Journal of
Current Chinese Affairs

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Emerging Issues for Cultural Tourism in Macau

Hilary du Cros

Abstract: Recent research on achieving sustainable heritage tourism in Macau advocates a greater collaboration between tourism and heritage management authorities and the local community on reaching sustainable tourism goals. A key theme for Macau in the last ten years has been how the tension between the proponents for greater casino development versus those for cultural heritage product development has played out in government policies for heritage management, private sector tourism development and host community concerns about heritage protection and achieving quality tourism. The indirect influence of the central government on Macau Special Administrative Region's (SAR's) policy development in relation to these topics in the last ten years will be discussed in this context using findings from three recent studies by the Institute For Tourism Studies (IFT) and background information collected on government policy and community views. This paper will outline emerging issues regarding demand, supply, and impacts of cultural tourism with reference to findings from four recent research projects. Special reference will be made to over-use and under-use issues, authenticity, and the management of tourism impacts while enhancing visitor experience. Strategic planning and management of cultural tourism products will also be touched upon.

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Cultural Heritage Management, Tourism, and Stakeholders

Cultural heritage management (CHM, in the USA known as cultural resources management) is the *process* of undertaking activities to care for heritage items or assets. Caring for cultural heritage assets is important because our society has a responsibility toward present and future generations to manage such heritage assets to the best of our ability. CHM has also become increasingly intertwined with other principal objectives of sustainable development, an environmental management framework that considers such precious resources as important cultural capital. CHM is now a global phenomenon. A series of internationally recognized charters and conventions, such as the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 2004) and the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 2008), dictate its core principles. These principles are embodied in formal heritage protection legislation or accepted heritage management policies for most localities.

Many authorities see cultural heritage assets as ensuring a higher level of quality of life for the local community and have broadened the heritage significance assessment criteria to include assets of social value to that community. This means that the incorporation of some items representative of everyday life, not just monuments and ancient relics in public parks, is becoming more important to many societies. In particular, an increasing number of researchers have focused on the question of how CHM could be fully integrated within the general framework of sustainable development, particularly in relation to that most global of all industries – tourism (Boniface and Fowler 1993; Middleton and Hawkins 1998; Mowforth and Munt 1998; Shackley 1998; UNESCO and the Nordic World Heritage Office 1999; Richards 2007). Debates about tourism impacts within cultural heritage management discourse have been going on since the 1970s at the international level. However, a similar debate has taken place only fairly recently in some regions, such as Asia, particularly in countries that urgently require the economic benefits that tourism can sometimes bring (Logan 2002; Taylor 2004; Chan and Ma 2004).

Establishing sustainable cultural tourism through greater stakeholder involvement in the planning, marketing and management of heritage assets might sound simple. However, the reality is that stakeholders are not always easy to deal with, whether you are a government official, a consultant or a community leader facilitating a project. Hall and McArthur observe that for many such facilitators and project leaders,

> one of the greatest difficulties in dealing with stakeholders is coping
> with the range of values and interests that occur in relation to heritage

> [and] […] the treatment of historical resources so as to create heritage products that convey specific notions of identity and their consequent commodification, in many cases for the commercial market, has heightened and extended these tensions (Hall and McArthur 1998: 49).

This issue has its roots in how different stakeholders view heritage assets. Some see them as valuable for tourism foremost, others as social capital for the community, and some as a mix of both; problematically, a few powerful stakeholders may even see them as having little value at all. All sorts of different combinations of these scenarios are possible in the Asia-Pacific region, where dissonance over the role of heritage in the transformation of historic cities and towns is commonplace (Taylor 2004). However, taking a strategic approach to heritage tourism management on this issue is still worthwhile, and stakeholder involvement does not have to be the "poisoned chalice" (see Jones 2003) that some authorities feel they have been handed in facilitating such projects.

Overcoming dissonance regarding heritage conservation and tourism requires appropriate management strategies. A first step is to identify key stakeholders, particularly individuals or groups that are most affected by and those that are most vocal about changes. It is also critical to understand and chart the relationships between stakeholders, looking at how often they interact, how formally and with what amount of friendliness. It has been noted by McKercher and du Cros (2002) that there are a number of ways that facilitation of stakeholder relationships can develop over time. Examples for Macau are to be found in the research projects outlined in this paper.

CHM Administration in China and Macau SAR: Two Systems, One Country

Macau was not more than a small collection of fishing villages when Portuguese traders set up a permanent settlement in 1557. It was the only Western settlement within Chinese territory for many years. Jesuits launched their missionary activities in Asia from Macau. Western technology and cultural pursuits, such as mechanical clock-making, painting and classical music, also seeped into China for the first time from the enclave. Likewise, Chinese knowledge and goods made their way to the West (Peterson 1994).

By 1863, Macau was a mixed population of Portuguese, Japanese, Malays, Indians, Africans, Chinese, and Eurasians or "Macanese" much of which is still evident in cuisine, architecture, and customs (Miu and Miu 2004; de Sales Marques 2008). Macau's gaming industry emerged after 1875 and differed from that of China by including canine and horse racing, Western table games

along with traditional Chinese ones. The enclave was governed largely by Portuguese officials supported by a number of Macanese and ethnic Chinese staff, the most senior of whom had been trained in Portugal, up until tertiary education was available locally in the late twentieth century, unlike Hong Kong where it started in 1909. Hence, it was a heavily hierarchical society for many years with the majority of the population not highly educated (Tan 1999; du Cros and Lee 2007). By the Handover in 1999, only 4.3 per cent had attained tertiary qualifications and 8 per cent had completed high school. It also included a constant trickle of recent arrivals from China admitted for mostly construction and manufacturing work who did not share the same deep attachment to the place as did longer-term residents (Tan 1999).

