Politics of Memories: Identity Construction in Museums

Abstract: This paper adopts collective memory theory to reveal processes through which heritage tourism stakeholders (re)construct contested national identity. Theoretically sensitised to identity crisis, the study analyses how Hong Kong and Macao heritage managers utilise complex transnational memories to (re)construct an identity aligned with, yet distinct from, that of China. Through a critical discourse analysis of interviews and discursive exhibition and museum texts, the article reveals that museum managers formulate heritage imaginings and a sense of belonging(s) through defining the collective memory for "Self" and "Other". The article concludes that, by collective memory-building, museum professionals make tangible statements of national identities through legitimating negotiations and resistance in heritage tourism discourse. Implications for heritage tourism studies and museum management are also discussed.

Keywords: Heritage tourism, transnational collective memory, national identity, China, postcolonial representation

INTRODUCTION

Heritage production, (re)presentation and consumption are closely connected to place promotion power relations, whilst identity (re)construction is often seen as a negotiation between dynamic and contested heritage discourses (d'Hauteserre, 2011; Light, 2001; Morgan, 2004; Morgan & Pritchard, 1998; Zhang, L'Espoir Decosta & McKercher, 2015). An in-depth understanding of such processes requires critical considerations of the ways in which heritage legitimates national identity through manipulations of what to remember and what to forget (Bell, 2003; Smith, 1991). As heritage attractions, museums act as memory institutions, connecting valued objects to "official" national discourses (Crane, 1997). Yet despite such historical objects (and sites) being embodiments of collective memory for identity construction, memory studies are still at a developmental stage in tourism, although scholars have explored how tourism engages and perpetuates significant historical moments through image-building or memory-making (d'Hauteserre, 2011; Park, 2010, 2011; Marschall, 2012; Winter, 2009).

While recognising museums as material testimonies of national identity, tourism studies have largely deployed descriptive/ethnographic approaches to interpreting the meanings of museums as constructions of dominant national identities (Adams, 2003; Dimache, Wondirad & Agyeiwaah, 2017; Hitchcock, 1998; Park, 2010, 2011; Pretes, 2003), positioning museums on an authenticity continuum (Chhabra, 2008), and/or typologising museum visitors and attributes for urban tourism marketing and cultural attraction management (Jansen-Verbeke & van Rekom, 1996; McKercher, Ho & du Cros, 2004; Stylianou-Lambert, 2011). While some previous studies recognised the contested nature of identity and the way it was formed within a museum (Bennett, 1995; Lowenthal, 2015), they have largely overlooked important insights that might have

otherwise enhanced understanding of discursive practices of memories through museum discourses.

This study addresses collective memory-making and the (re)construction of contested national identities through a critical discourse analysis of museum representations in two distinct postcolonial destinations. It scrutinises the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Macao Museum. Although both are products of the transition from a former colony to a postcolonial 'independence', their (re)construction is distinct. The Hong Kong Museum of History was initially established in 1975 and (re)located to its present site in 1998 after the handover in 1997. The Macao Museum was established in 1998, one year *before* the handover, making it distinct from that in Hong Kong. Notably, both museums are part of China's nation-building projects; however, struggles with perceptions of 'Chineseness' have made museums in Hong Kong and Macao highly contested in their provision of evidence for national identification (Lau, 1997; Wang & Law, 2017). Moreover, this identity crisis implies that postcolonial memory-making through museums is transnational since it involves negotiations amongst and between Chinese, Western and local memories. Transnational memory is an emerging concept that challenges bounded views on national belonging (Assmann, 2014) and, even though tourism is a transnational phenomenon, very few studies have examined memory practices across national boundaries (Frew & White, 2011; Marschall, 2012); those that have place their emphasis on understanding how transnational shared heritage sites (e.g., holocaust museums) are linked with global collective identities (Assmann, 2010; White, 1995).

As national identity construction is fundamentally about defining "Us" through identifying "significant Others" (Sarup, 1996), the transnational capacity of memories to appreciate the internal differences and relational connectedness of nations requires further research (Assmann,

2014; Bell, 2006; Sundholm, 2011). Hence museums, as articulations of conflicting memories, (re)present cultural objects transitionally and transnationally, which is inherent to the practice of postcolonial exhibitions (Nora, 1989; Parker, 1992). To understand this discursive practice of museum exhibitions, this study unpacks the way in which national identity is (re)constructed and experienced through negotiating postcolonial memories. The research draws out the idealised national discourses and discursive themes that underpin identity (re)construction in postcolonial Chinese museums. In doing so, it provides insights into the role that conflicting memories play in shaping the politics of postcolonial representations (Hall & Tucker, 2004). The article begins by reviewing the theory of collective memory, linking it to a broader discussion on national identity construction in museums and the role played by heritage tourism. Following a critique of the transnational nature of collective memories, the study outlines methodological considerations relating to critical discourse analysis in understanding discursive texts from museums in Hong Kong and Macao. The study then conceptualises museums as repositories of transnational collective memories and highlights their contribution to the (re)making of national identities.

IDENTITY (RE)CONSTRUCTION IN MUSEUMS

The (re)construction of national identity is often conceived as the outcome of social processes in which individuals are exposed to collective cultural/national elements such as symbols, traditions, and memories, and through which beliefs, values, assumptions and expectations associated with (or distinctive of) the culture or nation are transmitted to its members (Kelman, 1997; Smith, 1991). As a medium of educational and cultural representation, museums forge identity development through collective memory-making.

