

Crafting Collaboration: Conflict Resolution and Community Engagement in the Hangzhou Arts and Crafts Museum Cluster

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate the complex nature of participation, collaboration and conflict between craftspeople and museum professionals in the context of museums engaging with craftsmanship. Multiple research methods (direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation) were employed, focusing on the case of the Arts and Crafts Museum Cluster (ACMC) in Hangzhou, China. The findings suggest that the initial participation and continuing collaboration of the craftspeople was motivated by their receiving a sustainable income, spiritual satisfaction, and social awareness and recognition. The museum professionals were rather more market-oriented, seeking to satisfy visitors' needs and interests. The different interests of the two parties in terms of participation and collaboration resulted in several conflicts, which were resolved by a combination of negotiation and compromise between the craftspeople and the museum professionals. Through re-examining the community participation approach in the intangible heritage practice of contemporary Chinese museums, this research highlights the importance of active participation and collaboration between the two parties through the continuing process of negotiation and compromise.

Kevwords

craftsmanship, craftspeople and museums, community participation, Hangzhou, ACMC, China

Introduction

The adoption of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2003 (hereafter, the ICHC) was a turning point for international cultural heritage practice that had previously mainly focused on tangible or material cultural heritage. Scholars and practitioners broadly agreed that safeguarding intangible heritage should be distinguished from safeguarding tangible heritage because of the unique human-centred or community-centred nature of the former (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004; Kurin, 2007). However, how to define, understand and value the roles that people or communities play in the context of intangible heritage has always been a controversial issue (Alivizatou, 2012; Smith, 2006; Smith and Akagawa, 2009).

The Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) that guides the practice of intangible heritage emphasises the dominant role of 'the community of professionals' (Smith 2012, p.25) in constructing and interpreting intangible heritage (Smith, 2006 and 2012). More recently, critical analyses of the heritage discourse have explored the participation of the 'source community' (Peers and Brown, 2007, p.519) and critically challenged the power of professionals and experts in intangible heritage (Smith, 2006 and 2012; Chirikure et al., 2010; Harrison, 2010). Source communities and communities of professionals are often highlighted as the two most significant parties in the process of heritage construction, alongside other 'cultural mediators' (Arantes, 2013, p.39) and organisations or institutions, including (non)governmental organisations, cultural centres, universities and business enterprises (Smith, 2006, 2009 and 2012; Watson, 2007; Blake, 2009; Munjeri, 2009; Harrison, 2010).

Along with the trend that has seen conventional objectcentred museums become an important sector in preserving, presenting, interpreting and promoting intangible heritage, much attention has also been paid to interactions between the community of museum professionals and source communities in the setting of the museum itself, whilst engaging with intangible heritage (Bouchenaki, 2004; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998 and 2004; Kurin, 2004 and 2007; Fu, Kim and Zhou, 2014). Much of the existing literature in this area is based on colonial or post-colonial contexts that expose significant conflicts between the museum professionals of western society (particularly those that are Euro-centric) and the source communities of non-western societies (e.g. First Nations peoples, and colonial peoples and their descendants all over the world) (Chirikure et al., 2010; Harrison and Hughes, 2010; Alivizatou, 2012). In addition, social power

relations within western societies affect the relationships between museum professionals and source communities, for example in relation to class, religion, ethnicity and/or gender (Smith, 2006; West, 2010; Tibbles, 2012). The former have more social power while the latter are comparatively subordinate, suppressed, or marginalised. The sources of the conflicts between the two sides can be their different ideologies, understandings of local culture and its demands, aesthetics, and the symbolic and functional values of intangible heritage. Further complications also arise from differing interpretations of national or international policies on the safeguarding of intangible heritage.