In the Western Pearl River Delta Region, two general administrative frameworks for heritage management have been identified that are supported by distinctly different heritage protection legislation: the Portuguese-colonial derived in Macau; and the socialist-country-in-transition of the People's Republic of China (PRC). However, only the former is directly relevant to Macau's cultural heritage and tourism though there is some indirect influence by the later regarding the use of the PRC's recent conservation code, the China Principles (Agnew and Demas 2002) and increasing cultural exchanges.

Macau's heritage protection efforts began with national legislation that listed its most significant colonial sites in 1953 on a national list in Portugal. It then developed local laws that protected a broader range of assets as it gained greater independence in the 1970s. In 1976, Macau enacted its first truly local heritage legislation – Statutory Order No. 34/76/M – in response to Portugal pronouncing administrative and legal changes to the running of some of its overseas provinces/ colonies (du Cros and Lee 2007). This Statutory Order recognized:

> [t]he city of Macao, a meeting place of two civilizations and cultures, has characteristics that […] must be preserved in order to maintain the character that distinguishes Macao from the other population centres of the region in which it is located […] [It also] prescribes measures to allow Macao to evolve as a city without losing the heritage that, even today, gives it value, and to preserve and protect that heritage from depredation and modifications that could destroy this artistic and scenic value (Decree No. 34/76/M 1976).

At the end of the Qing dynasty, mainland China was suffering difficulties with the illegal removal and export of significant movable cultural property, such as antiques, paintings and scrolls, sacred and archaeological artefacts. These items were mostly sold by or stolen from their owners/ sites and left the country in increasing numbers. One of the last ordinances promulgated by the failing Imperial government to protect such cultural property was introduced in 1909

through the newly instituted Ministry of Internal Affairs. Lai, Demas, and Agnew (2004) suspect that the promulgation of this legislation was triggered by the removal by foreign expeditions of a significant number of items taken from the Silk Road sites (e.g., the Dunhuang scrolls). Successive laws enacted after this time also tried to address the problem.

However, in terms of the built environment, it was not until 1982 that the views of architectural preservationists, such as the famous architect Liang Sicheng, were included in the framing of relevant laws. He was one of the Chinese preservationists who had been active before the War who became active again in the 1950s and after the Cultural Revolution (Lai, Demas, and Agnew 2004). When the central government was preparing to enact national legislation in the early 1980s, it took notice mostly of those preservationists working in Beijing. The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics, 1982's definition of categories of heritage assets to be protected as "cultural relics" is broad, including everything from historic cities to those "underground and above ground cultural relics within the land and sea boundary of the country" (from an English translation of the law by Ivan Ho, Architectural Conservation Programme, University of Hong Kong, 2004). The national level legislation's scope was widely defined so that it could be applied to a broad category of cultural heritage assets (although this does not include intangible heritage). The coverage or protection afforded by the 1982 national law was thus far more than Macau SAR's closely proscribed tangible heritage definitions in its 1976 and 1992 Decrees.

The Macau legislative definitions are set to change in 2009 with the introduction of new heritage protection laws in Macau to be more in line with international best practice and Portuguese legal instruments rather than the 1982 Cultural Relics Act. Accordingly, the process has involved more input from Portuguese heritage practitioners and lawyers than those from the mainland thereby guaranteeing Macau its autonomy as a SAR under the Basic Law, 1999. It is likely that there will be some changes to the administration of heritage management and opportunities for greater participation of the local community, and integration of heritage protection and planning into the urban design of Macau (Interview 2008a).

Overall, legislation in China was and is still being developed and promulgated by the central government in a top-down approach to heritage management and other related matters within the PRC only. Of more relevance to Macau than mainland legislation is the *Principles for Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* or the China Principles, 2002. This document was devised as a collaborative project between the State Administration for Cultural Heritage (SACH), the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, and the Australian Heritage Commission (now itself restructured as part of

Environment Australia). It provides the first clear guidelines for heritage practice for Chinese heritage under the PRC's system. Unfortunately, it does not include any guidance on stakeholder consultation (Sullivan 2001; Agnew et al. 2005). Stephen Chan from the Cultural Affairs Bureau had observed that Macau's policy on the use of charters can vary. He saw it as important to "keep in line with the (international) Venice Charter and the China Principles, but it is more important to handle projects on a case by case basis". He followed the China Principles in cases involving Chinese structures "because [they] don't want to Westernise the structures".

Regarding intangible heritage, there are closer links between China and Macau SAR through the increasing exchange of performing and visual arts activities. Local Macau artists have set up galleries in Beijing and most local arts and cultural festivals in Macau feature at least one mainland event (Kok 2008). Even the predominantly Portuguese Lusofonia Festival 2008 included acrobatics and paper-cutting groups from Shandong due to extra funding provided by the Permanent Secretary for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries (*Macau Daily* 2008). It is possible that the strong emphasis on maintaining locally developed Portuguese/ Macanese legal administrative structures is a reaction against the growing Chinesification of Macau since 1999 by increased exposure to the mainland through tourism and trade. It will be interesting to track how this cultural tension is resolved as Macau integrates into mainland Chinese system over the next 40 years.

The Relationship between CHM and Tourism Development

The People's Republic of China views cultural tourist attractions as part of its appeal for international tourists and key to its appeal for domestic tourists (Zhang 2003). It also brings much needed revenue to relatively undeveloped areas with only intangible heritage assets, such as the culture of ethnic communities. The economy of the Peoples' Republic of China has undergone dramatic reform and growth since the liberalization process was initiated by Deng Xiaoping's "Open Door" policy in 1978. This process has been even further accelerated by China's accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. Changes associated with acceleration in economic reform have had an impact on China's stewardship of heritage assets in relation to tourism. This impact has been especially marked at popular heritage Sites that have witnessed increased commercialism (Xu 2003; Chan and Ma 2004; du Cros 2006; Li and Hu 2008).