Collective Memory and Museum Tourism

According to Renan (1998), the concept of a nation is based on the joint action of forgetting and remembering. As widely shared perceptions of the past, collective memory is an active past that constitutes and maintains national identities (Bell, 2003; Olick, 1999). Collective or social memory scholars have recognised that memories are different from history as the reconstruction of the past is always done in the light of the present (Halbwachs, 1992). Any distinctive national identification is continuously (re)constituted and maintained through collective memories (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995). This openness of collective memory raises the question of the relationship between nations and memory. Although nations can be conceptualised as self-defining communities whose members often cultivate shared memories to attach to historic territories to create a distinctive public culture (Smith, 2009), such a concept exists only in and through our imaginations and interpretations of the past (Anderson, 1991). Nations can be considered from a postmodernist perspective as a discourse, which frames a way of seeing and interpreting the world (Özkirimli, 2010). This fluid and dynamic way of approaching nations signifies that collective memories embedded within heritage sites discursively formulate a way of speaking that shapes our consciousness (Calhoun, 1997; Wight, 2016). Memory-making in heritage sites thus not only reflects the meaning of national belonging, but produces and maintains such meaning over time.

Heritage tourism has become a principal medium through which collective memories are represented to tell national stories (Park 2010; Winter, 2009). By fashioning the uniqueness of a nation, tourism reinforces social cohesion and differentiates one nation from another (Frew & White, 2011). Tourism therefore becomes performative as it can be used to articulate the preferred meaning of people and place within destinations (Hollinshead, 2004; Jolliffe & Smith,

2001; Zhang et al., 2015). Heritage attractions become creative discursive spaces, which offer visitors a chance to engage in a specific context of time and place within which their connection to the past, present and projected future can occur (Winter, 2009). Timothy (1997) reported that heritage visitation encompasses four types of tourism experience at the global, national, local and personal levels where visitor attachments to heritage attractions are dynamic. By implication, the conceptualisation of national shared remembrance within heritage tourism plays a vital role in the construction and maintenance of an identity to define the "Self" against the "Other" (Sarup, 1996). From a postmodern perspective, fragmented and differentiated memory practices enable national members to consume the meaning of a place and to establish a sense of unity that defines identity and separates it from its constitutive "Others" within the heritage experience with the power of claiming the "true" representation of a nation (Foucault, 1982; Walker, 2001).

Museums are regarded as one of the most powerful types of heritage attractions that define the characteristics of a nation and exhibit historical evidence of its existence for both tourists and locals (Anderson, 1991; Chhabra, 2008; Hitchcock, 1998; Stylianou-Lambert, 2011). As collections of representations, museums shape discourse and legitimate national memories through exhibiting cultural objects (Nora, 1989), which are often detached from their "original" contexts to re-contextualise past spaces and re-construct the idea of ancestry (Crane, 1997). Through re-organising these detached and often fragmented objects into museums' exhibitions, different versions of "realities" are defined by a range of interested parties, and thereby become performative (Karp et al., 2006; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Exhibitions thus perform and define the specific, selected version of collective ancestry and become tangible evidence legitimating the discourse of a nation (Bennett, 1995; Pretes, 2003). It is in this national context that visitors can recall and localise their memories (Halbwachs, 1992).

Although memories rely heavily on the materiality of traces associated with fragmented objects, for visitors, intangible elements of these objects (meaning and imagination) are of greater significance in engaging and (re)framing the museum experience (Adams, 2003; Jolliffe, 2008; Jolliffe & Smith, 2001; Nora, 1989; Park, 2011). For visitors, the strategy to make their imaginations meaningful is often through the process of subjectification, which allows subjects to believe that they are part of the projected shared imaginings (Hetherington, 2011). This interaction between objects and subjects indicates that national heritage is created through exhibiting the shared cultural knowledge of space, as museum objects facilitate such discursive social space, which is often embedded in the societal structure (Kaeppler, 1994). The unequal societal position of subjects and their associated cultural memories hence have implications for different interpretations of shared cultural knowledge (Handler & Gable, 1997; Henderson, 2016). Thus, studying museums not only has implications for heritage attractions per se, but also contributes to understanding the wider political and social construction of national discourses.

The past itself cannot construct a nation; it is the affective nostalgia of a past that maintains and reproduces national identities within museums. Affective shared memories act as a subtle yet powerful mechanism for generating and perpetuating a dominant culture (Dimache, et al., 2017). The crucial element of this process is that collective memories often facilitate emotional attachment to a nation; exhibiting museum objects allows the projected identities to enter the inner world of an individual and generate a sense of collective national belonging (Smith, 2009). Discursive memory practices within museums are no longer purely individual psychological matters but aggregated to (dis)locate visitors within a certain cultural tradition (Olick, 1999). Importantly, it is the emotional commitment associated with national belonging that sustains identities (Smith, 1991). Whether the past is glorious or disgraceful, museums are employed to

evoke emotions that draw boundaries between “Us” and the constructive “Other” (Tolia-Kelly, 2016). This affective attachment enables visitors (both locals and tourists) to consume the fundamental meaning of a nation and to be impressed by the “homogenised” image of a destination. Existing studies often highlight the role that museums play in stimulating national belonging for domestic tourists (Park, 2011; Pretes, 2003); however, as emotional links with spaces extend beyond the physical constraints of national territories, manipulating memories can also include living emotions from “Others” (Tolia-Kelly, 2016).

While memories serve as a social adhesive, memory-making in museums is always contestable and underpinned by complex power struggles (Bell, 2006; Tolia-Kelly, 2016). In principle, museums should adequately represent the culture and values of different sections of the public (Jolliffe, 2008); however, as museums legitimate the regime in power, their exhibitions often highlight the preferred version of memories and are therefore deemed to be inadequate and incomplete (Bennett, 1995). Memory-making in museums is hence an on-going project, where competing discourses are constantly (re)negotiating their role in contributing to the society’s progression (Picard & Wood, 1997). This contestation of national identity (re)construction in museums is often a matter of remembrance versus forgetting. Museum collections exhibit materials for memory and encourage individual visitors to recall some events and/or forget others (Olick, 1999). When cultural artefacts are categorised for visitation, conflicting meanings and competing claims to ownership and definitions of memories between communities lie at the heart of the national struggles (Hutchinson, 2005; Schwenkel, 2006). It is forgetting, rather than remembering, that provides access to the subtle absence within the production and maintenance of identities (Olick & Robbins, 1998). This notion of absence facilitates an understanding of how museums privilege the dominant discourses while silencing

others through making and remaking collective memories (Foucault, 1982; Park, 2010, 2011). The barriers to being connected to a projected identity in museums are thus cultural not managerial (Bennett, 1995) and through this process of inclusion and exclusion, dissonant interests collide within discursive museum spaces.