Unlike in western literature, it is rare to find research into the interactions and relationships between museum professionals and the source communities in China. The existing literature on museums that engages with intangible heritage in China is often based on eco-museums that mostly focus on ethnic minority cultures, far from the economically developed coastal areas (see e.g. Stanley and Chung, 1995; Su, 2008; Davis, 2011). However, due to the significant differences in terms of politics, economies, and cultures within China, museums are scattered around the country and their heritage practices are very different. In most cities that are majority Han Chinese, traditional museums and intangible heritage practitioners are usually found working independently or in collaboration with local governments (e.g. Yu, 2013; Pan, 2014), and thus it is rare to see the two parties participating in common causes and collaborating with each other. However, this situation has gradually been changing. The current study is based on such a case; the Arts and Crafts Museum Cluster (hereafter, ACMC) in Hangzhou, a coastal city in eastern China. In order to open up a new window of research into the community participation approach in the context of Chinese museums engaging with intangible heritage, this study aims to examine how and why the artisan community, the so-called source community, and museum professionals participate in and collaborate with each other in the practice of craftsmanship.

Intangible cultural heritage and the concept of community

The *ICHC* has inspired extensive debates on the nature and value of intangible heritage, which, to put it simply, may include the extent to which intangible heritage is mutable or static, object-based or process-based, determined or negotiable, local or international, and past-oriented or present-oriented (see e.g. Bouchenaki, 2004; Kirshenblatt-

Gimblett, 2004; Matsuura, 2004; Smith, 2006; Smith and Akagawa, 2009; Hafsein, 2009; Munjeri, 2009; Alivizatou, 2012; Fu, Kim and Zhou, 2014). However, these debates are centred around the fundamental issues of what intangible heritage is and who owns it, or in Smith's words, who has the ability to speak for and about heritage (Smith, 2006, p.29). Most scholars have suggested that intangible heritage is living heritage (Kurin, 2007; Munjeri, 2009) because it is practised and expressed dynamically through oral traditions, performances, rituals, craftsmanship, and systems of knowledge. It is not merely a 'cultural product' but is a 'living process' (Seitel, 2001, p.13) that requires people to continue to practise and transmit it, reflecting their knowledge, wisdom and lifestyles in particular contexts. Thus, a community and its people are defined as the centre of intangible heritage, unlike natural or tangible heritage that focuses on things and materiality (Blake, 2009).

However, one must ask, what is a community? Who belongs to a community? Although various disciplines have contributed to the interpretation and understanding of community (such as the social and political sciences), the concept of community and its connotations is still elusive, vague and subject to great debate. This is because the boundaries of a community cannot be easily defined. There is no set standard; instead there are various contributing factors in different socio-cultural contexts (Hall, 1993; Bauman, 2001). In the context of intangible heritage, however, community tends to be understood in terms of association with the place where the community collectively resides (Blake, 2009). For Murphy (1985), community is synonymous with place and is comparatively stable and fixed. For example, in Africa, communities that reside around heritage sites and accordingly share common traditions, may claim ownership of those sites and traditions. This assumes that all communities defined by territory have equal opportunities to participate in the political process of heritage practice (Cole, 2005). However, it is difficult to claim that all communities within a given territory share equally the right to use heritage as, in reality, such access is influenced by the unbalanced power structures within communities, conflicts between traditional custodians and legal custodians, interventions by governments, and other factors (Blake, 2009; Chirikure, et al., 2010). Scholars such as Cole (2005), Watson (2007) and Fu, Long, and Thomas (2014) emphasise that the heterogeneous and fluid nature of communities means that community members do not always share the use of heritage and its surroundings, due to their multiple and changing identities in terms of class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other aspects.

