



# THE MOBILITIES OF HOSPITALITY WORK: AN EXPLORATION OF ISSUES AND DEBATES

**Tara Duncan**

University of Otago, New Zealand

**David G. Scott**

Southern Cross University, Australia

**Tom Baum**

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

**Abstract:** In this paper we highlight the contribution which an understanding of mobilities brings to an analysis of hospitality work. The complex mobilities of hospitality employees are playing an increasing role within global tourism and hospitality sectors. Our discussion explores notions of voluntary mobility as motivated by work and lifestyle factors. We challenge the commonplace conceptualisation of tourism and hospitality employment which has been predicated upon the nature of the work itself rather than on the diverse experience backgrounds; social and geographical origins; and motivating attributes of those who work in the sector. In taking this approach, we question conventional management discourses of hospitality labour processes and illustrate the value of adopting a mobilities framework within tourism and hospitality studies. **Keywords:** mobility, hospitality, work. © 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## INTRODUCTION

The global tourism and hospitality sectors have witnessed exponential growth over the last few decades and it has been suggested that, together, they now constitute the world's largest services industries (Cloke, 2000; Ottenbacher, Harrington, & Parsa, 2009; Tisdell, 2001). Whilst widely suggested as offering predominantly unskilled or low-skilled employment opportunities (Crang, 1997; Shaw & Williams, 1994; Westwood, 2002; Wood, 1997), this stereotype of tourism and hospitality work is challenged in the context of hospitality by a

---

**Tara Duncan's** (Department of Tourism, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand <tara.duncan@otago.ac.nz>) research interests focus on current debates around lifestyle mobility, migration and transnationalism as well as the everyday spaces and practices within tourism, hospitality and leisure. **David Scott's** interests include understanding the sociological and cultural aspects of the hospitality experience **Tom Baum's** interests include people, migration and wider mobilities with a particular focus on the international hospitality and tourism sector.

number of authors (Baum, 1996; Burns, 1997; Witz, Warhurst, & Nickson, 2003). Here it is suggested that previous research and understanding represents both a technical and western-centric perception of work and skills. This moreover, underplays both the specific context where the work is undertaken and the experience backgrounds; social and geographical origins; and motivating attributes of those who work in the sector. In addition, previous understandings have, in part, been overly influenced by the economic and skills-labelling ideologies more commonly associated with manufacturing industries and, as such, are a source of confusion in the interpretation of the meaning and value of skills across different cultures (Clarke & Winch, 2006). Therefore, it is perhaps more appropriate to suggest that tourism and hospitality employment involves interactive service work where increasingly the ‘person-to-person’ and ‘soft’ skills, along with aesthetic, emotion and authenticity dimensions, become the prevailing requirements for those employed (Crouch, 2004; Warhurst & Nickson, 2007a). However, in recognising the increasingly complex skills and personality traits necessary for effective (and affective) work in the tourism and hospitality sectors globally (see Baum, 2006a, 2008a; Bell, 2011), it is also necessary to acknowledge the interconnectedness of many other factors with and on key stakeholders, notably employers, customers, the communities in which the businesses are located and, of course, those working or aspiring to work in the sector themselves.

Common issues, from an industry perspective, frequently relate to the difficulties in attracting and retaining suitable employees to work in tourism and hospitality, where consumer expectations are evolving, complex and demanding. Specific factors can include a (often young) transient workforce, low pay, a perceived and real lack of formal qualifications at all levels and a high ratio of female, minority, student, part-time and casual workers (Deery, 2002; Deery & Shaw, 1999). These issues are exacerbated by widely held perceptions of hospitality employment as primarily consisting of ‘low’ skilled jobs, negative lifestyle issues including a substantial percentage of hours worked outside normal business hours, social stigma (within many western cultures) of working in this industry, poor utilisation of ‘Gen Y’ labour (Solnet & Hood, 2008), high levels of staff turnover and the consequent images these may create in many potential employees (Baum, 2006b, 2007; Richardson 2009). Such images provide reasons why many employees do not identify the tourism and hospitality industries as a ‘career choice’ but rather as a ‘stop gap’ whilst looking for ‘something better’ (Baum, 2008b; Richardson, 2009).

In order to begin to address these issues, throughout this paper we suggest that it is vital to re-conceptualise and re-consider those who undertake tourism and hospitality work (see also Lugosi, Lynch, & Morrison, 2009; Ottenbacher et al., 2009). As Ladkin (2011, p. 1135) suggests, “tourism [and hospitality] labor remains a relatively minor player in academic research” yet within the wider social sciences “there is no shortage of explorations into labor and employment, specifically in the areas of economics and employment issues in relation to society, culture and identity” (see also Veijola, 2010; Zampou-

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات