directly about the tour guide. The comments about the tour guides are categorized in the following table. The comments are categorized as follows: the personal characteristics of the tour guides, their informative roles, the fact that they are locals, and that they are respected/well-liked/well-known by the local residents, their language skills, and voluntary work. These categories show the importance of tour guides in tourists' perception of slum experience as an inspirational and eye-opening experience, rather than an exploitative and voyeuristic approach to human life.

**Table 1:** Themes regarding the Eye-opening Role of Tour Guides in Slum Experience

Themes	Recurrence Frequency
Good Personal Characteristics	32
Effective Information	35
Being one of the local people	11
Admired/Well Respected/Well Known by Locals	26
Good Language Skills	17
Working voluntary for his/her community	20

### *Good personal characteristics*

When the comments on Tripadvisor.com are analyzed, it is observed that the positive personal characteristics of the tour guides have significant effects in tourists' interpretation of the area and their experience. The tourists described the tour guides as good people, friendly, admirable, great, lovely, helpful, heartwarming, wonderful, incredible, superwoman, mediator, and more. Some of these comments are given below:

**(C1)** *The slum walk with Pete India is a really eye opening experience. Laxmi is a fantastic guide - so friendly and warm and ready to answer any questions...*

**(C9)** *It is a very insightful day, Laxmi, the tour guide, is one of our favorite people we have ever met!*

**(C10)** *Laxmi was our guide and she is truly amazing. She has such a big heart and helps so many people.*

**(C12)** *A great way to see the real India and experience the different culture and way of life. Laxmi was an amazing guide, very informative and helpful.*

**(C13)** *Eye-opening and safe. I would recommend to everyone. The guide was wonderfully warm and engaging.*

**(C17)** *Excellent tour, but not for the faint hearted. Laxmi our tour guide was first class, she*

*was so in touch with the community, known by everyone.*

*(C26) It puts a different perspective of your life when you walk through this. My tour guide was wonderful.*

*(C38) Laxmi our guide was very nice and kind and was well respected by the community.*

*(C39) It could have felt voyeuristic but with Laxmi it was all very friendly and natural... Our three hours with Laxmi left a deep impression.*

*(C42) I really appreciated having a local person take us around - she was helpful, informative, kind and caring and shared the details of the particular slum.*

### **Effective information**

The informative traits of the tour guides are accentuated in studies about tour guides. Considering the fact that the tour guides are the most significant connection between a destination and the tourists, it is observed that the impressions about the local people and the area are built by the information provided by the tour guides. When the comments of the tourists within the scope of this research are reviewed, this fact would be revealed once more. Some of these comments are as follows:

*(C8) I would highly recommend this tour - it would be impossible to see this area without going with a guide. One of our guides lived in the area, so we were able to ask her questions about life in the colony.*

*(C9) ...It is a very insightful day, Laxmi has lots of knowledge and is truly amazing...*

*(C12) ...A great way to see the real India and experience the different culture and way of life. Laxmi was an amazing guide, very informative...*

*(C63) ...Lakshmi told us about the work she does in education and healthcare in the slums...*

*(C69) ...I was genuinely concerned about whether I was being voyeuristic... Laxmi took us through the slums, talking to us about the history, the many challenges and also the children. We were met by politeness wherever we went and I genuinely learnt so much about myself, India and the superwomen of India embodied by Laxmi...*

*(C76) ...Lakshmi, our guide, who lives in this area was very knowledgeable and provided us with information regarding the different areas within the slum... Lakshmi was a terrific guide...*

*(C81) ...She is an awesome guide, giving lots of interesting information about the different slums...*

*(C86) ...This tour was one of my highlights during my stay in Delhi and surely a unique experience. My guide Lakshmi showed me the different quarters within this slum and provided me detailed information...*

*(C91) ...Very engaging and shared a lot of information...*

### **Being one of the local people**

The fact that the tour guides are a part of the local people and the poverty experienced by tourists has an influence on the positive perception of the experience. It is therefore understood that the information provided by the tour guide becomes more persuasive and supports the idea of "feeling like helping local people" by participating in these tours.

*(C6) Our tour guide knew almost everybody and introduced us to loads of people. She provided a clear insight to why things are the way they were and how people try to get by.*

*(C8) One of our guides lived in the area, so we were able to ask her questions about life in the colony.*

*(C17) Excellent tour, but not for the faint hearted. Laxmi our tour guide was first class, she was so in touch with the community, known by everyone.*

*(C42) I really appreciated having a local person take us around - she was helpful, informative, kind and caring and shared the details of the particular slum.*

*(C43) ...Our guide was a social worker who has lived there for many decades... As such, we didn't feel as though we were being led by a for hire guide simply "touring the slum"...*

*(C54) Our guide herself lives in the slum & works there as a health visitor - and it is clear to see how well liked & respected she is by other slum residents...*

*(C76) Lakshmi, our guide, who lives in this area was very knowledgeable and provided us with information regarding the different areas within the slum. All of the locals were very friendly and happy to have visitors. I felt very safe, and Lakshmi was a terrific guide.*

#### **Admired/well respected/well known by locals**

The fact that the slum tour guides are known, loved, and respected by everybody made them admired by the tourists and this also takes a hold of them. Some of these comments are as follows:

*(C9) ...Laxmi is well respected and hugely loved woman in the community.*

*(C11) It was truly amazing to see how much respect everyone in the slum had for our guide Laxmi.*

*(C34) Laxmi is clearly very respected in her community, helping many throughout the walk.*

*(C35) Laxmi is clearly a well-respected pillar of the community and works tirelessly to help those who need her. The world could do with a few more people like her!*

*(C38) Laxmi [...] was well respected by the community.*

*(C39) Laxmi is much more than a tour guide, she is effectively a social worker who is clearly loved and respected by the various communities we visited with her...*

*(C41) Laxmi is a superstar she is well loved by everyone ...*

*(C43) ...The respect for her was amazing, as everyone we encountered there knew her and respected her...*

*(C51) ...She can't walk two feet without getting hugged, embraced, and greeted, everyone knows her, especially all the kids.*

*(C53) ... Laxmi is like a Mother Theresa of the Slums. Everyone knows her. She's checking in on everyone like a doctor, giving advice, asking the children why they aren't in school. She asks the children to greet us in English, shake our hand, ask our name. She is encouraging them to practice their English with us. This made me feel like we had a good purpose to be there.*

*(C55) Laxmi herself is an incredible lady, giving of herself so much for these people. The love and respect they show her is truly heartwarming.*

*(C63) ....She is pretty clearly a well-loved icon in all the different neighborhoods in the slums and is a wonderful and thoughtful guide...*

*(C70) She was known by the local people and therefore ensured our presence and interac-*

tions with everyone we met was handled with deep consideration...

**(C80)** *Laxmi the guide is a healthcare/social worker who is obviously well loved and respected by the slum residents and so this makes one's presence there not awkward at all.*

**(C81)** *The experience is one we will remember. Lakshmi is respected in the slums and everyone welcomed us with smiles and hellos...*

**(C82)** *Our guide Lakshmi made us feel very relaxed from the moment she met us at the station. [...] Lakshmi is clearly very well respected within the slum and her English is very good.*

**(C83)** *This walk was an eye-opening experience. Our tour guide, Lakshmi and volunteer Pedro, were respected and welcomed in this slum.*

### **Good language skills**

The tourists will definitely need a tour guide with good language skills in order to understand the culture, way of living, and to find out what's happening there. Tour guides are intercultural bridges and the communicators between the tourists and the local people as the interpreters of the culture. In order to truly understand (as it should be) and interpret the slum experience in this area mostly visited by Western tourists, the language skills of the tour guides are naturally of the essence.

**(C10)** *Her English is very good!*

**(C33)** *Laxmi's English is very good and gives an educational tour of the social structure, politics, and family life of the slum.*

**(C35)** *We met the lovely Laxmi. She gave us some background to the PETE project and explained what to expect from the tour. Her English was very good.*

**(C37)** *Our guide Laxmi speaks very good English...*

**(C82)** *Our guide Lakshmi made us feel very relaxed from the moment she met us at the station [...] Her English is very good.*

### **Working voluntary for his/her community**

It is also observed that the fact that slum guides devote their lives to volunteer works especially for women and children melts the hearts of tourists experiencing the slum areas. Some of the comments are as follows:

**(C21)** *An eye-opening experience. Laxmi and John did a great job and the work that PETE is doing to help the residents of the slum is admirable!*

**(C33)** *I was met by Laxmi, lovely lady working as a social worker running four schools in the slum. Herself being brought up in the same circumstances, gave a humbling experience to understand the struggles she faces in providing a future for children of the slums, especially the girls.*

**(C37)** *Our guide Laxmi [...] made the purpose of the slum tour one of showing us the small opportunities that are opening for some of these children by education and gaining of productive skills. Congratulations to Laxmi on her dedication to the people of her community.*

**(C39)** *Laxmi is much more than a tour guide, she is effectively a social worker who is clearly loved and respected by the various communities we visited with her...*

**(C43)** *Our guide was a social worker who has lived there for many decades...*

**(C45)** *Our guide was an inspiration and when not guiding tourists to raise awareness and*



*funds, she helps provide basic education for children and health projects for women.*

*(C72) I was so glad that I did, because I had the opportunity to meet Laxmi, who works at PETE. She is such a warm, kind individual who has worked in the colony for over ten years and is clearly highly-regarded by its residents.*

*(C77) Our guide was a lady called Laksmi, who worked with the residents of the slum for 10 years providing assistance with social care especially regarding children, women, and families.*

*(C80) Laxmi the guide is a healthcare/social worker who is obviously well loved and respected by the slum residents and so this makes one's presence there not awkward at all.*

## Discussion, and Conclusion

The slum tours, where the poverty in slum areas in Delhi, India is exhibited as a tourism object and normalized as “reality tours”, attract more people every day. The social meaning ascribed to these tours solidify the belief that by appealing to the tourists’ humane sentiment that they help those people and make great contributions to their lives. Questioning the meaning of their lives during this 3-hour tour in the slum area, the tourists begin to feel ashamed for their grouchy kids, and their care-free lives in the seventh heaven. However, they would never forget to pull up their trousers’ legs and use their sanitizers since they feel uneasy about the poor hygiene conditions, and they would constantly ask themselves how these people are so happy and could smile all the time despite of the poverty and challenging conditions. They will pay the organization for the slum tour, watch the puppet show, purchase a couple of handmade souvenirs, give candies to the kids and take photographs, and thus, they will be helping the poor. With this peace of mind, they will head back to their comfortable hotel room and the local people will remain poor and continue to struggle for life.

In this study, the thoughts of people, who had “a real slum experience” in Delhi, where poverty became a personal/private show, and the role of tour guides in formation of those opinions have been revealed. In consequence of the analysis, it is observed that especially the local tour guides had a significant role on formation of thoughts and although many tourists have concerns (security, feeling like voyeurs, etc.) about visiting this district, tour guides have a significant role on making them believe that ‘they are doing something good’ by visiting this quarter and participating in slum tourism. The people in slum areas are living under harsh conditions. Well, how do they do that? At this very point, the tour guides show the tourists what they really want to see. Women, who manage to survive despite of all kinds of difficulties, children, who try to practice their English and smile cheerfully, rather than begging the tourists for money... The tour guides show these moments of happiness to tourists through the routes they are familiar with. It is understood from the comments of tourists that everything in these slum areas is ritualized and staged. The informative role of tour guides is very important in the fact that this slum experience is an eye-opening experience.

Consequently; at the end of the analyses, it is concluded that the following characteristics of the tour guides have an influence on people’s concerns about voyeurism and help



them interpret and explain this experience: good personal characteristics, providing efficient information about the local people, and being one of them, admired/well respected/well known by locals, having good language skills, and engaging in volunteer works. The results of this study revealed the way slum guides are viewed, or the fact that their roles in slum experience are worth investigating. Further studies on the slum guides in Dharavi, the largest slum of India, may be suggested through broadening this study, which is about the eye-opening roles of tour guides in slum areas of New Delhi, India on the tourists, who experience this phenomenon through the help of these guides.

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# Assessment on Thermal Tourism Potential in Eskişehir through the Tour Guides' Perspective

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## Abstract:

*While Eskişehir has always been one of the most important industrial cities in Turkey, the city has recently become a tourist attraction with great efforts of the local authorities. Due to its geological structure, Eskişehir has many thermal springs. Thus, people have been visiting the city since the ancient ages in order to keep healthy and improve the quality of their lives. However, the domestic tourists, who visit the city through package tours, are not able to adequately benefit from the thermal resources. The purpose of this study is to investigate the thermal springs preferences of domestic tourists visiting Eskişehir from the viewpoint of the tour guides. The opinions of the tour guides, who had a major influence on development of tourism and promotion of the destination, were asked. Within this context, a qualitative method was adopted and semi-structured face-to-face and online interviews were conducted with 10 tour guides, who live in Eskişehir and had at some point organized city tours. As a result of the descriptive analysis of the data obtained from the interviews, it is observed that the domestic tourists could not benefit from thermal tourism. The reasons of this, may be listed as; the insufficiency of promotion and facilities suitable for thermal tourism in Eskişehir, lack of diversifications, such as wellness and SPA, strong competitors from nearby cities, problems of hygiene and parking, lack of support from local government and specialist personnel, and the short periods of stay, and that their main purpose of visit is not thermal tourism. At the end of this study, it is observed that the tour guides are aware of their own roles and responsibilities in developing the potential of thermal tourism. It is also observed that the tour guides are ready to do their best in terms of informing, guiding, and encouraging tourists if the local governments,*

*travel agencies and tourism investors take the necessary steps towards improving thermal tourism in Eskisehir.*

**Key words:**

*Tour guide, Guided tours, Promotion, Thermal tourism, Eskisehir, Turkey.*

**Introduction**

The use of thermal waters for health improvement/healing dates back to ancient times. Because of its geological and geomorphological features, Turkey has many thermal springs that vary in terms of their flow rates, temperatures, radioactivity levels, molten mineral rates, and accessibilities (Özşahin & Kaymaz, 2013, p. 26), and in terms of overall potential of thermal springs, it is ranked first, and in terms of thermal spring practices, it is ranked third in Europe (Turkish Republic Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2017). Located in the north-east Turkey, and having a wide range of thermal tourism resources, Eskisehir has recently come into prominence with urban tourism. However, it is observed in relevant studies that the number of domestic tourists visiting Eskisehir for its thermal springs is very low (Eskisehir Tourism Master Plan, 2011, p. 54).

Tour guides play a significant role in promotion of a tourism destination. With the Law on the Association of Travel Agencies enacted in Turkey in 1982, it became mandatory to have a tour guide present in package tours (Law on the Travel Agencies and the Association of Travel Agencies, Article 10/a). This article increased the influence of tour guides on promotion of the destination and their importance on informing tourists. Thus, the fact that these tour guides guiding domestic tourist groups in Eskisehir are always in touch with these tourists throughout their trips, and this eventually urged researchers to get more information about the thoughts and opinions of these tour guides.

**Literature Review*****Eskisehir's spring water resources***

Anatolia has been known as a source of health and healing by many civilizations throughout history. Particularly in the era of Roman and Byzantine Empires, many physicians used thermal springs to cure various diseases and to heal people. The curative effect of natural thermal springs was discovered and many people benefitted from these resources. At first, these thermal springs were solely used for healthcare purposes, but later on, they stood out with their curative features and have been used since the Ancient Times (Yüksek & Kalyoncu, 2017, p. 65). The most popular thermal springs in Anatolia inherited from the ancient Rome are Hierapolis, Pergamum, and Allianoi. In literature section of this study, first the previous studies on thermal springs in Eskisehir, and then the studies about the way tour guides introduce these thermal springs are discussed.



**Figure 1:** Boat tour on the Porsuk Creek in Eskişehir. Source: Copyright by Emrah Büyükkara

Eskişehir is one of the largest metropolitan regions of Turkey's territories on Asia (Anatolia). The city's historical background dates back to 4000 B.C. Eskişehir is represented as the city of thermal springs in many ancient scripts (İşcan, 2004). The Greek King Athenaios (200 A.D.) wrote: "*The hot water springs found around Dorylaion are so delicious.*" (Albek, 1991). The Arabian traveler Ali b. Ebu Bekir el-Herevi, who travelled around Anatolia in 1173, wrote that the thermal springs in Eskişehir had recuperating effects and that those springs were used both by the Turks and the Byzantines (Doğru, 1992). Evliya Çelebi mentioned the thermal springs of Eskişehir in his travel book, that he had written in 17<sup>th</sup> century, and he stated that thermal water was good for renal calculus, gall bladder, gout, and skin diseases (Balcıoğulları, 2013, p. 300). In addition, the hot water around this region helps healing cardiovascular diseases, painful diseases, rheumatic diseases, inflammatory and traumatic neurological diseases, diabetes, obesity, gout, and renal calculus, and it also invigorates the skin (Banger, 2002, pp. 47-48).