The connection between community and place manifested in UNESCO's ICHC is that communities create and transmit intangible heritage in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and history (2003, p.2). There are two implicit meanings of community, in this case the 'source community' (Peers and Brown, 2007, p.519). First, source communities create intangible heritage based on their original homes and surrounding environments. Intangible heritage thus reflects their understanding of and adaptation to their surrounding environment. Second, as source communities' original environments are transformed, e.g. by the decline of the rural environment and processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, they (and their descendants) may adjust the way they transmit their (endangered) intangible heritage to adapt to the new environment. Such adjustments may include the source community becoming divorced from their original environment and displaying intangible heritage in museums or cultural institutions. For example, some Native American folk artists leave their original homes where they learnt traditional craft-making skills, and display their craftwork at the Smithsonian Folk Festival (Kurin, 2004). Similarly in China, minority ethnic people leave the remote mountain areas where they learnt the traditional dances performed by their ancestors and perform them instead in the Cultural Village in Shenzhen (Stanley and Chung, 1995). When this happens, a source community is no longer the only one controlling the intangible heritage as they must work with other people or institutions in order to support the transmission of that heritage.

Some scholars therefore insist that multiple communities are involved in the 'cultural process' (Smith, 2011, p.24) of heritage construction or performance (see for example, Watson [2007]; Jackson and Kidd [2011]; Smith [2011]). Among the multiple communities, the community of professionals, including museum professionals and heritage experts, often plays a significant role in heritage practice, e.g. interpretation, presentation, preservation, and management. The AHD illustrates how museum and heritage experts exert their influence on heritage practice (Smith, 2006). The source community and the community of professionals may overlap, which means that members of the source communities may also be professionals or experts. For example, Benvenuto Cellini was not only a famous goldsmith of the Renaissance, but also a heritage expert in today's terms, as he possessed professional knowledge about traditional metalwork and gold painting and wrote about it (Sennett, 2008). However, it is often the case that the source community is independent of the

community of professionals, with the former tending to work with the latter in heritage practice. The professional identity of experts is (re)presented in the process of engagement with heritage, through which they control it (Smith, 2011). Various communities of the public are also involved in such a cultural process. For example, the response of tourists affects a local community's attitude towards their intangible heritage, and this can affect the authenticity of that intangible heritage (Stanley, 2011; Alivizatou, 2012).

Apart from the source community, professional community, and visitors or tourists, other communities may also be involved in intangible heritage practice, including mediators and business people. Due to the complexity of the process of heritage construction in contemporary society, it is difficult to provide a general concept of community, especially in the context of (intangible) heritage. A more useful way of understanding communities would be to analyse them within a particular context through fieldwork. This is supported by Marcus (cited in Bruner, 1994, p.424), who said that: What we need in this field is theory that constructs our objects so that they may be studied by fieldwork and the more traditional methods of ethnography.

The community participation approach in the context of intangible heritage

Intangible heritage preservation and management has become a key concern and the emergence of the community participation approach has significantly shifted the paradigm of heritage management practice across the world (Chirikure, Manyanga, Ndoro and Pwiti, 2010). Heritage management has long been criticised for excluding local demands and aspirations, and for being dominated by the AHD (Smith, 2006), a manifestation of western or European upper-class values and aesthetics, such as uniqueness, tradition and authenticity (Brown, 2005; Churchill, 2006; West, 2010). In this regard, community participation tends to be presented as a more effective way for heritage management to encourage local communities' involvement and participation in a wide range of activities relating to (intangible) heritage practice (Blake, 2009). Such local communities are the so-called 'source communities' that create and transmit intangible heritage.

A hierarchy of community participation exists in heritage practice ranging from the dissemination of superficial information to deep engagement, like project planning and decision-making (Albro, 2007; Blake, 2009). The community

participation approach emphasises the deep and active engagement of communities for their own empowerment (Damm, 2005; Blake, 2009; Chirikure, Manyanga, Ndoro and Pwiti, 2010). It means that the poor and oppressed should be mobilised by external agents and encouraged to participate in decision-making (Midgley, 1986, p.13) at the local level. In other words, communities should have the power and capabilities to define their own futures in a manner of their own choosing (Blake, 2009, p.50) with regard to safeguarding and managing intangible heritage. Unlike the institutionoriented approach, the community participation approach emphasises the leading role that source communities play in heritage practice, with governments, NGOs, and professionals on hand to provide the necessary support and guidance. Furthermore, the ultimate purpose of the community participation approach is to achieve sustainable community development through heritage practice, and thus it must first guarantee the interests of source communities over those of other parties.

As discussed earlier, multiple communities, such as source communities, the professional community, and the visitor community, are involved in heritage practice. The community participation approach does not oppose the participation of other communities and organisations such as governments and non-governmental organisations. Rather, it highlights the idea that any actions that aim to safeguard intangible heritage must rely on collaborative efforts whilst guaranteeing the core role of the source community and their active participation (Blake, 2009). However, it is often the case that source communities and professional communities experience tensions and conflicts within their collaborative practices. These tensions and conflicts arise over the strategies and purposes of preservation and display, the ownership of heritage (management processes), the understanding of the authenticity of heritage, relationships with visitors, the value of heritage, and other factors (Burden, 2007; Blake, 2009; Churchill, 2006; Harrison, 2010; Alivizatou, 2012).

Source communities are often marginalised or underprivileged. For example, they include communities from former colonies, indigenous peoples, diasporic and immigrant groups, working- class people and LGBT communities, whose heritage is preserved and interpreted within the discourse of heritage preservation that is often controlled by heritage or museum experts from western white middle- or upper-class society (Peers and Brown, 2003; West, 2010; Tibbles, 2012). Thus, source communities and

professional communities often have different heritage ideologies due to their intrinsic differences, including class, a sense of place, belief, and nationality.

Since the late twentieth century, museums have engaged with intangible heritage (Fu, Kim and Zhou, 2014), reflecting the collaborative museum work undertaken by source communities and museum professionals (e.g. curators, museum educators and heritage experts in museums). Source communities bring to museums their oral histories, indigenous beliefs, traditional rituals and other elements that are not usually accepted as part of conventional museum collections, whereas museum professionals provide source communities with conservation, presentation and education services, and training programmes for safeguarding their intangible heritage in the museum setting (Kurin, 2004 and 2007). Museums have been transformed from spaces dominated by the didactic voices of professionals to dialogic spaces, where grassroots or marginalised communities can challenge the ideas of linearity, objectivity and elitism (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). Successful practices include activities at the National Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa, where Maori communities work with museum professionals to exhibit Maori intangible heritage (Alivizatou, 2012), and the Afrikaans Language Museum in South Africa where the Afrikaans-speaking community collaborates with museum professionals to promote their language (Burden, 2007). In this context, museums are described as 'contact zones' (Clifford, 1997, p.188) or 'interactive theatres' (Phillips, 2005, p.88), where museum professionals negotiate with source communities. Although conflict and tension between the two parties do occasionally arise, both Clifford and Phillips point out that such a phenomenon is necessary and significant for the construction of intangible heritage in museums.

Eco-museums may be the best places for this kind of engagement with intangible heritage practice. In the context of eco-museums, source communities rely on local eco-environments to practise their intangible heritage (e.g. craftsmanship, rituals and lifestyles). The value of the community participation approach in eco-museums has achieved a general consensus among scholars of heritage studies, anthropology and tourism studies. However, in practice, there are various forms, strategies and methods of community participation to be considered. For example, a democratic method of intangible heritage preservation is more often used in Europe than in Asia (Davis, 2011), whereas it is more common for top-down initiatives to be used in

intangible heritage preservation in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in China, Japan, Thailand, and Indonesia. This is because economics and the development of tourism tend to be the primary purposes of intangible heritage preservation and a precondition for community sustainability in those Asian countries (Stanley and Chung, 1995; Hitchcock, Stanley and Siu, 2004; Davis, 2011). In China, eco-museums began to emerge in the 1990s (Su, 2008). Unlike in other countries, most Chinese eco-museums focus on ethnic minority cultures. It has been noted that they bring improvements to the local economy and infrastructure used by minority cultural groups. For instance, the transportation and water supply facilities in some ethnic villages have been improved, and the incomes of local minority ethnic people have increased due to the presence of the eco-museums (Stanley and Chung, 1995; Davis, 2011; Wang, 2012). However, Chinese eco-museums are more often criticised for primarily serving government policy, the local economy, and the tourism industry, often raising other potential problems, such as a kitsch approach to intangible heritage, the transformation of living cultures into static exhibitions, a loss of authenticity, and changes to the social fabric and values of ethnic minority communities (Yang and Wall, 2009; Davis, 2011). Another criticism is that the practices of eco-museums in China are limited by the perspectives of scholars, and show little understanding of the voices of source communities.

