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Coercive geographies: Biopower, spatial politics, and the tourist

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Abstract

This symposium examines the relations between biopower, destination governance and tourism. Biopower, a Foucauldian concept, refers to political strategies based on humanity's biological features. In the simplest of terms, it is applied via biopolitical mandates that govern life of a given population. Contemporary tourism exemplifies the exertion of biopower over the mobility of travellers, as was evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to a lesser degree, continues to do so. The role that tourism plays in enabling authorities to enact spatial transformations reinforcing state power, while also indicating potential means of resistance, is foregrounded in this symposium. The four empirical contributions extend biopolitical thought by demonstrating that biopower is instrumental in the practices and regimes of mobility, security, in/exclusion of tourism. In Europe, the Dutch government experimented with enclosed "COVID-safe" tourist spaces. In Macao, China's border regime screened tourists based on their viral threat capacities. On Naoshima Island in Japan, museums have transformed into infrastructures of bodily control. In Taiwan, flight attendants are grappling with newly emerging forms of biopower shaping the sociality of air travel and their own practices of hospitality. These empirically informed contributions interrogate how tourism figures in attempts to govern bodies at the population level, while uncovering the modes of coercion applied to govern tourists and the spaces they inhabit.

Keywords: tourism biopolitics, biopower, tourism geography, COVID-19, tourist populations

Introduction

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Biopower, and the associated concept of biopolitics, refers to how life is governed, controlled, and managed at the level of aggregate populations. Popularized by Foucault (1978; 2007; 2010) who examined the application of political authority over populations and the positioning of biological life (*zoē*) within the core of state power (*bios*), biopower is applied upon humanity's biological features to discipline and regulate entire populations (Foucault 1978; 2003), including tourist populations (Iaquinto et al. 2023). Biopolitical mechanisms of power are often explicitly designed to govern mobile bodies (Vaughan-Williams, 2017), making them well suited to the coercion of tourists, particularly foreign tourists. The relevance of biopolitical logics to tourism can also be seen in Agamben's (2005) work on the "state of exception". Resort destinations and other tourist enclaves function through their own systems of exception where norms of behaviour are evidently suspended (Minca, 2009).

But the governance of tourist populations has taken on new urgency since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, nations shut their borders to foreign arrivals, and kept their citizens confined to their homes and neighborhoods through the application of disciplinary power rather than biopower (Sarasin 2020). When it became clear that infections could not be completely contained, different forms of power emerged - a "concretely liberal governmentality" (Sarasin 2020) allowing the populace to circulate but in a highly regulated fashion. Hence, the employment of vaccine passports and temperature checks, combined with body scanners and security screening at entry points, mobile apps to monitor travelers, and various surveillance tools to help track the spread of the virus. Since 2020, governments have intensified their efforts to attract the "right" kind of tourists and exclude the less desirable by implementing security regimes that prevent the spread of contagion.

But despite the novelty and unprecedented scope of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments were already experimenting with practices and technologies of surveillance and security, controlling the circulation of bodies and objects organized along the separation between the "good" ones and the "bad" (Adey, 2009; Amoore, 2009; Aradau and Blanke, 2010). The notion of "security" as a set of biopolitical practices related to the governing of *circulation* appears in Foucault's 1977-78 Lectures, where he uses the example of eighteenth-century Nantes (France) and its restructuring to alleviate overcrowding, and to facilitate commercial development. To enable trade, city walls were suppressed, and networks of streets were connected to external roads allowing for the influx of goods and people. This inadvertently led to the influx of vagrants, thieves, and otherwise mobile or undesirable subjects, eventually prompting robust planning of access to "the outside" and the organization of circulation of goods and people, "eliminating its dangerous elements" (Foucault 2007: 18).

Tourists have long been the object of security and surveillance. In the 1970s, male backpackers were subject to grooming standards before being granted entry into countries such as Singapore and Greece, made worse by their association with vagabonding and hippie culture (O'Regan 2016). More recently, the Chinese government applied biopolitical logics to its outbound tourist populations to transform them into a "productive, self-disciplining population who practice and promote state logics of social and environmental responsibility" (Iaquinto et al. 2023: 1). Apropos, contemporary tourism remains a biopolitical quagmire. It commodifies Indigenous land, forcibly displaces people, transforms space into territory, legitimizes militarization and propagates structural violence against human and nonhuman life (Bluwstein, 2017; Büscher and Fletcher, 2017; Fletcher et al., 2023; Rowen, 2021; Yang, 2020). Tourism produces various "coercive geographies" (Heinsen et al., 2020: 12) which are spaces of

restriction limiting people's mobility and forcing them to labor precariously (Floros and Jørgensen, 2020), while modern slavery proliferates throughout the tourism supply chain (Cheer, 2018).

However, the application of biopower, and the use of biopolitical logics, are not always coercive. For Ojakangas (2005: 27), biopower is exercised "over all life for the sake of living" rather than to advance any thanatopolitical project. Tourism, in particular, may provide an opportunity to advance more affirmative notions of biopower which aim to mobilize a love for living beings and universal solidarity among humanity to combat inequality (Hannah, 2011; Braidotti, 2015; Lin et al., 2018). Tourism enables micro level encounters between tourists and non-tourists in which learning and empathy are realized (Gibson, 2021), and it produces embodied knowledge that can open moral gateways between non-indigenous tourists and indigenous people (Waitt et al., 2007). Tourism, as a form of circulation, has since COVID-19 become a sort of "testing ground" for more advanced forms of biopolitical regulation (Pavli and Maltezou, 2021). Tourism plays a key role in the "boomeranging" (Foucault, 2003) of technologies of airport surveillance back onto the streets of cities and tourist destinations. Tourist bodies are increasingly seen as conspicuously and dangerously more-than-human as their mobility can facilitate the spread of contagion (Iaquinto, 2020). Tourism governance resembles elements of Povinelli's (2016) "geontopower" which governs at and across the divide between Life and Nonlife (Johnson et al., 2019), working to produce tourists as human-virus hybrids. The four contributions herein, demonstrate the ongoing relevance of biopolitical rationales in the governance of tourists and the spaces they inhabit. In the first, Claudio Minca and Maartje Roelofsen show how the Dutch government's "COVID-safe" tourist spaces risked "letting die" the so-called unproductive members of society. The second contribution by Dominic Lapointe, Meng Qu, A. D. McCormick and Joseph M. Cheer takes us to Japan's Naoshima Island whose art museums are managed as spaces of exception in which political subjectivities of both tourists and locals are suspended. Thirdly, Chin-Ee Ong and Cora Un In Wong delve into the shifting biopolitical rationales used to manage tourists in Macao during the coronavirus pandemic. The final contribution from Chih-Chen Trista Lin considers how the Taoyuan Flight Attendants Union in Taiwan resisted and responded to various biopolitical mandates that reinforced highly gendered forms of hospitality. Throughout, we leverage Heinsen et al's (2020: 12) conceptualization of coercive geographies as "spatialities that work to create moments of coercion through practices that limit or otherwise define the mobility of a subject". In the main, this symposium interrogates the coercive power of tourism, how it figures in the goal of producing healthy, productive citizens and consumers, and the influence of biopower on spaces of tourism consumption and mobility.

