"Enough stories!"
Asian tourism redefining the roles of Asian tour guides[1]

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Résumé : *Aujourd'hui, les guides touristiques sont des acteurs-clés dans la médiation des tensions entre les processus de localisation et de globalisation. En se basant sur une recherche de terrain menée à Yogyakarta, en Indonésie, cet article montre comment les guides javanais adaptent leurs pratiques pour servir au mieux leurs clients asiatiques. À travers un examen anthropologique du secteur touristique de Yogyakarta en général, et de l'activité des guides touristiques en particulier, cet article illustre comment l'augmentation du nombre de touristes d'origine asiatique redéfinit les rôles habituellement dévolus aux guides selon la littérature scientifique. Les données empiriques montrent que, parallèlement aux réorientations de leurs routines que les guides javanais mettent en place pour s'adapter à ce qu'ils perçoivent comme les intérêts et les sensibilités asiatiques, des dynamiques structurelles plus larges contribuent aussi à façonner leurs rencontres avec les touristes asiatiques. Ces différents points réaffirment finalement que le tourisme d'origine asiatique façonne, mais est aussi façonné par les modèles, les discours et les imaginaires dominants du tourisme international.*

Mots-clés : anthropologie du tourisme, ethnographie, guide touristique, touristes asiatiques, Indonésie.

Abstract*: Nowadays, local tour guides are key players in mediating tensions between concurrent processes of localization and globalization. Drawing on fieldwork in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, this paper explores how Javanese guides adapt their practices to better serve and please Asian clients. By way of an anthropological examination of Yogyakarta's tourism sector in general and the guiding scene in particular, the paper illustrates how the surge in tourists of Asian origin is redefining the roles commonly assigned to guides in the scientific literature. The empirical data illustrate that while the Javanese guides are fine-tuning their routines to accommodate what they perceive as Asian cultural sensibilities and interests, broader structural dynamics frame the encounter. This reaffirms that tourism of Asian origin is both shaped by and shaping the currently dominant models, discourses, and imaginaries of international tourism.*

Key words: anthropology of tourism, ethnography, local tour guiding, Asian tourists, Indonesia.

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If we accept the commonly heard prediction that tourism and travel will be one of the most important economic sectors of the 21st century, the Asian continent will play a dominant role in this development. The market share of Asia in global tourism has dramatically increased over the last few decades, reflecting a remarkable overall economic growth (UNWTO 2007). The emergence of a rising Asian middle class (in countries like China, India, and South Korea) that can afford intraregional travel is quickly turning the region into one of the most attractive tourist markets. As a result, Asian tourism hot spots, like destinations elsewhere in the world, are competing to obtain their piece of the lucrative Asian tourist pie (Winter *et al.* 2008). Singapore, Hong Kong, and Thailand are already strongly positioned, China is the fastest rising star, and competition is high in Malaysia, Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos), South Korea, the Philippines, and Indonesia. By way of a case study, this paper examines how tourism in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, has been opening up to Asian tourists and how local tour guides have adapted their practices to fit what they perceive to be the interests and expectations of these clients[2].

Yogyakarta, cultural capital and progressive pacesetter

Yogyakarta is the name of one of Indonesia's 33 provinces and its capital city, situated in central Java. This cradle of Javanese culture was the Republic of Indonesia's first revolutionary capital. Nowadays, many Indonesians see Yogyakarta as a quiet provincial town, economically marked by small-scale enterprises, cottage industries, and self-employed individuals. At the beginning of the new millennium, "Jogja" was introduced as a brand name to market the region, since the letter *Y* was believed to be a more difficult alphabetical start for international audiences. The contraction also appears in "Jogja, never ending Asia", the catchphrase used by both the provincial government and the private sector to lure investors, traders, and tourists to the area. Alongside the fact that the Sultan's Palace and its revered inhabitants still symbolize the power of traditional Javanese life, the city has become the country's pacesetter for the progressive and the populist, home to one of the most active contemporary art scenes and a major national centre of higher education. Jogja also shows obvious signs of rapid globalization: transnational supermarket chains, global brand name department stores, luxurious shopping malls, international restaurants, transnational fast-food eateries, star-rated chain hotels, etc. Expanding interconnections have not only helped to detail a vision of the world at large, they have reciprocally promoted an awareness of Yogyakarta as nested within the nexus

2. The research described in this paper is part of a larger multi-sited study of guiding discourses and practices (Salazar 2005, 2007, 2008a). The methodology used involves extensive ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation of guided tours and in-depth interviewing of tour guides as well as collecting emic insights from the local tour guide community. Additional short semi-structured interviews were conducted with other service providers, key players in local tourism, and tourists. All primary qualitative data (field notes, interviews, and audio recordings of guided tours) were coded and interpreted with the help of Atlas.ti, a popular software package for visual qualitative data analysis. Background literature research was undertaken in the libraries of Gadjah Mada University, Sanata Dharma University, and the Stuppa Indonesia Foundation for Tourism Research and Development.

of places. Locals look up to neighbouring Singapore, for instance, as the perfect Asian example of a modern cosmopolitan city and shopper's paradise[3].

