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Author(s)	周, 建紅
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Representations from Miao people in ethnic tourism

（民族観光におけるミャオ族の自己表象）

Doctoral thesis summary

Jianhong Zhou

Hokkaido University

Graduate School of International Media, Communication, and Tourism Studies

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1 Abstract

Tourism representations of local people in mainstream discourses are often constructed by external stakeholders to either promote economic growth or exert political control. This is perceived as a form of new colonialism for local people. Based on this, this study critically investigates the epistemological and axiological aspects of local people's subjectivity in tourism representations by analysing interactions between Miao people and other stakeholders in Upper Langde Miao Village in China.

The findings reveal that the current political authorities' intense focus on the political value of Miao people's subjectivity perpetuates the long-standing stereotype of the traditional Miao image. Self-representations of Miao people in Upper Langde Miao Village in tourism are influenced by political authorities, often emphasising a traditional image. However, this mimicry is not a compelled form of colonial mimicry. Instead, it is a representation of Miao people actively embodying diverse subjectivity in various tourism practices. The diverse subjectivity local Miao people exhibit in tourism can, in turn, exert a positive influence on modern society.

This study makes two theoretical contributions by applying CR to investigate power interactions between local people and other tourism stakeholders, and by developing a critical realist understanding of the Other. Stratified reality theory and the dialectical assumption claimed in CR provide both synchronic and diachronic framework to examine the subjectivity of local people in tourism interactions. In addition, this study offers a theoretical framework by comparing 'Other' theories in Western and Asian philosophies. This study illustrates how and why the subjectivity of local people in tourism representations may be constrained and exhibited. It also serves as an inspiration for individuals to reflect on ethical proximity when engaging with others and advocates for the promotion of cultural tolerance and mutual respect.

2 Summary of thesis

This thesis is composed of nine chapters. Chapter 2 provides literature reviews and concludes by stating the research objective. Chapters 3–5 show how I approach the research objective by presenting theoretical, paradigmatic, and methodological assumptions. Chapters 6–8 display the analysis and summarise the results. Chapter 9 concludes the study.

1.4.1 Chapter 2

Chapter 2 shows the rationale underpinning ethnic tourism and tourism representation. I define the concept of ethnic tourism in this study by reviewing the rationale underpinning 'Indigenous identity', 'Indigenous tourism', 'ethnic minority', and 'ethnic minority tourism'. I show how, the two ethnic identities, Indigenous identity and ethnic minority identity, are conceptualised as distinct yet overlapping, how Indigenous tourism shifted from being perceived as a form of new colonial power to evolving into a force for community liberation in current studies, and how studies of ethnic minority tourism are still at the stage of critiquing colonial power in tourism. Against this background, I propose that my research objective is to explore the subjectivity of local people in tourism representations and emphasise the significance of this objective for both Indigenous tourism studies and ethnic minority tourism studies. Then, I present how the concept of 'tourism representation' transcends being merely an event presenting attractiveness and becomes a field of different power interactions involving various stakeholders. Based on this, I further refine my research objective to examine the subjectivity exhibited by local people in interactions hidden behind tourism representations using a holistic approach.

1.4.2 Chapters 3–5

Chapter 3 shows the theoretical assumption in this study. I focus on comparing and combining the 'Other' in Western and Asian philosophies to appreciate the distinct worldviews they generate. By doing so, I answer the question of how the interaction, identity of local people, and subjectivity are theorised by objectivists, subjectivists and critical assumptions. Based on this, I argue that the critical assumption of the Other is

more inclusive in establishing an interaction relationship between local people and other stakeholders. Inspired by Spivak (1985), I propose that the complex interaction can be understood through three synchronical dimensions: mimicry, hybridity, and the Third Space.

Chapter 4 shows the paradigmatic assumption in this study. I explain why critical realism (hereafter, CR) is chosen by comparing it with realism and relativism, as well as with objectivist, subjectivist, and critical paradigms commonly used in the existing literature on the Other. I suggest that CR's stratified reality assumption and dialectic assumption can reconcile the contradictions between realists' universal claims and relativists' concrete knowledge. A stratified reality assumption is necessary to establish a diverse theoretical dialogue between Western and Asian philosophies regarding theories of the Other. In addition, a dialectic interaction assumption provides a diachronic framework for examining complex interaction processes between local people and different stakeholders. These assumptions are essential for investigating the epistemological and axiological aspects of local people's subjectivity in tourism representations.