On the demand side, the advent of the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) in 1981 and later the recognition of the economic role of tourism in national policy led to increases in the numbers of people partaking in domestic travel (Zhang 2003). In 1992 most areas of China were open to mass tourism and week long public holidays made it easier for tourists to go further on trips within their own country (Sofield and Li 1998). A five-day working week introduced in 1995 opened up the possibility for travel on weekends, while the promotion of the three "Golden Week" holidays from 1999 inspired greater movement and freedom of travel within China (Zhang 2003). In addition, Chinese tourists have been able to apply for individual visas to travel independently outside Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions (SARs), since 1983 and 1984 respectively (Zhang, Jenkins, and Qu 2003).

Macau has undergone its own most intense phase of tourism development in the last ten years, where whole sections of reclaimed land have been given over to the industry. It is located one hours distance by ferry from Hong Kong (also a popular mainland Chinese tourist destination) and immediately adjacent to the relatively wealthy southern Chinese province of Guangdong. This gives Macau a unique position to access this increasing demand for leisure tourism in relation to China, both now and in the past. The recent increase has been in response in part to the Macau government breaking the monopoly on local gaming licenses that has allowed overseas investment in new properties and activities. Arrivals have jumped from 16,672,600 in 2004 to 26,992,995 in 2007 in an area of around 28 square kilometres. The majority of these visitors come from China. For instance, mainland Chinese visitors in October 2008 accounted for 58.4 per cent of arrivals into Macau (Tso 2007; DSEC 2008).

Prior to this boom, cultural tourism in Macau began to develop in parallel with gambling as one of the key attractions of Macau. It started with guided day tours and self-guiding tourists with a variety of motivations, which may have including gambling as well in some form. The Macau government promulgated the "Ordinance for the Tourism Industry and Related Industries" on July 23, 1966. Ten years later the standing committee, the Committee for the Defense of Macau's Urbanistic, Natural and Cultural Heritage, was created in 1976 and had as one of its mandates to collaborate with the Information and Tourism Centre to promote the territory's natural, architectural and cultural property (Statutory Order No. 34/76/M).

In 1980, the Information and Tourism Centre (later the Macau Government Tourism Office – MGTO) undertook a strategic tourism development study together with the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) in 1980. The report is entitled *Macau: A Study of Tourism Development*. The report

emphasized the importance of Macau's heritage to tourism development.[1] One observation about relationship between the built environment and intangible heritage stands out for its time and became key to Macau's approach to cultural tourism thereafter:

> The people of Macau and its government should be justly proud of the marvelous and rich urban experience that the city offers to both visitors as well as themselves. The physical and social quality of the city is most impressive […] it is a history in action as well as in stone and stucco. The people themselves, as they go about their daily activities, are a vital part of the Macao experience (PATA 1980: 15).

In summary, the report:

- Praised the efforts at conservation of the built environment and stated that these should be copied by the private sector hoping that government would not be expected to bear the brunt of the cost of keeping Macau's heritage looking good for tourists and local people.
- To that end, the taskforce wanted to see more planning controls, incentives for private investment in heritage conservation, care with design of infrastructure and services, implement/enforce 1976 heritage decree, and programs to increase local awareness of heritage values.

The Macau government then adopted the following policy directions in response to the report in regards to tourism (Chen and Guo 1999: 210).

- Cooperate with tourism organizations in Portugal.
- Establish a comprehensive tourism strategic plan.
- Strengthen communication with national, regional and international tourism organizations.
- Improve the standard of service in the tourism and related industries.
- Establish a tourism training school.
- Amend tourism regulations.
- Repair and preserve temples and other tourist attractions.
- Construct new hotels and other supporting facilities.
- Explore the establishment of new tourist attractions.

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1   One of the taskforce members with heritage tourism experience was Robertson Collins, who was an advisor to the Singapore government around the same time. Heritage conservation expertise is included in all PATA studies (Collins 1991). Most PATA studies follow a standard tourism master-planning research approach where key stakeholders are contacted, statistics gathered, attractions visited and opinions sought from decision makers about the current situation and future directions.

- Simplify immigration processes for visitors.

Therefore from the earliest days of modern tourism development in Macau tourism and heritage preservation became closely linked in order to capitalize on the opportunities this approach allowed.

Accordingly in 1994, another PATA study was undertaken entitled: *Macao: Tourism in Transition.*[2] This report reaffirmed the importance of cultural heritage to tourism and the retention and enhancement of Macau's ambience based on its cultural and heritage strengths. To this end, the report also recommended establishment of "distinct heritage precincts" that could also contain modern buildings if in a sympathetic design and scale with older building stock. It advocated continued growth but with the retention of "important heritage characteristics". It did not, however, give any indication of Macau's ultimate limit for growth or how to increase some aspects of its carrying capacity.

Governor of the time, General Vasco Rocha Viera, confirmed that heritage was important to Macau's future:

> Macao has its own identity in terms of its heritage, its way of life, and its distinctive capacity to be a meeting point and a place of tolerance. You can find oriental and western styles side by side, together with a mixture of these styles which you cannot say is west or east, simply that it is Macao. I am fully convinced that the population of Macao intends to preserve this unique identity and I am fully convinced too that China is also interested in preserving it (PATA 1994: 48).

It also recommended that the government provide more education opportunities for the local community and industry training. Finally it observed that Macau should devise marketing approaches to capitalize on proximity to China and its potential as a meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) destination. The Institute For Tourism Studies (IFT) was established in 1995 as a result, particularly as local staff were urgently needed for management positions and for the new airport, as guides and for hotels (PATA 1994; IFT 2008).

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2   A larger team of PATA Taskforce members undertook the 1994 study. The team comprised: Ian Kennedy (former vice president of PATA's Pacific Division), Eamonn Brennon (former director of ASEAN Tourism Training Project), Ian Oelrichs (Australian environmental management consultant), Hisashi Sugaya (Japanese-American heritage architect and former chairman of the International Council on Monuments and Sites – ICOMOS, International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism), Malcolm Peat (Peat Marwick management consultants) and Fletch Walker (American business management consultant). It followed the same methodology as the earlier study.

After 1996 Macau was affected by the Asian economic downturn, which slowed tourism growth. During the late Transition phase before the Handover in 1999, Macau also witnessed deterioration in public security, which damaged its reputation as a relatively safe leisure destination in Asia. Triad gangs had left Hong Kong before its Handover in 1997 and set up operations in Macau, so that it became known as "Eastern Chicago" to some due to the rise in crime (Miu and Miu 2004). This could be one possible cause of the reduction in gaming revenues and hotel occupancy in 1996 and 1997 (Tan 1999). Even so, this twilight zone before the Handover in 1999 is still celebrated in films, such as "Yi Sa Bui Lai" ("Isabella") (2006), in relation to the darker aspects of the transition to Chinese sovereignty.

Macau was also known in throughout Asia as an "Oriental Monte Carlo" by the time of the Handover in 1997. The previous year its gaming revenue was nearly 2 billion USD and accounted for 40.24 per cent of its GDP. Even then gaming revenue accounted for 50 per cent of government revenue through collection of a gambling tax (Tan 1999). Hence, Macau came back to China with gaming historical, financially and administratively ingrained as an inevitable part of the package. In 2002, the Chief Executive, Edmund Ho, named the following as the three pillars of Macau's economy:

- Gaming,
- leisure (tourism and entertainment),
- MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) (PATA 2002).

After 2002, development commenced on a reclaimed strip of land between Taipa Island and Coloane with the vision of it becoming an Asian version of the Las Vegas Strip or "Vegas of the Orient". Since breaking of the monopoly on gambling to allow Las Vegas investment in casino development, the Macau government made the way was clear to allow a new generation multipurpose leisure and gambling complexes to be constructed. Its vision is for Macau to become a key international recreation and shopping destination with less reliance on gaming as time goes by was outlined in the Chief Executive's 2004 Policy Speech. However these complexes are aimed squarely at the mainland Chinese market and other Asians in the region rather than international tourists seeking diverse visitor experiences outside of gaming. The first of these casino leisure complexes to open were the Wynn Resort in September 2006 and the Venetian in August 2007. In 2007 Steve Wynn, CEO of Wynn Resorts, saw the direction policy was going on this emerging issue with both Macau and central governments moving away from Macau's economic reliance on gambling. He observed in November 2007 "that non-casino revenue is more important to me" (Wynn 2007: 29).

One could argue that as every new casino complex opens (and more will between now and 2014) Macau's reputation as the Las Vegas of Asia rather than anything else will grow particularly with the regional market. This is unless Macau changes from a destination concentrated on gambling to one that offers a range of attractions such as family resorts, retail, MICE, sports, cuisine and cultural heritage. The objective of positioning the destination brand for Macau further away from gaming is one that is shared by both the public and private sector concerned about an overdependence on gaming revenue.

However this diversification policy has been harder to implement than would first appear. For instance, the development of the MICE industry has been one of the Macau government's pillars in its policy to diversify the local economy. The Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO) established the Macau Business Tourism Centre in 2006 to promote the MICE industry and assist both local and foreign event managers in organizing activities in the SAR (Pereira 2008). Despite PATA's recommendations in 1994, it took another 13 years at least to establish a supply of professionally managed facilities that are attractive to MICE and it has occurred only in conjunction with investment in casinos and mega-resorts. John Allen, a high-level government consultant involved in certifying events and an event promoter himself, has observed that "human resources" are the biggest challenge Macau faces in the development of the industry. He also, stated that:

> [V]ast amounts of people will be needed to run these properties: for that you need to attract talent from more mature markets overseas to come and help train the local work force (Pereira 2008).

Tourism development in Southern China is now entering a new phase as Asian tourists become wealthier and travel more regionally. There is also a greater interest in studying the growth of independent mainland Chinese tourist market regarding its potential for consuming cultural tourism products in view of the relaxation of visa restrictions on independent pleasure travel to Hong Kong and Macau in 2003. When visa restrictions were tightened again after June 2008, investors in the fledgling MICE industry and casino/ hotel mega-resorts complained. However, there appears to be no logic behind the rumours that the Chinese government has been using its control over independent visas as a way to restrict Macau's economy (MacKillop 2008).

Significantly, with this restriction is coming more encouragement by the Macau government of non-gaming mainland niches such as family, students and youth travel. At the end of 2008, MGTO also made a presentation to the Committee of Tourism Support and Development in Macau on next year's

festivities for the Handover anniversary that included recommendations to improve visitor experience by supplying:

- Thematic cultural heritage tour packages,
- nn-site guides to improve the visitor experience for the World Heritage Site (WHS),
- heritage bus shuttles from transport hubs to heritage attractions (MGTO 2008a).