Although processes of globalization and modernization are unmistakably present in many domains of daily life in Jogja, the current tourism discourse, as uttered by the local government, by travel agencies, and by tour guides, is all about the region's cultural heritage sites and traditional arts and crafts, performed or produced in the city or in its vicinity (Salazar 2005). Jogja has been receiving sizeable numbers of international tourists for over thirty years. It became a mass destination in the 1980s and, according to statistics of international arrivals, it is currently the third most visited destination in Indonesia, after Bali and Jakarta[4]. Under General Suharto's New Order regime (1967-1998), Jogja was promoted as "the cultural heart of Java" (or even Indonesia) and an ideal destination for both domestic and international visitors (Dahles 2001). Apart from the historical city centre around the Sultan's Palace, the most important attractions include the eighth century Buddhist monument of Borobudur and the ninth century Hindu temple complex in Prambanan (both recognized as UNESCO World Heritage sites in 1991). Foreign visitors used to come mainly from Europe (Germany, the Netherlands, and France) and Japan. However, there are potential Asian markets developing in Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, China, and maybe India (see Table 1).

It is important to note that the statistics in Table 1 not only reflect the changing numbers of Asian and Western tourism but also larger geo-political developments. Over the last ten years, international tourism to the region has been hit hard, often by events that did not occur in Jogja itself but affected the province in indirect ways. There was Indonesia's 1997 economic crisis and the ensuing 1998 political turmoil, the Bali bomb blasts of 2002 and 2005, the 2003 Marriott Hotel and 2004 Australian Embassy bombs in Jakarta, the Asian outbreak of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) in 2003, and the tsunamis in Aceh (2004) and Pangandaran, West Java (2006). In addition, there were social disturbances in Jakarta and outer Indonesian islands (e.g. Aceh, Maluku, Sulawesi, and Papua) at various points in time. All of this led countries such as the USA, the UK, and Australia to issue repeated travel warnings against non-essential travel to the whole of Indonesia. The global "War on Terror", which started after 9/11 and intensified during the war in Iraq, only adds to the negative image because Western tourists more and more perceive Indonesia, the country with the world's largest Muslim population, as dangerous and to be avoided. On top of all this, there is the pending danger of a bird flu pandemic.

3. Singaporeans themselves look up to New York and Paris as the most successful global examples of cosmopolitan cities. Singapore therefore brands itself as "The New York of the East" or the "Paris of Asia". While for most Indonesians New York or Paris are too far and too expensive to visit, nearby Singapore and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) function as worthy Southeast-Asian substitutes. Weekly flights from Jogja to these regional hubs facilitate the constant circulation of global commodities, ideas, and people to and from the city.

4. International arrival statistics, collected at airports and other ports of entry, do not only comprise tourists, but all people using tourist visas. In the case of Indonesia, international flight connections force many people to land in Jakarta. However, most tourists who do not need to be in the capital for any particular reason leave the metropolis as soon as they can, making Jogja the country's second most important tourist destination. Since the majority of international tourists visiting Jogja arrive via road or on domestic flights from Jakarta or Bali, it is hard to calculate their exact numbers.

Table 1: Number of foreign visitor arrivals to Indonesia

Country/ Region	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Up					
ASEAN*	2 085 736	2 083 320	2 431 154	2 174 006	2 328 345
South Korea	210 581	201 741	228 408	251 971	295 514
China	36 685	40 870	50 856	112 164	147 245
India	35 063	29 895	36 169	36 679	54 346
Down					
Europe**	833 004	605 904	720 706	798 408	730 398
Japan	620 722	463 088	615 720	517 879	419 213
Taiwan	400 334	381 877	384 226	247 037	236 384
Australia	346 245	268 538	406 389	391 862	226 981
America	222 052	175 546	209 779	209 511	184 525

* Mainly Singapore and Malaysia, and to a lesser extent the Philippines and Thailand.

** In order of importance: Germany, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and France.

(Source : PBS-Statistics Indonesia).

The repeated eruptions of the Merapi volcano, the 2006 earthquake (severely damaging the Prambanan complex and other minor heritage sites), and a spectacular plane crash in 2007 at Adisucipto International Airport (leading EU authorities to ban all 51 Indonesian airlines from entering European skies) have made the circle of negativity surrounding Jogja complete.

While Asians are as afraid of epidemics and natural disasters as Westerners are, they do not have to deal with the questionable practice of travel advisories and seem less receptive to the Western-led anti-terrorist rhetoric. China, Japan, South Korea, and the ASEAN countries, for example, have urged other governments to avoid the use of travel bans. On the contrary, many Asian tourists are rather nervous of travelling to Western countries where security measures have dramatically increased and new visa constraints have been implemented. This situation has facilitated the promotion of shorter haul trips to less expensive intraregional destinations within Asia itself (Winter *et al.* 2008)[5]. One of the reasons tourism in Bali recovered faster than expected after the 2002 bombings, for instance, was the relaxed reaction by visitors from Japan and Taiwan who greedily accepted the heavily discounted flights and hotel room rates. These developments, together with the fact that there is a growing population of middle-class Asians who can afford to travel abroad (Pinches 1999; Robison and Goodman 1996), prompted the Indonesian authorities to consider boosting tourism promotion within Asia.