Unlike some of the travelers, such as Wittek, Charles Texier, who visited the city in 19<sup>th</sup> century described the city as a "*lifeless, colourless and an uninteresting place*" (Yetgin & Yilmaz, 2014), some of the travellers, such as Baedeker, Hartmann and Körte wrote that the sulphurous hot springs containing iron and the public baths inherited from the Byzantine Period attracted many people for both medical and entertainment purposes (Lindner, 2008, pp. 47,72). When the thermal springs in Eskişehir are geologically examined, it is observed that the rocks around the source of hot water are young rock formations, and consist of conglomerate, sandstone, claystone, and argillaceous limestone (Gözler, Cevher & Küçükayman, 1985). The temperature of hot water in the city



centre is around 38-40°C and the water features hydrogeological and hyperthermal characteristics.

### ***Eskisehir's thermal tourism potential***

With the investments following the proclamation of the republic in 1923, the city began to develop industrially. With the efforts and support of local government, the city has gone through fundamental changes in early 2000s, and became an attractive region for urban tourism. Recent tourism studies demonstrated that what tourists mostly search for are experiences that result in a *"healthy balance of body, mind and spirit"* (Chen, Chang & Wu, 2013, p. 1093). That's why wellness tourism has turned into such a massive trend in the tourism industry and has become a *"fashionable tourist product"* (Smith & Puczkó, 2009; Chen, Chang & Wu, 2013). Dryglas & Hadzik (2016, p. 31) defined thermal tourism as follows;

*'thermal tourism involves a conscious and voluntary decision to leave for at least one day (an overnight stay), but for no longer than a year, in one's free time, to a place where geothermal waters of temperature of at least 20°C at the outflow are found and are used for various healing and prophylactic treatments. Thermal tourism can have the form of visiting spa resorts, tourist resorts with thermal facilities, or spa centres.'*

The tourism potential of Eskisehir has been investigated and the potential of thermal tourism has been discussed. Thermal tourism is recognized as one of the main forms of wellness tourism (Smith & Puczkó, 2009; Chang & Wu, 2013). In Evren and Kozak's (2012, p. 226) study based on visitors' opinions about the attractive features of the city, they found that the bathhouses in the city is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> among 33 factors and that the main motive of the domestic tourists visiting Eskisehir is travel-entertainment (54.8%), and the health tourists are ranked sixth among others with 10.6 %. In addition, 1.100 tourists were asked about their purposes of visit within the scope of a master plan conducted to create a proper tourism strategy in 2011, and it was found that 2.2 % of domestic tourists and 1.8% of foreign tourists visited Eskisehir for healthcare purposes and thermal springs. It was also found in the same study that thermal springs and bathhouses ranked 4<sup>th</sup> with 10.8% among all local elements as the first thing that comes to mind about Eskisehir (Eskisehir Tourism Master Plan).

In 2014 report of Eskisehir Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, thermal tourism is ranked second among other tourism activities in the city (Kaşlı et al., 2012, p. 75). In 2023 Turkish Tourism Strategy, Eskisehir is included within "Phrygia Culture and Thermal Tourism Development Region" together with Afyonkarahisar, Kütahya, Uşak and Ankara. Apart from the city centre, the healing hot water is also available in districts, such as Kızılınler, Sakarılica and İnönü (Kaşlı et al., 2012, p. 75). This study only includes the thermal springs in the city centre of Eskisehir. In this study, only the opinions of tour guides, who are one of the most important groups of contributors in tourism, are included to reveal whether the thermal tourism potential in Eskisehir city centre is adequately utilized.



**Figure 2:** *Eskişehir Science, Art and Culture Park.* Source: Copyright by Emrah Büyükkara

### ***Tour guides and their roles***

A tour guide is the most important mediator between tourists and destinations. Tour guides ensure that tourists are satisfied with tour organization and travel experiences and play an important role in promoting destinations (Weiler & Black, 2015). World Federation of Tourist Guides Association (WFTGA, 2015) defines a tour guide as;

*'A person, who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the cultural and natural heritage of an area, and who normally possesses an area-specific qualification usually issued and/or recognized by the appropriate authority'*

In Turkey, a license card is issued to all national and local tour guides, who successfully completed all necessary requirements set forth by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Since a person without a license card is not considered a tour guide, he/she does not have the right to guide tours.

The roles played by the tour guides vary by the type of tourism, the level of development of the country where the tour takes place, and the structure of the tourist group and the tour. Although many different studies about the roles of the tour guides and many different roles defined in those studies in the international literature, some of those studies and roles are considered fundamental roles and studies (Pond, 1993; Cohen, 1985; Holloway, 1981; Schmidt, 1979). These fundamental roles are as follows: Director/leader, instructive/informative, cultural ambassador/representative, intermediary, environmentalist/environmental preserver, entertainer/provider of pleasant times (Yetgin,



2017). Interaction between tour guides and tourists can provide opportunity for the tour guides to have important effects on tourists as regards to promoting attractions in destination (Chilembwe & Mweiwa, 2014, p. 33). Tour guides create a strategic factor in as far as representation of a destination (Baum et al., 2007). Chilembwe and Mweiwa's study (2014) revealed that all tour guides help to promote tourism through the way they do their share of the task.

Since tour guides have a substantial influence on promotion of a destination, the authors reviewed the studies in literature regarding the influence of tour guides on development of thermal tourism potential. Weiler and Black (2014, p. 67) stated that tour guides assume a major role in taking care of tourists' health. In their study "The Tourism Potential of Kızılcahamam (A thermal destination in Turkey) District and its Developing", Usta and Zaman (2015, p. 17-18) performed SWOT analysis of the destination. Among the weaknesses of the destination, inadequate number of tour guides was emphasized and they suggested that well-trained and competent tour guides should work in the field. In his study, where Ekici (2014) examined the role of bathhouses in marketing and promotion of Eskisehir as a destination, he found following as the current inadequacies of thermal facilities: lack of incentives, lack of collaboration between these facilities and travel agencies, they mostly offer service to the residents instead of tourists and overnight tourists, insufficient advertisement and promotion, and lack of support from local authorities. When other studies in literature about the potential of thermal tourism in Turkey are reviewed, it is observed that tour guides are neglected at large. Thus, it became necessary to reveal the potential of thermal tourism in Eskisehir from the viewpoint of tour guides.

## Method

'A popular practice for qualitative research is to provide corroborating evidence collected through multiple methods, such as observations, interviews, and documents to locate major and minor themes' (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p.127). Therefore, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in this study to collect data. The data required to achieve the purposes of this study were obtained through interview method, which is one of the qualitative data collection methods. After thermal tourism in literature and the thermal springs in Eskisehir were reviewed, a question form was developed by asking the opinions of three specialists in thermal tourism and tour guiding. The following questions were asked in line with the purpose of this study:

### *Thermal tourism potential in Eskisehir*

1. What do you think about thermal tourism potential in Eskisehir?
2. Do you think the tourists adequately benefit from thermal facilities in Eskisehir (bathhouses, thermal hotel services)? For instance, are these included in tour schedules?
3. Are the tourists interested in thermal facilities? If yes, please specify the gender and age group of the majority of those, who are interested.

*The role of tour guides in promotion of thermal tourism in Eskisehir*

4. Do you think the thermal facilities in Eskisehir are adequately promoted? (Please provide your opinions in terms of government, local governments, travel agencies, local people, and tour guides.)
5. Do you provide any information about the thermal facilities in Eskisehir while guiding the tourists? If yes, what do you tell them?

*The suggestions of tour guides for promotion of thermal tourism in Eskisehir*

6. What are your opinions about the preference of/avoidance from thermal facilities as touristic products in Eskisehir?
7. How can the thermal tourism resources be utilized to extend the average over-night stays of tourists visiting Eskisehir?
8. What can the tour guides do to boost the thermal tourism potential of Eskisehir? Please list your suggestions.

The participants of this study were selected through random sample approach. 'For many audiences, random sampling, even of small samples, will substantially increase the credibility of the results' (Patton, 2002, pp. 240-241). There are total of 16 tour guides with an active license card in Eskisehir. Although the authors aimed to interview with all 16 tour guides, they could only obtain interview with 10 of them due to various reasons. The face-to-face and online interviews were conducted between October 2016 and December 2016. The authors made appointments with the tour guides on the phone and informed them about the purpose, method, duration, and place of the interview. The interviews were tape-recorded by permission of the participants.

The participants, who were not available for face-to-face interviews, were informed on the phone in advance and an online interview form was prepared and sent to those participants. The interviews were then deciphered and textualized by the authors. The authors assigned codes to each participant as P1, P2, P3...P10, and the participants were presented with these codes in this study. Descriptive analysis method was adopted in this study for data analysis. Descriptive analysis is an approach, where the data obtained are summarized and interpreted in accordance with the pre-determined themes. The following stages were implemented in the descriptive analysis process: forming a framework, data processing according to this thematic framework, and description and interpretation of the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 256). The data obtained were evaluated and interpreted under the following themes: "*potential of thermal tourism*", where questions regarding the utilization of thermal tourism potential in Eskisehir were asked; "*the role of tour guides in promotion of the city*", where the roles of tour guides in promotion of thermal tourism in Eskisehir were analysed; and "*the suggestions of the tour guides*" which included the suggestions of tour guides for the promotion of thermal tourism in Eskisehir.

## Findings and Discussions

The demographic findings were presented in line with the data obtained through interviews; the data were analysed and interpreted under “*the potential of thermal tourism*”, “*the role of tour guides in promotion*” and “*suggestions of the tour guides*” themes.

### *Demographic Characteristics of the Participants*

In order to reveal to demographic characteristics of the participants, the age, work status (permanent/freelance), the nationality of the visiting tourists and the number of days that the tour guides actively participate in a tour within a year were asked and the data obtained is given in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Profile of the respondents (N=10)*

Code	Gender	Age	Permanent/ Freelance	Nationality of visitors	Duration of Tour guiding in Eskisehir (days)
P1	Female	26	Freelance	Turkish	20
P2	Female	28	Freelance	Turkish	50
P3	Male	37	Permanent	Turkish	150
P4	Female	30	Freelance	Turkish	30
P5	Female	37	Freelance	Turkish	20
P6	Male	25	Freelance	Turkish	20
P7	Male	46	Freelance	Turkish	35
P8	Male	29	Freelance	Turkish	20
P9	Female	34	Freelance	Turkish	50
P10	Female	35	Freelance	Turkish	10

As it is seen in Table 1, there are six female, and four male participants. The age distribution is between 25 and 46 and they offer tour guiding services to Turkish tourists. When the work statuses of the tour guides are examined, it is observed that nine of them are freelancers, and one of them is a permanent employee. The number of days that the tour guides actively participate in a tour range between 10 and 150 days and the average number is 40,5 days.

### *Potential of Thermal Tourism in Eskisehir*

The thermal springs in Eskisehir can be listed as follows: Sıcak Sular and Hamam (Hot Waters and Bathhouse) in city centre, thermal springs in Hasırca, Mihalgaži Gümele, Sarıcakaya, Sakarılıca, and the thermal spring of Kızılınler, etc. These regions are declared as thermal tourism centres by the decision of the Cabinet. In 2023 Turkish Tourism Strategy, Eskisehir is included within Phrygia Culture and Thermal Tourism Development Region. This indicates that the region will develop within the frame of a specific plan in terms of thermal tourism in the near future (Kaşlı et al., 2012). Within this context,

the participants were asked about their opinions on the potential of thermal tourism, whether the tourists sufficiently benefit from thermal facilities (bathhouses, thermal hotels) in Eskisehir, whether these facilities are included within the tour schedules, and which age group and gender is mostly interested in thermal tourism, and the data obtained through the answers of these questions were analysed under the potential of thermal tourism theme. All participants agree with the fact that Eskisehir has a potential of thermal tourism, but they also agree that this potential is not adequately utilized:

*Bathhouse culture is very dominant in this city, but I think Eskisehir, among others, deserves to become a flagship in thermal tourism. However, this potential is not adequately utilized. (P1)*

*When we examine the touristic image or tourists' perception of Eskisehir, it is clearly seen that the tourists have very little information and knowledge on thermal springs and bathhouses in Eskisehir. The fact that the hotels in this region are located in the old and narrow streets of the city, the parking problem, inefficiency of the facilities, and the failure to integrate thermal tourism with other tourist attractions of the city prevent this branch of tourism to develop further. (P6)*

*Eskisehir is very rich in thermal springs due to its geological structure. There is Hamamyolu Thermal Springs in the city centre and Kızılınler and Sakarılica Thermal Springs in those districts. Eskisehir is very attractive in this regard. The only disadvantage of the thermal springs in Eskisehir is that the mineral value of the thermal springs in Eskisehir is lower than the thermal springs located in nearby cities. (P9)*

A master plan was prepared in order to create an accurate tourism strategy for Eskisehir. In this research, 1.100 tourists were asked about their purpose of visit, and 2.2% of domestic tourists and 1.8% of the foreign visitors stated that they visited Eskisehir for healthcare and thermal springs (Eskisehir Tourism Masterplan, 2011-2015, p. 54). When the participants were asked: "Do you think the tourists sufficiently benefit from thermal facilities (bathhouses, thermal hotel services) in Eskisehir? For instance, are they included in tour schedules?", the common view of the majority of the participants were negative about the utilization of the thermal facilities in Eskisehir. The opinions of the participants are as follows: P7: "I have not yet seen thermal springs in tour schedules of the Travel Agencies", P10: "Thermal springs were not available in any of the programs that I have participated to date", P5: "It is observed that only a few tour programs include thermal tourism, and this only happens if the participants stay at thermal hotels". The participants stated that the majority of the thermal tourism enthusiasts are women aged 45 and over. The related statements are as follows:

*Since Eskisehir is generally preferred by third-age tourist groups, i.e., women aged 45 and over, the city attracts this age group. In general, thermal tourism also attracts people who seek for healing/recovery. (P1)*

*Thermal facilities usually attract middle-aged women. (P2)*

*If we, as tour guides, even slightly go over and promote these attractions, some people eventually grow interest. The target group is women aged between 45 and 60. (P4)*

### ***The Role of Tour Guides in Promotion of Thermal Tourism in Eskisehir***

The following roles are among the fundamental roles of the tour guides: director/leader, instructive/informative, cultural ambassador/representative, intermediary, and environmentalist/environmental preserver. A tour guide is responsible for providing all fundamental information regarding local opportunities, distance, route, travel time, attractions, services provided, features and security about the tour program and the destination to make sure that the tourists feel safe (Toker, 2011; Yetgin, 2017, p. 15). Tour guides should be efficient promoters of thermal tourism as the local opportunities and attractions of the destination by highlighting their informative/instructive roles. Within this context, the participants were asked whether the thermal facilities in Eskisehir are adequately promoted, and were also asked to give a brief evaluation in terms of the government, local governments, travel agencies, local people, and tour guides. However, the statements of the participants emphasize that thermal tourism activities in Eskisehir are not adequately promoted, and that if local government provides support, the tour guides will do their part. Some of the most intriguing statements about this matter are as follows:

*I'm afraid this picture fails to satisfy me. The local people frequently use these bathhouses but these facilities remain under-promoted when it comes to tourists. Eskisehir stands out with urban tourism and it is the shining star of domestic tourism. These tours generally cover the parks, museums, the attractions around Porsuk River, and historical Odunpazarı region. Thermal facilities are excluded while these attractions are promoted. (P5)*

*It is a known fact that the thermal facilities are under-promoted. The travel agencies and tour guides promote these facilities, but promotion and incentive are two different concepts. Particularly us, the tour guides mention these facilities in our tours. But we do not encourage our guests to visit those facilities since they are not suitable for tourism. As soon as these facilities are ready in terms of their infrastructures and service personnel, the tour guides will do more to promote these facilities. At this point, the local governments should set their hands to this problem. (P6)*

*I find the capacity of thermal facilities inadequate. I don't see any facilities that truly reflect the bathhouse culture in Eskisehir. The local people sustain this culture within their own community, but these facilities should be promoted more for the domestic tourists. (P7)*

In order to get more information about whether the tour guides fulfil their share of informative roles, they were asked if they talk about thermal facilities in Eskisehir when guiding tourists visiting Eskisehir. Accordingly, it is observed that the majority of the participants talk about the bathhouses, bathhouse culture and thermal springs. A sample statement regarding this matter is given below:

*As a tour guide, I always provide information about Eskisehir and bathhouse culture. I generally explain the importance of bathhouses in Eskisehir according to Athenaios in 204 B.C. Eskisehir was known as "the city with potable hot water springs" in ancient scripts. In this sense, the fact that these bathhouses have been used since ancient times attracts the attention of the tourists. (P7)*

#### ***The Suggestions of Tour Guides for Promotion of Thermal Tourism in Eskisehir***

Tour guides are people, who are particularly familiar with a destination and who relay the information to domestic and foreign tourists. At this point, the tour guides, who have an influence on promotion of thermal tourism in Eskisehir, were asked to give their opinions about how these thermal tourism resources may be utilized to increase average overnight stays of the tourists and what can the tour guides do to increase the potential of thermal tourism in Eskisehir. The participants indicated problems such as insufficiency of facilities suitable for thermal tourism in Eskisehir, the lack of diversifications, such as wellness and SPA, the strong competitors from nearby cities, problems of hygiene and parking, lack of support from local government and specialist personnel, and the short periods of stay, and brought forward some suggestions. Some of these suggestions are as follows:

*More information may be provided regarding the benefits of thermal springs. The tourists may be convinced and led towards utilizing these thermal springs. More importantly, the people should be informed and advised about these resources. (P8)*

*Travel agencies should attach more importance on thermal tourism, should organize tours with overnight stays and definitely include bathhouses within their tour schedules. The tour guides may also specialize on thermal tourism, and provide the tourists with the information that they will learn from these specific training programs. (P3)*

*Tour guides know tourists very well because they spend too much time together. The government executives in Eskisehir should confer more power to the tour guides and support them in order to let them contribute more. (P10)*

As it is seen in the statements of the participants, the tour guides are aware of their own roles and responsibilities in developing thermal tourism and they emphasized the importance of information, and they also stated that they need the support of travel agencies and local government.



## Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to investigate the thermal springs preferences of domestic tourists visiting Eskisehir from the viewpoint of the tour guides. Within this context, semi-structured face-to-face and online interviews were conducted with ten tour guides, who live in Eskisehir and had at some point organized city tours, and the data obtained were evaluated and interpreted under the following themes: “potential of thermal tourism”, “the role of tour guides in promotion of the city”, and “the suggestions of the tour guides”. When it comes to promotion in tourism, informing prospective tourists about the nature, culture, history, archaeology, sea, sun, etc. fundamental touristic potentials of a country, and creating a positive image of the touristic values of the country are the first things that come to mind. Tour guides play a key role in tourists’ purchases and loyalty. Within this context, the promotion should excite the attention of the tourists, the services and benefits should be well-understood, a positive approach should be created towards the product, tourists’ preferences should be improved, and thus, tourists should be convinced (Tavmergen & Meriç, 2002, pp. 33, 49).

Among the reasons for preferences of the domestic and foreign tourists visiting Eskisehir, business, sightseeing, and art and culture activities stand out among other things. It is observed that only 1.8% of tourists prefer Eskisehir for healthcare and its thermal springs. On the other hand, the thermal springs and bathhouses are ranked first among other local factors in Eskisehir (Eskisehir Master Plan, 2011). This contradiction is one of the starting points of this study. As a result of the descriptive analysis of the data obtained from the interviews, it is observed that the domestic tourists could not benefit from thermal tourism due to the reasons, such as, the insufficiency of promotion and facilities suitable for thermal tourism in Eskisehir, the lack of diversifications, such as wellness and SPA, the strong competitors from nearby cities, problems of hygiene and parking, lack of support from local government and specialist personnel, and the short periods of stay, and that their main purpose of visit is not thermal tourism.

Although the tour guides in Eskisehir acknowledge the potential of thermal tourism, it is observed that this potential is not used efficiently, the target group of thermal facilities is usually women aged 45 and over, tour schedules do not include any activities regarding thermal springs unless the tourists prefer to stay at thermal facilities, the tour guides do their best and frequently mention bathhouses and bathhouse culture during tours, but other than that the thermal tourism is not sufficiently promoted, and if the local government provides support, the tour guides are ready to do their part. It is also observed that bathhouses became the most repeated factor by the participants when it comes to thermal tourism in Eskisehir.

Eskisehir is already a popular destination in domestic tourism and the visitors usually prefer daytrips or two-day trips. The main purpose of improving thermal tourism is to increase the number of nights spent in Eskisehir. In this study, the tour guides brought forward various suggestions in order to increase the use of thermal resources in Eskisehir. The common ground of these suggestions is the promotion of thermal tourism

resources by the national government agencies, such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, local government agencies, such as the Governorships and municipalities, the travel agencies and tour guides. “Extension of Public and Private Sectors in Promotion and Marketing” is one of the articles of Tenth Development Plan (2014-2018) policies of the Ministry of Health. Within this context, the travel agencies, which are a part of the private sector, are expected to contribute to this initiative through the medium of tour guides (The Ministry of Health, 2017).

First, the tour guides can participate in training programs for specialization in thermal tourism and they can inform the tourists more efficiently. They can also cooperate with the travel agencies and make sure that the agencies include thermal tourism resources in their tour schedules. Thus, they can both increase the number of overnight stays and contribute to the optimum use of the potential of thermal tourism in Eskisehir. The hot water springs and bathhouses are located at the city centre. Thus, there are serious traffic and parking problems. This is one of the reasons why the travel agencies refrain from including thermal facilities in their tour schedules. The tourism entrepreneurs and local governments in Eskisehir may diversify thermal tourism resources with Day-Spa and wellness. According to Ergüven and Yılmaz (2016), Day-SPA centres are places, which offer thermal resources and daily SPA activities (such as fitness and cosmetics) under the same roof. Thus, larger facilities away from the city centre, such as Kızılınlar and Sakarılıca, can be established and traffic and parking problems may be avoided.

At the end of this study, it is observed that the tour guides are aware of their own roles and responsibilities in developing the potential of thermal tourism. It is also observed that the tour guides are ready to do their best in terms of informing, guiding, and encouraging tourists if the local governments, travel agencies and tourism investors take the necessary steps towards improving thermal tourism in Eskisehir. It may be suggested to interview with the tourists in future academic studies and to find out their thoughts and opinions about this subject.

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# The future of the Tour Guide profession in Norway: status, regulations and ethics

## A Discussion Paper

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## Introduction

After the oil price dropped, the tourist industry in Norway is playing a more critical role in the economy of the nation. This type of industry offers excellent opportunities for growth and of employment in the private market. In this picture, the tourist guides are becoming a critical part of the industry. The tour guide business has grown strategic in this context and fundamental for the growing cruise tourism. This study has used a holistic approach to provide an overview of the status and regulations of the market of the tour guides branch.

The tour guide business in Norway presents, first of all, a contradiction. From one side, the number of tourists and the number of cruise boats is increasing, year after year, in according to articles of Financial Times, Aftenposten and Romsdals Budstikke. According to with proff.no, a website where economic information about the Norwegian companies is officially published, the tour guide business has billionaire incomes that also are increasing. This type of business has lower expenses, if compared with other private businesses.

This type of business has lower expenses if compared with other private companies. This is due to, for example, the lack of need for permanent infrastructures (such as offices) for the job of the employees. On the other side, there is only one company, which has tariff agreement in Norway with a union of workers (LO) and no other companies appear to be affiliated with the union of employers (NHO). From the interviews, emerges that many employers actively discourage their guides to enroll as workers' union members.



Due to lack of a formal certification of tour guides and the structure of the business, guide company entrepreneurs may cut costs by ignoring agreements and laws of working life and lowering guide service quality, according to information provided by the workers' union LO.

Through several practical cases and examples, after having characterized the current status of the "tour guide business in Norway" and its trends, these analyses have also tested the limits of the present legislation, of the mandate for controls that Norwegian authorities have and of the fundamental role of the workers' unions. This study explores to which extent; a) guide services sold were up to the standard of the Tour Guides' National Association; and b) the working conditions were acceptable concerning the Working Environment Law and the General Agreements with Employees' Union.

In this study, the information related to the work conditions comes from inspections of Norwegian Authorities to workplaces and from documentation provided by tour guides, to both the Norwegian Authorities and to the worker's union LO. The declarations of the tour guides to the public authorities have not been anonymous. These disclosures are protected by privacy; therefore, the names cannot be published in this discussion paper.

## Study methods

This study is based on qualitative methods including observations, interviews, narratives, circa 600 written pages made by several guides of different companies, letters and other formal documents. The data collection went on from February 2016 to August 2017. Data were collected from officials in:

- The Norwegian Labor Authority (Arbeidstilsynet);
- The Financial Supervisory Authority for private pension and work insurance (Finanstilsynet, OTP);
- The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO);
- The Norwegian Union of Commerce and Office Employees (Handel og Kontor (HK);
- The Social Security Authority (NAV);
- The Norwegian Ports' Authority;
- The Norwegian Royal Ministry of Labour;
- Authority responsible for the market competition (Konkurransetilsynet);
- The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman (LDO);
- The Norwegian Education Department (Utdanningsdepartementet);
- The National Association of the Tour Guides;
- Private lawyers;
- Court: Romsdal Tingrett;
- Council of EU Court for Human Rights;
- Innovation Norway, Visit Norway, Proff.no websites; and

- Media: The Norwegian National Broadcasting (NRK) and Romsdals Budstikke, RB-nett
- Statements provided by 52 guides of different companies to the Norwegian authorities and to the workers' union LO, during social dumping investigations for the years 2011, 2014, 2015, 2016. 25% are authorized tour guides in Norway, and 15% are licensed tour guides in European countries. 5% are Norwegian citizens.

Notes were taken during and after the observations and interviews. The material was analyzed mainly in two ways, both representing an inductive approach to the understanding of the guides' working conditions. Firstly, factual information was identified and extracted from interviews, narratives and documents. Secondly, content analyses were applied to identify themes that constituted critical issues for the guides as employees. Along with issues related to the quality of employees performances, the relationship between the leaders and owners of the companies, on one side; and on the other, the employees' behavior. Patterns were identified that portrayed the working conditions of the guides, the quality of their performance, and the action of their leaders. The data from the official documents and the communication with the authorities were included when relevant for the understanding of the difficulties observed and reported by the guides. Finally, conclusions were drawn, based on the themes and patterns identified.

## Results

### *Part 1: Issues and status*

Tour guides in Norway were mainly migrants occupying seasonal part-time jobs, not unionized, and thus minimum salaries rules did not apply. Most of the foreigners that worked in the tour guide business were adults, with knowledge of a minimum of four languages, often with M.Sc. and Ph.D. Several tour guides travelled to Norway by hiking or by car, which made them invisible to security controls. Training was shorter than the courses offered by the National Association. Some had to guide at unknown locations and stay prepared for services 24/7, on very short notice, without extra payment. Some lacked contract or registration as employees in the national database, and some were not reimbursed for food allowance during long-distance journeys. In this wild market, pension and other workers' rights are vulnerable.

The market of the tourist guides is characterized by a high rate of seasonal foreign employment, with Norwegian jobs advertised mostly in EU and extra-EU countries. Work conditions and workers' rights appear to be poor, often based on threats, slanders and intimidation operated on a regular basis by several companies. Norwegian employees and permanent immigrants seem to be discriminated, due to their chance to become informed by reading, in Norwegian language, the legislation and to know how to contact workers' unions or authorities. German guides bullied some of the foreign employees from south of Europe, because of their origins and ethnicity.

In addition to this, an authorization to work as tour guide is not mandatory in Norway: this makes a difference in comparison to what happens in many EU countries. In Italy, for example, a B.Sc. is compulsory to work as a guide, with the addition of a rigorous exam regulated by the State; the number of available working places is also monitored. Usually, this authorization allows working in all the EU countries. In Norway, there is an authorization, but it is not mandatory: each company sells or provides short courses of a few weeks to new employees, mainly through online distance learning platforms. Such courses are of little use and are not equivalent to the real authorization course provided by the National Association of Tour Guides. In fact, any person in the world, with or without education or studies, can work as a tour guide in Norway and compete to get Norwegian jobs. In general, discrimination and lack of priority toward real authorized guides, that invested time and money to study in Norway, are pinpointed. Cheap foreign labor is preferred regardless the qualifications.

The general quality of the services and transparency in the sector seem to be poor. Moreover, the Norwegian Association of Tour Guides feels unable to stop the use of unqualified and underpaid guides, as illustrated in the article “Vil stoppe dårlige guider - men vet ikke hvordan” [“Want to stop unqualified guides – but do not know how”] (21 August 2016, NRK). This article furthermore shows how the quality of the services can be low. It demonstrates how foreign and unauthorized tour guides, hired by Norwegian companies, provided wrong information to the tourists: “The city of Stavanger to be a church in wood and Grandiosa pizza to be the typical Christmas dinner”, for example.

With a few exceptions, employees that have complained to their employers about poor work and living conditions, or even about illegal work conditions, do not find a new job - neither in the same company nor in many other companies in Norway - during the following years. One employer stated in an e-mail that: “(...) it is our policy not to take guides from other guide companies which do not belong to our sister companies”. This statement can lead to obvious questions to whether these “Sisters companies” is an oligopoly with a cartel in Norway, since according to proff.no, 26 companies are related to each other on the board in this case, often using the same accountant. For these reasons, the questioning about the risk of having an oligopoly with a cartel, which is an illegal practice in the EU and Norwegian markets, has been sent to the Court of Justice of the European Free Trade Association States (EFTA), for possible violation of EEA agreements and to the authority responsible for the market competition (Konkurransetilsynet).

During the year 2016, a company had several articles in the newspaper Romsdals Budstikke, reporting on the poor work and living conditions within the company. In September 2016, this firm received an inspection from the Arbeidstilsynet (Governmental Labour Authorities) resulting in an executive order “Pålegg” nr. 2016/3339. This company was also summoned to a court hearing in May 2017. The case was raised by the workers’ representative and workers’ union LO. Regarding those cases, a giant of the Norwegian cruise market, the Hurtigruten, declared, in an interview to Romsdals

Budstikke, the preference of using services of quality from companies that respect employees, laws, and ethics. However, the company that had the case in court and the executive order "Pålegg," is still providing guides to the Hurtigruten, which, according to the company's website (list of clients 2017), has seemingly not yet terminated their contracts with this company.

Analyzing the information of proff.no, some of the tour guide companies seem to be organized like "matryoshka dolls," also called "Chinese boxes." If this observation will be confirmed by the current investigation of the tax department, it would be the case of an illegal business practice, where owners have several companies on paper, which have no other operative function except moving money and expenses between them, and to confuse the controls of the tax authorities. The tax office has been contacted several times also from LO, and they explained that they do not check the companies frequently.

Our data, of circa 600 pages of written declarations by employees, also shows that many companies provide accommodation to their employees in buildings that they own. However, this is done without a regular rental contract and with low-quality standards. The rent is not mentioned in the payslips, and it is irregularly subtracted directly from the guides' salary to avoid taxes. The rent is also higher than the market price of the areas, for example, 6000 NOK (600 EUR) per month in an isolated village in the countryside, for a double bedroom shared with a stranger.

It has also been observed how several companies declare that they buy training courses from each other, these courses have a cost which is subtracted from the amount of paid taxes: but the employees have declared to the authorities that they have never participated in such studies. These training courses are overpriced if compared to the market price and are often based on material illegally copied from several online sources, without paying any copyright fees and without declaring references. In addition, some companies reported the practical courses to be longer than the actual amount of days provided to the employees. Another strategy used to avoid taxes is to double or to triple the salary of the company leaders each year.

All these factors combined together, allow the companies to avoid a significant amount of taxes.

Illegal workers and tax evasion could easily be detected by the authorities, for example by merely comparing the bank transfers done by the employers to the employees, with the regularly NAV registered workforce. Also a comparison between paid salaries and average pay rates can undoubtedly show that some employees work more than 20% and are thus eligible for pension contributions, which appear to be missing for most of the employees.

It is important to highlight the special case of authorized guides that have worked in the Norwegian tour guide market for over 10 years, for more than 20% and for the same company each season, but the pension contribution has never been accredited on a bank account by the employers.

In many European countries, there is a special police called “against-fraud,” that takes care of these types of irregularities. However, in Norway, the employees themselves must take the company, which applies illegal work conditions, to court. Examples are the cases of: missing work insurance, missing pension contribution, missing contracts and registrations and missing payments. A court case may be extremely expensive for a seasonal worker.

