

# FED Lunch Research Series

## Ethnic Tourism and the Big Song: Public Pedagogies and the Ambiguity of Environmental Discourse in Southwest China

Date & Time: 30 Sept 2015, 13:00 – 14:00 (Light lunch begins at 12:30pm)

Venue: Room G021, Faculty of Education (E33)

Language: English

Audience: UM Staff / Postgraduate Students

Enquiries & Registration: Ms. Vera CHOI (FED\_Event@umac.mo); Tel: 8822-8788

\*Complementary light lunch will be provided.

### Abstract

This seminar examines two forms of public pedagogies in a rural region of southwest China—tourism and ethnic songs—to illustrate their contested roles in transforming local relations with natural and built environment. While tourism development daily alters the village landscape by spatial intervention, demolition, and construction, the “landscaping” is both a visual and conceptual device that produces a pleasurable environment as the “other” and signifies what is tourable and what is to be seen. On the other hand, the echoes of the environment and human-nature relations are central elements in ethnic songs that have been sung for centuries as a major music genre to transmit ancestral, historical, and cultural understandings. Indigenous worldviews and ecological awareness are expressed in songs through imitation of nature and worship of various nonhuman forms of life. The research argues that a nascent environmentalism and ecological significance of the ethnic songs are increasingly oriented towards instrumental development rationality, while at the same time revived and choreographed in staged tourism performances. Both tourism and ethnic songs offer powerful forms of public pedagogies through which to rethink how incommensurable discourses generate new environmental crises by drastically altering not only the vernacular landscape but also local cosmological beliefs. While curricula in rural schools are chiefly urban-oriented, a place-based critical pedagogy, if properly invoked, might provide some transformative educational responses to increase the awareness of the indigenous knowledge system and address the neoliberal impacts on rural ecological wellbeing.

### Speaker

Dr. Jinting WU, Assistant Professor of Education Policy at the Faculty of Education, University of Macau. She received her PhD with a joint degree in Educational Policy Studies and Curriculum and Instruction, and a minor in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She was a Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Luxembourg, also a recipient of the Gail P. Kelly Outstanding Dissertation Award in Comparative Education. Her research interests include comparative, international, and global studies of education; anthropology of education policy and social change; educational theory and philosophy; education and human diversity; global migration and Chinese diaspora. She is the author of *Fabricating an Educational Miracle: Compulsory Schooling Meets Ethnic Rural Development in Southwest China*, forthcoming with the State University of New York Press.