The focus on Asian markets definitely makes sense for Jogja, because the region has long-standing cultural and religious ties with many parts of the continent. It has assimilated Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Islamic, as well as Christian influences into a syncretic Javanese culture. While the eyes of many local entrepreneurs remain turned to the West, others are increasingly turning towards Asia. However, the growing presence of Asian tourists poses many challenges for Jogja's tourism service providers. Interestingly, this is not because tourism of Asian origin is a newer phenomenon. Actually, Asian tourists (especially Japanese) arrived in Jogja as early as Western visitors did. In the past, however, tourism consultants from Western-dominated international organizations such as the World Bank, ICOMOS, and UNESCO have tended to focus exclusively on the development of Western markets, and tourism personnel were originally trained to serve Western clients. Because of space restrictions, the analysis below is limited to a case study of the interaction between local tour guides and non-domestic Asian tourists in Jogja[6]. Situating this encounter in a broader context helps to understand why Jogja's guides tend to valuate Asian tourists rather negatively. Since Japanese are by far the largest group of Asian origin, the focus is on their encounters with guides. However, before presenting these data, I briefly review and problematize the existing literature on tour guide roles.

5. An important development in this respect is the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Visa Exemption, allowing ASEAN nationals to travel within the region without visa for a period of two weeks.

6. A discussion of domestic tourism in Jogja would lead to an entirely different set of issues, as has been described in detail elsewhere (Dahles 2001).

A pocket guide to guiding

Based on a dramaturgical metaphor, the term *role* refers to a collection of culturally defined attributes and expectations associated with social positions that guide and direct a person's behaviour in a given setting. While a role (or social persona) is the typical behaviour and attitude of a person in a particular position, one can usually expect some discrepancy between the typical and the actual behaviour. In the context of tourism studies, the role concept is related to those approaches that conceptualize tourism as a performance, a mutually negotiated relationship between producers and consumers (Coleman and Crang 2002). The performance of roles becomes palpable in the encounter between tourists and service providers. Crang (1997), for example, describes how tourism workers are trained to enact roles that fit the institutional setting, to express attributes such as deference, eagerness to please, and friendliness, and to wear outfits and expressions that harmonize with themed environments. Although it seems a playful allegory, tourism performance is, to varying extents, socio-culturally regulated (Edensor 2001). At the same time, "the roles of tourist and interpreter are not fixed… Subjectivities and motives change, even within one individual, even during the course of a single visit" (Bruner 2005: 166).

Since tour guides are often the only local people at a sight or destination with whom tourists interact during a considerable amount of time, it is imperative to study and understand which role(s) they play in tourism. The World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations defines a tourist guide as "a person who guides visitors in the language of their choice and interprets the cultural and natural heritage of an area, which person normally possesses an area-specific qualification usually issued and/or recognized by the appropriate authority". Whereas the term *tourist guide* points squarely to the service relation (a tourism worker serving clients), the notion *tour guide* shifts this narrow focus to the dynamics of the encounter between guide, tourists, and locals while touring.

Cohen's (1985) four-quadrant model is most often cited as a basis for examining tour guide roles. This model encompasses four major tour guide functions: instrumental, social, interactionary, and communicative. Cohen traces the origins of modern guiding roles back to two types that the ancient Greeks distinguished: the pathfinder and the mentor. The first "provides privileged access to an otherwise non-public territory," while the second is concerned with "edifying his party as in social mediation and culture brokerage" (1985: 10). The two principal concepts that characterize contemporary guiding, leading and mediating, combine and expand elements from the earlier roles of pathfinder and mentor. According to Cohen, guiding is evolving and shifting from the logistical aspect to the facilitation of experience, from the pathfinder to the mentor role, away from leadership toward mediating and away from the outer toward the inner-directed sphere, with the communicative component becoming the centre of the professional role.

Even if global tourism exerts a great amount of control over its workers, none of the service provider roles are as rigid as they seem (Edensor 2001). As with most typologies, Cohen's categorization of tour guide roles is not all encompassing. Trying to fit the ephemeral professional activities of guides into a narrow essentializing framework does not do justice to what actually happens during the dynamic guide-tourist encounter, a point that has been well illustrated by ethnographic research (Bras 2000; Bruner 2005; Fine and Speer 1985; Salazar 2005, 2006, 2007). The local socio-legal context in which guides work, for example, also greatly shapes their roles. In Indonesia, authorities recognize,

license, and control three types of guide: (1) tour leaders, who can accompany tourists inside and even outside the country; (2) general guides, who are confined to guiding within the limits of one province; and (3) site-specific guides, who are only allowed to work at one site or attraction. Driver-guides and adventure guides exist too but are rare.