In recent years, other types of museums in China have begun to engage with intangible heritage, including existing traditional object-oriented museums and newly-established intangible heritage-themed museums. However, they have not attracted enough attention from academia. In such cases, it is worth asking how museum professionals collaborate with source communities. To what extent is the community participation approach employed? Will the existing (mostly western) literature on the community participation approach be appropriate in the Chinese context? This study attempts to enrich and improve the existing theoretical discussion on the community collaboration approach by answering these questions.

Intangible heritage and museums in Hangzhou and the ACMC

Since the launch of the *Intangible Cultural Heritage Law* of the *People's Republic of China* (hereafter: *ICHLC*) in 2011, laws and actions for the protection of intangible heritage have gradually been adopted in Hangzhou. In terms of the

governmental administration, a specialised hierarchical system has been set up which consists of different governmental organisations, including the Leading Taskforce on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Division of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the Hangzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Centre. They are responsible for conducting surveys about intangible heritage in Hangzhou, building a database, making declarations and evaluations according to the *ICHLC*, and providing financial support for the preservation and management of intangible heritage (Yu and Pan, 2014; Wen, 2011).

In Hangzhou, museums primarily engage with intangible heritage in two ways. First, conventional object-oriented museums attempt to display intangible heritage apart from their permanent object exhibitions. For example, the China Tea Museum invites tea-makers to display their traditional tea-making skills, while the China National Silk Museum shows the crafts of silk tie-dyeing and painting. Second, new museums and exhibition centres that focus on intangible heritage have been established thanks to governmental financial support. There are currently 53 museums and exhibition centres of intangible heritage in Hangzhou, and a further 33. 2 thousand square metre intangible heritage exhibition centre will be established in the near future with an investment of RMB 415 million (around US \$70 million) (Pan, 2014).

Intangible heritage practitioners take an active role in the practice of intangible heritage in Hangzhou, which, to a large extent, is driven by local governments. Since 2011, projects targeting intangible heritage practitioners have been launched, for example, the project 'Masters Teach Apprentices' (Pan, 2014). Some intangible heritage practitioners have opened their own private museums with local government support. For example, the paper umbrella maker, Liu Yongguan, has established the Paper Umbrella Museum. In addition, as both national and local governments at various levels promote the so-called 'productive protection' (Xu, 2012, p.6) of intangible heritage, that is, protecting intangible heritage in the process of production, craftspeople are actively involved in various production activities. As of 2013, 151 private enterprises and 56 private workshops have been participating in activities or businesses related to intangible heritage in the Yuhang district, one of the eight districts of Hangzhou (Yu, 2013). However, the extent to which the 'productive protection' method can preserve intangible heritage, and the effects it will have, are questionable.

The subject of this research, the ACMC, was established in 2009. It was the first attempt by museums to engage with intangible heritage in Hangzhou. The ACMC is located on the western side of the Grand Canal in Hangzhou, which was designated a UNESCO World Heritage property in 2014. Much of the space upon which the ACMC was developed used to house craft workshops and factories dating back to the late nineteenth century that had been built beside the canal (e.g. the 1889 Tongyi Cotton Factory). Therefore, the establishment of the ACMC was initially regarded as a way of safeguarding, re-using and promoting Hangzhou's heritage of handicrafts and the re-enactment of traditional techniques.