Post-COVID biopolitical fantasies and the case of the Dutch "Pilot Holidays"

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Rhodes, Greece, April 2021: 182 Dutch tourists are spending their holidays in a so-called "bubble" environment at the five-star resort Hotel Mitsis Grand Beach. They are the winners of a lottery which attracted over 25,000 applicants all hoping to be selected for a "pilot holiday" study funded by the Dutch government and carried out by tour operators, airlines and a consultancy firm specializing in behavioral psychology (Rijksoverheid, 2021a). In media interviews, the selected participants resolve to enjoy their holidays despite not being allowed to leave the resort and being under constant surveillance and monitored by a team of behavioral "observers" monitoring their movements, their attitude towards COVID-19 measures, and their interactions with other participants and staff[1].

> "It feels really strange that I am allowed to walk outside and relax along the pool side. For a brief period, we are back to 'normal'. There are indeed a couple of people walking around the resort who observe the behavior of the participants in the experiment. They specifically observe how we behave in relation to the COVID-19 measures. But everyone sticks to the rules really well".
>
> Interview with participant (Ockers, 2021, authors' translation)

The "pilot holidays" resembled a "living" laboratory within which a selected group were studied in an enclosed space of leisure, under a pandemic regime: the holidays took place in a period of "lockdown" during which the European Union and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended essential travel only (Rijksoverheid, 2021b; WHO, 2020a). After the Rhodes Pilot Holiday, a similar laboratory was established in Grand Canaria (Spain), this time including the possibility for tourists to leave the resort and mingle with locals.

According to the Dutch government's dedicated website, the aim of the experiment was to observe tourist behavior and their compliance with COVID-19 measures, with the hope that this would contribute to policymaking and communication strategies that support and nudge travellers towards safer holidaymaking (Rijksoverheid, 2021a). The pilot holidays were run in parallel with a series of highly contested "FieldLabs", which entailed the creation of massive "living laboratories" where thousands of individuals were subject to observation under specific and exceptional experimental conditions. These events were exempt from some of the introduced measures, and the main criterion for people to attend was that they had tested negative a few hours ahead of the event (Jonge et al., 2021). Notably, these projects were conceptualized and implemented when most of the Dutch population were unvaccinated and when the rate of infection and hospitalizations peaked.

[1] See https://osf.io/emh2t/?view_only=091918108d8745909d8f9d1cd02b74ae for an overview of sources.

Following their inception, pilot holidays and FieldLabs received intense criticism in the Dutch context (van Lissa et al., 2021). One line of criticism questioned the broader neoliberal-, biopolitical- and necropolitical approach of the government to the pandemic - aimed at reducing the disruption or shutdown of economic activities (such as tourism) and initially supporting a "controlled" transmission of the virus among the population (Schinkel, 2021; Bourgeron, 2022).

In light of this criticism, we consider the pilot holidays as a form of biopolitical *thana*tourism (thánatos meaning death in Ancient Greek). Thanatourism is defined as a form of travel in which tourists visit sites "associated with death, disaster and the macabre" (Johnston, 2015: 20). However, in the case of the pilot holidays, our reference to thanatourism is related to the biopolitical, if not *thanapolitical*, dimension of these experiments and how they are possibly linked to the broader strategies adopted to confront COVID-19. Moreover, we advance the question of "who gets to live and who gets to die" within the context of the pandemic, and drawing from John Troyer's powerful intervention on this issue, focus on "the sheer inequality of how individuals in power answer those questions" (Troyer, 2021).

Post-COVID fantasies

Work on the biopolitical in the tourism literature is often discussed in relation to enclavic spaces and the spatio-temporal regimes of holiday "camps" or gated tourist villages (see Ek, 2016). Islands, precisely for their separation from "the rest", are also seen as ideal settings for the realization of "utopian" spaces aimed at re-creating ad hoc tourist communities and carefully managing the bodies of the individuals involved (Minca, 2009). The tourism industry has indeed often presented these spaces as protected environments, facilitated by the conditions of (perceived) separation and internal homogeneity that characterize such tightly crafted landscapes. The very idea of an experimental tourist community placed in an enclavic space, and located on an island, draws from a long tradition of tourist "laboratories" in which tourist bodies are closely governed and monitored (Ek and Tesfahuney, 2019; Simpson, 2016).

In a time when "COVID-free" spaces and travel corridors have become new putative horizons to be explored, the settings of these pilot holidays represent an ideal "bubble" environment. They were supposedly shielded from contamination and allowed for close and continuous monitoring of individual and collective behavior of "guests", their bodily conduct, and their movements. Yet, arguably, no enclavic tourist space is entirely insulated. COVID-19 incubation periods vary (WHO, 2021) and while all participants tested negative hours before departure, infections could have also been detected several days after arrival. In addition, the resort's workers could have played a role in local transmission by encountering potentially infected participants. In fact, the final report indicates that masks were often inappropriately worn, and safe physical distance was not maintained between participants and staff when dancing to live music. Furthermore, the Dutch government's decision to elect islands "elsewhere" (i.e., outside the Netherlands) to conduct these experiments – with the possibility of exporting the virus to other countries in a time when non-essential travel was highly discouraged – revealed how tourism, even in pandemic times, continued to be seen as a playground-in-other-people's yard.