While Cohen's model offers a good starting point to analyze the practices of guides, one of its major drawbacks is that it is too service-oriented: it mainly includes roles expected by tourists, the tourism sector, or authorities. However, guiding is not just about organizing a tour, socializing with tourists, and interpreting what they see and experience in a language they understand. Guides are not necessarily altruistic mediators by vocation, nor can they be expected to submit blindly to government or tour operator rules and regulations exacting them to tell pre-fabricated stories (Bras 2000). Importantly, guides never serve a neutral role. Even if limited, they often have some power to intervene and constrain tourism activities. As Edensor notes, "'appropriate' behaviour and performative procedures are regulated by guides, who by synthesizing meaning and action reinforce a common-sense praxis and re-encode enactive norms" (2001: 69). During their interaction with clients, guides might use hidden transcripts to contest in disguise the roles they are expected to play (Salazar 2008a).

A successful guide is a "facilitator" who knows how and when to fulfil and synthesize different roles, often simultaneously (Pond 1993). The best guides are those who know the tricks of the trade and have found a healthy equilibrium between their own interests, those of their clients, their employer, and the local people they interact with while touring. This implies continuously shifting between roles, for example between one deemed appropriate when dealing with tourists, and another that conforms better to local norms. Through their narratives and practices, guides subtly enhance the experience of the visitors, in a way that demonstrates cultural proximity. They play a Janus-faced role, in the sense that they are not only supposed to know the heritage and culture they interpret, but to understand the tourists visiting from other cultural backgrounds too. The latter is something they do not learn from books but from practice, often through trial and error. In order to make this challenging task easier, many guides stereotypically distinguish and classify tourists according to their nationality (Pizam 1999; Pizam and Sussmann 1995). It is no wonder, then, that guides in Jogja perceive Asian tourists as very different from Western clients. What follows is a composite ethnographic sketch (based on real fieldwork examples) of what this perceived difference means for the roles local guides in Jogjakarta commonly enact.

"They left as quickly as they came": Jogja à la Japanese

It is around 5.30 am when I meet Pak Suhardi in front of a local tour operator's office in the centre of Jogja. I had interviewed this freelance Japanese language guide a couple of weeks earlier and he had kindly agreed to let me observe one of his tours. As soon as the driver of the company's minivan arrives (dressed in the same batik uniform as Suhardi), we set off for the city's airport to pick up the clients. I feel sleepy, in contrast to my Indonesian companions who seem used to waking up so early. Indonesia attracts Japanese visitors for a number of reasons (cf. Yamashita 2003). While waiting at the airport, Suhardi tells me that Jogja started receiving significant numbers of Japanese tourists in the 1980s. The Borobudur exhibition held in Japan in 1981 made Jogja popular as a possible cultural tourism destination. Since 1985, the Province of Yogyakarta also has a sister city partnership with the Kyoto Prefecture.

Except for a small number of independent travellers, most Japanese come as one-day transit visitors from Bali. As Suhardi explains, the reason why Jogja's inbound tourism is dependent on Bali is a structural one. In contrast with Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport, Jogja's Adisucipto International Airport has no direct flights to and from Japan. He does not mention another important factor, namely the large number of Japanese-owned tourism services on Bali (including hotels, restaurants, and tour operators). It is after 6.30 am when the clients walk through the airport's custom gate. Suhardi is lucky today because the group is not accompanied by a Balinese tour leader (as is often the case), meaning that he will be able to serve the clients. Because the plane had half an hour delay, there is no time to waste. Suhardi greets the group (in a typically Japanese way) and we immediately leave for Borobudur. In the minivan, the tourists are briefed in detail about the program of the day.

The Japanese, seven in total, all attended an expert meeting on fine arts in Bali. The conference organizers had included a daytrip around Bali in the programme. The island reminded them of landscapes and cultural roots that have vanished in present-day urban Japan. Their experience corresponds to Matsuda's (1989: 43-45) description of Japanese tourism to Bali. In her study, she stressed not only the perspective of exoticism, but also of nostalgia. The Balinese barong dance is reminiscent of the Japanese lion dance, the Hindu temples remind people of those in Kyoto and Nara, and rice terraces are quite normal in Japanese rural areas. Matsuda's analysis applies well to Jogja too. Unfortunately, Japanese day-trippers from Bali are on a tight schedule and only catch a glimpse of traditional Javanese village life. Experiential tourism activities such as learning how to cultivate rice, for instance, would be extremely popular, but there is simply no time to do this. Besides, the tourists are already tired upon their arrival in Jogja because they left their Balinese hotel in the middle of the night. While Suhardi has dozens of interesting stories and jokes ready to entertain his clients, they prefer to rest a little. They even hardly touch the nicely packaged breakfast.

Upon arrival in Borobudur, Suhardi gently wakes his clients and gives them a brief historical introduction of the site. Interestingly, he compares the building of Borobudur with other monuments, implicitly putting it on an equal level of global importance: "This is the technique they used to build Borobudur in the 8th century, without using concrete. It's like a puzzle, exactly like the pyramids in South America and in Mexico, the Aztec and Maya culture, and Inca". By making this kind of comparison, of course, the guide assumes that the Japanese are familiar with those American sites. Suhardi is curious to know whether he will be allowed to guide within the compound today. Because of the ongoing process of regional autonomy in Indonesia, guides legally need a certificate from the regency or city where they live and license badges from all the regencies or cities where they operate. These new rules are highly impractical given that virtually all tours cross administrative boundaries. The most common daytrip for Japanese tourists, for example, includes visits to Borobudur (Magelang Regency, Central Java), the Sultan's Palace (Yogyakarta City), and Prambanan (Sleman Regency and Klaten Regency, Central Java). These three sites have on-site guides, but Suhardi is still guiding in between and would technically need at least four different license badges. Already in 2002, the regency where Borobudur is located issued a directive stating that all visitors need to take an on-site guide. However, hardly any of those guides speak Asian languages and, as a result, Jogja-based Japanese language guides such as Suhardi are still allowed to operate inside the site's boundaries.

According to the tour operator's schedule, Suhardi has about one hour and a half to walk from the parking lot to the entry gate, queue to pay the entrance fees, walk almost half a mile to reach the monument, climb the seven levels, and descend the monument to walk all the way back to the parking lot. Because it is impossible to cover the entire site in such a short time, Suhardi carefully selects some popular highlights: (1) the few uncovered bas reliefs of Borobudur's hidden foot depicting desires and worldly temptations; (2) some of the panels on the first and second galleries telling the story of Prince Siddhartha; and (3) the upper platform with its 72 small stupas (with statues of the Buddha sitting inside the pierced enclosures) surrounding one large central stupa. I notice that the tourists politely listen to the guiding narratives but, in contrast to most Western groups, ask no questions. Once we have reached the top, Suhardi invites the male tourists to touch the hand and the female tourists to touch the foot of one particular Buddha statue. According to local lore, this brings good luck (and it creates good photo opportunities too). The Japanese are happily surprised that the backpack Suhardi carried all the way up contains a small water bottle for each. They immediately show their gratitude. After drinking, the group is given ten minutes to walk around and take pictures of the magnificent platform and the surrounding lush landscape. This gives Suhardi a chance to rest a little and chat with some of his colleagues.

Being a devout Muslim, Suhardi has acquired in-depth knowledge about Buddhism and, being a guide for Japanese tourists, he does not fail to make the necessary links between Buddhism in Indonesia and in Japan (in both countries the form of Buddhism that established itself was Mahayana Buddhism, or the Great Vehicle). Observing the expensive photographic equipment of the Japanese, another guide comments that they must be rich. Before descending, Suhardi points to the luxurious Amanjiwo Hotel, which can be seen from where they stand, and remarks: "For the Presidential Suite, 2 000 dollars per night. Have you ever been there? I have only been there once: in my dreams! … OK, let's return to reality now". He can only dream about staying at an expensive place like the Amanjiwo Hotel. Yet, this is a hotel his affluent clients can afford. In other words, for the Japanese it is reality, while it might be harder for them to imagine the socio-economic conditions in which Suhardi is living. At the foot of the monument, Suhardi takes some pictures of the group. Our last stop before heading back to the minivan is the plaque commemorating the large restoration project of Borobudur (1975-1982). Of course, Suhardi points out that Japan was one of the 27 countries who generously contributed to the fundraising campaign.

On our way back to Jogja, we stop at a silverware workshop. The group receives a brief explanation of the production process and is then invited to look around in the huge shop. However, the clients seem more interested in the shop's toilet than in its wares. Suhardi tells me that when Japanese tourism boomed, from the mid-1980s until the mid-1990s, guides received extra commissions by bringing Japanese to souvenir shops. This largely compensated for the fact that Japanese do not have the custom to tip[7]. Nowadays, there is often not enough time for shopping and, when there is, the tourists are not interested in

7. While the numbers of tourists these days are much smaller than during the golden years, there is an excess of tour operators and guides. This has created an economic context in which many tour guides are accepting to be underpaid rather than to be completely without work. In this precarious situation, receiving tips is vital and guides prefer to have clients from countries with a culture of generous tipping.

buying anything. When I ask why this is, he blames the Balinese (and this is something I heard repeatedly in Jogja). Due to the Balinese's negative advertisement of Java as an island of cheaters and pickpockets, tourists limit their visit to a daytrip and hardly buy anything (some would even have been advised to leave their money on Bali). I would add, equally important, that all of Jogja's traditional handicrafts can be purchased on Bali as well (albeit more expensive).

Since the clients have not had a decent breakfast, we have an early lunch at a typical tourist buffet restaurant on Jogja's ring road. While eating, I ask Suhardi how he learned about Japan and Japanese culture. Although he would love to, he cannot afford to travel to Japan. Instead, he reads Japanese books and magazines at a local university library and uses the Internet to obtain extra information about specific Japanese topics. Some of his senior colleagues have cable television and they occasionally get together to watch the *Nippon Hoso Kyokai* (Japanese Broadcasting Corporation) station. Suhardi also tries to attend cultural activities organized by the Japan Foundation. In his personal library, he has a copy of a locally produced manual that specifically address the characteristics and needs of Japanese tourists (Desky 1999). Suhardi stresses that this is not so difficult because Japanese and Javanese 'culture' are similar. He gives the examples of politeness, social etiquette, and the importance of purchasing souvenirs for those who stayed at home. Punctuality remains a difficult point for many Javanese who, as Suhardi jokingly remarks, live in a "culture of *jam karet*" (flexible time, or the continuous uncertainty of scheduled time arrangements).

Talking about punctuality, the driver comes by to tell us that the clients have finished eating and we have to hurry up because the last guided tours of the Sultan's Palace start before 1 pm. The palace has its own pool of guides, and they are exempted from any of the aforementioned rules and regulations. Many are children of royal court employees and have received private training from senior court officials. Suhardi instructs the Japanese speaking palace guide to bring his clients back to the entrance in 45 minutes. While we are waiting, he tells me how he became a guide. Suhardi used to work as a clerk at a local travel agency. He decided to enroll in a two-year intensive Japanese language course because at the time there were still many tourists from Japan and not enough guides. Suhardi recalls how even the Sultan traveled to Japan to promote Jogja. In order to obtain his license, he took part in a short three-month course organized by the provincial tourism authority. He immediately became a member of the local tour guide association. In fact, the Japanese language guides are the largest subgroup within the association, although the number of Japanese clients has declined drastically. According to Suhardi, this decrease is mainly due to the exaggerated fear in Japan for infectious and other diseases. He recalls how an outbreak of cholera amongst returning Japanese tourists in 1994 and 1996 led to a pronounced decline in tourists. In 2003, there was the outbreak of SARS and since 2005 a bird flu pandemic is looming. Looking at Japanese tourist arrivals (see Table 1), this analysis could at least partly be right.

The tourists arrive ten minutes too late and, since we are already behind on schedule, Suhardi decides to skip the souvenir shopping around Malioboro Street, the city's major commercial area. Instead, we drive straight to the last attraction of the day, the Prambanan temple complex. The Japanese are taking a nap when we pass by Jogja's fancy new shopping malls. Suhardi does not think his clients could possibly be interested in visiting them because he is sure the shopping palaces in Japan are bigger and fancier. On the way, I also notice the once celebrated Ambarrukmo Palace Hotel, built in 1966 with funds

provided by war reparations from Japan. However, "Don't mention the war", or, in this case, the Japanese occupation of Java (1942-45), seems a guiding motto throughout the tour. This oppressively dark period before Indonesia's national liberation heavily affected life in Jogja, both economically and socially, and Javanese prefer to forget about it altogether. It is much easier to talk about politically neutral heritage, such as Prambanan. Like Borobudur, this world heritage site has a small pool of on-site guides, but the ones here do not mind the Jogja guides leading clients around the temple complex (and they also have no legal recourses to prohibit this). Because it is in the middle of the afternoon and the Japanese tourists are suffering from the heat and are markedly tired, Suhardi slowly strolls around the three main temples and keeps his explanations to an absolute minimum. Providing drinking water and shade seem priorities that are more important.

Part of the temple complex is closed to the public after the May 2006 earthquake structurally damaged it (although some of the security guards offer to enter anyway, in exchange for a sizeable amount of cash). Suhardi does not fail to mention that immediately after the disaster Jogja received generous emergency aid from the Japanese government and from NGOs. After one hour and a half, we rush to the airport and the driver gets nervous because there is too much traffic. There is nothing to be worried about because we learn at the airport that the plane back to Bali is one hour delayed. This gives Suhardi the first (and last) opportunity of the day to really get to know his clients. Remembering their interest in art, he tells the group how important Jogja is for the Indonesian art scene. The Japanese had no clue that the city is home to the Indonesian Institute of Fine Arts and one of the most active contemporary art scenes in the country. A missed opportunity, according to Suhardi, and they will miss the beautiful Ramayana Ballet too, performed every night in an open-air theatre that uses the Prambanan temples as a fairytale background. In addition, there are the shadow puppet plays, the gamelan concerts, the Javanese court dances, and the Affandi Museum (exhibiting over 250 paintings by this renowned Indonesian artist). Is all of this not a reason enough to return to Jogja for a longer visit? The Japanese kindly nod.

On the way back to the city centre, we are completely stuck in the evening traffic. I ask Suhardi to evaluate the tour. Although he is certainly experienced enough to know the intricacies of Japanese culture, he still finds it difficult to please Japanese guests (cf. Sugiantoro 2000: 69-72). Suhardi tells me that he prefers older Japanese clients, like the ones today, because they are usually fascinated by stories about the rural life around Jogja – the nostalgic element Matsuda (1989) refers to in her discussion of Bali. Unfortunately, as I could witness myself, there is virtually no time to show any of the Javanese village life (and many Japanese have already taken a similar tour on Bali). It clearly frustrates Suhardi that he cannot even tell much about Jogja. He recalls how, a couple of years ago, an irritated Japanese tourist had almost shouted at him "enough stories!" (the man wanted to get some sleep in between the sightseeing walks).

Seeing and selling Jogja through 'Asian eyes'

The ethnographic description above of a typical Japanese tour of Jogja challenges Cohen's (1985) assertion that guiding is evolving and shifting from the logistical aspect to the facilitation of experience, from the pathfinder to the mentor role, away from leadership toward mediating and away from the outer toward the inner-directed sphere, with the communicative component becoming the centre of the professional role. Clearly,

Suhardi's narratives were only of minor importance throughout the trip. Rather, it was imperative to show his clients that he took good care of them. In contrast to guided tours for Western tourists (which I also observed while I was in Jogja), the stress seemed to be on the service component of the guiding job. To what are these differences due?