The ACMC consists of five museums, three of which focus on object displays combined with new technologies and exhibitions (see Plate 1), whereas the other two specialise in living craftsmanship as intangible heritage. The three object-oriented museums are the Knives, Scissors, and Swords Museum, the Umbrella Museum, and the Fan Museum, which display the knives, scissors, swords, umbrellas, and fans that were made by hand over the course of China's long history. The other two museums are the Workmanship Demonstration Pavilion (hereafter: WDP) and the Hangzhou Arts and Crafts Museum Master Workshop (hereafter: MW), which focus on the preservation and presentation of living craftsmanship as intangible heritage.



Plate 1 A scene in the Fan Museum of the ACMC Photo: Ruohan Mao, April 2015.

Research methods

This study employed a combination of research methods, namely semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The primary research data came from 13 formal semi-structured interviews and 38 informal conversations. Table 1 shows the interviewees' profiles. They represent a mixture of craftspeople and museum professionals, including museum planners, curators, and museum staff. The interviewees were encouraged to have open-ended discussions on two key questions: (1) why they participate in the practice of craftsmanship in the ACMC and (2) how they collaborate with each other during the process.

The authors also conducted direct observations in the museums from September 2013 to March 2014. The direct observations were expected to provide further information about how craftspeople and museum staff work together in the ACMC and how their constant collaboration influences the presentation of craftsmanship there. A variety of documents were collected and used in this study. They included administrative documents, museum brochures and planning proposals, evaluation reports, government reports, photographs, and newspaper articles. Such documentation is helpful to cross-check and understand the reasons for the participation of, and collaboration between craftspeople and museum professionals. Once the data had been collected from the fieldwork, the raw data was transformed into words, which was followed by processes of word coding and data analysis.

Findings

The museums' focus on living presentation and the craftspeople's demands

The ACMC's policy is very different from that of conventional object-based museums, as one of the ACMC planners, Mr. Qiang, explains:

One of our aims is to present the development of artsand-crafts' hand making techniques, including the processes of producing, dealing with raw materials... and the standards for evaluating the quality of arts-and-crafts in different eras. We need to show visitors how objects were made and how history and people's wisdom were developed through such processes ... Currently, visitors like living stuff ... rather than piles of objects...Thus, this objective should be realised through living presentations, rather than objects...

It is clear that living presentation is one of the strategies used by the ACMC to highlight the importance of its function of satisfying the requirements of museum visitors. This is why the ACMC's planners and curators invited craftspeople to make live presentations demonstrating their craftsmanship as intangible heritage in the WDP and MW of the ACMC (see Plate 2). To some extent, such a strategy reflects the influence of new museological theory on museum practice, in which

Table 1Details of the Semi-structured Interviews

| Interview | Interviewees' role | Pseudonym | Date |
|-----------|---|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1-2 | Planning Leader of the ACMC | Mr. Qiang | 24 October and 16 November 2013 |
| 3 | Director of the Exhibition Department of the ACMC | Miss. Xu | 17 December 2013 |
| 4 | Director of the Education Department of the ACMC | Mrs. Wang | 25 April 2014 |
| 5 | Staff member of the Exhibition Department of the ACMC | Mrs. Chen | 22 January 2014 |
| 6-7 | West Lake silk umbrella makers | Mr. Tu & Mr. Zhang | 25 April 2012 and 23 April 2014 |
| 8 | Wangxingji fan maker Mrs. Zhang | Mrs. Zhang | 23 April 2014 |
| 9 | Fuyang bamboo paper craftsman | Mr. Zheng | 23 April 2014 |
| 10-11 | Zhangxiaoquan scissor maker | Mr. Deng & Mr. Qian | 25 April 2014 |
| 12 | Boxwood carver | Miss. Chen | 30 April 2014 |
| 13 | Colour relief worker Miss. Dong | Miss. Dong | 30 April 2014 |



Plate 2
An artisan making a bamboo basket to carry water.
Photo: Ruohan Mao, April 2015.



Plate 3
Two artisans making a pair of scissors in the Workmanship Demonstration Pavilion of the ACMC.
Photo: Ruohan Mao, April 2015.