Pension Authority (Finanstilsynet) and the Governmental Labor Authorities (Arbeidstilsynet) have explained that to take to court the companies that apply illegal work conditions, should be done (potentially and utopistically) each year by the employees. This happens because the authorities do not have any mandate to investigate the correctness of the administration of a company during the years before an inspection, and sanctions are extremely rare. The mandate for these authorities is very narrow. Neither seems to be a methodology to prevent this from happening during the following years. Therefore there aren't the necessary instruments for the authorities to draw a picture of the company's general situation, from the points of view of legality and business management.

When an employee takes a case to court, he/she has no guarantee of economic assistance from the state. Moreover, the Norwegian fund aimed to economically support people at court, is leaving behind work issues, prioritizing major crimes. Another aspect that has emerged is that it is also impossible for the employees to collect the necessary proofs, to take a case at court. In fact the authorities do not help the employees neither the workers' unions. This lack of help from the authorities becomes very crucial in the matter of pension contribution. For example to prove that a company violates the law systematically each year and that most of its employees haven't had any pension contribution in the present and in the past, not accidentally but operating fraud. The EU Court of Human rights has been contacted about these pension issues that appear to be discriminative against temporary workers and poor workers. It is relevant to highlight how a case against the Norwegian State has been won by an immigrant, for missing economical legal assistance in work-related crucial issues.

### ***Part 2: The role of regulations***

The Norwegian work market is organized into three main parts that, in normal conditions, act together: the employer, the workers (represented by the “Workers' representative-Til-litsvalgt” or by workers' unions) and the Norwegian State. During the last 30 years, a progressive deregulation of the private market has taken place, where more bureaucracy has replaced controls. The private market is mainly based on trust; the authorities have a very narrow mandate for controls and limited resources. Inspections are prioritized



concerning the personal safety and health of the workers. The system is not punitive, and sanctions are rarely given; consequently, the size and type of sanctions do not produce any relevant impact on the companies. As a consequence of the above, companies that apply poor or illegal work conditions gain a competitive advantage towards the companies which are respectful of rules and ethics. Unfair market competition might be beneficial to the companies operating along such blurred lines.

There are also several lacks in the Norwegian legislation in the matter of workers' protection. Basically, the workers should investigate and take care of issues within their company, standing alone in front of the employers, risking a non-renewal of the employment contract. The workers' representative, the health and safety organization "ombudsman" and the workers' Union (if the person is affiliated to a Union), may be called upon to assist in raising the issue internally. If nothing is achieved in this way, the employee may report the case to the Arbeidstilsynet, and workers' Union may assist in taking the case to court. Most of what is often a matter of public law in the EU countries, in Norway, oppositely, is delegated by the state to the private law, and therefore, to the individual citizens. Such practice is not acceptable because of the severe consequences of discrimination that come with it.

For these reasons, both EFTA and the EU Court of Human Rights have been contacted for this study. It is an attempt to bypass the standard approach of barely using politics to make the Parliament discuss these issues. On 28/03/2017, the local branch of Arbeiderpartiet (Labour party) approved a proposal aimed at empowering the authorities to increase sanctions and controls and to regulate better the temporary and seasonal works. The proposal is waiting for further approvals, to be presented at higher political levels.

Regarding the crucial need of a mandatory authorization to work as a tour guide, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry has answered us in the document 17/2659-2. It states that in Norway, the initiative to request for a mandatory examination to become a tour guide is an issue that has to be approached politically by the government.

The role of the workers' unions in Norway is crucial, because the system itself delegates to them controls and several practical actions for the protection of workers' rights. There appears to be a failure in the tourist business and in the seasonal or temporary work markets. In fact, there is a high risk of a non-renewal of the employment contract in case of complaints on the work conditions. The loss of reputation and the risk of receiving negative references from the employer are other disincentives. This generates frustration on the employees and they decide most often of not join a union. They also do not have the skills and the resources neither to control their employers, nor do they have access to company's records and to necessary documentation to win cases at court.

The authorities cannot conduct effective investigations to list the companies that regularly operate illegally, year after year, using also unfair market competition against other

companies. Most of the actions of the authorities are limited to cognitive investigation, without practical consequences. On the side of the workers, the Norwegian system is structured in a way where the employees should “want” to be associated with workers’ unions (e.g., LO), to receive protection. One condition that the unions have is that they can provide free legal help if the facts that require assistance happened after three months from the start of the membership, due to the cost of the legal support. Employees (mainly foreigners) only work for 5-6 months per year, the abuses start immediately and after this period they leave the country. This is the reason why the Norwegian authorities should have wider mandate for control and to take care of work-related issues.

In the tourism industry, unfortunately, most of the information is also written in the Norwegian language, the Norwegian system is also very complex, fragmented and this is a further issue for the workers to get known their rights. However, Arbeidstilsynet has web-pages in English which may be approached by workers speaking foreign languages.

To better inform the tour guides in Norway, all the regulations related to the tour guide business have been listed on one Facebook page in English: “To be a tour guide in Norway: what you need to know.” It did not appear to be an efficient way to solve the problem because most of the employees are not re-hired season after season. New employees do not become aware of this page.

So far many work-related issues for the employees have been described. But on the side of the employers also, the Norwegian system is structured in a way where the employers should “want” to be associated with employer’ unions (NHO). Only when a company is associated, NHO can investigate unfair market competition between companies. In the tour guide business, there isn’t any company that appears to be associated with NHO. There is only one company that has tariff agreement with LO: the “Norwegian white buses.”

As a last aspect of part of the study, we want to talk about health and security. Norwegian employers should register their employees in the NAV AA register within one month before the start of the work. This registration entitles the employee access to medical services and to have an appointed medical doctor called “fastlege”, who takes care of health problems unrelated to emergencies. Many guides did not have this registration done. Furthermore, they lacked contracts and registration with the Directorate of Foreign Affairs (UDI) and they may be missing official ID for identification when they are at work. As emerged from the declarations of employees, they have been forced to lie to security officers of some Norwegian harbors: they were told by the companies to confirm that a safety course had been provided to them, even though such training had never been administered.

### ***Part 3: Ethics, future perspectives, and proposal of best practices***

Ethics look to be a necessary part of the Norwegian system based on trust, but also an inefficient method to supply the lack of regulations, controls, and sanctions. This study

with practical examples has shown some limitations of the current legislation and organization of the Norwegian system. The Norwegian system based on trust somehow uses social pressure to make the people behave correctly, but in the tourism industry, in the seasonal or temporary work markets, this technique is not efficient. Instead, the current system is based on the law of the strongest, where the most aggressive, dishonest groups of people (or companies), can quickly put social pressure on local communities and intimidate the workers without having any reaction back from authorities, unions or the state. This practical study of 1.5 years should be used as a revelation, to understand that, although laws and regulations exist, the authorities have neither resources nor mandate to make them thoroughly respected. Deregulation and temporary jobs may undermine the role of unions, the fair market competition, and the balance of the three actors on which the Norwegian society is based on: the employer, the workers, and the Norwegian State.

The final result of a deregulated market is that the business inhibits itself, due lack of rules, instead of expanding. The inner incapacity of the market to regulate itself with simplistic ethics has been wildly documented in this study. Unions look more and more powerless in emerging sectors, such as tourism, and the state seems unable to take the genuine opportunities and new tax incomes.

The extreme complexity of the Norwegian administrative system, with bureaucracy instead of control, shows its limit because the authorities are not aware of: 1) what other authorities do; 2) what are their discoveries; and 3) what are their intentions. This lack of knowledge generates frustration and lack of trust in the workers toward the state, authorities, and unions. In the end, a weaker feeling of being part of the society is generated, which can become an issue for the integration of the foreigners.

Norwegian working life is based on regulations, trust, and companies' self-control; hence, all businesses need ethically sound owner, leadership to display transparency, provide service quality, to earn positive reputation and respect. In lack of such, we propose that the Tour Guides' National Association becomes the reference institute for a "Respect of standards and certification of guide quality charter" and that Working Life Inspectors audit these companies annually.

## Conclusions

Good reputation, transparency, and quality of the services seem to be at stake for the parts of the tourist businesses involved with both hiring and providing tour guides services in Norway. The tour guide business and the touristic sector, in general, appear to be very "unbalanced." This lack of balance is also shown in the content of the working contracts, meaning that employers have most of the advantages, while the employees have most of the risks and of the disadvantages. Through several examples, this study demonstrates enormous differences between theory and practice in this business, between law and application of the law, and between expectations and reality. The

sector offers excellent opportunities for the private job market of Norway, but due to unruly business practice, gaps in the legislation, lack of mandate, resources for control, deregulation and the progressive marginalization of the role of the unions, these opportunities may be wasted. Norwegian employees and permanent foreigners are often discriminated and are left out of the job market by Norwegian companies. Incomes from the taxes for the State become almost insignificant, while the revenues for the entrepreneurs are increasing.

This study understands that some companies work correctly and that some employees are satisfied with the work conditions. But the general status of the system, its issues and the limitations in the Norwegian law, make this branch of the tourism industry in need of a profound reformation.

The national association of tour guides should be asked to set transparent rules and standards, and a certification system for the companies should be configured to distinguish ethical firms from low-quality companies. The current market has more demand for tour guides than what is offered in Norway. From an economic point of view, this is the optimal condition to transform a business, which partly has the quality standards of amateurs, into a profession with decent standards and reasonable salaries. This job could be a work career alternative. The need for a severe mandatory certification to be a tour guide looks to be a more and more an essential step for the future of the tour guide business. This certification should be one of the political priorities for any future action in this industry.

We may conclude with a letter from two German people that went to Norway at their own expenses, paid for the rent of an apartment, and had to go back to Germany within three days from their arrival because they refused to accept the work conditions they were offered:

*"Hi Chiara, here's our story: We found the job ad on a german job search website. We send them our application and talked to XXXX\* on the next day. He (the tour guide manager) didn't ask us about our qualifications, just asked if we speak the languages that we had put on our CV. Then he only wanted to know how fast we can be in XX\*\*/Molde. We arrived last Friday and went to the Geiranger-Molde tour on Saturday. On Sunday we went to Ålesund and in the afternoon directly to Olden. Before traveling to Norway XXXX\* sent us information papers of 3 tours after we requested it. We have never received any information (duration of the tour, content, etc.) about the Tours during our stay in XXXX\*, our only information came from our talks with our guides and what we wrote down during the two tours. We didn't even get information about how the proceeding of the training will be. Late at night we got information about the training next day. On Sunday afternoon the tour guide manager XXXX\* sent us a text message and told us that he needed us to guide in Olden on Monday. It would have been our third day, we have never been there, didn't have a contract and haven't received any information. I replied him that we do not want to be responsible for a group of tourist and that we cannot do it. At around 10 PM XXXX\* came to Olden and tried to convince us to guide the next day. He did not listen to our arguments, told us that*

*it is legal to guide without a contract, that the tour is not so difficult etc. We insisted on our points and so he told us that if we do not guide tomorrow we can't work for the company. We replied that if those are his conditions, we won't work for the company.*

*This is the short story of our short time in XXXX\*. Hope it helps! Please treat this information confidentially, we do not want that our names appear on public! If you have any questions, just ask.*

*All the best, A and B\*\*\*"*

*\*Note: the tour guide manager is called "XXXX"*

*\*\*A work location*

*\*\*\*The e-mail is signed. For privacy reasons the names of the two authors have been omitted*



# The Variables that Affect the Occupational Commitment Levels of Tour Guides: The Case of Turkey

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## Abstract:

*The purpose of this study is to reveal and analyze the variables that affect the occupational commitment levels of tour guides in Turkey in terms of their subdimensions. Three-component (affective, continuance, and normative) occupational commitment model developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) was used. 370 active tour guides took part in this sample. t test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used in analyses. It was observed that the affective occupational commitment levels of the participating tour guides did not go through any statistically significant changes at  $p > 0.05$  level in accordance with their demographic characteristics, such as gender ( $p = .896$ ), age ( $p = .981$ ), and educational level ( $p = .818$ ). It was also observed that the affective occupational commitments of tour guides did not show any statistically significant differences in accordance with their years of experience ( $p = .317$ ). However, a difference was observed between affective occupational commitment levels of tour guides with and without side jobs ( $p = .047$ ); and high level of difference ( $p = .000$ ) was observed between affective occupational commitment levels of tour guides in accordance with their differences and statuses. It was observed that the affective occupational commitment levels of tour guides with side jobs were higher than the affective occupational commitment levels of tour guides without any other jobs. It was also observed that affective occupational commitment levels the full-time freelancers, or seasonal tour guides were higher than the tour guides, who work for a travel agency.*

## Keywords:

*Tour Guiding Profession, Occupational Commitment, Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Turkey.*

## Introduction

Tour guides are one of the most important actors of tourism, which occupies a critical position in all economies. Tour guides are professionals, who are the immediate witnesses of satisfactions/complaints of tourists, who both enhance the quality of the sector and shape the future of tourism with the help of their observations, experiences, and accurate feedback (Ahipaşaoğlu, 2006, p. 2). A successful tour guide contributes to improvement of the image of (Geyik, 2011; Temizkan, 2010) his/her country and the tourist area, and to enhancement of satisfaction levels of tourists. A satisfied tourist not only becomes a potential loyal visitor of a specific destination, he/she also plays a natural role in efficient promotion of the area (Ap & Wong, 2001).

Tour guiding, which has increasingly been becoming an appealing and sought-out occupation, has recently grabbed the attention of many researchers in international and national literature. The studies in literature mostly focused on education of tour guides (Prakash & Chowdhary, 2010; Rabotic, 2015); the relationship between performances of tour guides and tourists' satisfaction, (Zhang & Chow, 2004); the competences/qualifications of tour guides, (Meged, 2010; Kozak & Yetgin, 2013); roles of tour guides (Cohen, 1985; Black & Weiler, 2005; Toker, 2011), eco-tourism and sustainability (Mills, 1920; Weiler & Crabtree, 1998; Skanavis & Giannoulis, 2010), occupational problems of tour guides (Ap & Wong, 2001; Prakash & Chowdhary, 2010), expectations from tour guiding occupation (Torland, 2012), and the levels of satisfaction and contentedness (Köroğlu, 2011). Although there are many studies on commitment for different occupational groups, it is observed that there are only a few studies on occupational commitments of tour guides.

Tour guiding is a distinct occupational group with its own idiosyncratic characteristics, qualities, and standards. Thus, it is important to measure occupational commitment levels of tour guides, and to make suggestions to increase these levels. The purpose of this study is to analyze the occupational commitment levels of tour guides in terms of their subdimensions to reveal the variables that affect these.

## Literature

### *Occupational commitment and its subdimensions*

*Occupation* is defined as the working of the employees in a job for a certain period of time to survive and earn an income (Lee, Carswell & Allen, 2000). In order to succeed in any career, the professionals of the job should have a deep commitment that goes beyond their desire to make money (Benligiray & Sönmez, 2011, p. 29). Commitment is defined as "the motive that drives people to act towards a certain purpose". In other words, commitment means being enthusiastic about maintaining a valued relationship for a long time (Çermik, Şahin & Doğan, 2010, p. 202).

*Occupational commitment* is the psychological relationship that an individual develops between himself and his occupation, and his affective responses to his occupation (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). This concept was first introduced by Becker in 1960 through *Side-Bets Theory*, and used as a reference in further studies. The number of studies on this subject has increased after 2000s. In literature, the subdimensions of occupational commitment are discussed in a uni- and multi-dimensional manner by various researchers. Uni-dimensional occupational commitment concept (scales) were developed by Blau (1985), Aranya and Ferris, (1984), Morrow (1983), Greenhaus, (1971), Ritzer and Trice (1969); multi-dimensional occupational commitment concept (scales) were developed by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) as three-dimensional, and by Blau (2003) as four-dimensional concepts. The occupational commitment dimensions developed by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) are affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment.

*Affective commitment* arises when the individuals do their occupation out of love, when they wish to continue what they are doing, and when they identify with their occupations. Considering the behavioral repercussions of affective occupational commitment, the individuals, who are affectively committed to their occupation, consider their occupations more important, follow professional publications, and participate in conferences related to their professions (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993).

Affective occupational commitment is considered as the most desired dimension among all dimensions of occupational commitment (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). Especially in a service-based industry like tourism, affective occupational commitment becomes more significant. This is because the service provider can have direct positive or negative influence on tourist's experience. When compared to other tourism professionals, tour guides interact with tourists for longer times. In this case, if the affective commitment level of the tour guide is high, the tours will be more successful.

*Continuance commitment* means individuals may commit to the occupations because they perceive a high costs and negative outcomes of losing their jobs, and that they continue working by necessity (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). The forced continuance for fear of losing everything and starting over, and the fear of failing in finding another occupation are not desirable motives. Since higher occupational continuance commitment levels show that the individuals are not doing their jobs willingly, this commitment levels are expected to be low in tour guides.

*Normative commitment* occurs when the individual continues to work and commits to his/her organization because he/she think it is the most correct and ethical thing to do. The individuals with high normative commitment levels continue to work because of their strong sense of duty and responsibility, develop a mandatory commitment to their jobs (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993), become more loyal to their professions, and dedicate themselves to their jobs (Durna & Eren, 2005, p. 211). Thus, the tour guides are expected to have high levels of normative commitment.

***The variables that affect occupational commitment***

There are many factors that affect occupational commitment. There are some demographic characteristics among these, such as gender (Cunningham et al., 2012; Frauman, Ivy and Cunningham, 2011), age (Özmen, Özer & Saatçioğlu, 2005; Lee, Carswell & Allen, 2000; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993), and educational background (Cohen, 2007).

It is known that demographic factors have an influence on occupational commitment and its subdimensions in general. However, it is observed that different or similar results were found in numerous studies. For instance, Frauman, Ivy & Cunningham (2011) and Kaldenberg, Becker & Zvonkovic, (1995) found that men are more affectively committed to their occupation than women; Chiu & Ng, (1999) found that women are more affectively committed to their occupation than men. Cunningham et al. (2012), found no significant differences between affective and normative commitment, although the continuance commitment levels of women were found to be lower than of men's. In another study, however, it was revealed that gender and occupational commitment were unrelated (Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000).

According to the results of Özmen, Özer, and Saatçioğlu's (2005, p. 6) study, there is a poor connection between age and occupational commitment. According to Meyer, Allen, and Smith's (1993) study on nurses, age is related to occupational affective and normative commitment, but is not related to continuance commitment. Lee, Carswell, and Allen (2000) found a mid-level relationship between age and occupational commitment. In another study, no connections were found between age and occupational commitment (Goulet & Singh, 2002). It was found in Cohen, (2007) and Yuan, Yu, Li, and Ning's (2014) studies that as the educational level increases, the occupational commitment levels increase as well.

Along with demographic characteristics, some occupational variables also affect occupational commitment. It is observed that the longer work experience (Tang et al., 2012; Özmen, Özer & Saatçioğlu, 2005; Solmuş, 2004; Lee, Carswell, and Allen, 2000), participation (Aydın, 2010), job satisfaction (Kaldenberg, Becker & Zvonkovic, 1995), and organizational commitment (Lee, Carswell & Allen, 2000; Cohen, 2007) have positive impacts on occupational commitment. However, it is also observed that work stress (Pai, et al., 2012; Aydın, 2010), and burnout syndrome (Çiftçioğlu, 2011; Brown and Roloff, 2011; Raiziene & Endriulaitiene, 2007) have negative impacts on occupational commitment.

In this study, gender, age, and educational background were used as demographic variables that affect occupational commitment. The variables that affect occupational commitment are professional experience, having a side job other than tour guiding, and tour guiding status. Tour guides in Turkey tend to engage in side jobs because of occupational problems and economic concerns. At this point, it is important to reveal occupational commitment levels of tour guides with side jobs. Apart from this, it is observed in many other studies that tour guides have problems with travel agencies. It is important to reveal whether these problems affect the occupational commitment levels of tour guides.

## Method

Three-component model of occupational commitment developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993), which has been tested by many researchers, was used. This scale includes 18 articles for affective commitment (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7), continuance commitment (8, 9, 10, 11, 12), and normative commitment (13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18). The articles that contain negative statements were reverse-scored (2; 3; 5; 6). The statements in this scale were measured with 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Cronbach Alpha values for occupational commitment scale are 0.854; affective commitment is 0.792; continuance commitment is 0.706; and normative commitment is 0.846. this value is above 0.700, which is the acceptable limit in social sciences (Nunnally, 1978, p. 245). In order to get better results from reliability level, the article 11 of continuance commitment, "There are no reasons for me to switch jobs", was removed from this evaluation.

This research was conducted with participation of active tour guides. According to the data of Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Union of Turkish Tourist Guides' Chambers (TUREB) for June 2016, there are 7290 active and 2707 inactive tour guides in Turkey. In case there is a definite number regarding population, the size of the sample is calculated by using the following formula:  $n = (Nt^2 pq)/(d^2 (N-1)+t^2 pq)$ . The sample, which was calculated through this formula, contains approximately 370 participants with 5% of fault tolerance.

Proportional distribution method in stratified sampling was used in order to determine a sample, which will best represent the population that includes active tour guides. In this method, the sample is first stratified depending on the purpose of the study. In order to represent the sample, some certain strata are created according to the proportion of each substrata within the population. Independent samples are selected from each homogeneous substratum (Kothari, 2004, p.). Professional Associations for tour guides are the substrata of the sample. There are 13 tour guiding associations in Turkey. The ratio of the number of active tour guides under any tour guiding association to the total number of active tour guides is determined through the following formula:

$$n_{\text{Professional Association}} = \text{Sample} \frac{\text{Number of Active Tour Guides under an Association}}{\text{Number of Active Tour Guides in Turkey}}$$

A survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews, e-mails, and social media on tour guides between August 20 and October 10, 2016. As a result, 394 survey forms were received, the incomplete forms were eliminated, and 370 survey forms were taken into evaluation in accordance with stratified sampling method.

T-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used in analyses in order to find out whether the averages of affective, continuance, and normative commitment subdimensions of occupational commitment show significant differences in accordance with tour guides' demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, and educational background, and occupational characteristics, such as experience, side job status, and professional status.



## Findings

The sample of this research includes 370 tour guides. 243 male (65.7%) and 127 female (34.3%) tour guides participated in this study. 19 participants (5.1%) are between the ages of 20 and 25; 88 participants (23.8%) are between the ages of 26 and 31; 83 participants (22.4%) are between the ages of 32 and 37; 68 participants (18.4%) are between the ages of 38 and 43; 60 participants (16.2%) are between the ages of 44 and 49, and 52 participants (14.1%) are over 50 years old. 19 participants (5.1%) are high school graduates; 43 participants (11.6%) have associate's degrees; 241 participants (65.1%) have bachelor's degrees, and 67 participants (18.1%) have master's degrees (See Table 1).

**Table 1:** *Demographic Characteristics of the Participants*

Variables		n	%
Gender	Female	127	34,3
	Male	243	65,7
Age	20-25	19	5,1
	26-31	88	23,8
	32-37	83	22,4
	38-43	68	18,4
	44-49	60	16,2
	50+	52	14,1
Educational Background	High School	19	5,1
	Associate's Degree	43	11,6
	Bachelor's Degree	241	65,1
	Postgraduate Degree	67	18,1
Seniority	1 year and less	34	9,2
	2-7 year	103	27,8
	8-13 year	103	27,8
	14-19 year	50	13,5
	20-25 year	33	8,9
	26 + year	47	12,7
Side Jobs	Yes	135	36,5
	No	235	63,5
Tour Guiding Status	Full-time (Travel Agency)	32	8,6
	Seasonal (Travel Agency)	44	11,6
	Freelancer -Full-time	145	39,2
	Freelancer - Seasonal	149	40,3

34 participants (9.2%) have one year or less experience, 103 participants (27.8%) have 2-7 years of experience, 103 participants (27.8%) have 8-13 years of experience, 50 participants (13.5%) have 14-19 years of experience, 33 participants (8.9%) have 20-25 years of experience and 47 participants (12.7%) have more than 26 years of experience. 135 participants (36.5%) stated that they have side jobs other than tour guiding, however, 235 participants (63.5%) stated that tour guiding is their only source of income. 32 participants (8.6%) stated that they work full-time as tour guides for a travel agency (TA), 44 participants (11.9%) stated that they work seasonally for a travel agency, 145 participants (39.2%) stated that they work as full-time freelancers, and 149 participants (40.3%) stated that they work as seasonal freelancers

### Analysis

Table 2 shows mean, standard deviation, mod, median, skewness and kurtosis values for occupational commitment scale applied to tour guides. The average of affective commitment subdimension is highest among other factors with 4.04. this is followed by continuance commitment with 3.69, and normative commitment with 3.35. the option with highest frequency is 5 in affective and normative occupational commitment subdimensions. Table 2 shows that central measures of location (median) are also close to arithmetic average (mean). Skewness value of affective commitment, which shows whether the data is normally distributed, is -1.018, kurtosis value of affective commitment is 1.118; skewness value of continuance commitment is -.644, kurtosis value of continuance commitment is .086, and skewness value of normative commitment is -.157 and kurtosis value of normative commitment is .711. Skewness and kurtosis values should be between -2 and +2 in order to show a normal distribution according to Bachman (2004, p. 74).

**Table 2:** Mean, Standard Deviation, Mod, Median, Skewness, and Kurtosis Values of Occupational Commitment Dimensions

Sub dimensions of occupational commitment	Mean	Standard deviation	Mod	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis
Affective commitment	4,04	,81	5,00	4,21	-1,018	1,118
Continuance commitment	3,69	,94	4,00	3,75	-,644	,086
Normative commitment	3,35	1,02	5,00	3,33	-,157	,711

It was observed that the occupational continuance commitment levels of participating tour guides did not show any differences according to their genders ( $p=.690$ ), and ages ( $p=.060$ ). However, a statistically significant difference was observed in occupational continuance commitment levels ( $p=.033$ ) of the participants according to their educational backgrounds. The average of occupational continuance commitments of tour

guides with high school diplomas and associate degrees is higher than of tour guides with bachelor's or master's degrees. Statistically significant differences were observed between the experience levels ( $p=.008$ ), side jobs ( $p=.001$ ), and statuses ( $p=.007$ ) of the participants and their continuance occupational commitment. It was also observed that the occupational continuance commitment levels of the participants with less experience were lower than the long-serving tour guides. It was observed that the occupational continuance commitment levels of the participants with no side jobs, who work on seasonal basis (regardless of whether they work independently or for a travel agency), were higher than the others.

**Table 3: Discriminant Analysis Table Regarding Sub-dimension of Occupational Commitment**

Variables			Affective commitment				Continuance commitment				Normative commitment			
			Mean	Standard deviation	f	p	Mean	Standard deviation	f	p	Mean	Standard deviation	f	p
Demeographical features	Gender	Female	4,04	,81	,153	,896	3,67	,95	,160	,671	3,34	1,01	,00	,948
		Men	4,03	,80			3,71	,90			3,34	1,03		
	Age	20-25	4,01	,93	,145	,981	3,46	1,21	2,14	,060	3,35	1,22	1,41	,218
		26-31	4,06	,77			3,49	,97			3,33	1,02		
		32-37	4,06	,89			3,68	,91			3,40	,99		
		38-43	3,97	,81			3,75	,99			3,10	1,01		
		44-49	4,05	,78			3,70	,86			3,35	1,05		
		50+	4,07	,72			3,99	,72			3,58	,908		
	Educational Background	High School	3,9474	,76	,310	,818	3,75	1,08	2,9	,033	3,07	1,03	1,10	,348
		Associate's Degree	3,9934	,77			3,92	,99			3,55	,991		
		Bachelor's Degree	4,0391	,82			3,71	,91			3,33	1,01		
		Master's Degree	4,1130	,77			3,41	,92			3,32	1,03		
Professional features	Seniority	1 year or less	4,1513	,83	1,18	,317	3,48	1,15	3,19	,008	3,47	1,04	2,62	,024
		2-7 years	4,0222	,88			3,47	,91			3,35	1,05		
		8-13 years	4,1359	,78			3,85	,92			3,52	,97		
		14-19 years	3,8200	,68			3,59	,98			2,98	,87		
		20-25 years	4,0693	,83			3,73	,98			3,06	1,12		
		26 + years	4,0213	,76			3,98	,59			3,41	,99		
	Side jobs	Yes	4,15	,81	,209	,047	3,47	,95	,707	,001	3,33	1,05	,769	,381
		No	3,97	,80			3,80	,91			3,35	1,00		
	Tour Guiding Status	Full-time for a travel agency	3,86	,99	6,59	,000	3,54	1,16	4,07	,007	3,02	1,19	2,5	,056
		Seasonal for a travel agency	3,60	,89			3,72	,85			3,23	1,04		
		Full-time freelancer	4,17	,71			3,88	,87			3,50	,98		
		Seasonal freelancer	4,07	,78			3,51	,94			3,29	,98		

Normative occupational commitment levels of participating tour guides did show any statistically significant differences at  $p > 0.05$  level in accordance with their demographic characteristics, such as gender ( $p = .696$ ), age ( $p = .981$ ), and educational level ( $p = .818$ ). It was also observed that normative occupational commitment levels did not show any statistically significant differences in accordance with their involvement in side jobs ( $p = .381$ ), and their statuses ( $p = .056$ ). However, it was observed that the normative occupational commitment levels of the participants differed in accordance with their experience ( $p = .024$ ), and the commitment levels of tour guides with 14-17 years of experience were found to be lower than the others.

## Conclusion and Discussion

At the end of the analysis, it was observed that among all subdimensions of arithmetic averages of participating tour guides, the factors were ranked as: affective occupational commitment levels, occupational continuance commitments, and normative occupational commitments, respectively. This indicates to what extent the tour guides identified themselves with their professions. Occupational continuance commitment was ranked second. The fact that there are a few alternative job opportunities, and economic reasons are closely associated with continuance commitment (Arslantürk, 2016).

Since the tour guides go through very tough conditions to become tour guides, the other job alternatives are limited, and negative economic conditions in Turkey, the continuance commitment levels of the members of this occupational group becomes higher and more important. The normative commitment levels of the participants are ranked last. We believe that the normative occupational commitment level, which is related to codes of practice and ethics, will be higher with increasing professionalization, occupational standardization, and norms.

The affective occupational commitment levels of the participants did not show any differences in accordance with their demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, and educational background, and their experience. However, a difference was observed in affective occupational commitment levels of the participants as per their involvement in side jobs or their statuses. It was also observed that the occupational continuance commitments of the participants did not show any differences in terms of gender and age, but showed differences in terms of their educational backgrounds. It was also observed that the continuance commitment levels of the participants showed differences in terms of their involvement in side jobs and statuses. It was observed that the normative occupational commitment levels of the participants did not show any differences in terms of their demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, and educational background, and their experience. However, normative occupational commitment levels of the participants showed differences in terms of their involvement in side jobs, and their statuses.

No differences were observed in affective, continuance and normative commitment levels of the participating tour guides in terms of their genders and ages. The reasons of this are considered to be the fact that tour guides love what they do, they want to remain in business, they identify themselves with their jobs, they think that this job is entertaining, and it reveals social aspects of the people, that they get to spend time with people at their moments of pleasure (Mancini, 2001, p. 22-23), freedom of travel, and they believe this is an engaging and entertaining job (Wong and Wang, 2009).

While no differences were observed in affective and normative occupational commitments in terms of their educational backgrounds, differences were observed in occupational continuance commitment. The occupational continuance commitments tour guides with high school or associate degrees were found to be the highest. Similar results were found in another study on banking sector. Since the alternative job opportunities for tour guides with bachelor's and master's degrees will appear, lower commitment levels are perceptible (Firat, 2015).

While the experience of participants did not cause any differences in affective occupational commitments of tour guides, it led to a difference in continuance and normative commitment levels. However, when their occupations attain a significant place in individuals' lives, they then begin to internalize the values and ideology of their profession, and their occupational identities grow stronger (Lee, Craswell & Allen, 2000; Morrow, 1983, p. 489). It is observed that occupational commitment increases with experience. This promotes and supports similar studies in literature (Firat, 2015; Cunningham et al., 2012; Tang et al., 2012; Sears, 2010). Studies show that the affective commitment levels of the individuals are lower at the beginning of their careers, but as they advance in their careers, and begin to accommodate themselves with their professions, and their affective commitment levels increase. The individual begins to incorporate his/her skills and knowledge into his/her job, gets rewarded, and reaches his/her career goals and these increase the affective commitment levels (Weng & McElroy, 2012, p. 257).

It was observed that the continuance occupational commitment levels of the less experienced tour guides were lower than the more experienced tour guides. The duration of experience is explained through occupational investments. As this duration increases, the amount of investments also increases, and this increases the continuance commitment levels and reduces the chances of the individuals to quit their professions. In addition, the alternative job opportunities for individuals begin to decrease as the time passes (Firat, 2015; Cunningham et al.; Tang et al., 2012; Sears, 2010; Özmen, Özer & Saatçioğlu, 2005, p. 5).

The normative commitment levels of tour guides with +26 years of experience are higher than the ones with 14-19 years of experience. According to Meyer Allen and Smith (1993), the individuals with strong normative commitments feel obliged to continue what they do, and they explain this in ethical terms. The individuals in this group consider professional membership as a duty. Pursuant to the Law on Tour Guid-



ing Profession enacted in 2012 in Turkey, it became mandatory for all tour guides in Turkey to register with the nearest trade associations. The purpose of this obligation is to secure occupational uniformity, to unite the performers of this occupation under a common purpose, and to ensure joint action for resolution of problems and career development. Higher normative occupational commitment levels for tour guides are foregone conclusions following the particularly this date. At the end of this study, higher normative commitment levels were observed at the beginning of their careers and later on. While affective and continuance occupational commitment levels of the tour guides showed differences in terms of their involvement in side jobs, no differences were found between normative occupational commitment levels. The affective occupational commitment levels of the participants with side jobs were found to be higher. This study is compatible with the literature. In his study, Meged (2017) found that the tour guides with side jobs become more selective on tours, and try to make their professional lives more entertaining. It may have become inevitable for the tour guides to do side jobs, who feel affectively committed to their occupations. It was found that the occupational continuance commitment levels of the tour guides without any side jobs were higher. It could be concluded that the tour guides with no side jobs earn sufficient amount of income, and they feel committed to their jobs since they do not want to lose this income and their jobs. The fact that they shaped their careers on tour guiding may also have an influence on this difference.

The involvement of tour guides with side jobs did not cause any differences on their normative commitment levels. So, this shows that the normative commitment, which requires duty, responsibility, and other consciences, is not related to whether the tour guides do side jobs or not. In any case, the tour guides overwhelmed by these feelings would eventually feel committed to their jobs.

The affective and continuance occupational commitment levels of the tour guides were found to show differences in terms of their statuses. The affective commitment levels of the freelancer tour guides were found to be higher than the ones, who work for a travel agency. The following problems may be considered as potential causes: the fact that the travel agencies want to pay them below base wage (Güzel, Türker & Şahin, 2014), that the travel agencies fail to take this occupation seriously, being forced to act as brokers, and insufficient social rights (Yazıcıoğlu Tokmak & Uzun, 2008; Köroğlu et al., 2007; Batman, 2003).

It was also observed that the occupational continuance commitment levels of seasonal tour guides were higher than the tour guides, who work full-time. Since they work harder in certain times of the year, lose income and job opportunities, lack job security (Yazıcıoğlu, Tokmak & Uzun, 2008; Akbulut, 2006; Ahıpaşaoğlu, 2006) and fixed income, they have concerns about earning sufficient amount of income to support their families (Güzel, Türker & Şahin, 2014), and they are retired later than others because of seasonal and aperiodic work conditions (Ahıpaşaoğlu, 2006), it is normal for seasonal tour guides to feel occupational continuance commitment.

Finally, it was observed that the statuses of the tour guides did not influence their normative commitment levels. As well as the participants, who are affectively committed to their occupations, working for a travel agency, or working as a freelancing, full-time, or seasonal tour guide did not make any differences for tour guides, who are normatively committed to their occupations.

Even though the tour guides are freelancers, they sometimes offer service in tours organized by travel agencies and tour operators. Thus, there is significant connection and relationship between these two. Tour guides work under travel agencies, or they work for those agencies as independent tour guides (freelancers). "The tour guides, who work under travel agencies, are under the wageworker status, and they are obliged to participate in tours organized by the travel agency" (Demircan, 2007, p. 18). While the ones, who work as an employee of a travel agency, may receive fixed salaries, the freelancers are only paid when they participate in any tour as the tour guide. However, the literature review shows that the tour guides in Turkey mostly have problems with the travel agencies (Güzel, Türker & Şahin, 2014; Yazıcıoğlu Tokmak & Uzun, 2008; Köroğlu et al., 2007; Batman, 2003). In order to decrease occupational continuance commitments and increase affective occupational commitments of tour guides, the travel agencies should improve the working conditions of the tour guides, should cooperate with the tour guides when organizing and planning tours and excursions, should not pay tour guides less than the base pay, should not force tour guides to act as brokers, should not employ illegal and unauthorized tour guides, should reward the tour guides, who receive highest scores in customer satisfaction surveys, and should ensure occupational safety and security.

The occupational commitments of tour guides are the determinants of the quality of service provided by the tour guides. At this point, if the tour guides give prominence to their occupational identities, make more of an effort for their jobs, and act by placing importance on ethical principles for occupational purposes, their occupational commitment levels would increase. If occupational commitment increases, the job performance of tour guides and tourists' satisfaction may increase, the image of the travel agency may be improved, and more loyal potential tourist may be attracted.

This study was applied on a sample selected among active tour guides, who work in Turkey. Implementation of the same research on inactive tour guides in Turkey, and a comparative research, which compares active tour guides or active tour guides in other countries, may be suggested.

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# Amsterdam: Interpreting the city in “free” walking tours

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## Abstract

*The so-called “free” walking tour constitutes a disruptive influence on the tourism industry. Companies offering “free” tours use similar business models as, for example, Airbnb. Although “free” walking tours have been criticized from various angles (tours are not really free but tip-based; guides are often not professional tourist guides), the “free” tour is perhaps to the guided walk what Airbnb is to the hotel industry: difficult to regulate, denounced by traditional companies, yet very popular with tourists. This paper looks at the interpretation delivered during five “free” tours of the city of Amsterdam.*

## Keywords:

*Amsterdam, free walking tours, tourist guides, interpretation*

## Introduction

The rapid and disruptive growth of the sharing economy has deeply impacted the tourism industry. The start of the sharing economy was celebrated as a progressive technological and economic innovation. Originally, it was heralded as a money-making opportunity for “ordinary people” and a way to build more sustainable and socially connected societies; these positively framed perspectives were most welcome after the 2008 financial crisis (Schor, 2014; Scholz, 2014).

However, the introduction of large for-profit platforms backed by venture capitalists, such as Airbnb, signified a move away from the initial idealism which inspired many peer-to-peer sharing communities (Scholz, 2014). Sharing is an ancient world-wide custom and in its common sense meaning “sharing” is about a joint use of goods, resources or space without any monetary benefits involved. Obviously, Airbnb - whose co-founders became the first “sharing economy” billionaires in 2014 (Konrad & Mac, 2014) - and similar platforms are something completely different. When “sharing” is market-mediated - when a company provides the means for consumers and owners to engage in market transactions for purposes of profit - it is not sharing at all (Kalamar, 2013; Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2015). In these cases, “access” economy would be a more appropriate label; in the access economy technology mediated platforms provide consumers with access

to someone else's goods or services while making money in the process (Scholz, 2014; Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2015). When stripped of all the common-good and "sharing" rhetoric that these platforms wrap around their business models, they constitute just another form of multinational capitalism. Instead of curbing the growth of the mainstream economy, they contribute to it on a large scale, according to Kalamar (2013): "all those spare rooms, empty car seats, and idle hands can be translated into money, once they are brought to the market". The platform economy is even referred to as a form of "hyper capitalism" which induces people to rent out what before had been given for free. Social relations which might have been characterized by real sharing are now exposed to monetary calculations, giving rise to considerations such as "will I invite family and friends to stay or rent out my spare room via Airbnb" (Rifkin, 2000; Kalamar, 2013; Franken, 2016; Martin, 2016). Morozov (2013) refers to it as "neo-liberalism on steroids" which commercializes aspects of life previously beyond the reach of the market. So, it is perhaps not surprising that the initial euphoric mood regarding the access economy seems to have changed. Several cities, of which Amsterdam is one, are engaged in a battle with Airbnb and similar platforms to try and reduce their disruptive impact, not just on the hotel business but also on the local housing situation and social cohesion in neighbourhoods.

### Free walking tours

Another disruptive influence on the tourism industry is the so-called "free" walking tour. Companies offering "free" tours use similar business models as, for example, Airbnb. Through social media and websites, they connect tourists and independent guides while making money in the process. The "free" tour is perhaps to the guided walk what Airbnb is to the hotel industry: difficult to regulate, denounced by traditional walking tour operators, yet very popular with tourists.

"Free" tours have been criticized from various angles. Tours offered are not really free but operate on a pay-what-you-want basis. Many tourists are by now familiar with this concept and have no problems to tip the guides after the tour. Others, however, are surprised and upset when they are pressurized into paying gratuities at the end of a tour. Complaints about this practice, which can be perceived as misleading, has led to regulation in, for instance, the UK. In March 2017, the Advertising Standards Authority issued guidelines which put an end to advertising "free" tours when they are in fact tip-based. In their advertisements, companies using this business model must now prominently state that "guides will be inviting discretionary payments ...." (ASA, 2017). Tour operators should make clear that such payments are entirely voluntary and they also must notify customers when guides have to remit part of their gratuities to the company (ASA, 2017). If this is the case, then discretionary payments should not be referred to as "tips".

Another objection to "free" tours concerns the guides: many "free" tours are not led by professional tourist guides but by locals, students or expats from English speaking

countries without any guiding background (Steves, 2009; Miranda, 2013). However, being a tourist guide is a professional and responsible job, for which guides train and take exams which guarantee a certain level of knowledge and competence. They should therefore be paid a decent wage and not be dependent on tips according to various guide organizations (Barker, 2013). In the case of “free” tours, the question is whether the information provided by the guides is accurate and who is making sure of that?

“Free” tours have therefore greatly contributed to the casualization of tourist guide labour. Today, anybody can be a guide (as long as on-line reviews are satisfactory) but without job security or knowing how much their earnings will be. Many “free” tour companies call their guides “self-employed” or “volunteers” and technically do not employ them (Miranda, 2013; Poulter, 2017). Instead of the companies taking responsibility for basic labour conditions, in many cases the guides must pay the company a fee which can range from a percentage of their tips to a fixed amount for each tourist joining the tour. This can add up to two or three euros per customer, regardless of how much or little people tip or if they leave before the end of the tour without paying anything (Steves, 2009; Barker, 2013; Miranda, 2013; Schlaf, 2014; Hu, 2017; Poulter, 2017). To make sure that guides will comply with this, some companies send a staff member to departure locations to count heads or take photos of departing groups as a way of knowing how many tourists joined and how much money they can collect from the guide. This business model is supplemented in many cases by the guides recommending and trying to sell other, paid-for tours and excursions during the “free” tours.

The business model of these operators is contested and has been under attack in various countries. In 2010, for example, German television broadcast company ZDF reported extensively on Sandemans, the largest provider of “free” tours in Europe (The Local, 2010); this led to investigations of alleged illegal employment practices and suspicion of tax evasion. Nevertheless, these tours are hugely popular with both guides - there seems to be no shortage of people willing to work on this basis - and tourists. For tourists, the advantages of “free” tours are obvious. It is a casual and cheap way of getting to know a city; participants do not have to pay in advance, can just show up at a designated time and place (to be found on the companies’ websites and social media), take the tour with anyone else who happens to be there, and then leave a tip with the guide at the end. When it is raining or something unexpected comes up, tourists can postpone their walk without cancellation or losing money.

## Research methods

Academic research on “free” guided tours is quite limited to date. Londoño and Medina (2017) analyse the development of “free” walking tour companies based on the concept of evolutionary economics and using case studies of Barcelona and Berlin. Meged and Christensen (2017) look at job crafting in relation to the collaborative economy through the perspectives of guides working with Copenhagen Free Walking Tours. Meged and Zillinger (2018), building on a case study of a company in Copenhagen, show that “free”

guided tours are not merely a new product but a disruptive market innovation in the field of guided tours. Willis (2014) describes Sandemans Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Tour and the interpretation delivered by the guide (a young girl from New Zealand, temporarily located in Berlin). This, however, is not a free but a paid-for tour which currently costs 16 euro per person (Sandemans New Europe Tours, 2017a).

This paper looks at the interpretation delivered during “free” tours of Amsterdam. Witnessing the growing stream of large groups walking the downtown streets on “free” tours, the author became interested in the interpretation (crucial to the image of Amsterdam participants will take home) delivered by the - mostly young - guides and joined some walks. The research was conducted from a qualitative perspective; its aim was to explore and describe the narratives produced during these tours and to shed some light on the way in which Amsterdam is interpreted in “free” walking tours. A mixed methods approach was used for this purpose. The author took five “free” city tours between mid-August 2016 and February 2017. Instead of labelling this activity “participant observation”, the author prefers to call it “walking-along”; this denominates both the fleeting character of the contact with the guide and group as well as the activity undertaken together. Although full disclosure of the work and the role of the researcher in qualitative research is recommended and it is considered unethical to operate “under cover” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), this is precisely what the author did and felt comfortable with; the purpose of walking-along was to gain an understanding of the interpretation delivered during the tours. No personal information was collected from the guides as this would indeed have been unethical. For this reason, the interpretation was not recorded; field notes were taken while walking along and transcribed immediately after each tour.

A content analysis was then performed on the interpretation gathered. This provided the author with information on how the guides constructed narratives of Amsterdam and on the points of interest highlighted in their interpretation. To gain a more complete picture of both companies and their tours, an analysis of their websites was conducted to discover their business philosophies as well as how they present themselves to prospective customers. Although the information gathered sheds some light on the way in which Amsterdam is interpreted in “free” tours, the number of tourist guide narratives collected is currently limited, making any conclusions on the content of the interpretation tentative.

### **Amsterdam and “free” walking tours**

Amsterdam is doing quite well these days. In the 2015 Anholt-GfK Roper City Brands Index, Amsterdam made it into the top ten for first time (GfK, 2016). After years of decline, the population is growing again with the number of inhabitants up from just over 790,000 in 2012 to nearly 835,000 in 2016 (OIS Amsterdam, 2016). Many people are making Amsterdam their home for shorter or longer periods with the largest group of newcomers those between the ages of 20 and 34. Amsterdam today is also one of the most popular destinations in city tourism in Europe with over 17 million visitors



in 2015 (Amsterdam Marketing, 2016). This can be credited to several factors such as cheap flights, a clean-up of the city combined with a very successful city marketing and branding campaign (initiated in 2004), and the rise of Airbnb and similar platforms.

In fact, Amsterdam has perhaps been too successful in attracting tourists. Amsterdam is a small city with a mere 835,000 inhabitants. Current estimates say the number of visitors to Amsterdam will almost double to 30 million in 2025 (NRC, 2016). For many locals this is a frightening prospect. Today, citizens are already complaining about crowdedness, noise, and drunken tourists in the city centre. Here, many neighbourhood shops have disappeared due to massive rent hikes only to be replaced by bike rental outlets, souvenir shops and fast food joints catering to tourists. As in other cities, gentrification and “hotellification” of the downtown area has taken place with Airbnb properties and expensive hotels popping up everywhere; bank buildings, post offices, university buildings have been sold to hotel companies, all adding up to a less diversified city centre (Shorto, 2016; Moorman & Boutkan, 2017).

The “free” walking tour phenomenon is contributing to the feeling of crowdedness and of being swamped with tourists in the city centre in a big way. On good days a hundred or more tourists gather at various times of the day on Dam Square, the departure point of most of the “free” tours (author’s observations). The many companies offering these walks try to make themselves known to their prospective customers with assorted colours of umbrellas, making for an often chaotic scene at departure times with orange (360Amsterdam), white (Free Walking Tours Amsterdam), yellow (FreeDamTours), blue (City Free Tour Amsterdam) and, the most well-known of all, Sandemans’ red umbrellas competing for attention.



**Figure 1:** Sandeman New Europe. Photo by author

Recently, the local government initiated various policies to try and regulate walking tours. To counter the large groups crowding the narrow streets, blocking passageways, obstructing entrance to shops, and often producing a lot of noise, the municipal government drew up a covenant with walking tour operators in Spring 2017. Those who signed, committed themselves voluntarily to restrict the size of their walking groups to preferably 20 and maximum 25 persons and to not conduct tours after 23.00 hours (Pen & Damen, 2017). However, since several tour operators have declined to sign this agreement and many guides do not adhere to the size limit, local politicians are now pushing for regulation where only licensed tourist guides will be allowed to conduct tours in parts of the city centre, notably the Red-Light district (Couzy, 2017).

### **“Free” guided tours: Sandemans New Europe Tours and Free Walking Tours Amsterdam**

For this paper, three walks were taken with Sandemans New Europe Tours, the largest player in the European “free” tour market. Founded in 2003 by Chris Sandeman, this company is - according to its website - the pioneer of the “free” tour concept which they advertise (although not on the website’s opening page) as “an innovative, gratuity-based model that puts the power back into the hands of the modern-day traveller” (Sandemans New Europe Tours, 2017b). Obviously, this concept has been very successful since Sandemans currently operates in eighteen cities across Europe, the Middle East and the USA (Sandemans New Europe Tours, 2017b).

Sandemans has five to six departures a day of their “free” Amsterdam tour; they also offer five paid-for tours such as an *Alternative Amsterdam Tour*, a *Red-Light District Tour* and an *Amsterdam Food and Drink Experience*; these cost between fourteen and 26 euro per person (Sandemans New Europe Tours, 2017c). According to their website, the Sandemans gratuity-based tours “represent a unique style of infotainment (mixing history and charismatic storytelling through the guide’s own personality and flair) ...” (Sandemans New Europe Tours, 2017b).

The other two tours were operated by Free Walking Tours Amsterdam (FWTA), a small Amsterdam based company. They offer three daily departures of their “free” city tour while their “free” *Alternative Amsterdam* tour runs once a day. They also have a weekly food tour which, in their words, is “free (tip based) and the samples are included” (Free Walking Tours, 2017). FWTA emphasizes - perhaps to distinguish themselves from Sandemans - the “Dutchness” of their guides. The tours are “guided by Dutch guides”; “as Dutchmen we will tell you about Dutch culture and typical Dutch food”; tourists will “see Amsterdam as an Amsterdammer” and “experience a personal tour from a Dutch” (Free Walking Tours, 2017). Intrigued by this specific underlining of being “Dutch”, the author opted for two walks with the – Dutch – guides of FWTA.

An analysis of both companies’ websites further indicates they position themselves as offering value for money as well as providing an insiders perspective on Amsterdam.

FWTA is different from Sandemans in that all their tours are “free” as well as in the size of their groups. FWTA limits groups to twenty and sometimes 25 people (Free Walking Tours, 2017), thus complying with the 2017 covenant. Sandemans, on the other hand, states (September 2017): “... we work hard to achieve an average group size of 26 PAX and we will always try to keep numbers under 30. However, 40 is our absolute maximum” (Sandemans New Europe Tours, 2017d). This substantial number is perhaps understandable from the point of view of the tip-based business model. However, this size is not only highly impractical in downtown Amsterdam, it also shows that Sandemans is obviously flouting the rules laid out in the covenant.

### **Amsterdam: interpreting the city in “free” guided tours**

After taking five walks, the first that stood out was, as already noted above, the huge popularity of these tours. Even on a rainy Sunday in February there were more than 50 people gathering for Sandemans tours in English and Spanish and some 20 for the tour run by FWTA. It raises the question if these tip-based tours have perhaps increased the popularity of walking tours, especially among a younger generation who cannot afford the 20 euros per person that is the average fee for a guided walk with a “normal” operator in Amsterdam.

The FWTA tours had fifteen and 20 participants; the three Sandemans groups had 25, 32 and 29 participants. This is too large to navigate downtown Amsterdam without causing nuisances for other pedestrians. Furthermore, there are few places large enough for groups of 30 people to stand around and listen to a guide (and those few places will often have other groups standing around simultaneously); a consequence was that sometimes the guide had already finished speaking before all group members had arrived; another consequence was that tours had a minimal number of locations where information was provided and a fair amount of - fast - walking between them.

### ***Amsterdam interpreted***

Routes were largely the same on all five walks, although Sandemans’ are longer, having a mid-tour break in a café for a toilet stop and selling other tours, and include the (outside of the) Anne Frank house and surrounding area. Guides of both companies construct their interpretation around a limited number of topics: the origins of the city, Amsterdam as a town built on trade, the royal palace and family, religion and the Jewish area, and Amsterdam as a liberal and tolerant city, notably demonstrated in its drugs and prostitution policies. Although there is nothing wrong with these topics for a first introduction, they also affirm common stereotypes of Amsterdam as a city of drugs and prostitution, a city where the Dutch tolerated just about anything as long as money could be made. In fact, all were surprisingly conventional tours with a mainly historical focus similar to those offered by traditional tour operators (see e.g. Tours & Tickets, 2017), something which was also found by Londoño and Medina (2017) in their research on “free” walking tours in Barcelona and Berlin and by Meged and Zillinger (2018) in their work on tours in Copenhagen. The topics covered and the

stories delivered were in no way exceptional, exclusive or tailored to the current trend of authentic and local experiences.

### ***Sandemans guides and interpretation***

The three - male - Sandemans guides had all lived in Amsterdam for a couple of years; none had Dutch nationality (although there are Dutch nationals working as guides for Sandemans). All started their tour by explaining the tip-based concept; they did this mainly by commenting in a negative way on tours with fixed prices, saying things like: "all too often at the end of a tour you think: it wasn't really worth the 20 euros so you walk away unsatisfied. We solved this issue for you: we deliver the tour, if you like the tour you pay what it was worth to you and you always walk away satisfied". The three guides provided more or less the same information during their tours and they did this quite well - all three were knowledgeable, providing detailed information on the topics mentioned above; they also presented some stories and anecdotes (e.g. about the royal family), although nothing that could not be easily retrieved from the Internet. There was the occasional mistake (e.g. the locations of trading posts of the Dutch East Indies Company) which, most likely, would not have been noticed by the average tourist. Two Sandemans guides made supposedly funny (although the audience did laugh) comments on the Dutch: the Dutch being stingy or being tolerant (of various religions, for example) as long as money can be earned.

Sandemans, as noted above, promises "infotainment (mixing history and charismatic storytelling)". This was not the case on the three tours taken by the author. Perhaps it had to do with the guides not having lived in Amsterdam long enough, but there seemed to be a distance between the guides and the city as well as between the guides and the groups. There was little interaction and a lack of emotional and personal stories of what living in Amsterdam meant to them; stories that perhaps would have enabled the guests to make a deeper or more emotional connection to the city.

### ***FWTA guides and interpretation***

The two FWTA guides - also male - were Dutch as mentioned on the website. Although their introduction of the tip-based tour was similar as Sandemans', they had a different approach to their customers. They shook hands with everybody (which allegedly is more difficult to do with over 30 participants than with under 20), engaged people in a brief conversation (their names, where they were from, what they had done in Amsterdam so far, a news item) which facilitated interaction between participants en route. As noted above, the topics addressed and interpretation delivered was to a considerable extent the same on all five tours. However, the FWTA guides mixed in more personal stories - family history during the Second World War, bars they loved and why, places they had lived, some of which the author still remembers half a year later. They also had better guide skills, not only facilitating interaction between group members but also warning people repeatedly to take care while crossing the streets, and waiting for the group to gather before starting a story.



## Concluding remarks and discussion

“Free” guided walking tours are hugely popular. Perhaps - although this would require more research - these pay-what-you-want tours have contributed to an increase in the popularity of guided walks, especially among a younger generation, aided by the fact that they are easily accessible; although on-line registration is encouraged, it is most of the times possible to join on the spot, making a more spontaneous form of joining a guided walk possible.

The five tours described visit the most touristic spots in the Amsterdam downtown area; starting on Dam Square they make their way to the Red-Light district, pass along a few (too) narrow streets and canals to end up on Dam Square again; Sandemans walk down to the Anne Frank house and surroundings. Places visited are the most well-known that participants most likely would have found without a guided tour. The fact that all tours - including those of other companies operating walking tours in Amsterdam - visit the same streets, bridges, squares, and canals adds to an uncomfortable feeling of crowdedness in these parts of town; it also creates dangerous situations sometimes. Self-regulation regarding group size has not had the desired effect so far, making further municipal regulation in the near future necessary.

The limited research on the interpretation delivered during the tours shows that guides strongly focus on historical themes and developments; the narratives constructed depict Amsterdam in a stereotypical way as a liberal place throughout the centuries where currently drugs and prostitution have free reign. The tours were perhaps good enough for a first introduction but offered no new or surprising perspectives on the city. To gain a more complete picture of “free” guided tours, however, further research would be necessary, including not only more tours and different companies but also the perspective of participants (beyond the obvious Facebook comments and TripAdvisor ratings); why do they join and how do they value these tours; what is the image of Amsterdam that emerges from these tours for them and how is this different from the image they had before; what do they remember of the interpretation delivered.

Finally, although currently popular, a question is whether these tours will be interesting and special enough in a time when local and authentic experiences are becoming ever more important. In fact, “free” tours have only signified the beginning of providing travellers with access to tours and experiences with the help of mobile technology. Airbnb has recently entered this market with Airbnb Trips (Ting, 2017). Here, as with many other already existing smaller platforms in this line of business, the focus is on local, unique and personalized experiences where direct host-guest relationships contribute to a higher level of perceived authenticity, something that the investigated “free” tours did not deliver.



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# Tour Guiding and Professionalism: Emerging Structural Issues in Turkey

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Scientific inquiry into the concepts professions as well as professionalism has held its place especially through sociological research and organizational studies since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Crook, 2008). Researchers in these areas have put considerable efforts in order to attach specific features to professions in an attempt to prescribe criteria to distinguish any given profession from daily routines or work. From a tour guiding perspective, referred to as “pathfinder”, “exegetai” “proxemos”, and “bear leaders” in early times, to Pond (1993), tour guiding “... surely ranks among the world’s oldest profession.” However, considering the present formation and organizational structure, handled by TUREB (the National Union of Tourist Guides’ Chambers) established by law to govern tour guiding and guides at the nationwide, tour guiding seems to succumb to issues related to (de)professionalism in Turkey. Taking this into account, this paper sets out to examine the issues related to professionalism first through a literature review dealing with a wide range of theories on professions ranging from structural –functional, power-privilege approaches to process-practice as a conceptual framework, then through conducting a focus-group study with a group of seasoned tourist guides in order to elaborate on the issues and implications will be mentioned.

**Keywords:** theories on profession, professionalism in tour guiding, national regulation, tour guiding organization, Turkey

# Does governmental regulations relate to tourist guides' perceived levels of job stress, job satisfaction and career plans? Tourist guides in Catalonia and Norway compared

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*Background and purpose* - Despite the multiple and diverse roles of tourist guides and the benefits this bring to the tourism destination, the tourist guide profession and work environment are under-researched. This study compares two different contexts of tourist guiding. One is Catalonia (Spain), where tourist guides are regulated by law and the Catalan government is the institution issuing the official guiding licenses.

Norway is the other, where there is no requirement or license needed to be a guide and there is no governmental regulations for the guiding profession. In this line, the researcher aimed to identify the relationship between the guiding context – that is, regulation or not, and elements of the work environment – and the levels of job satisfaction, job stress and career plans.

*Design and methods* – An exploratory / descriptive design was chosen for a quantitative data collection approach. The data was collected through a questionnaire-survey sent to 860 registered tourist guides in Catalonia and 300 guides in Norway that were members of the Norwegian Guide Association.

*Results* – The guiding country (non-licensed guides in Norway vs. licensed guides in Catalonia) does not explain the variance in the levels of job satisfaction, job stress and career plans. However, elements within the work environment have been found to predict job satisfaction, job stress and career plans.

*Conclusions* – The guides' work in itself – the tasks with their pleasures, challenges, and hazards - relates to guides' levels of job satisfaction, job stress and career plans. This is in line with research in other occupations. Protection of the job by regulations were



perceived as important by the guides, however, less central than the job content for job satisfaction, job stress and career plans.

**Key words:** tourist guide, job satisfaction, job stress, career plans, licenses

# Being in the minority: the challenges of being a female tour guide in Jordan

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Tourism is a significant global industry and according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2013) supported about 2.6 million jobs representing 8.9% of total employment across all industries, many of which are undertaken by women.

The tourism literature shows that women working in the tourism industry are often concentrated in low status, and low paid jobs (Levy & Lerch, 1991) such as cleaners, cooks and hospitality workers. They are often underpaid, under-utilized, under-educated, and under-represented (Global Report on Women in Tourism, 2010). These working conditions create many challenges for the women. Yet, limited research has been carried out to explore such challenges from the perspectives of female workers themselves. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the perceptions of Jordanian female tour guides. Using qualitative interviews, the paper offers insights into the phenomenology of female tour guides, addressing issues relating to their work-life balance, status, family matters, and their cultural commitments.

**Keywords:** Female tour guides, tourism employment, work-life balance, women, Jordan

# Rethinking sustainability dimensions in guided ecotourism tours

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A new project on Urban Ecotourism starts in January 2017 in Denmark with a focus on establishing a number of guided tours in two protected areas: National Park Skjoldungernes Land around Roskilde and Nature Park Amager very close to the city center of Copenhagen. Traditionally, the concept of ecotourism has been associated with remote natural areas but this project introduces the concept of urban ecotourism and brings ecotourism principles into a much more urban context linked to semi-wild and cultural landscapes. This paper discusses the revised definition of ecotourism (TIES 2015) which to a higher extent emphasizes interpretation and educational aspects to both guests and staff. It discusses how the different principles of ecotourism can be integrated into the overall methodological approach of the project: conceptual development of themes and narratives, design of facilities, guide training and development of tours offered to tourists and locals in the two areas. The project aims at developing and testing urban ecotourism tours in order to develop a model/blueprint and a toolkit for spreading the concept to the growing number of national parks and nature parks in Denmark. Consequently, the overall process will be researched closely and lessons extracted for contributing to this dissemination. Evaluations of the experiences of guides and urban ecotourists as well as the awareness raising effects are key aspects. We invite for critical discussions of our methodological design approach and implementation of ecotourism principles in a more urban context.

**Key words:** urban ecotourism, guide training, awareness raising, research, Denmark

# **Sustaining sustainability? Hidden and open tourism imaginaries in guided tours on the island of Gotland, Sweden**

**Consuelo Griggio, Doctoral Candidate and research assistant,  
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The island of Gotland and the hanseatic town of Visby (World Heritage Site) are well-known and developed tourist destinations in Europe. Gotland is famous for its mild climate, rich history, beautiful nature, and lively cultural life. The municipality is currently investing in a new pier that will bring over 60.000 new visitors to the island by 2018. As per today, a million annual visitors share resources and space with 57.000 islanders, making sustainability a primary concern.

The University of Uppsala campus Gotland has recently started a multidisciplinary project called Hållbara Besök (Sustainable visit). The goal is to provide Gotland with innovative research that will help the region to develop into a fully sustainable destination socially, economically, culturally, and environmentally. My research with tour guides is part of this project.

By mediating and interpreting a place, tour guides have a pivotal role in transmitting, perpetuating, and promoting a destination's tourism imaginaries. Tourism imaginaries are "socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and that are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices" (Salazar 2010a). Tourism imaginaries become tangible and institutionalized through images, ideas, performances, and narratives portrayed by destination marketers, media, tour guides, and museums.

In my research on sustainability and tourism on Gotland, besides following tour guides, I have also trained and I am currently working as a tour guide. The aim of my research is to identify what tourism imaginaries are currently being transmitted during guided tours and analyze the potential to develop more sustainably oriented narratives that can help Gotland and its visitors to make tourism a truly sustainable industry.

Preliminary results show that imaginaries on sustainability in guides' narratives are mostly absent or well 'hidden'. Major causes, according to most tour guides, are lack of specific training and interest by the part of the municipality.

**Key Words:** tour guides, sustainability, Gotland, Visby, tourism imaginaries.



# Sustainable ecologies in guided tours

Eva Diekmann, Certified Guide,  
Entrepreneur, Copenhagen, Denmark

Copenhagen is known as one of the most sustainable cities in the world. Working as a guide I want to give my guest an introduction to sustainability while visiting Copenhagen. For me it is important to inspire by visiting some of the sights and projects where sustainable frontrunners, companies, civil organisations, the citizens, the municipality or a mix of these, have made a difference.

While participating the course, Nordic Sustainability, I got the idea to use the United Nations 17 Global Sustainable Development Goals as a frame for my communication.

The strength of the SDGs is that they are global. All 193 countries have agreed on these goals. A common language together with a colourful design makes them a frame for talking about sustainable development wherever in the world you are from.

One of the challenges for the UN right now is to make people aware of the SDG's. As said: "We are not going to reach the 17 Goals by 2030 if nobody knows them".

I can contribute to address two challenges with my guided tours of Copenhagen. A: Make visitors aware of the SDG's,

B: Give visitors hands on examples and experiences of how daily life and daily life routines can be a part of the solution to reach the SDG's by 2030.

My idea is to use classical Copenhagen highlights and some of the nice and more hidden spots as an entry to communicate the SDG's.

Using the SDG's as frame for guided tours, gives me a perfect platform. It gives me the possibility to talk about the good examples, the challenges, the complexity and the very important thing, that everything is connected.

**Keywords:** Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Holistic understanding, Hands on experiences, Daily life experiences

# How to make package tours sustainable

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Co-owner of Urban naturewalk Århus Denmark

Both clients, agencies, guides and local communities have an interest in sustainable tourism. And all four levels of the players have an opportunity to promote sustainability.