While this presentation also outlined a program for increased promotion and marketing of the WHS, it contained no clear direction on long-standing problems for developing tourism further such as congestion management in connection with this proposed increase in tourism to some places that are already heavily visited. This greater promotion of WHS also comes at a time when some significant sections of Macau's urban heritage is under threat through relaxation of height controls, such as close to the Guia Lighthouse (Wan, Pinheiro, and Korenaga 2007). Ironically it is the completion of a national government building in front of the lighthouse that is blocking the view of the latter for non-gaming tourists and the local community (Guia Lighthouse Blogspot 2008).

The Rise of Government and Community Heritage Awareness

Historically, it was the public sector that took up the cause for heritage conservation not the community regarding initial heritage inventory and protection. In general the Chinese community in Macau had little interest for most of the twentieth century in maintaining tangible heritage assets, such as historic buildings and archaeological sites, as many people on the poverty line were more concerned about basic survival. However, cultural heritage assets, such as temples and ancestral halls, were (and still are) in frequent use and considered part of contemporary culture and not cultural artefacts in a separate category requiring special care. For these people, the statement by the historian David Lowenthal (1985: 241) that "every relic exists simultaneously in the past and in the present" holds real merit.

However, with the inscription of the "Historic Centre of Macau" as a World Heritage site in 2005, the popularity of the pedestrianization of Tap Seac Square, and the enhancement of the St. Lazarus Historic District and Taipa Old Village, preservation of Macau's cultural heritage has been moved to a higher plane in terms of community awareness of heritage conservation. To the point that now even the Guia Lighthouse has its own blog (Guia Lighthouse Blogspot 2008). Community pride in heritage assets is an

important linchpin for successful cultural tourism. This awareness was demonstrated vigorously in the 2006 debate about the fate of a slightly eccentric Portuguese building, known as the Blue House or Lam Uk Chye. It was even possible to measure it quantitatively in a phone survey conducted in the latter part of that year. The Blue House is currently a two storey building with a flame tree growing out of the centre of it on a corner block behind the St Paul's Ruins precinct. However, it is neither part of the World Heritage site (WHS) or its buffer zone.

The Blue House was first used as a residence when it was completed in 1953. In 1956, the government took over the building. In 1958, it was sold to the Comissão Central de Asistência Pública. It was then partially rebuilt in 1966 as an office for the Provedonia de Asistência Pública or Department of Public Welfare. Throughout that time it has acted as a service centre for the community at large, providing aid to the poor, needy and elderly (IFT 2006). Overall, it is a reminder to long-term community members of how charity moved from the private to the public domain in Macau.

The controversy arose in June 2006 from a genuine need by the Social Welfare Institute (SWI) – the present occupant and user of the Blue House – to expand office requirements to meet growing social service needs of Macau residents and a new policy to centralize services. Immediately the plan created strong reaction from the public, which prompted the Macau SAR government to study matter further and consider public and expert opinions by conducting two studies.

The two studies comprised an expert panel assessment of the Blue House and a large-scale public opinion survey of Macau residents. The first study was really a modified form of impact assessment to ascertain the asset's significance from an expert point of view. Two independent and internationally-recognized experts on cultural heritage preservation were hired principally because of their independence from the Macau heritage scene and their close association with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites). Their brief from the government required them to also conduct extensive interviews with stakeholders, a group which included various historical and cultural associations in Macau, the Social Welfare Institute (the occupant of the Blue House), and local cultural heritage experts among others.

The consultants concluded that its cultural significance level was high and that it possessed the following values (among others):

- It is a physical reminder of the Macau government's role in the story of welfare and charity.

▪ It was once commemorated as one of the 15 most important "Public Buildings and Monuments of Macau" in a series of stamps issued by the Post Office of Macau [in 1983] confirming its status as a heritage building that is worthy of preservation.

Accordingly, the report recommended that the Blue House should be retained and preserved by expanding the present boundaries of the conservation zone of Sao Lazaro and Tap Seac Square to include the Blue House (IFT 2006).

The second study was carried out by the Institute For Tourism Studies (IFT)[3] between October and December 2006, a little after the peak of the controversy. It comprised a large-scale public opinion survey conducted by telephone. A total of 38,669 call attempts made over the survey period to reach targeted sample size of 10,000 (response rate of 26 per cent) (IFT 2007). This massive poll was the first of its kind and allowed heritage authorities to slip in some general questions about public awareness of heritage conservation the responses for which were as interesting as those regarding the Blue House. The pollsters asked local residents about their:

▪ Perception of the government's role in heritage preservation,
▪ level of personal support for heritage preservation,
▪ willingness to compromise on the preservation of heritage buildings,
▪ level of awareness or knowledge of the Blue House,
▪ opinion regarding the future of the Blue House,
▪ views on the significance of the Blue House (among those who wished to preserve it).

The findings from the telephone survey were that there is relatively high level of support for heritage preservation among Macau residents. They answered positively that they consider the government to have done a lot over the years

to preserve heritage and they expect the government to continue with its commitment and lead in this responsibility. Also they exhibited a high level of support for historic preservation; and that they do not agree that it is expensive to do so and they do not feel that land space occupied by heritage buildings can be better used for other social purposes. Among Macau residents who were aware of the Blue House:

- The majority – or 46.8 per cent – wished to preserve the Blue House,
- 38.1 per cent wish to have it partly demolished, maintaining only the façade,
- 15.2 per cent wish to have it demolished (IFT 2007: 18).