Transnational Memory-Making in Postcolonial Museums

Postcolonial museums in the Chinese context were selected as the focus for this study to investigate dissonant memory-making in the postcolonial era. The study recognises that the return to the motherland for both Hong Kong and Macao has transformed their identities, making them extremely ambiguous. Whilst as SARs of China, they cannot craft a new national identity like other postcolonial nations, the increasing post-handover conflicts show that they are distinct from China with Chinese-European memories (Ip, 2012; Kaeding, 2010; Lam, 2010; Mathews, 1997; Zhang et al., 2015). Much of this contested postcolonial identity-making is related to the historical development of both cities as refuges for people who fled the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and '70s. Many of these are now resident in Macau and particularly in Hong Kong and hold strong anti-communist views (Hao, 2011; Hsiung, 2000). Since the handover, Hong Kong has begun to reconstruct its identity by balancing its colonial and Chinese identities and shifting the focus of its identity debates from politics to economics, contextualising Hong Kong as a place that is separate from the mainland.

In contrast, whilst Hong Kong was strengthening its border with China, Macao was losing patience with the Portuguese government's detached approach and turned to rely on Hong Kong; hence, for both cities, discourses of 'home' were not associated with China but with the

"old home" in Europe (Hao, 2011; Lau, 1997). Whilst Macao had the most contact with the mainland during the colonial period and experienced more post-handover economic benefits, the phrase HongKongese has increasingly defined Hong Kong people as a sophisticated Chinese district separate from the mainland (Chou, 2010; Mathews, 1997). This identity crisis has intensified since the Occupy Central Protest in 2014 and since then nearly half of the Hong Kong people define themselves as Hongkongers and not part of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (POP, 2018a). Although the event has also affected Macao, the positive rating of eight out of ten (8/10) for the PRC government (POP, 2018b) is a strong indication of its association with the mainland.

Such postcolonial identity contestation is arguably part of the "Orientalist" fantasies of the East in the Western imagination (Said, 2003). Here, the discourse that Hong Kong is a superior Western city in Asia in contrast to (being) an underdeveloped Chinese city, contributes to perceptions of its position. The identity contestation in the SARs is shaped by negotiations among transnational Chinese, Western and local memories, and challenges bounded views on national belonging, as it highlights the movement of memories across time and space (Assmann, 2014). As a condition of memory has become mobility rather than location (Sundholm, 2011), the study suggests that it is the dissonance of postcolonial discourses, often constructed in transnational contexts, that exposes the key themes underlying national identification (Assmann, 2010; White, 1995). In today's transnational world, collective memories are not only created by local directions but are also influenced by the transnational notion of experiencing and consuming the constructed national experience in heritage tourism (Feldman, 2012; White, 1995). Since the handover, the inflow of mainland Chinese tourists has supposedly created a common understanding between tourists and local people; however, the mainland tourists are

increasingly viewed as outsiders, for they are both visible reminders of the influence the PRC has on SARs and have different memories and attitudes towards the PRC (Liu, 2012; Mathews, 1997). In contrast, non-mainland tourists and dynamic colonial heritage objects signify European nostalgia and are viewed as crucial to the international atmosphere in the SARs (Zhang, et al., 2015). Such transnational fragmentation of memories and identities highlights the need to understand the postcolonial renegotiation of heritage at the local level (Atkinson, 2008).

The study conceptualises two museums in the postcolonial Chinese context (the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Macao Museum) as transnational and transitional spaces for (re)articulating national identities (table 1). Both museums are products of the handovers and share the goal of exhibiting the complex history of the SARs to signify that they are no longer colonies but part of the PRC. The Hong Kong Museum of History's permanent exhibition has not been refreshed since its (re)construction in 1998. This is indicative of its strong connection with the colonial past. The newly established Macao museum was built from scratch and offered opportunities to continuously add objects and interpretations in the postcolonial era. While public museums on the mainland often utilise Chinese history to establish national pride and patriotism, the SARs' colonial connections and often negative view of the communist party, combined with the PRC's hands-on approach suggests that these two museums will be challenged to demonstrate local uniqueness and balance dissonant state and local desires (Dimache, et al., 2017; Ip, 2012; Said, 2003).

These two museums are therefore unusually contested cultural spaces. While in this case, the Chinese state fosters new identity and reconciles diversity, locals and tourists are negotiating those identities within such spaces (Handler & Gable, 1997; Picard & Wood, 1997). According to Karp et al (2006), it is the competing collective memories rather than the contested ethnic

narratives that transform the public culture and make the postcolonial Chinese context unique. The fragmented power relations in these museums thus pose fundamental questions of understanding the politics of memories through museum exhibitions. Who decides what should be exhibited? How are memories utilised to justify representations? How do the narratives of museum exhibitions inform national identity (MacDonald, 1998)? Focusing on such politics of memories and their transnational nature, this paper seeks to examine the ways in which postcolonial national identity is (re)constructed through discursive memory practices in museum exhibitions and draws out the themes underlying national identification in the postcolonial Chinese context.

(Insert table 1 here)

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DISCURSIVE TEXTS

The present study operates within a methodological framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) of museum texts. A discourse comprises ways of speaking and seeing, forms of subjectivity, and power relations (Foucault, 1982). In fact, Calhoun (1997) described nation as a discursive formation and a way of speaking that shapes our consciousness. The process of defining what are shared memories between “Us” and “Others” is the discourse of nationalism. CDA is useful to appreciate the discursive formation of national identity as it attempts to bridge the gap between text and society. CDA does not stop at describing what cultural objects are used to represent the subject (people and places in the SARs); it pays attention to the texts circulating around museums and their links with contested national identity-making (Parker, 1992). This interest in the production and maintenance of social reality makes CDA a sensible way to understand how changes in broader social-cultural and political environments result in different

constellations of positive and negative memories of being and becoming “Chinese cities” after the handovers (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Additionally, considering its ability to address the role of discursive activities in constructing unequal power relations (Wodak & Fairclough, 2004), CDA allows researchers to understand the discursive, fragmented, contested and transnational memories within postcolonial Chinese museums. Here, multi-sourced data including texts, objects, images and narratives were utilised to capture the discursive activities and memories circulating within the Hong Kong Museum of History and the Macao Museum (Wight, 2016).

Numerous site visits and analysis took place during 2014-2017. First, data were collected in the form of online and offline attraction-related promotional texts distributed by the two museums, local tourism authorities (Hong Kong Tourism Broad [HKTB] and Macao Government Tourist Office [MGTO]), tour operators and culture-related government departments. Both English and Chinese materials were included. Secondly, several hundred photographs of exhibitions, written forms of visitor interpretations, and artefacts were taken and catalogued for the analysis. Third, participant observations were undertaken by the first author in both museums over more than 10 visits during 2014-2016. Observations were also carried out by the first author in the official guided tours (in English, Cantonese and Chinese) at least twice in both museums to familiarise her with the context. The native Cantonese and the native British author also joined the tours to minimise the potential risks posed by linguistic issues. As discourse refers to language as a form of practice (Parker, 1992), the inclusion of multi-linguistic data reveals the transnational nature of memory-making and triangulates construction of identities beyond their fixed exhibition. The narratives provided by the tour guides were recorded during these visits. Through covert observations of tourists during the guided tours, it was possible to gain insights into their reactions towards the exhibits and their interpretations. Casual

conversations with both tour guides and visitors were held during and after the tours and interactions between visitors and tour guides were observed to understand the nature of the inquiries from visitors. Methodologically, friendly conversations can be viewed as supplements to "personal narratives and privatised confessions" (Park, 2011, p.530). All four authors fitted easily into the setting as museum visitors. Fourth, to ensure that the present study has a wider understanding of tourists' responses to museum exhibition, online reviews and commentaries on the two museums were collected up to March 2018 from TripAdvisor and *Dianping* (for mainland Chinese travellers).

Finally, 12 semi-structured in-depth interviews were held with cultural experts (table 2) to gain insights into the production and construction of museum exhibitions and to link such constructions to the broader identity crisis in the SARs. Interviews were conducted through snowball and maximum variation sampling techniques with the aim of recruiting various, unique and purposeful informants. To discourse on identity change as a "lived" experience, only people who worked through the pre-and-post handover periods were recruited as interviewees. These cultural experts are museum curators, government officials in cultural departments, and cultural studies academics at local institutions involved in the construction of museums. For the sake of anonymity or confidentiality, the term "cultural expert" was used in reporting the analyses. These participants are all in their 40s, 50s and 60s and consist of four females and eight males.

(Insert table 2 here)

The interviews with cultural experts were guided by questions pertaining to: 1) the design of museum exhibitions; 2) implications of exhibitions for local identities; 3) perceptions of colonial memories; 4) perceptions of the handover; 5) identity conflicts; and 6) roles of museums

in identity-building. On average, the interviews each lasted an hour, and all were audio-recorded and transcribed. Through employing in-depth interviews, rich and complex insights into emotional memory-making in (or through) museums were captured (Hoggart, Lees & Davies, 2002). CDA was adopted to examine interview transcripts based on its understanding of transcriptions as social texts, which was influenced by pre-existing linguistic resources within the study contexts (Phillipe & Hardy 2002, Talja 1999). Hence, this type of analysis did not suggest interest in authentic meanings of respondents' narratives; rather it paid attention to recognising culturally constructed statements in respondents' accounts to examine the data on a macro-level (Foucault, 1982; Talja, 1999).

Accordingly, CDA facilitated identification of central themes about people and place in different historical periods and enabled evaluation of their implications for identity (re)construction. After data familiarisation, the analysts focused on statements of the past and units of discourse, which gave meaning to contemporary people and place in the SARs (Parker, 1992). Subsequently, relationships between statements were identified both within and across texts. This process also involved examining the underlying assumptions behind statements that structured the objects (people and place) and highlighted differences and/or inconsistencies between being a Chinese and being a European in the SARs (Foucault, 1982; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Next, CDA concentrates on how these statements produce "effects of truth" and how claimed identities within museums have been naturalised. Foucault (1982) highlights the notion of absence in analysing dynamic power struggles and in offering a chance to see how forgetting plays a role in the politics of memory. Comparing statements from the empirical data against the literature helped identify the central themes that explain transnational memories and identity (re)construction.

While the research data are conducive to CDA, the multiple realities of the topic under study and the perspectives associated with the interpretation must be acknowledged. Notably, this study relies on multiple forms of data, analyses, interpretations and perspectives. The first author, a Chinese national currently residing in England, has lived in Hong Kong and Macao for over seven years, and has been struggling between her "outsider" and "insider" position in both SARs. In addition, various and varying levels of theoretical sensitivities of the authors to the topic, from complete "outsider" to complete "insider" in data collection, analysis and interpretation, are also acknowledged.

(RE)CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL DISCOURSES

Museums have profound power to shape the way in which postcolonial nations image the legitimacy of their ancestry (Anderson, 1991). In this section, we (re)present dominant national discourses to see how SARs' museums accommodate their recently acquired state identity embedded with normative claims of people and place (Özkirimli, 2010). We identify three discursive themes along a timeline that contribute to, or contradict with, such claims: re-imagining Chineseness, crafting colonial harmony through imagined others, and the contested fate of being SARs.

Dominant Stories

The Hong Kong Story – Long Chinese but Short British. The permanent exhibition contains eight sections linked together by an official chronological visitation route (see Table 1 and Figure 1). The dominant discourse underpinning this chronological presentation is that Hong Kong has long been a part of China (Section 1, 2, 3 & 4) and that the British colonial period (Section 5) was a

blip during this continuous settlement. This discourse of "long Chinese but short British" justifies the significant allocation of space to pre-colonial and post-handover Chineseness (Section 8). The word British is absent from the section headings and only a small area narrates the early British settlement (highlighted in Figure 1). Through the transnational negotiation of privileging a common Chinese past (Olick & Robbins, 1998), the "official" storyline guides visitors to skip sections such as the British and Japanese Occupation (Section 7). Through re-contextualisation of artefacts, the museum orchestrates a way of seeing (Hetherington, 2011) Hong Kong as "*a Chinese city…with large numbers of Chinese residents*" (P4 & P7). Although the storyline presented was recognised by most visitors, some expressed regret over its limited exhibition of the colonial past, which initially attracted them to visit the museum. One said, "[there is] *not much to say about colonial* [period]*? ……there are many things to say"* (TripAdvisor comments), whilst some Western tourists on the English language tour commented that they: "*would expect to see more about the colonial period"*. Museums are social spaces (Adams, 2003; Crane, 1997), and the social desire to include the British discourse implies competing memory-making (see below).

(Insert figure 1 here)

The Macao Story – An Eternal Chinese City Where the East Meets the West. Instead of adopting a chronological approach, the Macao Museum is organised into three main themes: History, Folk Customs, and Contemporary Macao, which aims to "*preserve cultural heritage and carry forward Macao's unique cultural diversity fusing Chinese and Western cultures*" (Macao Museum, 2017). This discourse of representing Macao as "the East meets the West", is endorsed

by our cultural expert interviewees, who maintain the museum fulfils its main objective of "*decolonising Macao as a Chinese city*".

(Insert figure 2 here)

Many of the exhibitions are organised to juxtapose Macao's Western and Chinese cultures. Museum objects are made, not found (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998) and here, Chinese and European cultural objects, which are not found in Macao, have been brought together to present Macao as a place encompassing both civilisations. Fragmented exhibition scripts point out that Macao's current cultural diversity is ascribed to the memory of a "*continuous convergence*" between the East and the West, which has implications for Macao SAR as a Chinese platform for business cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries (Macao Government, 2017; Smith 2009). The word "Portuguese" is mentioned throughout the museum (Figure 2), however, the departure of the Portuguese from Macao means their objects are included or excluded by others (the Chinese), in the museum (Tolia-Kelly, 2016). For instance, the word "colony" is absent, as is any reference to the Sino-Portuguese Treaty of Peking in 1887 (which officially ceded Macao to Portugal), underlining the continuity of Chinese settlement. Although it is "*interesting to see the comparison between Chinese and Western culture to understand Macao*" (*Dianping* comments), the thematic presentation of museum objects potentially loses some international visitors: "*this museum only spends around 50% to introduce about Macau history, other than that it is more to China and some European history"* (Malaysian tourist, TripAdvisor comments).

Re-imagining Chineseness

In the Hong Kong Museum, the re-imagining of its Chineseness focuses on the dominant discourse of "long Chinese" (Section 1, 2, 3 & 4). Objects in Section 1 (The Natural Environment) and Section 2 (Prehistoric Hong Kong) interpret the place as a lively city before the British arrivals and connections with its current SAR status are often explicitly referenced. For example, when passing Section 1, the tour guide will often ask his/her visitors to guess the name of a small bird, before he/she explains, "*although the silver phoenix cannot be found in Hong Kong today, you can still see it in Canton, where it is currently designated as bird of the Province*" (Tour narratives). The interactive tour reinforces the discourse of "long Chinese" and yet some local visitors on the Cantonese tour felt perplexed and asked, "*if it isn't in Hong Kong, why put it in the Hong Kong Museum?*" To strengthen the discourse of "long Chinese", Section 3 (The Dynasties: From the Han to the Qing) illustrates how Hong Kong was part of the Chinese empire and artefacts from different dynasties have been (re)discovered to accommodate Hong Kong's Chinese (re)-imagining (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

(Insert figure 3 here)

In Figure 3, under the discourse of "long Chinese", archaeological maps and chronological tables delimit Hong Kong as part of ancient and contemporary China (Anderson, 1991). Subtle narratives augment its pre-colonial power. For example, at the entrance to this section, the English tour narrative reads, "*the tomb is for someone royal and important… it was built in Eastern Han Dynasty 2,000 years ago in Hong Kong*". This narrative mythologises Hong Kong as a principal place in ancient China, as royal tombs are usually only found in mega-cities. Such narratives might be interesting to Western tourists, who find Hong Kong a safe place to

sample Chinese culture (Zhang, et al., 2015) but both the Chinese and Cantonese tours skipped this section as the guides regarded it as "*not much to see*" and led mainland tourists directly to Section 4 (Folk Culture in Hong Kong). Nevertheless, the mainland tourists were interested as "*seeing artefacts in dynasties* [to]*… know more about our brothers*" (*Dianping* comments). While Chinese artefacts evoke shared imaginings for mainlanders (Hetherington, 2011; Olick, 1999), some younger local visitors do not share these feelings, saying: "*we do have many things in common, but not all*".

These divergent views are particularly evident in the representation of the Hong Kong fisherfolk memories. The fact that "*Chinese fishing vessels*" and "*Chinese clans*" commonly appear in Section 4 support the discourse of a long Chinese history in the territory and the main exhibition script, "*demarcating the time when from a few scattered fishing villages and rural hamlets under the jurisdiction of Xin'an country, it became a British colony*", subtly portrays a shared memory of Hong Kong as rural and ancient before the British arrived (Carroll, 2007; Chou, 2010). Interestingly, local visitors do not feel connected to this remote fishing heritage of Hong Kong, suggesting that its performative effect on memory-making is minimal (Handler & Gable, 1997). At the same time as describing the SARs as isolated fishing villages in Chinese history (Hao, 2011), the Macao Museum is also paradoxically (re)inventing (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1992) the pre-colonial settlement as an "*international commercial port*" (exhibition script), positioned at the heart of world trading routes. Figure 4 is an exhibit of numerous world routes linked to Macao; the Chinese media now refers to these as the Maritime Silk Road and museum tour guides tell visitors that: "*Macao was the centre of the Maritime Silk Road with ships loading here with silk for Rome…*". Exhibitions of tea, porcelain and silk objects around the interactive exhibition have become "*proof of the merchandise trade and cultural exchange*