When a customer buys a guided tour, there will rarely be direct contact between the customer and the local guide. Often the tour is included in a tour package the travel agency purchased through an incoming agency. There can therefore be several links in between the customer and the local guide.

The customer may on his own initiative even find a limited selection of tours on the internet - but how can the customer succeed in finding sustainable tours at an unknown destination? And make sure that the product full fill the expectations?

When local sustainable guides stand as a provider of sustainable tours to big companies they must face requirements on delivery, volume and available guides throughout the season.

The result is all too often that agents and customers choose a safe standard solution with the usual excursion. And the guide may for the benefit of the visitor and for his own pleasure add sustainability as a value.

In this paper, I will highlight the challenges faced by the guide who wants to communicate sustainability in a standard tour. How can the guide within the given possibilities and conditions offer the customer a sightseeing addressing the principles of sustainability? I will also analyze the opportunities the local guide and other stakeholders have to influence customer choice in a sustainable direction. And based on concrete examples, I will discuss solutions and points, all relevant stakeholders can work with when selling or purchasing sustainable tours. As perspective, I will highlight the opportunities that a community has to promote sustainable tourism

**Keywords:** destination image, sustainability, package tours, urban nature, guided tours

# Tourist Guides as Educators and Changing Agents: The case of the Marquis of Pom- bal Palace, in Oeiras

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The article recalls the authors' experience as certified guides and lecturers at a higher institute, considering the visits performed with graduate students of Tourism Information (i.e. Tour Guiding and Tourism Promotion) over the years to Oeiras' Pombal palace. A theoretical approach on interpretation opens this paper. The historic presentation of the venue's main areas ensue, followed by shortcomings and suggestions for the future tourist management and interpretation frameworks of palace and gardens. Therefore, the article aims at granting propositions that might be applied to assist guides, tour operators and the venue's managers to prepare (complementary) general and theme tours, and host niche markets to fully grasp the cultural resource's charisma and *ambience*.

Brochu and Merriman (2002) sustain each generation of interpreters enhances the legacy of its predecessors by expanding the science and enriching the art. On the other hand, Weiler & Black (2015) claim that guides resort to many interpretative media, such as drama, storytelling and narratives, in order to create more persuasive tours. All in all, both interpretation narratives and techniques leading to mental time travel are key to the clients' understanding of a site's evolving identity, especially when complemented with the teasing of the visitors' senses as one shall reveal.

Appropriate and effective competence on interpretation techniques allied to professional practice and theoretical background during the education of Tourism Information students are pivotal to shape the future of guided tours.

**Keywords:** Heritage Interpretation, Oeiras, Pombal Palace, Tourist guides, Tourism Information.

# The Eye-Opening Role of Tour Guides in the Slum Experience

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The slum tourism, which has always been a matter of debate although it has become one of the most rapidly-growing types of tourism after 2000s, has been analyzed in this study. While slum tourism is supported due to its potential to lead the middle and upper class to help poor population in the suburbs through touristic purchasing activities, it is also criticized by others since it is an exploitative, voyeuristic and imperialist approach to human life. This study has been conducted to reveal the thoughts of people on “*slum experience*”, who experienced *slum tourism activities* in Mumbai, India, a popular activity especially among Western tourists, and the role of tour guides in formation of those opinions. In line with the purpose of the study, the tourist comments on *slum tourism* on Trip Advisor have been reviewed and content analysis has been carried out on these comments. Each comment has been coded and categorized, and thematized separately. Thereafter, the themes related to “slum tourism experience” and “tour guides” have been reviewed. Thus, the thoughts of people, who had “a real slum experience” in Mumbai, where poverty became a personal/private show, and the role of tour guides in formation of those opinions have been revealed. In consequence of the analysis, it has been observed that especially the regional tour guides, local people and kids had a significant role on formation of thoughts and opinions of tourists on slumtourism.

**Keywords:** Slum tourism experience, tour guides roles, voyeurism, Mumbai.

## Tours to thanatouristic places; opinions of tour guides.

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The distressing events of the last two centuries of human history have preserved their place in memory today through widespread tourism activities. The mention of these events is the subject of travel events today. The widespread belief that the areas of war, fear and cruelty in recent years, which are the subject of these activities, are regarded as cultural heritage. Thanatourism is known as a tourism activity involving the execution areas, the areas where mass killings are made, war zones, or visits to places where death events occur. The focus of Thanatourism activities is to bring the mind to the forefront of reviving nostalgia by taking the angle facing the life of the person facing death. Therefore, such activities provide for the revival of the atmosphere of the moment, with the aim of reviving the places by constructing monumental buildings or exhibiting the memories of the deceased people in the museum. On the other hand, this move the past sentiment into action strengthens the national feelings of belonging to the individual. This whole process of interaction occurs when symbols of the past have been emphasized.

On July 15, 2016; a very sad situation took place in Turkey "A coup attempt"... Traitors threatened the civilians in Istanbul, Ankara and some other cities. Especially in Ankara -The Capital City of Turkey, traitors attacked to Grand National Assembly building, Special Forces headquarter and Air Forces Association center. After this attempt, these points have become national monumental and thanatouristic points. Tours have organized to these points to show national struggle of Turkish people.

Tourist guides are among the most important representatives of the international promotion of the cultural heritage of a country as the first person that the tourists meet in a foreign country. In this study, it is aimed to discover of tourist guide's opinion about thanatouristic destinations. The data of this study will be collected from tourist guides in Ankara-The Capital City of Turkey. At this point, tourist guides have very important role to narrating of July, 15.



# Assessment of the Potential of Thermal Tourism in Eskisehir through the Perspective of Tour Guides

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While it was one of the most important industrial cities in Turkey, the city has recently become a tourist attraction with great efforts of the local authorities. Due to its geological structure, Eskisehir has many thermal springs. Thus, people have been visiting the city since the ancient ages in order to stay healthy and improve the quality of their lives. However, the domestic tourists, who visit the city through package tours, are not able to adequately benefit from the thermal resources. The purpose of this study is to determine the level recognition of the thermal tourism resources in Eskisehir by the domestic tourists. A qualitative research has been made by utilizing primary and secondary sources, and within this context, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with seven tour guides living in Eskisehir. In consequence of the descriptive analysis of the data obtained from the interviews, it has been observed that the domestic tourists do not visit the city for thermal tourism, due to inadequate publicity of the thermal resources in Eskisehir, the city has formidable competitors in its immediate surroundings, the publicity may be increased with the support of local and national authorities, and so the supply capacity of thermal tourism may be improved. This is a significant study with respect to encouragement of touristic use of thermal tourism resources in Eskisehir, and thus, to the extension of the duration of stays, and the contribution to urban economy of the city, which stands out with its key elements of urban tourism.

**Keywords:** Potential of Tourism, Thermal tourism, Tour guide, Eskisehir, Turkey.

# The future of the Tour Guide profession in Norway: status, regulations and ethics

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While the income from the Norwegian petroleum industry has dropped, the tourism industry has demonstrated growth potentials. The tour guide business has become strategic in this context and fundamental for the growing cruise tourism. However, due to lack of a mandatory governmental certification of tour guides and the unfastened structure of the business, new guide companies may cut costs by shorten training, ignore laws of working life, and lower guide service quality. This study *explores* to which extent a) new guide services align with standards of the Tour Guides' National Association; and b) their working conditions are acceptable in relation to the Working Environment Law and the General Agreements with the Employees' Union.

*Data* emerged by consulting the Financial Supervisory Authority, The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, The Norwegian Union of Commerce and Office Employees (HK), the Tour Guides' National Association, lawyers, and observing a case at court.

The guides were mainly migrants occupying seasonal part-time jobs, not unionised, and thus minimum salaries rules did not apply. Training were shorter than for courses offered by the National Association. Some had to guide at unknown destinations and stay prepared for services 24/7 on very short notice without extra payment. Some lacked contracts or registration as employees in the social security system, and some were not reimbursed for food allowance during long distance journeys. In this wild market, pension and other workers' rights are vulnerable.

Norwegian working life is based on regulations, trust, and companies' self-control; hence, any business needs ethically sound owner- and leadership to display transparency, provide service quality, and earn positive reputation and respect. In lack of such, we

propose that the Tour Guides' National Association becomes the reference institute for a "Respect of standards and certification of guide quality" charter, and that Working Life Inspectors audit guide companies' work environment.

**Key words:** tour guides, certification, quality, collective agreement, work environment

# **The Norwegian Tourist guide Association: Presentation of a survey among local Guide Associations to map keyinfor- mation on members, theirlegalstatus, employment and other important issues**

**Kristian Bredby,  
Chairman of the Norwegian Tourist Guide Association**

In November 2016 The Norwegian Guide Association published a survey on important issues concerning those who works as Tourist Guides in Norway. The Association have about 550 individual members who mostly belongs in one of the 18 local Tourist Associations. To be accepted as a member of The Norwegian Tourist Guide Association you have to participate in the local "Guide courses" that have a curriculum in accordance with guidelines given by The Norwegian Tourist Guide Association, that both have a general part consisting of history, social - geography, knowledge of the Norwegian Society, culture etc. The basic theoretical part of the education consist of about 150 hours lectures in classes. The practical part of the education is on spot and focuses on the destination, the presentation of it and service and building of relations with the visitor. Both the theoretical and the practical part of the education is concluded in a written exam combined with a practical on the spot part. Norwegian Tourist Guides have to speak Norwegian and they have to qualify by exam in the different languages they want to seek authorization. The survey gave updated and important information about the working conditions of the Tourist Guides in Norway, and information about important factors to be taken into consideration when local Tourist Authorities plan the seasons ahead. The Norwegian Tourist Guide Association has as a result of the survey started a discussion with local Municipal Authorities on how to secure the quality of the Guide -services, and how local Authorities should act to secure the visitors positive experience, -secure the "Goosebumps."

# The Variables that Affect the Occupational Commitment Levels of Tour Guides: The Case of Turkey

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Tour guiding is a distinct occupational group with its idiosyncratic characteristics, qualities, and standards. The definition and improvement of occupational commitment levels of the members of this professional group are important, yet typically overlooked matters. As their occupational commitments increase, their performance would equally increase together with tourist satisfaction, the image of the travel agency would improve and they would be able to establish a potential for more loyal customers. Thus, it is very important to measure occupational commitment levels of tour guides and to make suggestions to improve these levels. Within this context, it is important to understand the factors that may increase or decrease tour guides' occupational commitment levels. There are various factors that determine and affect occupational commitment. The purpose of this study is to reveal the variables that affect the occupational commitment levels of active (certified) tour guides in Turkey. For this purpose, a survey was conducted on 370 active tour guides, who were determined through stratified sampling method. Three-component (Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment, and Continuance Commitment) Occupational Commitment model developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) was used to determine occupational commitment levels of tour guides. Descriptive statistics of this research and the relationships between the variables were analyzed through SPSS 22.00 program. It was analyzed whether there were significant differences between occupational commitment levels of tour guides in terms of control variables, such as gender, age, educational background, experience, second jobs (if any), and tour guiding status. Statistically significant differences were determined between affective commitment and being engaged in side jobs other than tour guiding, tour guiding status; between continuance commitment and educational background, experience, being engaged in side jobs and tour guiding status; between normative commitment and experience.

**Keywords:** Tour Guiding Profession, Occupational Commitment, Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment, Continuance Commitment



# **In which way can guides manage to be National guides in own countries and foreign countries with same group of tourists?**

**Carla Braga, Lecturer and PhD student,  
Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies (ESHTE), Portugal**

In today's world globalization, the work of Guide has new challenges, mainly due to the costumers demanding. Tourists from outside Europe have visited several countries just in one single trip (eg. American who visited Portugal, Spain and Morocco) but nowadays, due to economic crisis and the lack of money to travel, even the Europeans are visiting more than one country in the same tour.

Several European countries have (de)regulations for national guides, and how can guides face the labor question, when the tours include more than one country and the costumers prefer the same guide leading the whole tour?

Thus, should the role of a national guide, outside the border of her/his own country, change only into a tour leader role – providing less information - on the foreign country visited with same tourists? Or should the national guide, in a foreign country, try to provide the same kind of quality information as in the guide's home country, to maintain the tourists satisfied?

If outside own country's border the guide should act as a guide, how should this problem be solved? Should any kind of formation be provided by the host country to these foreign guides, in order to give them the best (in) formation to represent this host country? Are these foreign guides supposed to make an exam in the host country which allow them to be officially recognized as guides or tour leaders in these territories?

Our aim is to show the results of research concerning the guides/tour leader performance about Portuguese National Guides who lead Italians through Portugal and Spanish Galicia, as well as foreign guides who lead tourists through Lapland, including Finland, Norway and Sweden.

# Challenges and solutions following the deregulation of the tourist guide profession in Portugal: the case study of AGIC's members

**Cristina Maria R Sousa F Leal** chairwoman of the Portuguese Association of Tourist Guides and Tour Managers – AGIC

Based on the case study of AGIC's members, the association is able to present a pattern on today's work methodologies of tourist guides in Portugal. The profession was deregulated in 2011, which implied almost overnight, from the guide's point of view, a series of behaviour and professional alterations to meet the challenges that this reality imposes. Are guides evolving to being entrepreneurs? On the other hand, the work at hand of the Association itself also changed dramatically in order to provide for visibility of certified tourist guides. Is training and building partnerships the expected line of work of Guide's Associations? AGIC proposes in the IRFGT an extended overview of what has been done in Portugal to meet the tourist guides, tour operators and entities expectations since 2011.

**Keywords:** Deregulation - training - quality- entrepreneurship - partnerships

# Networked innovations in guided tours

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Guided tours have existed as long as there has been tourism. Through times, the tours have changed both form and content and one could argue that they still exist firmly because they have had the ability to adapt to new consumer demands. Recent years have generated a completely new form of tours: the free guided tours. Here, participants are offered a tour that they officially do not have to pay for, but which is tipped by the end of the performance. They pop up in ever more places around the world and demonstrate immense growth rates. Like many other segments of the sharing economy, it is extremely dependent on ICT. Without the possibility to interact with past, present and potential customers, the concept of a guided tour could not have transformed in such a quick and thorough way. ICT enables actors to interact with colleagues and peers and to perform different kinds of innovation.

This presentation is about a case study being done on networked innovation that is taking place within the scene of free guided tours in Copenhagen. Data has been collected on interactions between actors within the network of peers. In this way, both the own organisation and the actual market is being continually developed. ICT plays a key role, just as well as the relationships between the individual actors. It has been shown that close relationships building on friendship and trust are beneficial for the process of innovation. The fast growth of the sector of free guided tours however poses a number of difficulties, and it is not easy to stick to an organizational model based on friendship in times when business is growing at fast rates.

**Keywords:** guided tours, ICT, innovation, network, sharing economy

# Interpreting the City in “Free” Walking Tours

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The rapid and disruptive growth of the sharing economy has deeply impacted the tourism industry. The start of the sharing economy - a questionable term to describe technology mediated peer-to-peer access to under-utilized goods and services for free or for a fee - was celebrated as a technological and economic innovation. Originally, it was heralded as a money-making opportunity for “ordinary people” and a way to build world-wide social connections. Currently, the mood seems to have changed. Several cities, of which Amsterdam is one, are engaged in a battle with Airbnb and similar platforms to try and reduce their disruptive impact, not just on the hotel business but also on the local housing situation and social cohesion in various neighborhoods.

Another disruptive influence is the so-called “free” walking tour. Companies offering “free” tours use similar business models as, for example, Airbnb. Through social media and websites, they connect tourists and tour guides (locals who offer their underused knowledge of the city) while making money in the process. The “free” tour phenomenon has been widely criticized: tours offered are not really “free” but tip based and the people leading these tours are no professional tour guides. “Free” tours have also contributed to the casualization of tour guide labor. Today, anybody can be a tour guide (as long as on-line reviews are satisfactory) but without any job security or knowing how much they will earn per tour. Instead of the company taking responsibility for such basic labor conditions, the guides must pay the company a fee for each customer joining their tour from the tips they manage to collect.

Although some of these aspects have been addressed in publications, the interpretation delivered during “free” tours is much less researched. This paper offers an analysis of the content of five “free” city tours: three operated by *Sandemans New Europe Tours* and two by *City Free Tour Amsterdam*. The research was conducted from a qualitative perspective; its aim was to explore and describe the narratives produced during these tours and to shed some light on the way in which Amsterdam is interpreted in “free” walking tours of the city

**Keywords:** disruptive economy, sharing economy, Amsterdam, free walking tours, interpretation