

## Can the subaltern speak in Creative Tourism?

**LARISSA FERNANDA DE LIMA ALMEIDA<sup>1,2,3</sup> & GABRIELA NICOLAU DOS SANTOS<sup>1,4,5</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> University of Aveiro, <sup>2</sup> GOVCOPP, <sup>3</sup> RECRIA – Brazilian Creative Tourism and Experiences Network, <sup>4</sup> Gender and Performances (GECE), <sup>5</sup> Center for Studies in Culture and Leisure (NECO)  
Founder of Vento Leve Turismo de Experiência  
Contacting author: [larissal.almeida@ua.pt](mailto:larissal.almeida@ua.pt)

**Keywords** | Creative tourism, Cultural studies, Cultural Heritage, Decolonial studies

**Objectives** | This study aims to discuss, from a decolonial perspective, the relationship between tourist activity and the local, precisely the tourist-host relational dynamic in creative tourism. It proposes reflecting on the power dynamics within tourism and whether creative tourism can be associated with the host community's emancipation.

**Methodology** | This study is a theoretical essay based on the reflections of Aitchison (2001), "Theorizing Other discourses of tourism, gender and culture: Can the subaltern speak (In tourism)?"; Laurajane Smith (2015) "Intangible Heritage: A challenge to the authorized heritage discourse?" and Richards and Raymond (2000) "Creative Tourism".

**Main Results and Contributions** | Aitchison (2001) analyses that tourism needs to be understood - also - as a powerful cultural arena and process that shapes and is shaped by gendered (re)presentations of places, people, nations and cultures. (Smith, 2012; 2015), in turn, discusses the role of tourism in heritage preservation and invites us to understand that heritage tourism is an integral process of heritage building and should not be understood only as a practice that contributes to the commodification of culture.

Creative tourism is a practice where the tourist meets the destination through a learning experience conducted by a local with active participation and interaction with the local community (Richards, 2003; Richards & Wilson, 2006; 2007). The dynamics of creative tourism seem to favour community agency; however, considering the power dynamics and the context presented by Aitchison (2001) and Smith (2012, 2015), is it possible for the host to expose their narrative, or will it be influenced by the expectations created by marketing and other dominant tourism stakeholders? By constructing and offering what the tourist can buy from a local perspective, the host exercises their agency over the construction of the activity, which we consider a positive tool for transformation. Is it real?

**Limitations** | This is an initial study focusing on the tourist-host relationship. Analyzing the role of other stakeholders can help improve our understanding of colonial dynamics in the territory.

**Conclusions** | Post-structural analyses presented by Aitchison (2001) have elucidated how the relationships between people, places, culture and power are mutable and continually reinvented by tourism. The texts of Smith (2012, 2015) presented how the multiple and complex effects promoted by heritage tourism can act (re)configuring cultural heritage, connections and channels for processes of cultural transformation and hybridity. The essay is an initial effort to discuss if creative tourism can be a strategy to foster the community in a way that allows them to tell local history on their own and influence local tourism development in a way that diminishes the power differences within tourism dynamics.

### Acknowledgements

This work was financially supported by the Research Unit on Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies (UIDB/04058/2020) + (UIDP/04058/2020), funded by national funds through FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.

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