Chapter 5 presents the methodological assumptions by clarifying how local people's subjectivity in tourism representations can be investigated with critical discourse analysis (hereafter, CDA). I suggest that the complex interaction between local people and other tourism stakeholders should be embedded into the interaction relationship between local discourses and mainstream discourses, as well as discursive and extra-discursive elements (practice and social structure) of local people's tourism representations. In addition, a case study approach is adopted to guide data collection and analysis. Secondary data collection and semi-structured interviews are used to collect data, while CDA and thematic analysis are introduced to guide my data analysis.

1.4.3 Chapters 6–9

Chapter 6 delves into the influence of structural power on the construction of Miao representations and then identifies the obstacle to addressing problematic representations of Miao people in mainstream discourses. I clarify how these problematic representations of Miao people are formulated based on political

authorities' intense focus on the political value of Miao subjectivity. Specifically, I posit that the common thread among these varied representations in different contexts is their portrayal of the traditional image of the Miao people. Subsequently, I clarify how this traditional Miao image is shaped by political authorities' diverse understandings of Miao subjectivity. Building on this, I conduct further analysis to reveal the shared value judgments about political authorities that underlie these different interpretations. Finally, I argue that the obstacle in addressing problematic representations of Miao people lies in the singular political value judgment concerning the Miao subjectivity.

Chapter 7 examines self-representations of Miao people in local discourses to identify potential solutions to address the obstacle identified in the previous chapter. Based on local discourses, I elucidate how Miao people exhibit their diverse subjectivity in their interaction practices with other tourism stakeholders. I then analyse these interaction practices to identify how local people understand their subjectivity as diverse and transcendent, and the value of this subjectivity as an inclusive social value. Finally, I point out that practice strategies and inclusive social value represented by local Miao people can potentially serve as a theoretical reference for addressing the obstacle defined in the previous chapter.

Chapter 8 examines the influence of the Miao people's self-representations on tourism reality. The aim is to test the potential solutions proposed in the previous chapter and see if they are effective in addressing the problematic representations of Miao people. Based on discourses from tourism developers and tourists, I explain how tourism developers and tourists undergo transformations when interacting with local Miao people. I then analyse these interaction practices to identify how tourism developers and tourists understand the subjectivity of Miao people. Finally, I argue that the inclusive social value embodied in Miao subjectivity can effectively harmonise with the commercial value emphasised by tourism developers and the cultural value cherished by tourists, thereby promoting more ethical interactions among different stakeholders. Representations from local Miao people can help solve the problematic representations in a way that does not challenge but benefits political authorities in

consolidating political stability in a modern society that advocates cultural tolerance and mutual respect.

By drawing together results presented in Chapters 6–8, **Chapter 9** shows that political authorities' intense focus on the political value of Miao subjectivity still perpetuates the longstanding stereotype held by previous leaders in depicting the traditional Miao image. Local Miao people's self-representations in tourism is influenced by political authorities, often emphasising a traditional image. However, this mimicry is not a compelled form of colonial mimicry. Instead, it is a representation of local Miao people actively embodying diverse subjectivity in various tourism practices. This means that the political value emphasised by political authorities is not necessarily incompatible with the inclusive social value held by local people. In addition, when the subjectivity of local people is actively exhibited, it has a positive influence in rectifying the stereotypes held by mainstream groups.