Overall, how might participants, who are fully aware of being constantly observed, provide meaningful insights capable of anticipating and nudging the behavior of future mass tourists? And, were the risks associated with these experiments proportionate to the findings of research conducted under such conditions? How were the costs in terms of illness and possible

death caused by the virus, calculated into the equation, and how was the implementation of such a social laboratory, given the tacit knowledge that the spread of the virus is quickened by the mobility of individuals and their close contacts, justified?

At the outset of the pandemic, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte announced that it would adopt a "herd immunity" strategy which, in response to the controversy associated with the term, was quickly relabeled as "group immunity", then as "controlled spreading and mitigation" and finally as a strategy of "maximum control" (Schinkel, 2021: 98). Regardless, this approach relied heavily on the controlled spread of the virus among its population and on "individual responsibility". The strategy was predicated on the calculation of an acceptable number of hospital and ICU admissions; a reckoning based on the existing health infrastructure in the Netherlands, which in the preceding years, had notoriously been cut back in the name of "logistical efficiency" (Schinkel, 2021: 40–41).

According to the WHO (2020b):

> "Herd immunity", also known as "population immunity", is the indirect protection from an infectious disease that happens when a population is immune either through vaccination or immunity developed through previous infection. […] Attempts to reach "herd immunity" through exposing people to a virus are scientifically problematic and unethical. Letting COVID-19 spread through populations, of any age or health status will lead to unnecessary infections, suffering and death.

Any attempt to manage COVID-19 based on immunity induced by natural contagion has also been dismissed by numerous public interventions, including by internationally renowned scientists in an open letter published in *The Lancet* (Alwan et al., 2020). For Roberto Esposito, whose work has been key in conceptualizing the concept of immunity (Esposito, 2011), herd immunity or "group immunity" strategies are fundamentally "based on *thanatopolitical principles* that imply, if not the elimination, at least the marginalization of the 'lesser fit' to benefit the most productive component of the population" (2022: 6, authors' translation and italics added). Following this line of thought, can the pilot holidays be considered a thanatopolitical experiment? For Stuart Murray (2018: 718): "if biopolitics is a productive power that necessitates or silently calls for death as the consequence of 'making live', then thanatopolitics is not merely the lethal underside of biopolitics but is itself a productive power in the voices of those for whom biopolitical power 'lets die'".

Let's reflect on this for a moment. In the promotion of the pilot holidays, there was an astonishing lack of consideration for the potentially deadly consequences of participation, not least for the tourists but for all those involved. In interviews with various media, pilot holiday organizers referred to participants returning positive test results to COVID-19 and how they would be quarantined away from the other holidaymakers (NL Times, 2021), but references to severe illness, hospitalization, ICU admittance or even death were strikingly absent. While health and safety protocols were implemented, one organizer noted that "it is impossible to guarantee that nobody gets sick" and that therefore the knowledge that four people had to quarantine during the Rhodes holiday "did not cause any panic" (Lutgendorff, 2021, authors' translation). From the outset, involved parties were clear about the fact that the pilot holidays had to resemble a "natural situation to acquire knowledge" and for this reason "there would be no interventions" (Het Parool, 2021, authors' translation).

The “COVID-safe-protocols” required participants to carry out PCR-tests prior to their departure and before flying back. However, the study showed little interest in the actual number of infected individuals provoked by the overall experiment, demonstrated by the fact that the results of the participants’ PCR-test upon return and after quarantine, were not part of the pilot holidays objective. Participants were expected to quarantine for 10 days after returning to the Netherlands, or for 5 days then take a PCR-test, which, if negative, allowed them to end quarantine.

Strikingly, 14% of the Rhodes-pilot respondents and 16% of the Gran Canaria respondents did not quarantine at all and among those who did quarantine, “more than half indicated they had not adhered to the quarantine measures. They would go outside, terminate their quarantine before the expected end date, or received guests at home” (Rijksoverheid, 2021a, authors’ translation). The report confirms that six tourists were infected during the holiday in Grand Canaria and quarantined in a separate wing of the hotel, but little is said about the impact on their health. There is no mention in the report of how the workers in the resorts were affected by the experiment or even the residents in Grand Canaria who had come in contact with tourists.

Such biopolitical production of tourism space for those who are considered “worthy of life” does not proceed without “collateral damage, negative externalities, opportunity costs”, for those who are permitted to perish (Murray, 2018: 718). If a certain threshold of illness and death is tolerated as a crucial component of any biopolitical modus operandi in tourism, for Stuart Murray, thanatopolitics is “a productive power in the voices of those who biopolitical power ‘lets die’” (Murray, 2018: 718). This calls into question precisely the covert cultivation of illness and death, and asks how those deaths “productively disaffirm the regime of a neoliberal biopolitics that condemns to death? How might those deaths rise up, and haunt, the spaces of biopolitical production […]?” (Murray, 2018: 718).

Controlling bodies, framing subjectivities in art and tourism

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The "management of bodies" has always been a part of tourism mobility and its spatialities. How biopower is brought to bear upon tourism mobilities and the embodied negotiations between tourists and tourism workers in resort spaces is a stark example of this. More subtly, investment in tourism for redevelopment of declining rural communities involves biopower. Foucault (2007) stressed the importance of coupling population with production, as populations become productive assets in contemporary capitalism. As rural populations decline, they lose connectivity due to the dwindling circulation of bodies and capital, thus are considered less productive, or even nonproductive assets. The application of biopower to rural redevelopment aims at reconnecting declining rural areas to the circulation of bodies and capital.

Cultural institutions, such as museums, are key tourist attractions and are deeply involved in the governance of tourist bodies. The cluster of contemporary art museums on the island of Naoshima in Japan, which features prominently in the globally renowned Setouchi Triennale, is one such example situated in a rural context. Via in-depth content analysis of museum material as well as long-term, immersive participant observation in the study site, we dissect two levels of biopolitics. First, we examine the control and regulation of tourist bodies in museum spaces in which their conduct is regulated in such a way as to protect the works of art while incorporating them into circuits of capital. Secondly, we detail the subjectivity formation that this biopolitical control imposes on visitors throughout the tourist experience. The biopolitical processes of visitation that expand its reach beyond the museum in filtering the experience is dissected, and we expound upon how they contribute to subjectivity formation and desubjectification.