Despite the homogenising trends of global tourism, the needs and interests of international tourists are multiple and often culturally determined. Some academics argue, rather bluntly, that the biggest cultural differences are to be found between Asian and Western societies (e.g. Samovar *et al.* 2005). Others have tried to empirically show that the needs and tastes of Western tourists are, indeed, very different from those of Asian clients (Reisinger and Turner 1999, 2002a, 2002b). Throughout my own travels around the globe, I have noticed that many Asians are interested in visiting internationally renowned landmarks and modern and sophisticated attractions such as theme parks and shopping centres. They love to evaluate the development levels of other places and search for iconic representations of modernity. Many Westerners, on the other hand, like to experience the exotic beauty of (well-conserved) natural and cultural heritage sites. One should critically wonder, however, whether these stereotypical differences are really 'cultural' or whether they might simply refer to various stages of tourism development, as suggested, among others, by Urbain (1994). This would assume that all tourism develops in the way it has developed in the West. It suffices recalling the work of Bourdieu (1984) to realize how complex the matter of tastes and interests is. Most anthropologists would argue that artificially opposing 'the West' and 'Asia' does injustice to the multiple fault lines that crosscut this cultural binary: nationality, ethnicity, race, class, gender, et cetera.

Regardless of the conflicting explanations given, there are differences between Asian and Western tourists and these have real implications for tourism. How to market Jogja as a destination for tourists of Asian origin? Should it be promoted as the old cultural centre of Java (as is done for Western markets) or is it wiser to advertise the city as a hotbed of youthfulness and innovation? Although there are an increasing number of exclusive shopping malls, high-tech theme parks and soaring skyscrapers are strikingly absent in Jogja. Moreover, most malls largely cater to locals; they do not sell the arts and crafts for which the region is famous, making them less interesting for tourists. If the only sights left for Asians to visit are Borobudur and Prambanan, the two world heritage sites, they can easily do that on a day-trip or as transit visitors, hereby seriously limiting the impact they have on the local economy[8].

Independent of how Jogja and other destinations are being marketed, Asian tourists currently come to Indonesia for a relatively short time. Because they travel mostly in organized tour groups, they have limited contact with local people. They develop their perceptions of Indonesians mainly through the direct face-to-face contact with service providers, who are often their only contact points. Local tour guides, who spend a considerable amount of time with tourists, know that client satisfaction is best achieved when understanding their cultural background, including their values and perceptions of the world. One would expect Indonesian guides to have little difficulty dealing with

8. Although most tourists visit these cultural heritage sites on tours departing from Jogja, Prambanan is partly, and Borobudur completely located outside the Yogyakarta province, in the neighbouring province of Central Java. Transit tourists and day-trippers not only bypass Jogja's hotel industry, but also the restaurants, since tour groups often have their lunch nearby one of the two temple complexes.

Asian visitors because of the cultural proximity (although the existence of shared "Asian values" is debatable). However, what is gained by guiding for people with similar cultural backgrounds can be lost in communication problems. To serve Asian clients, guides have to learn difficult new languages and the local language schools do not possess the best human resources and learning materials. Besides, many guides have been professionally trained to work with Westerners, studying Western-produced guiding methods and techniques (Salazar 2008a). What they have learned through formal training is not readily transposable to a work context with Asians. Finally, cultural proximity does not mean that there are no cultural or other differences at all.

Tour guides' perceptions of foreign tourists, no matter whether they are Asian or not, are often trapped in cultural stereotyping. Many guides in Jogja, including Pak Suhardi, talk about Japanese tourists in ways that reinforce the common stereotype that Japanese are not that interested in heritage narratives and always seem in a hurry, only having time to take snapshots. Even if this would be true, it does certainly not imply less work for the tour guides. While Asian clients might need less interpretative information, they do expect constant attention and entertainment. Guides still offer explanatory narratives, skilfully adapted to shared Asian frames of reference, but sensibly invite those visitors not interested to roam around the visited sites and take pictures instead. Understanding that Asians are usually less willing to engage in physical efforts than Western tourists are, guides also adapt tour itineraries accordingly. Local tour guides clearly seem to ascribe these perceived behavioural differences to cultural factors.

However, it is an easy way out to explain the different roles guides play when dealing with Western and Asian tourists as culturally determined. Pace ? Reisinger and Turner (1999, 2002a, 2002b), alternative interpretations can be offered than culturalist ones to explain context-dependent differences. Structural characteristics of tourism, such as the length of annual holidays and the history of travelling abroad, are at least as salient. In many Western industrialized countries, for example, there has been a marked tendency for the minimum annual vacation period to be increased (Salazar 2008b). Westerners visiting Indonesia have at least two weeks of holidays and do not need to rush from one sight to the other. Many of them have extensively travelled abroad and seen many of the world's landmarks. They are therefore increasingly looking for experiential types of tourism, in which the mentor or mediator style of guiding gains importance. Asian tourists generally dispose of much less time and, for many, the tradition of travelling abroad for leisure is newer. Since they have less travel experience and usually speak neither English (the most widespread language in global tourism) nor the local language, Asians are dependent on local guides as pathfinders to lead them around safely. In a sense, tour guiding for tourists of Asian origin resembles much more the work of a tour manager, escort, or leader. In other words, structural factors are as important, if not more important, than cultural elements in understanding perceived Western–Asian differences.