The above was still a better result than would have been possible ten years earlier for preservation of a single building. A press conference was on 19 January 2007 to relay the results of the IFT reports to the public. Immediately afterwards, the proposal for its redevelopment was withdrawn by the Social Welfare Institute and alternative plans are being made to deal with their office overcrowding situation. Although the high population for the sample seemed like overkill at the time, it did allow IFT to collect some interesting data on how Macau's society is changing in relation to economic development, education opportunities and how this affects its attitude to local heritage. Most significantly it showed a higher than expected level of support amongst the public for heritage preservation in general.

The Role of Authenticity and Visitor Experience in the Success of Heritage Attractions in Macau

The relationship between authenticity and visitor experience is an emerging issue for Asian contemporary tourism. Cooper and Hall (2008) have identified contemporary tourism of all kinds as being firmly placed within a global experience economy. An IFT study was conducted to answer the question: "Do cultural themes parks in Macau offer an appealing experience to tourists as compared to that available at authentic heritage attractions?"

The visitor experience at two heritage attractions at opposing ends of the commodification continuum was compared to answer the question. Pine and Gilmore's (1998) five principles that drive the creation of memorable experiences were used as a framework for the study. The first of these principles is: have a consistent theme, one that resonates throughout the entire experience. Second, layer the theme with positive cues, such as, easy-to-follow signs. Third, eliminate negative cues, those visual or aural messages that distract or contradict the theme. Fourth, offer memorabilia that commemorate the experience for the user. Finally, engage all five senses through sights,

sounds, and so on to heighten the experience and thus make it more memorable (Pine and Gilmore 1998). A quantitative approach was used for the study which included counting tourists and conducting brief surveys of visitor satisfaction.

Forty student research assistants carried out data collection during Golden Week May and October 2006 at two sites: Macau Fisherman's Wharf Theme Park and the authentic Senardo Square/ St. Paul's Ruins that is part of the WHS. Macau Fisherman's Wharf opened in early 2006 and is an attempt at a pastiche style cultural theme park. The concept was instigated by David Chow (developer from Hong Kong) in collaboration with Lawrence Ho (son of the local tycoon Dr. Stanley Ho). Macau Fisherman's Wharf (MFW) mimics architectural style and layout of historic Portuguese areas of Macau as well as from that from other historic places around the world. It has even created some confusion amongst tourists arriving near it by ferry from Hong Kong for the first time.

The visitor counts were made by students at points of interest or key features and brief surveys of visitor satisfaction undertaken with 400 visitors (200 each Golden Week). The study found that the authentic Senardo Square/ St. Pauls Ruins section of the WHS attracted 45 per cent more tourists of all kinds than the fake historic town that forms part of MFW at this peak time. Senardo Square's proximity to a broader range of shops and facilities (e.g. street markets and local restaurants) and more realistic street life/ ambience (as per principle number five above) were named as key reasons for its appeal to tourists (34 and 31 per cent, respectively). Many of the visitors surveyed also named its World Heritage status and genuinely European feel as two principal reasons (19 and 17.3 per cent, respectively).

Macau Fisherman's Wharf with its hotchpotch of Roman, Islamic, Portuguese, and Dutch architectural styles still struggles to attract visitors, even the families it was designed for who are supposedly not interested in gambling in the Sands Casino nearby. Since the study was conducted, MFW has encountered competition for the family theme park market from the Venetian in Cotai since 2007, which has themed interior retail spaces and is also more comfortable to visit in the hot summer months. In answer to this, MFW has opened Middle-East war games area with army costumes and pi-pi guns in half of Aladdin's Castle not used for children's rides. Given the Iraq situation, it seems in dubious taste and hopefully will not attract terrorism.

Macau does have one other theme park beside MFW and that is the A-Ma Cultural Village in Coloane themed around the maritime goddess A-Ma of the South China Sea. It is the only commodified heritage attraction that Macau has which is closest in design to the mainland Chinese cultural theme park scenic spots (Nyiri 2006). Although it has not been studied as closely as

the above sites, anecdotal evidence from students and residents in Macau indicates that it may be even less popular with tourists, particularly those from China who can find similar attractions at home.

Visitor Experience, Congestion and Overuse at Popular Heritage Attractions in Macau

Research has shown over the years that impacts need to be carefully managed for tourism to be sustainable in the long-term at popular heritage attractions (ICOMOS 1999; Shackley 1998; Leask and Fyall 2006). Such management requires all stakeholders see the need to mitigate negative impacts and enhance positive ones. It also means that Macau's government needs to implement proactive rather than reactive policies, before important thresholds are reached.

Many World Heritage sites in China are congested on public holidays with problems arising from negative impacts (Chan and Ma 2004). For instance, Lijiang Ancient Town in Yunnan receives most of its three million or more annual visitors during these times to the point that most of the local people have moved out (du Cros 2006). These peaks while predictable still have a major impact.

Congestion management measures are needed before a threshold is breached, otherwise physical damage occurs, visitor satisfaction suffers, as does the amenity of the host community. Even when authorities think they are doing well, they should constantly monitor the situation and allocate resources accordingly. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) encourages tourist organizations to do this kind of monitoring and study more and not just rely on promotion to maintain a Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA) otherwise a destination is headed for decline.

Permanent congestion is characterized by blockages of visitor flow and continuous overcrowding in places where careful planning, resource allocation and active management are required to deal with the reduction of this type of congestion and impacts. Fluctuating congestion occurs in response to peaks in demand caused by well known periodical events, public holidays and school vacations, festivals, celebrations, ceremonies and just having free time on weekends. UNWTO (2004: 7) observes that this form of congestion requires "additional staffing, transportation, security, food and beverage resources for relatively short periods". It is common operations resource management issue for any popular tourist attraction, whether it is WHS or not (Schmenner 1995). This variation in resources needed is why it is more difficult to manage than permanent congestion, particularly if there are unforeseen fluctuations in

demand, such as people travelling in large numbers either side of a peak time hoping to avoid the crowds.