3 Table of contents

Acknowledgements
List of Publications
Abstract
Table of Contents
Table of Figures
Table of Tables
Chapter 1 Introduction
1.1 Research background
1.1.1 Personal background
1.1.2 Ethnic tourism in China
1.1.3 Ethnic tourism in a global context
1.2 Miao identity: Indigenous or ethnic minority
1. 3 Research problem, objective, scope, and limitation
1.4 A thesis summary
1.4.1 Chapters 2
1.4.2 Chapters 3-5
1.4.3 Chapters 6-9
Chapter 2 Literature review
2.1 Indigenous and Indigenous tourism
2.1.1 Indigenous identity
2.1.2 Indigenous tourism
2.2 Ethnic minority and ethnic minority tourism
2.2.1 Ethnic minority
2.2.2 Ethnic minority tourism
2.3 Distinguishing 'Indigenous tourism' from 'ethnic minority tourism'
2.4 Representation in ethnic tourism
Chapter 3 Theoretical assumptions
3.1 Otherness in objectivism: the Other as not Self
3.1.1 Being as a silenced subaltern
3.1.2 Being as a wholly 'speaking' aggressor
3.2 Otherness in subjectivism: the Other as Self
3.2.1 Being as the stranger
3.2.2 Being as the oneself
3.3 Otherness in criticism: the Other as a social agency
3.4 Otherness in tourism studies
3.4.1 The construction of the Other as an objection in tourism
3.4.2 The counter-construction of the Other as an agency in tourism
Chapter 4 Paradigmatic assumptions
4.1 Critical realism (CR)
4.1.1 Ontological assumptions
4.1.2 Epistemological assumptions
4.1.3 Axiological assumptions

4.2 Paradigm concerns of CR
4.2.1 CR, realism, and relativism
4.2.2 CR, objectivism, subjectivism, and critical theory
4.3 CR in this study
Chapter 5 Methodological assumptions
5.1 Critical discourse analysis
5.1.1 Discourse
5.1.2 Critique
5.1.3 Different schools of CDA
5.1.4 The analytical framework of CDA
5.1.5 The application of CDA in tourism study
5.2 Case study approach
5.3 Data collection methods
5.3.1 Secondary data collection
5.3.2 Participant observations
5.3.3 Semi-structured interviews
5.4 Data analysis methods
5.4.1 Thematic analysis (TA)
5.4.2 Three-dimensional approach to CDA
5.4.3 Data analysis in this study
5.5 Positionality & Reflexivity
Chapter 6 Miao representations in mainstream discourses
6.1 Rebels in the historical context
6.1.1 The descendants of Chi You
6.1.2 Miao rebellion constructed in historical practices
6.1.3 Social cause of the representation of the Miao rebellion
6.2 Backward subordinates in the political context
6.2.1 From Non-Han Indigenous to Miao nationality
6.2.2 Backward Miao constructed in political practice
6.2.3 Social cause of the representation of the backward Miao
6.3 Traditional inheritors in the cultural context
6.3.1 Socialist Miao or ancient Miao
6.3.2 Traditional inheritor constructed in cultural practices
6.3.3 Social cause of the representation of the traditional inheritor
Chapter 7 Self-representations of Miao in tourism
7.1 Custodian of the ancestral land
7.1.1 Empirical layer: spatial layout of Miao villages
7.1.2 Actual layer: the practice of resistance and compromise
7.1.3 Real layer: A strong land attachment
7.2 Displayer of Miao tradition
7.2.1 Empirical layer: traditional performances of local villagers
7.2.2 Actual layer: practices of catering, refusing, and appropriating
7.2.3 Real layer: a strong cultural identification
7.3 Indigenous businessman in tourism

7.3.1 Empirical layer: poor and grateful Miao people
7.3.2 Actual layer: practice of accepting tourism commerciality
7.3.3 Real layer: Indigenous worldview of diverse livelihoods
Chapter 8 The emergence of new realities in society
8.1 An inclusive bottom-up tourism model
8.1.1 Compelled to respect locals' self-governance
8.1.2 Transforming business focus
8.2 A harmonious host-guest relationship in tourism
8.2.1 Searching for 'exotic' others
8.2.2 Relinquishing control
8.2.3 Transforming identity consciousness
Chapter 9 Conclusion
9.1 Revisiting research questions
9.1.1 Interaction from both theoretical and empirical context
9.1.2 Epistemological aspects of local people's subjectivity role
9.1.3 Axiological aspects of local people's subjectivity role
9.2 Implications
9.2.1 Practical implications
9.2.2 Theoretical implications
9.3 Limitations and future studies
Bibliography