between China and Europe" (exhibition script) to signify the Portuguese as "Others". This narrative is further cemented by exhibits, which link Macao with China's Treasure Voyages (1405-1433), led by *ZHENG He*, who has become a significant cultural symbol in the dominant discourse of "the East meeting the West," linking Macao with ancient Chinese history. As P8 commented, "*ZHENG He has become an important historical figure since the handover. You can see him in opera, museums and TV… as Macao is a Chinese city*". The Chinese tour guide narrative reinforces this discourse: "*although Jorge Álvares was the first European to arrive in China, ZHENG He had already had seven far-reaching ocean voyages one hundred years before. This is something we should all be proud of*". Indeed, many of the local guides and tourists used the phrase, "*Macao has a glorious past*", reinforcing an emotional attachment to celebrated Chinese memories and encouraging visitors to redefine the SAR within a broader PRC identity (Tolia-Kelly, 2016). All the cultural experts in Macao also echo these sentiments; for them, "*we are Chinese before and we are Chinese now*".

(Insert figure 4 here)

Crafting Colonial Harmony through the Imaginary "Other"

Colonialism itself can be understood as a transnational way of enforcing memories of the "Other" as part of the "Self" for a colonised place or space (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Bell, 2003; Said, 2003). In tracing the formation of "Us" and "Others", competing claims of memory ownership between transnational communities lie in the heart of postcolonial identity struggles (Hutchinson, 2005). In Hong Kong, the "official" visitation route directs visitors to Section 5 (The Opium War and the Cession of Hong Kong), described in museum leaflets as signifying "*a*

watershed in the history of the territory". This section is also the most commonly discussed topic on both *Dianpin*g and TripAdvisor, indicating the interest visitors have in the role of the war in Hong Kong's past (Park, 2011). Although shared victimhood in a colonial period stimulates emotions (White, 1995; Wight, 2016), such narratives and anti-Western imperialism are downplayed here (Carroll, 2007; Lau, 1997). Despite the exhibition of objects like the statue of the Chinese hero, *LIN Zexu*, and the "Trade to War" video narrative, the failure of the war is associated with the Qing government corruption. While some Chinese visitors expressed shame about the past, here associated with "*the corrupted government"*, some Western tourists on the English language tour felt that: "*the main exhibition hall gives …. a sense that the colonial period was peaceful.*" Indeed, the "*relatively muted tone"* of the narrative here, the absence of victimhood and the limited anti-imperialist memories make the colonial period seem harmonious (Foucault, 1982; Olick & Robbins, 1998).

Such incompatible colonial themes illustrate the different regimes of truth in museums (Foucault, 1982). A counter statement to the dominant discourse of "long Chinese, but short British history" emerges here: that the harmonious colonial period led to a "rebirth" of the city. Thus, texts describe the harmonious colonial period as a condition for Hong Kong's current metropolitan status: "*[o]ne of the most fascinating aspects about Hong Kong is without doubt the transformation it has undergone over the past century and a half from a few insignificant villages to an international metropolis*" (preface to the permanent exhibition). P5 discussed the asymmetrical power struggle underlying the politics of museum representations: "*We were British subjects before, somehow Chinese, somehow not in the period of preparing for the museums. When we designed the museum, there were many conflicting discussions. But for me I see there is a way to protect the colonial legacy. We found that the colonial past has made Hong*

Kong what it looks like today". P7 commented: "*we had many objects from the old museum to support the new establishment; it is also a way to preserve the uniqueness of Hong Kong when the handover is on the way*". Although the British involvement is largely absent, in contrast to its Chineseness, the exhibition of banking, post offices, and trading industries in the museum tells of "*how the British colonists and the Hong Kong local people lived their lives together here*" (tour narratives); the British colonial memory has become part of the "Self" rather than a (or the) "significant Other" in Hong Kong.

As a Portuguese colony Macao enjoyed continuous interactions with the mainland (Chou, 2010; Hao, 2011) and a discourse of harmony and of a close relationship between the Chinese and the Portuguese typifies its museum exhibitions. Here the dominant discourse is one of decolonising Macao as an eternal Chinese city where East meets West (Lam, 2010), whilst the discourse of harmony is commonly applied to cultural and religious heritage attractions in multicultural Macao (Chou, 2010). However, many local participants felt that, "*we don't live in that culture*" and, although the museum exhibits Portuguese objects, "*the meanings attached to them are gone*" (P3). Ironically, these Chinese reconstructions of Portuguese memories as collective memories subtly exclude the Portuguese "Others" and positions Macao people as Chinese from time immemorial (Olick, 1999; Tolia-Kelly, 2016), although the Macao museum does include exhibitions to describe the small Macanese ethnic group (formed because of interracial marriage) and represents its cuisine and traditions (Figure 5).

(Insert figure 5 here)

Although one interpretation script uses the phrase "*Portuguese expansion into different*

parts of the world" to describe its imperial expansion, most of the Macanese-related objects focus on Macao's multi-cultural cuisine and interracial marriage. Once again, by manipulating what to remember and what to forget (Bell, 2003), the museum exhibitions acknowledge the existence of Macanese people and enforce the discourse of harmony, but at the same time exclude them from Macao's current identity (re)construction (Bennett, 1995). Local visitors generally take such claims for granted, as one Macanese visitor commented: "*you could only have those foods during the Macanese wedding in old times…we are small ethnic group in here*". While some believe "*the peaceful co-existence is interesting*" (*Dianping* comments), others stated that "*the existence of Macanese culture was much downplayed*" (TripAdvisor comments by Hong Kong tourists). Even though the "official" museum discourse portrays Macao as an eternal Chinese city rather than a colony, the word "colony" was commonly used by visitors in their commentaries. As ironically commented by P1 and P8, "*at least the Chinese should not regard Macao as a colony*", which in a way implies the future objective of the museum in legitimating the discourse of Macao as a Chinese city.

Within the transnational memory-making of "Us" and "Others", (re)discovering imaginary "significant Others" is crucial for postcolonial identification (Bell, 2006; Said, 2003). In Hong Kong, the Japanese occupation seems to be in line with the dominant museum discourse of "long Chinese", as "*under the communist party leadership*" is used to describe the local resistance against the Japanese. As "*we do love the British more than the Japanese*" (P6), a brutal visual representation of the Japanese Occupation period arouses the shared Chinese victimhood during World War II, but also reflects the harmonious British period, especially after the war (Carroll, 2007) in support of the discourse of "rebirth". Similarly, even though the Macao museum itself is a reconstruction from the Mount Fortresses (a strategic military location for the Portuguese

against the Chinese), all the military conflicts mentioned are directly related to the imagined "Others": the Dutch. The exhibition script tells how the Fortress "*presented the city with an efficient defence system in view of the successive attacks by the Dutch,"* whilst the tour guides comment how all of the cannons in the fortress "*were made by Portuguese and Chinese in cooperation*" and the Cannon badge with the Portuguese inscription, "*Da China. Da Cidade do Nome de Deus*" is enlarged to prove the Chinese sovereignty.

The Contested Fate of the SARs

Hong Kong's contemporary identity debates often emphasize economic prosperity, freedom and democratic movements, to distinguish the SAR from the mainland (Chou, 2010; Ip, 2012; Mathews, 1997). Although the tour guides and museum exhibitions avoid mentioning sensitive events like the June Fourth Incident, subtle references underline its difference from the PRC and describe how Hong Kong has developed its stand-alone identity since the 1960s. Under the dominant discourse of a "long Chinese, but short British" history, any British involvement in Hong Kong seems to be undermined in the History Museum. The last section (Modern Metropolis and Return to China) focuses on the city's "rebirth" and transforms the British legacy into its own contemporary metropolis identity. For example, when describing the governance of Hong Kong during the colonial period, the exhibition script reads:

> *The inclusion of Chinese high status in Hong Kong's government structure formed part of the effort to develop a distinctly Hong Kong society from its roots as an immigrant community…the Hong Kong government actively promoted the development of representative government … in a step towards the implementation of democratic elections and party politics in the territory.*

Alongside this script, visual exhibitions vividly illustrate economic development in the city, and "*democratic elections and party politics*" are often portrayed as conditions for such growth (Foucault, 1982). Such a political structure is fundamentally distinct from the one-party politics of the mainland, which has constantly exerted influences on identity struggles (Ip, 2012; Mathews, 1997). Importantly, Hong Kong's "*immigrant communities*" largely consist of people from the mainland who previously fled the Cultural Revolution and hold negative views on communism (Hsiung, 2000). As Cantonese tour narratives describe: "*after 1949, if you did not want your money taken away by the communist, Hong Kong became an exciting place for many people. Hong Kong then became an important industry and business centre*". This comment was endorsed by a teenager on the same tour who told his friend, "*my grandpa did this*". Hence, the "rebirth" and prosperity of Hong Kong have been portrayed, at least partially, as a consequence of people escaping from communism to pursue democracy and capitalism.

The identity crisis after the handover has at times become intense, to the extent that residents, including some participants of the study, cite the pre-handover as a more peaceful period of life. This sense of nostalgia is also linked to Western political ideologies, which are perceived as conditions for Hong Kong's economic prosperity and quality of life (Carroll, 2007; Ip, 2012). In such politics of memories (or memory-making), the latent yet dominant communist regime was felt as "alien" to the global market economy. According to P7, "*although the government seems pro-China, the anti-communism discourse is felt routine and pervasive, especially among the younger generations. They tend to use the "non-China" things to define themselves*".

The museum visit ends with handover newspaper report and a video featuring former PRC President JIANG Zemin's calligraphy with a message that reads "*Hong Kong's tomorrow will be*

better". At this point, all the tour guides stopped and did not offer any explanation of the handover. Whilst mainland Chinese tourists tend to express patriotic feelings towards the exhibition and believe the handover signifies "*the ending of the humiliated history*", local visitors spoke of "*disappointment*", "*just history*" or "*I am not sure it is a happy ending.*" Many of them commented how much they liked the background song "*Under the Lion Rock*" in the video, which is a popular symbol of the tenacious spirits of local people since the 1960s. Thus, while the main exhibition ascribes Hong Kong' future prosperity to the PRC, the song suggests that Hong Kong's future prosperity is in the hands of its resolute citizens.

In the Macao Museum there is no handover exhibition, although it is generally regarded as a "rebirth" in the Chinese and Cantonese tour narratives, one of which commented: "*Macao is inseparable from the motherland*". Unlike in Hong Kong, the ending video of the Macao Museum features the city's past and present, and highlights "*the transformation of Macao from nobody to somebody after the handover*" (P8 & P12). When the Portuguese army left the city in the 1970s, Macao had almost turned to a criminal gaming city (Hao, 2011) and its enhanced self-awareness after the handover has motivated the city to transform its relatively weak image into one of a self-confident, contemporary city. Moreover, their memories of isolation and disorder before the handover motivate many residents to describe the post-handover period as a better and more peaceful period of life.

Macao's pre-handover problems also motivated the government to focus on economic development and security (Hao, 2011; Lam, 2010) and its post-handover dynamism is attributable to the PRC government, who ended its casino monopoly in 2002, since when Macao has been positioned as the "Las Vegas of the East". As a Chinese-speaking tour guide reflected, "*It is very easy for us to explain to other people that we come from Macao nowadays. We just*

need to mention, the Macao with casinos, then everybody knows". The booming casino industry thus transformed the city into an entertainment centre and depoliticised it from any identity crisis or debate such as occurred in Hong Kong. Arguably, this increased self-identification, safety and economic advancement under the PRC, provided the conditions to support the dominant discourse and portray a better Macao (Lam, 2010).