Congestion alleviation requires site, destination and demand management. This mutual influence will not happen without organization, coordination and dialogue between the stakeholders. What links all the stakeholders and activities together is the experience of the visitor. There are five stages in that experience, three of which are pertinent for congestion management of sites:

1. The experience of choosing a destination and time to travel (demand management).
2. The journey to the destination.
3. The experience of the destination (destination management).
4. The journey to the natural or cultural site.
5. The experience of the site (site management) (UNWTO 2004).

On-going studies of congestion by IFT in Macau have taken the three stages of demand, destination and site management of visitors as the focus for finding ways to minimize congestion at natural and cultural sites. Originally a government study was commissioned regarding mainly site level congestion at key heritage attractions, although its connection with destination and demand management was also investigated. The primary attractions of St. Paul's Ruins and A-Ma Temple on Macau Peninsula were chosen to study initially on the advice of key stakeholders in 2005.

The first phase of the study originated as a result of a request made by the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture in August 2005 to examine how Macau's heritage sites were coping with mounting visitor numbers. The United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) guidebook on congestion management provided the framework to undertake the study. The UNWTO (2004) approach examines all aspects affecting congestion, requiring a comprehensive data collection process. Over time the study has adopted a four phased data collection process. Phase 1, which was essentially the initial study conducted for the Macau SAR government, involved the preliminary census of visitors and buses conducted over a two day period in October, 2005. The second phase involved periodic site inspections, visitor and bus counts conducted by the author and her students on seven different occasions over a two month period supplemented by interviews and official police statistics. The site inspections included days when high congestion would be expected, such as during first day of the Golden Week holiday period for China and the end of the East Asia Games, as well as other non holiday or festival times when visitor numbers were expected to be lower in October 2005. Brief interviews were conducted on site with tour guides and bus

drivers. These data sources were then triangulated against congestion and traffic flow data collected by the Corpo de Polícia de Segurança Pública de Macau (Police Department). Intermittent site inspections and traffic counts were conducted between March and October 2006 for phase 3, representing the third data collection phase. Interviews with both heritage asset and tourism industry stakeholders were conducted, such as neighbourhood association representatives, security guards, temple attendants, and tour guides (many of whom were on-site regularly) were undertaken to determine their perceptions of congestion at the sites. The fourth phase results were collected October 2008 following the same methods.

Initially St. Paul's Ruins was found to be more popular and congested than A-Ma Temple, despite them both figuring on official tour itineraries. With the off-peak figures and other tourist numbers factored in from student's counts and interviews, it is likely that St. Paul's Ruins attracted over 1.3 million tourists of all kinds over 12 months meaning that around 1 in 14 people arriving in Macau went to visit it in the year after it was inscribed in 2005. At least half of them were probably mainland Chinese tourists (du Cros 2007). Congestion management issues were identified as stemming from inadequate planning for the increase in visitation post-inscription.

In the latest observations for 2008, it was confirmed that St. Paul's Ruins is genuinely suffering permanent congestion on a daily basis due to still being Macau's most visited heritage attraction. The busiest times are early in the morning and later in the afternoon indicating that scheduling of bus tours is a continuing problem with tour operators putting this key attraction either first or last on tour itineraries. Tour guides were observed allowing their groups to obstruct other groups. There were no on-site managers or guides to resolve these problems, so hopefully the recent MGTO proposal (2008a) to provide this service will affect an improvement in 2009.

A-Ma Temple is experiencing fluctuating congestion, which could be verging on permanent congestion if tourist numbers continue to increase at the current rate. It received more of its visitors from China than St. Paul's Ruins did; 64 per cent as against 54 per cent of those counted. According to Schmenner (1995) and UNWTO (2004), permanent congestion is easier to allocate resources for than fluctuating congestion. It appears that casinos are not the only popular attractions in Macau. As to whether the visitors to heritage sites are getting much of a visitor experience once photos have been taken is another interesting question as the proportion of tourists observed standing around looking bored at both sites in 2008 was similar to counts from 2006.

Discussion of Key Theme: Cultural Tourism Versus Gaming

Macau today is a unique city with a blend of the Western and Eastern culture formulated over nearly 500 years, as well as having a solid history as a gambling centre. Most ancient Chinese temples, the Portuguese architectural and other historical sites have been reasonably well protected as the trademarks of Macau's cultural identity (for examples, see CAB 2008). Increasingly interest is being shown in associated intangible heritage, such as the Chinese festivals and Macanese cuisine, language, festivals and customs (for examples currently promoted for cultural tourism, see MGTO 2008b).

Cultural tourism can be defined as, "A form of tourism that relies on a destination's cultural heritage assets and transforms them into products that can be consumed by tourists" (McKercher and du Cros 2002: 6). What is understood as modern cultural tourism has only been studied in detail from the 1980s onwards (Tighe 1986; Boniface and Fowler 1993). Ever since taking up a position at the Institute For Tourism Studies in Macau, the author has been asked on an almost regular basis whether twenty-first century style gaming is compatible with cultural tourism in Macau. This issue has become a fixation with quite a few authorities, both before and after the inscription of the World Heritage site, and may well have caused Macau to shoot up China's tentative list to be put forward relatively quickly for nomination for World Heritage Site List inscription.