This process of subjectivity formation emerges through differentiation of space and ordering of people and bodies (Agamben, 1998, 2005), re-coding of what can be done by whom, and where—and, eventually, having the subjects internalize those codes. A prime example is the airport as a space of exception where, under the pretense of security—or even securitization—the subject internalizes that it is acceptable, or even normal, to cede control of its movement, of its belonging (Adey, 2009). This exposes a contradiction of the moving body of the tourist, as the possibility to travel is a form of freedom from assigned immobilities but involves entering other forms of biopolitical control over mobility, such as liberal form of governmentality in which freedom of movement is permitted under certain regulations (Sarasin 2020). Conversely, a museum as a space of exception, and power, is not as radical as the airport in terms of security and control, focusing more on the embodiment and affect to influence political subjectivity

(Miller and Wilson, 2022). However, as we assert, the Naoshima case is particular in its modus operandi and reach.

Naoshima is a small island in the Seto Inland Sea in western Japan that has achieved considerable recognition domestically and internationally as an art tourism destination due to its extensive collection of contemporary art museums and art installations. Growing out of a partnership between billionaire philanthropists and an influential local mayor in the 1980s, the art development project began in earnest when the Benesse House Museum, a Tadao Ando-designed concrete structure nestled into the mountainside, opened in 1992. Subsequent museums followed in the first decades of the 21st century, with the latest Ando structure completed in 2022.

The Naoshima project broadly accorded with rural leisure-tourism development initiatives occurring throughout Japan in the late 20th Century. While many of these projects failed during the collapse of Japan's bubble economy in the 1990s, Naoshima's novel blend of art and architecture in a remote island setting continued to attract tourists, particularly after the debut of the Chichu Art Museum in 2004, when visits to the island surged (Funck and Chang, 2018; Hamadeh, 2022). Over time, the island arts administrators (Benesse Art Site Naoshima) shifted away from expressing their goals purely in art-tourism terms, to focus instead on community revitalization (McCormick, 2022; Prince et al., 2021; Qu, 2022). Particularly following the debut of the Setouchi Triennale in 2010, which includes Naoshima, arts organizers began to describe their mission as that of returning "smiles" to the faces of elderly residents by inviting outsiders to view artwork set within declining rural communities (McCormick, 2022).

Biopolitical processes of visitation: Creating spaces of exception

The preeminent biopolitical process is the creation of the space of exception. In this space, bodies abide by a different set of norms, and even a different set of *rights*, recalling extreme spaces of exception like the Guantanamo jail, analyzed by Agamben (1998). Here, we focused on two arenas of exception: the whole island of Naoshima, which is exceptionalized through investment in the arts; and the Chichu Art Museum, a space with its own peculiar set of rules. Both are rooted in the fundamental motto of Benesse, to *live well*. Indeed, its very name is an aggregation of two Latin words meaning well-being, and this framing situates the entity's architecture and artworks as invitations to rethink how to live well. The idea of influencing, defining—even controlling—what it is to live well is central to the biopolitics of Agamben (1998), who situated the concept directly within the Greek *polis*, and the opposition of *zoe* and *bios*, where *bios* is the proper life of a group, or the well-being of a group.

Even before entering museums on Naoshima, visitors' bodies are restricted. On certain sections of road on the island, which were built and are owned by the museums, vehicles and bicycles are prohibited, with visitors required to either walk or use official museum shuttle buses. The museums themselves add further restrictions. Once at the Chichu Art Museum, visitors enter a highly controlled environment consisting of three art installations and the architectural space containing them. Right from the start, the experience bears signs of a place of exception, and the quality of Agamben's (1998) camp. At a gatehouse outside, a museum employee, wearing a uniform with an aesthetic somewhere between security guard and healthcare worker, takes your ticket and lists the restrictions that must be adhered to. Thus, upon entering, you are stripped of your sovereignty, restricted to ways of experiencing the works of art. Visual and verbal cues guide the entire visit: a route marked with signs, loud talking discouraged, some spaces limiting

the amount of time visitors spend inside. Your subjectivity is monitored, breaking from the freedom of experience and viewpoints usually associated with contemporary art.

All photography and even sketching is forbidden in the museum, stripping the visitors from the means to record their subjectivity. Despite this, photographs of the museum have proliferated online; we observed instances of tourists discreetly taking photographs, revealing a tension between visitors and authorities, and perhaps a tension between rule-breakers and rule-followers, all stemming from the institutional biopolitical apparatus.

Exhaustive explanations of rules prior to unfamiliar encounters are common in Japan, typically done to give participants confidence that they are doing things correctly. However, the continuation of these reminders throughout the experience presents a level of control more suggestive of visitor-proofing the museum encounter. Perhaps also of instilling a feeling that this is a museum entirely different: that whatever learned museum-visiting behavior tourists carry with them is not applicable in Chichu, reinforcing the state of exception in this space and its control of micromobilities of visitors.

While biopolitics is about disciplining bodies, it is also about the hierarchization of the social body (Foucault, 1978), and of the place and space it occupies. In this regard, the visitation process of the museum spreads across the whole destination. Naoshima has become an exceptional place due to the financial, material and symbolic investment of Benesse Art Site Naoshima. While employing a discourse of well-being and happiness, it reorders the spatial hierarchy of the Seto Inland Sea islands. Naoshima is the core of the so-called “art islands” that have grown around it, even as it maintains a strong peripheral quality in terms of geography, access and public services. Other islands use Naoshima as a reference for developing their own tourism, underlining its importance. These transformations are a reordering through new values, setting Naoshima as a core of this well-being movement, and a precedent for instrumentalization by private stakeholders who substitute their rationale to public discourses and policies. Indeed, the private arts investment from Benesse Art Site Naoshima, positioned as social philanthropy, in fact manifests as behavioral control of art visitors and top-down intervention within the Naoshima population to facilitate circulation of tourists. This also exposes how the biopolitics of the museum reaches far beyond its walls, and how biopolitical mandates are deployed to foster tourism while protecting the attractions enabling it.

Visitation process: Experiencing art through filtered experience

While Naoshima’s art landmarks (museums and outdoor artworks) occupy discrete positions in the island landscape, their influence extends to the entire island, with the visitor experience filtered through an art-tourism lens. Visitors to the growing number of small island businesses view these sites within the larger art encounter: Tourists rent bicycles that link art destinations; visitors to the Art House Project, a series of installations, stop at cafes on their way between artworks, effectively drawing these nominally independent businesses into the art itinerary. On the one hand, this effective outsourcing of amenities to local entrepreneurs indicates a positive synergy between the arts administrators and local actors. However, like a museum cafe or gift shop, conversely, these stops are relegated to secondary status in the tourist itinerary.

This filtered experience creates a path for tourists within the local environment, framing their movement, gaze and subjectivities in place. While it doesn’t constrain tourists to a single way of interacting with and experiencing art and the community, unlike in Chichu Art Museum, it transforms place as an artscape consumable for visitors, an artscape that has its own rules and

expected behaviors. In essence, people who stay at the museum hotel and go into town for brief glimpses of "local life" never really leave the museum at all. Rather, the museum extends into private businesses, which in many cases are adorned with art motifs, and operationally positioned within that whole art experience, conforming to conventions informally dictated by the art-philanthropy regime. Many small businesses embrace this blurring of lines, aligning with the "art island" brand and to meet the expectations of visitors to the island. Such visitors in turn reinterpret the island with their own subjectivity, creating a tension between appropriation and intrusion, linking intrusion with the ceding of control.

This is also echoed in the hotel associated with Benesse House Museum, where privilege is evident in the marketing of unique art experiences. Artworks in guest rooms are exclusive to the highest tier of consumers, as is the 24-hour access to the museum space, giving the impression that this class of visitor were private guests to the museum. Where visitors who purchase a standard ticket have a much more filtered and controlled experience, high-paying hotel guests have a freer experience, in terms of movement but also in the construction of their subjectivity in contact with art. This, again, creates an insidious hierarchy where rural society is reordered through expressive and material arrangement, where visitors with economic power are privileged more than regular visitors—and more than island residents, who are reconstituted as subsidiaries of the philanthropic action, rather than political subjects.

Subjectivity formation and desubjectification: Blurring the private and public

Benesse Art Site Naoshima acts as a mixed-body substitution of public agency in rural development. During fieldwork in 2020, the arts organizers emphasized the importance of their philanthropic mission to promote local social well-being rather than simply develop art tourism (Prince et al., 2021). This blurring of private and public action is a hallmark of philanthrocapitalism (Lefèvre and Fontan, 2017) and introduces a market logic, in this case, the tourist's consumption as an economic leverage, to traditional public investment areas (development, social well-being). The function of the relationship between stakeholders, and political subjects, is transformed from "how to live together in place" to "how to market place"; it is the internalization of this movement by stakeholders that is biopolitical (Brown, 2015). Still following Brown (2015), this movement from politics to market contributes to a political desubjectification of residents as their community moves towards catering to the needs and demands of tourists, and visiting artists in this case. These transformations are a manifestation of biopower as they reframe the population as a product, and re-couple population with production. Those transient, mobile subjects exercise their subjectivity through the market of hedonistic tourism experiences—living it or creating it—instead of the political forum of citizenship (Ek and Tesfahuney, 2019).

The result is a multilevel space of exception, with its own rules, but also with a redistribution of power away from political subjects in place, the forum of citizenship, and toward a regime of international philanthropic capitalism. This redistribution of power blurs the line between private and public action and private and public space, while filtering experiences: transforming subjectivity in place, internalizing rules of conduct with arts, and creating a new space of art. This contributes to a reordering of people according to their status within an already-existent subjectivity, towards appropriate behavior and the docile visitor through a discourse of well-being and happiness. Though the philosophy of the museum encourages reflection on "what it is to live well", it simultaneously imposes an order on whose sense of well-

being prevails, whose life has value, whose way of life should be prioritized – and who should be left behind.

From legal-economic to viral-biological: The biopolitics of Chinese tourism in Macao

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Macao was one of the first places outside Mainland China that Chinese nationals could visit for non-diplomatic and non-business purposes (as tourists). Tourism to Macao helped fuel its prosperity and instill Chinese national pride (Wong, 2013), while also serving as a "testing ground" for Chinese outbound tourism. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the Macao government has struggled to reconcile the status of tourist populations – simultaneously, as economic blessing and viral threat. Here we are concerned with discourses and practices emphasizing care, custody and control of tourist and resident bodies, along with their spatial and biopolitical implications. Our conceptualization of the biopolitical is inspired by Foucault's (1979; 2010) notions of micro-operations of power and control that render human populations as quantifiable units of economic production and consumption.

We identify two distinctive but interconnected discursive "epistemes" of tourism biopolitics in Macao: a legal-economic episteme and a viral-biological one. They demonstrate the centrality of the state and tourism businesses in exercising care and coercion simultaneously. By epistemes, we mean "the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences and possible formalised systems" (Foucault, 1972: 191–192). Using a Foucauldian understanding of epistemes allows us to identify the orderings of truth structured by power concerning Chinese tourism in Macao. The legal-economic episteme emphasizes the legal framework, based on China's Basic Law governing the relationship with mainland China and its Special Administrative Region (SAR from here on) of Macao. It highlights the economic benefits of Chinese tourists while regulating and controlling their access. The viral-biological episteme emerged in early 2020 during the coronavirus pandemic. Its top priority is the health of Macao residents, which necessitates rigorous viral screening of incoming Chinese tourists.

Legal-economic episteme: Mainland Chinese tourists as economic saviors

The notion of the Chinese tourist subject as a legal economic entity was prominent in the aftermath of the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in 2003. To salvage the economy of the two SARs (Hong Kong being the other), the Chinese government enacted the "free travel individual scheme" for Chinese tourists to travel to Macao and Hong Kong, increasing their autonomy and overall visitation. Under the scheme, Chinese tourists from affluent cities travel freely in Macao and Hong Kong as independent tourists without a tour group. In most cases, the scheme facilitates multiple and recurring visits to both SARs. As a free port possessing a wide selection of goods and services with minimal taxes, expenditure by Chinese tourists in Macao was considerable. The deployment and utilization of the large Chinese population as "legal-economic" entities to be promoted but carefully regulated (via the issuance

of free individual travel visas into Macao) is considered an economic success with visitor expenditures prior to the pandemic in the billions of US dollars.