Many Asians travelling to Jogja belong to the rapidly growing class of *nouveau riches*. This new Asian middle class is the result of the burgeoning economies of various Asian countries and characterized by conspicuous consumption (Pinches 1999; Robison and Goodman 1996). These people are salaried, live in rapidly urbanizing or already urban settings, are comparatively young, and are looking to spend their surplus money on entertainment and leisure. Already in the 1990s, the international media was filled with stories about Asia's new rich and their 'sexy' and often rampant consumption patterns: driving BMWs and Mercedes, riding Harleys, punching data into laptop computers,

visiting Paris, London, or New York, and paying all of this with platinum Visa cards and large salaries. Although they have been depicted as "superficially Western, essentially Oriental, and representing the majority of the population" (Pinches 1999: 1), in reality this cultural construction of the new rich in Asia totally neglects the wide cultural variance between and within Asian countries. Nevertheless, these culturalist accounts seem very influential and have a wide rhetorical power, also in tourism. It is believed that when travelling, the mere fact of visiting a famous site, and taking pictures or shooting video as proof for those who stayed at home, is deemed more important for these new rich than learning about the history of the place.

This larger socio-economic context enables us to link local observations to broader forces and power dynamics. It helps us to understand why it is, for example, that the guides in Jogja often value their Asian clients negatively. Partly as a legacy of the Dutch colonial era, having close contact with a white person is considered as status enhancing. In the personal imagination of many guides, Westerners act as their gateway into a better world, a Promised Land they know from television programs, advertisements, and movies. The privileged interaction with Westerners nourishes their dreams of escape from their harsh life. Asian tourists are perceived as socio-cultural proxies, people who have (materially) 'made it' in their lives and are able to travel abroad. Many Asians devotedly embrace their role of *nouveau riche* by being much more demanding towards service personnel. The Indonesian guides, as providers of paid-for services, often have to work harder for these clients, usually without receiving tips. They have not much choice than to faithfully play this guiding role.

Complexifying tourism theories

Typologies of tour guides, like any kind of classification, can identify regularities, but should be conceived as describing different styles rather than essentialized types, as roles adopted rather than social categories made manifest. Guides have to engage in a complex negotiation of roles between themselves and tourists, other service providers, tour operators, and local people, and the socio-cultural power expressed by each of these stakeholders in contexts of interaction. All these roles have different time and space dimensions. The case study of Asian tourists in Jogja, and Japanese visitors in particular, illustrates that there are various ways to facilitate a quality experience for the client. For Asian tourists too, guides are there to help fulfil the dream of a perfect vacation. However, the tourist expectations and imaginaries at work are different from those of Western clients (Salazar 2005; 2008a). Whereas Western tourists usually judge the quality of a guide by evaluating the quality of his explanatory commentaries, for Asian tourists what matters most is how they are treated as guests. The guide is expected to be a good organizer (instrumental) and entertainer (social) of the group, more than an information-giver (communicative) or culture broker (interactional) for the individual tourists. Cohen's (1985) key argument that tour guiding in general is marked by a transition of emphasis from the instrumental to the communicative role seems to apply less well to the Asian tourism I encountered in Jogja. As illustrated and explained in this paper, Indonesian guides working with Asian tourists have to pay more attention to tour management than experience management, emphasizing their leadership roles (both instrumental and social) over their (interactional and communicative) mediator roles. As such, this ethnographic study inscribes itself in a growing field of research on tourism of Asian origin that problematizes the universality

of existing theoretical frameworks explaining particular aspects of tourism (Winter *et al.* 2008).

Whatever roles they play, guides are there to help tourists find meaning in what they see and experience. This requires extensive preparation, not only in the geography and history of the region where they are guiding, but also in sociological, psychological, and anthropological fields of expertise such as group dynamics, motivation, and cultural background. In order to be successful, the guides in Jogja need to learn to repackage their guiding practices in a way that satisfactorily meets the preferences, desires, and aspirations of Asian clients. Because many guides were professionally trained to serve Western tourists, they have to 'unlearn' some of their narratives and techniques when dealing with Asian clients. For established markets (e.g. Japan), they can rely on specific handbooks and course materials. Unfortunately, such aids are not available for newer Asian markets, forcing the guides to learn on-the-job by trial and error. Thriving guides are those who comprehend at least some of the broader context and power dynamics of global tourism. They understand who their Asian clients are, why they travel to Indonesia, what they want to see and experience, and how they expect to be treated. A lack of these insights frequently leads to frustration and negative cultural or national stereotyping. This paper offers only one small piece of evidence that, given the historical and current socio-economic context, instead of being a stage behind in tourism development, Asian tourists are developing a different "culture of tourism".

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