On the gaming side, there are developments such as the Venetian mega-resort/ casino on the Cotai strip with a massive gaming floor and 350 shops devoted to retail in the Grande Canal Area (Yang 2008). This resort is designed to encourage a liminal state in visitors by its indoor permanently sunset lit streetscape of Venice. This type of experience fits well with many tourists to Macau who are likely to be seeking a shallow cultural tourism experience. Interviews with the Macau Tourist Guide Association (du Cros and Kong 2006) and later with the association's president in 2008 revealed that the three most popular tours offered by local tour companies for the mainland Chinese market are as follows:

- Gambling tour/ shopping tour (some sightseeing), attracts 80 per cent of customers.
- Sightseeing-only tour, attracts 10 per cent.
- MICE/ conference-related tour, attracts 10 per cent (Interview 2008b).

Independent mainland Chinese tourists do not tend to use guides unless they opt to take a tour on a whim. The visitor experiences of this group need to be explored more in relation to WHS as eventually mainland China will grant

individual visas to destinations other than Hong Kong and Macau for leisure tourists. The majority of mainland Chinese package tourists to Macau travel for recreation and visit cultural attractions for their recreational more than their educational values as one of the many activities they pursue (Nyiri 2006). However, such tourists are still important and can receive an educational message, if engaged correctly. In relation to this emerging issue the depth of cultural tourism experiences sort by this market, a preliminary street survey of 1,100 mainland Chinese tourists by IFT student research assistants was conducted in October 2007. Most tourists in this group to Macau were under 45 years old with approximately equal numbers of females and males. It yielded these results:

- 54 per cent would prefer to take a self-guided walking tour of the WH Site area.
- Less than 13 per cent are interested in a deep experience of churches, art galleries or museums.
- However, 33 per cent are interested in understanding Macau's history and culture in more detail.
- 34 per cent just want to take photographs of beautiful historic buildings or eat meals in them.

It is not unusual to find that Chinese mainland tourists relish the freedom to move beyond tour group itineraries required by group visas. Frequent and repeat visitors to Macau would probably prefer to visit heritage sites at their own discretion as has been found with the mainland Chinese youth budget tourist market (Ong and du Cros forthcoming). The percentage of tourists in this study interested in a deep experience of Macau's culture is higher than found in an earlier study for Hong Kong where such purposeful tourists amounted 11.8 per cent of the sample (McKercher and du Cros 2002: 228). The final observation about the popularity of historic buildings relates to an on-going conservation issue concerning the adaptive re-use of buildings for tourism. If the demand appears to be there from Macau's largest cultural tourism market segment for tourism related re-use, why are so many of these buildings still sitting vacant close to the popular sites of St. Paul's Ruins and A-Ma Temple?

Further research is planned on this issue, which relates to adaptive re-use of historic buildings and its role in developing arts leisure districts. Also the nature of the overlap between the gaming and cultural tourism markets will receive more attention in future studies. From this work it will be possible to determine whether there is a continuum that has gambling addicts at one end (people will not leave the casino at all during their stay) and purposeful cultural tourists at the other end (who will look at every exhibit in a museum). At the

moment it appears that the worlds of these two extremes do not meet at all and they seem to be able to coexist for now at the destination contentedly. For instance, photos of Macau on travel blogs of purposeful tourists the author has met do not include one single casino! Significantly there is likely to be a middle group, whose motivations regarding cultural tourism are more variable, and which could take into account a greater range of factors beyond time and interest. Knowing more about this group and how their visitor experience could be improved is going to be crucial to the survival of cultural heritage in Macau in the future.

Conclusion

Most tourist destinations in Asia are aiming for sustainable cultural tourism. It is a process that requires collaboration between tourism and cultural heritage management sectors along with the support for both by the host community as a basis. A partnership between both sectors is the ultimate objective for sustainable management of shared resources. Over the last ten years, Macau has maintained a reasonable record in this respect but still needs more general dialogue between these areas in the urban planning and tourism destination product management for this to occur more smoothly, particularly in the area of congestion management and visitor experience. More community involvement in heritage conservation and tourism promotion would also assist in achieving sustainable cultural tourism for Macau.

Coordination is likely to be an emerging issue for destination management to produce appropriate cultural tourism experiences and products. Cultural tourists have been coming to Macau as independent tourists from many countries for years, however easing of visa restrictions for mainland Chinese tourists is booming. More work is needed to encourage coordination of activities and creation of itineraries and to improve visitor experience.

Chinesification or the increasing influence of mainland culture (as this market for Macau predominates) is another emerging issue for cultural tourism product development and for the local community's sense of place. Certain long-term local businesses servicing small or disappearing markets and communities for Macau could themselves disappear in face of culturally monolithic mass Chinese tourism. Hence there is a concern about cultural diversity and survival of local traditions. Will Macau become just another Chinese city full of theme parks or an international city with its own authentic hybrid traditions? The government's encouragement new products and promotions for 2009 may be proof its efforts at trying to understand and encourage splitting the Chinese market into specialist niches, including one for

cultural tourism. It is also one possible way to support a policy of cultural diversity and sustain Macau's unique cultural identity for the local community and as an important cultural hub in Asia.

How Macau will succeed in continuing to build on its current policy of offering a diverse mix of attractions as against just gaming is a question for future research. Maintaining a range of products that will appeal to a wide variety of tourist segments is a difficult balancing act. If too much emphasis goes towards hedonistic entertainment then purposeful cultural tourists and many family tourists will be alienated. Alternatively, the enticement of inveterate gamblers out of the casinos to enjoy a more educational experience is not likely to occur. The tourist segments between these two extremes are of interest to marketers and heritage conservation advocates alike. A new Chief Executive will take over from Edmund Ho in 2009. Hopefully the next Chief Executive and future government policy will both favour more cultural tourism products that vary in scale, involve local small business people, re-use historic buildings appropriately and which are economically viable to increase the growth of quality cultural tourism in Macau.

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