Historically, Macao has defined itself and its place in the world viz-a-viz Hong Kong (Chou, 2010). As one tour said: "*[D]uring World War II, Macao became a shelter for people from Hong Kong and the mainland. Macao people gave them rice and helped them go through the war*". Now the (re)invented narrative of a harmonious pre-handover Macao gives it an identity like that of Hong Kong. The taxonomy of memory-making in the SARs and the degree of self-determination make Macao different in identity (re)construction from that of Hong Kong (Said, 2003). Nonetheless, the transnational feature of collective memories highlights the relational connectedness of national identity construction between the two places (Assmann, 2014). While the borders between the SARs and the mainland are strictly controlled, the mobilities of residents in the SARs make them feel that Hong Kong and Macao are different from the mainland. For example, a bilingual Hong Kong tour guide (in her 60s) reflected:

> *I was born in Canton and came to Macao with my family during the Cultural Revolution. Macao was then peaceful…but my family later moved to Hong Kong for better opportunities…Because of living in the British colony, I had the opportunity to receive education from a well-known European university. Not like my mainland cousins, who are still farmers. I feel happy and grateful for that part of history.*

CONCLUSION

This critical discourse analysis has focused on postcolonial museum representations and the politics of (re)building national identity and collective memories through heritage tourism. The

paper contributes to understandings of the subject in four ways. First, it contextually enriches the collective memory theorising of postcolonial museum discourses and representations (Assmann, 2014; Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Halbwachs, 1992; Olick, 1999; Olick & Robbins, 1998). Museums are not sites of conflicting identities (Karp et al., 2006), their dissonance is not always ethically related in the postcolonial context (Handler & Gable, 1997; Picard & Wood, 1997). Rather they are sites that offer or highlight specific, selective discourses about identities, and these highlighted visions of identities are influenced by the transitional notion of experiencing and consuming those memories (Feldman, 2012). In Hong Kong and Macao, their Chinese ethnicity, handovers and European colonial history collectively constitute a context for distinctive and discursive identity construction. Along with the dominant discourses of "the East meeting the West" and "the long Chinese but short British", this critical analysis identifies a recurring discourse of "rebirth" in the discursive texts from (or about) the two museums. Its colonial past is ever-present in Hong Kong and cementing this identity distances the city from the dominant PRC discourses. On the other hand, Macao's post-handover rebirth was built on a closer relationship with China, which is seen in its Museum's narratives of continued Chineseness, juxtaposed with its colonial "Other".

Second, the study extends discussion on heritage tourism's role in legitimating cultural/national identities into museums in the postcolonial context (Assmann, 2014; Calhoun, 1997; Dimanche et al., 2017; Frew & White 2011). Our analysis has demonstrated how museums legitimate contested national identities through manipulating what to remember and what to forget. As Bell (2003) notes, the past is selectively remembered or forgotten in the process of identity (re)construction, and new memories are inherited by (or after) the newly (re)constructed identity. Our study demonstrates that museums in the postcolonial context construct relatively

harmonious colonial imaginings for their visitors by excluding any conflictual events in their stories of both Hong Kong and Macao.

Third, the study offers fresh historical and geopolitical insights into postcolonial representations of the "Other" in critical cross-cultural studies (d'Hauteserre, 2011; Hall & Tucker, 2004; MacDonald, 1998; Said, 2003). It finds that national identity-building is affected by a discursive construction between "Us" and "Others" through museum exhibits both within and beyond the two museums. This critical discourse analysis attempts to delineate a process of (re)defining transnational "Us" as a reflection of a hybridity in the contested identity-making as the two SARs struggle to accept the other as the "Other" within oneself. This struggle also serves as a reminder of the two cities' cultural, ethnic and linguistic connections, as much as their political and economic associations with the global market economy.

Fourth, the study contributes to new understanding of heritage tourism (Chhabra, 2008; Hall & Tucker, 2004; Jolliffe, 2008; Jolliffe & Smith, 2001; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Park, 2010, 2011; Timothy, 1997; Zhang et al., 2015). Heritage tourism is an integral part of nationhood in which people experience and develop a sense of belonging through imagining the collective ancestry (Park, 2011; Pretes, 2003). To create a common remembering, heritage often acts as a symbolic evidence to reproduce and communicate the preferred version of the past over and across generations (Park, 2010; Winter, 2009). This invention of tradition in heritage tourism indicates that nationally significant heritage sites are carefully selected objects, which tell particular stories of a nation (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1992). Heritage attractions that articulate national identity discursively produce narratives to represent national ideologies (d'Hauteserre, 2011; Wight, 2016; Zhang et al., 2015). Museum exhibits as heritage attractions "…provide a framework and shape visitors' perceptions of the history that is presented" (Jolliffe & Smith,

2001, p.151). Specifically, this study indicates that a sense of national belonging is not exclusively grounded in pride but is transnationally and transitionally sensitive to its surrounding "Others"; hence museums, as sites of contested memories, open new ways to examine internal differences and relational connectedness.

As is true for all research, the study has its limitations, resulting from the positions or perspectives of the informants and the researchers. On one hand, locals and visitors who are not concerned with heritage museums should be consulted in future studies. As Bennett (1995) points out, non-visitation to heritage museums is often culturally related and should also be included in the scrutiny of museum discourses and representations. On the other hand, while the authors of this paper could all be generically labelled as "tourism academics", they are strong advocates of, and actively engaged in, critical/cultural studies of tourism, with diverse backgrounds in cross-cultural communication, history, linguistics, sociology, and tourism and leisure studies. Specifically, they are of Asian and European origins and affiliated with institutions both inside and outside the study regions. Hence their background knowledge, their positionalities and sensitivities to the issues under discussion could all be reflected in the criticality of this interpretation. Notwithstanding this, what is observed or discussed in this critical and discursive essay could contribute to further studying and managing museums for heritage tourism. ▲

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