The legal and economically productive (read: consumptive) powers of tourists are facilitated via an array of technologies to fulfil and optimize their potential as economic saviors of the territory. The legal and economic spatial politics concerning Macao's status as a SAR which separates and prevents Chinese residents from commuting without visas, helps create the emporium of luxury (international goods and services) formerly inaccessible to consumers on the mainland. Even as these indulgences become increasingly available in mainland China, buying designer handbags from Macao, for instance, still carries with it both added prestige (due to the prestige attached to an "overseas" purchase) and added authenticity assurance.

Besides the high-end shopping malls, the ultimate biopolitical technology of the legal-economic episteme are the casinos and gaming enterprises. The entire SAR can be considered a biopolitical apparatus or "Hotel California", turning legal visitation of Chinese tourists into capitalistic profits (Minca and Ong 2015). For that to happen, a sufficiently large pool of gamblers with access to adequate finances and the relevant visas are required. The legal-economic tourist bodies from the mainland are tempted, guided and encouraged at almost every moment of their tourist experience to "get lucky" at the casinos. Casino resort companies such as the American owned and operated Sands and Wynn Macau, and the Pearl River's Lisboa and Galaxy casino groups, are integrated with a host of accommodations, authentic Cantonese dim sum restaurants, massage parlors, shops and dazzling advertisements.

The pervasiveness of such "coercive geographies" (Heinsen et al. 2020) and consumption-focused biopolitical technologies, however, does not mean a total usurping of personal autonomy of Chinese tourists. Ong and du Cros (2012), for instance, documented how short-term "backpacking" and budget tourists from the mainland consistently utilize Macao's spaces for their hiking, cycling and general sightseeing activities, even having the "audacity" of repurposing casinos as a free storage facility for their heavy backpacks in pre-pandemic days.

Viral-biological episteme: maintaining healthy populations

While tourism to Macao has long been valued, it was strictly governed and inhibited during the first three years of the COVID-19 outbreak. Tourist populations were no longer considered a safe economic device. Instead, personal contact and mobility were discouraged as much as possible and the overall biosafety of the city's population is prioritized. Mandatory quarantine at a certified quarantine hotel of Macao for 7 - 21 days upon arrival was required, in addition to proof of having received at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

The key biopolitical device in this viral-biological episteme was the hotel quarantine requirement, which utilized bodily checks conducted in the name of passenger, guest and population protection. A collection of hotels were designated as quarantine facilities at the onset of COVID-19, with a spatial division based on tourist country of origin. Quarantined individuals were subjected to a series of daily nuclei-acid tests and detained for a period of 7 to 14 days. Evidently, tourists were seen as potential vectors of viruses (Iaquinto, 2020) who should be properly contained, examined and cleared of viral dangers in "quarantine hotels" before allowing them to engage with the wider Macao population. Subjecting travelers to these regimes and practices are a prime manifestation of tourism's coercive geographies.

While inbound tourism declined significantly, the governance and strict control of resident mobility lingered throughout 2021 and 2022. During that time, official announcements

were regularly released advising residents not to leave Macao except for emergencies. All tertiary and non-tertiary education institutions in Macao followed the same pandemic measures, cancelling many study tours, cultural visits and task-force delegations to the mainland and overseas. The viral-biological episteme overrode the power of the legal-economic episteme in Macao, working collectively with similar schemes implemented across mainland China. The coercive edge of the viral-biological episteme also manifested in the control of foreign workers who were prohibited from re-entering.

But biopolitical controls are not totalizing and are challenged. In July 2022, a new wave of infections induced citywide mobility control in Macao discouraging the populace from leaving home. This new measure was introduced after months of low infections and contrary to the generally positive mood. It also resulted in a series of transgressions and resistances from a population intolerant of the new laws and controls, despite these being broadly well-meaning and fairly executed. Social and new media reported the smuggling of items, some illegal (e.g., marijuana and other drugs), as some residents held in quarantine hotels re-interpreted their confinement as "staycations". The Macao police, subjecting these controlled individuals to further suppression and discipline, swiftly exercised punitive actions.

Additional disciplining of specific segments of the population continued amongst the casino resort frontline workers. As authorities endeavored to maintain its status and image as a gaming hub, the local government mandated casino frontline workers to return to work, despite the potential health risks in doing so. Workers were required to hold the right health conditions and codes to enter casinos. However, within three days, this measure was ceased as tourists were no longer entering Macao.

From legal-economic to viral-biological: biopower in tourism

From the outset, the Chinese government has enacted biopower over its citizens in the mainland and in Macao in myriad ways for economic gain. These have derived from varying economic and societal discourses and resulted in markedly different ways of controlling the Chinese tourist subject, individual and body. This is underlined by the use of the Basic Law to demarcate discrete residential spaces for mainland Chinese and Macao residents, respectively. Hence, a legal-apparatus has disciplined Mainland Chinese and Macao residents variously into their own spaces but an economic impetus in the 2000s prompted the biopolitical operation of Chinese tourism – allowing a population to be productive for the Macao economy by consuming in the territory under controlled conditions (limited time duration for stays as stipulated by visas).

Subject positions and the ways in which tourist, and resident, bodies are positioned in relation to power shifted drastically in late 2019 with the onset of the coronavirus. In a bid to safeguard the health of its citizens, the Chinese state mandated a series of mobility controls, social distancing and other viral measures, that severely affected tourism in Macao. What Sarasin (2020), following Foucault, would call the "plague model". The economic importance of the tourism industry gave way to control and custody of residents on both sides of the border. In its pursuit to optimize public health concerns, measures and practices with coercive edges have impinged on the wider populace, including foreign workers unable to re-enter the Macao viral-political space, as well as the increasing joblessness across the tourism industry. As a key tourism destination in China afforded some internal autonomy, Macao characterizes the spatiality of Chinese tourism's biopolitical operation and its associated coercive geographies. Yet the legal-economic and viral-biological epistemes applied to coerce resident and tourist populations

remained irreconcilable, resulting in China's abandonment of its "zero-COVID" policy in January 2023 and the application of an authoritarian mode of governmentality to regulate the circulation of tourist bodies to minimize viral spread while sustaining the tourism industry.

Transforming hospitality in air travel: Labor and life-in-common besides biopolitics

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Recent discussions in human and tourism geographies have provided a pertinent backdrop for discussing the regularization of labor into sustaining hospitality and tourism sectors in capitalist economies (Gibson, 2021, Ioannides and Zampoukos, 2018; Lin, 2015; Veijola, 2009). Air travel, a quintessential dimension of tourism mobility, embodies many forms of governmental control and corporate management that fold into the complex backdrop relevant to this discussion. In particular, the extraordinary "ascendency of the techno-political" power (Dubreuil, 2016: 34) vis-à-vis air travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, has provided a window into the rise of emergency and crisis governance, and the primacy of infection control over most aspects of work and life. As national (bio)security and sovereignty suspend an overwhelming amount of human mobility and relations of hospitality, what are the challenges faced by hospitality, tourism and transportation labor? And what is there to learn from the experiences and knowledges of laboring in the contact zone (i.e., guest-host, human-virus, homeland-foreign territory) of air travel, that can help inform discussions of biopolitics and tourism?

The approach to biopolitics adopted is informed by various scholarly attempts at scrutinizing the governing of life and work which eschew "a gloomy and pessimistic vision not only of power, but also of the technological developments that propel the regimes of biopower" (Braidotti, 2015: 38). I consider what Dubreuil and Eagle (2006: 96) have addressed as "the variable persistence of biopolitical action in politics". For this, Braidotti offers a useful point of entry, when asserting that *we* have "all become the subjects of bio-power", even though "we differ considerably in the degrees and modes of actualisation of that very power" (2009: 97). How could this emphasis on *we* as "the subjects of biopower" aid analyses of spaces for maneuver and persistent desires for better actualization of power?

I consider these questions together with a focus on the perspective of the Taoyuan Flight Attendants Union (TFAU) in Taiwan and its responses to COVID-19. My discussion is limited to the occupational health and safety campaigns the union has led since January 2020, zooming in on TFAU's early demands for changes in labor conditions in line with infection prevention and control. These campaigns illustrate labor's complex dependence *on*, negotiation *with*, as well as resistance *to*, entwined biopower and corporate capitalism. TFAU's campaigns aimed at the public in Taiwan also reveal the imperative and potential for the gendered subjects of biopower to actualize alternative relations of hospitality and "living-with" – a more affirmative biopolitics, in spite of the coercive biopolitical apparatuses that seek to contain these.

The political life of laboring-well

Starting in early January 2020, by means of official letters and labor-management meetings within airline companies, TFAU and its members have called for airlines in Taiwan to adopt infection prevention measures considering the rise of coronavirus cases. On January 21, Taiwan identified its first coronavirus case at Taoyuan International Airport, and on the same day, TFAU's occupational health representative Yu-Jie Gon queried Taiwan Central Epidemic

Command Center (CECC)[2] and expressed concern over airlines' lack of preventative measures against the coronavirus. The next day, TFAU initiated a social media campaign to urge the two major airlines China Airlines[3] and EVA Airways to allow crew members to wear face masks and gloves onboard, and to supply sufficient surgical masks. This was followed by another official request at the end of January for airlines to provide medical gloves and eye protection. However, the airlines responded to these demands in passive and partial ways, rather slow and reluctant to make exceptions to strict appearance, grooming and service rules — including those requiring a flight attendant to expose their whole face with appropriately attractive make-up, but without visible eyewear or face coverings, and to display bare and well-manicured hands while giving service[4].

Between then and late March 2020, the union's members and allies held several other campaigns seeking to garner simultaneously, media, government and the public's attention in their demands for further air travel hygiene and safety measures, and for the companies' assistance in enabling flight crews to cope with quarantine procedures. TFAU's strategic juxtaposition of the two airlines' different responses highlighting China Airlines' inaction was covered in news, and brought to a meeting of the Legislature's Transportation Committee on March 25, 2020. Since the Taiwan government is China Airlines' majority shareholder, putting pressure on the company during this meeting succeeded. The company complied with flight attendants' major demands thereafter. The CECC soon followed with an announcement that the government would start providing all flight crews with the full set of protective wear as applied in medical care.

These events at the start of the pandemic considered through the perspective of TFAU demonstrate an emerging biopolitical regime governing over border and population health control, before the regime appeared to consolidate and stabilize itself as COVID-19 evolved. A few things are noteworthy beginning with evolving corporate control over femininity and gendered service labor - important complications facing biopolitical control over labor safety and public health in air travel. This accords with incisive scholarly analyses of airlines' control and standardization of women workers' physical appearance and affective labor (Chang, 2016; Hochschild, 2012; Lin, 2015). In the face of a severe epidemic outbreak, not only did companies' regularization of standardized feminine appearance and managed personal service interfere with citizen-workers' demands for health and protection measures, it also added to the affective labor performed during the pandemic. In an interview with TFAU representative Gon, she noted the redundancy of lipstick while on duty, as face masks became a requirement in-flight. Instead, Gon spoke of new demands for grooming and performing caring femininity:

> I am now practicing how to "speak with my eyes". We are told that: "Customers can tell if you are smiling behind the mask or not. Your eyes smile, too." […] In-flight service managers would stress the importance of hair and eye makeup during the cabin crew pre-flight briefing. They would like that even with the face mask and everything you are still pleasing to the eye.

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[2] This disease control authority is commanded by the Minister of Health.

[3] The airline company is owned by the Taiwan government through the Aviation Development Foundation.

[4] For instance, to collect meal leftovers and waste including used personal hygiene products such as napkins and toothpicks with bare hands.

Another implication of these developments in early 2020 has to do with TFAU's actions which effectively prompted the application of biopower regarding disease prevention for all flight crews. These actions largely depended on, and were shaped by, the assemblage of diverse regulative state apparatuses which conditioned much of TFAU's mobilization for better work. For example, in the face of the evolving pandemic and the dramatic reduction of flights, flight crews relied on in-company unions to secure zero lay-off policies and discussion of conditions related to unpaid leave. Meanwhile, TFAU as a trade union mostly focused on bringing visibility to cabin crews' safety and health issues while on duty. TFAU's General Secretary Sheng-Kai Chou explained that this "division of labor" had to do with the Ministry of Labor's guidelines for negotiations over unpaid leave, which specified that negotiations should take place between a company and its in-house union, effectively limiting craft or trade unions' bargaining power in such matters. Thus, whereas these TFAU's actions revealed members' critical and pro-active attitude towards governmental authorities as "governable and self-governing […], self-determining, even empowered, subjects" (Roy, 2009: 160), there they showcased a form of agency operating as "civic governmentality" (Roy, 2009: 160) rather than "counter-governmentality" or "governmental counter-conducts" *per se* (Cadman, 2010: 540).

Lastly, as TFAU sought to engage newly assembled forms of biopower over COVID-19, it became mindful of the state of governmental technologies – that is, the frequent, televised and live-streamed press conferences that were utilized for disseminating public health information and advice. The two TFAU representatives reflected that prior to the pandemic, the issues they addressed rarely required them to interact with public health authorities. Presented with the challenge of intervening in epidemic control and labor safety over the course of 2020, the union then developed a strategy to make use of the rapid response time and dynamics between the public health officials and the journalists at those conferences. Prepared with its own press release statements, the union was able to voice its views and demands so that journalists would use them to form questions during the conferences. In one instance, this led to adjustments of inflight service and infection prevention procedure as advocated by TFAU.

The sociality of living-with

As an "achievement of corporate engineering" driving sexist cultural practices, flight attendants continue to be associated with "glamourous service" and the "desire to please" (Hochschild, 2012: 182; Lin, 2015: 295). TFAU's General Secretary Chou reckoned that the perceived high socio-economic status of cabin crews in combination with desires attached to flight attendants (and in a similar sense, though not identical, to pilots), situate the general public in a hierarchically lower position vis-à-vis these professionals. This was a key factor, Chou argued, underlying the public's misconceptions that privileges had been granted to crews in having fewer days of quarantine obligation than regular passengers. Meanwhile, there has long been a tendency for people to gaze at and objectify flight attendants, something shaped by decades of corporate advertising and customer experiences of consuming their femininity and hospitality (Chang, 2016). This contributed to rising criticism and stigmatization directed at cabin crews as "carriers of virus", as well as innuendo and rumour about flight attendants being irresponsible, promiscuous, privilege-seeking, and unlikely to abide by quarantine and physical distancing restrictions.

TFAU saw the urgent need to address the experiences of discrimination, severe stress and anxiety among the crews. At the same time, it recognized that its protest strategy usually aimed

at the government, or the corporates would not work with the general public. The primary focus of TFAU's public campaigns since December 2020 has been to employ personal stories to present the crews' worsening labor conditions and mental health, while highlighting their professionalism and commitment towards infection prevention. In an attempt to mobilize more affirmative biopolitical logics, these campaigns adopted varied narratives and asserted cabin crews' rights to health and safety, while evoking the viewers' empathetic and caring responses to crews as ordinary fellow citizens and enthusiastic workers at the frontline to protect the health and prosperity of the country.

Even though these campaigns reinforced the imperative for the cabin crew to perform affective labor in ways they are accustomed to, they simultaneously sought to re-qualify gendered meanings and relations of hospitality and care long structured by state-bolstered corporate interests. In *Leaving Politics*, Dubreuil and Eagle (2006: 94) draw from Aristotle to speak of a *living-with*, which concerns those "affective or practical relations that rest upon activities in common" which depend on politics, and yet are distinct from it. Not pursuing an argument backed by philology here, I close this discussion by reading this "living-with" next to Hardt's (1999) assertion about biopower. Hardt envisions a form of biopower being the "potential of affective labor", "the production of collective subjectivities, sociality, and society itself" (1999: 98). What if we consider these TFAU campaigns as affirming ways of *living-with*, as a step towards a different kind of sociality not limited by hierarchies of labor and the fetishism of feminine hospitality? In the face of national (bio)security emergency and vulnerability, the TFAU case suggests the potential and imperative for life/shared living to become otherwise, beyond and besides the political struggles of *living-well*.

Conclusion

Applying a coercive geography of biopolitics, we demonstrated various ways tourism is implicated in the spatial politics of destination governance and used to consolidate state power. The Dutch government's experimentation with "COVID-safe" spaces on islands in Greece and Spain, in which tourists were contained within a "bubble" environment involving constant surveillance, was a form of biopolitical thanatourism designed to revive the tourism industry at the expense of the wellbeing of tourists and workers. The biopolitical logics used to influence the conduct of tourists in the Chichu Art Museum foreclosed the political subjectivities of both tourists and locals across Japan's Naoshima Island. In Macao, the application of biopower based on extracting economic productivity from its populations contradicted the biopolitical mandates to maintain the health of these populations after the arrival of COVID-19. The shifting epistemes governing residents and tourists during the pandemic could not be reconciled, and were only resolved after the abandonment of the Chinese government's "zero-COVID" policy. The final contribution to the symposium indicates how certain forms of biopolitical coercion are resisted - by mobilizing affirmative biopolitical logics. The Taoyuan Flight Attendants Union launched public campaigns that highlighted the stress, anxiety and discrimination experienced by its members.

At the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, many commentators were variously celebrating or lamenting the end of tourism. But the tourism industry has proven itself quite adaptable to an evolving pandemic situation, while the use of biopower as a tactic of governance, has only intensified. If the status of capitalism as a spatial and biopolitical force is to be critiqued effectively, scholars must continue to reckon with tourism. The coronavirus emerged at a time

when tourism was increasingly being enrolled into the broader goal of a healthy, and economically productive, population. To continue illuminating the coercive practices of capital and the state, it pays for scholars to recognize the biopolitical rationales enabled by tourism. This symposium evidently shows how coercive power via tourism was increased as a result of COVID-19.Whether such coercive geographies continue to loom large, or whether they emerge as temporary measures in times of crisis, remains to be seen.

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