Plate 4
An artisan making an umbrella in the Workmanship Demonstration Pavilion of the ACMC.
Photo: Ruohan Mao, June 2015.

conventional museums moved on from focusing on object-based collections to encouraging increased interactions between the museum and its visitors and the wider society (Davis, 2011; Alivizatou, 2012). As Mrs. Chen of the Exhibition Department of the ACMC highlights: Visitors are the most important factor in running the museums ... in this era of New Museology ... We need to make it [the ACMC] more attractive to visitors. Thus, the practices of the ACMC reveal that museums may have multiple reasons for engaging with intangible heritage, whereas it was often assumed that they were simply motivated by the need for preservation. It is worth exploring the risks or after-effects that may emerge when communities with differing aims participate in common intangible heritage practice.

The so-called source community in the ACMC is the craftspeople, who can be grouped into two categories: the independent craftspeople who work for themselves and the craftspeople who are employed either full- or part-time by arts-and-crafts companies. The latter have comparatively more stable incomes and job security than the former. Their

participation in the ACMC usually results from collaboration between the ACMC and art-and-crafts enterprises. The collaborative pattern between craftspeople and the ACMC is described by the director of the Exhibition Department of the ACMC in the following way:

The ACMC provides craftspeople with a free space in which to work, sell products and teach apprentices, and with a sales team to support them, while the craftspeople demonstrate how they make arts-and-crafts and teach visitors if they want to learn from the craftspeople.

To a great extent, participating in the ACMC has helped independent craftspeople cut costs and has relieved them of the financial burden of running their own businesses. As one of the silk umbrella makers, Mr. Tu, explains:

The cost of making one hand-made umbrella can easily be more than one hundred Yuan [US \$16]. With such a high price, I cannot sell a lot... If I rent a working space, I need to pay electricity, rent, student training fees and other costs ... if I employ apprentices, how can I give them wages? In Hangzhou, the lowest wage is 1,310 Yuan [US \$209] per month. How can I manage all this?...That is why I do appreciate that the museums [ACMC] give me a space to make silk umbrellas on-site.

The operation of the ACMC primarily depends on annual funding from the government(s), as is the case for most public museums in China and in many other countries (Kurin, 2007; Alivizatou, 2012). A comparatively stable income and a secure working space provide financial support to the craftspeople working there. Furthermore, the craftspeople who were granted Chinese Intangible Cultural Inheritor status received extra subsidies from the ACMC, according to Zhangxiaoquan scissor-makers, Mr. Deng and Mr. Qian.

As well as the material and/or financial benefits, the craftspeople working in the ACMC also gained higher spiritual satisfaction and social recognition. One of the craftspeople, Mrs. Zhang, described how her child changed her attitude towards her job as a craftsperson after visiting the ACMC:

My daughter is in Grade 5. She has never watched me make a fan by hand before. After visiting here, she and her classmates think I am terrific. She is proud of me... She likes telling everyone [that] her mother is a craftsperson working in a museum ... Actually most people do not know my job well ... But working in museums has helped me a lot [in this regard].

In ancient China, craftspeople were usually regarded as a low social status group; this has not changed much over time, as demonstrated above. As museums often enjoy high public recognition as educational institutions (Kurin, 2004 and 2007), the craftspeople working in museums and their works that are collected by museums encourage wider society to re-evaluate and appreciate them and their work. Their participation and continuing collaboration with museums has, therefore, created a new social atmosphere in which craftspeople receive improved social recognition from their families, friends, and other members of society. This will lead to the affirming and strengthening of their identity and their social and cultural importance as craftspeople.

Because of this, the craftspeople have a strong motivation for ensuring their survival by participating in the practice of craftsmanship in the ACMC. This reflects the fact that craftsmanship is currently endangered in Hangzhou and, indeed, more broadly throughout China. By contrast, the

experts and curators of the ACMC did not specifically claim that the preservation of craftsmanship was their primary function. Nevertheless, the ACMC did make a significant contribution by providing material and spiritual support to the craftspeople to help them preserve and continue their craftsmanship. It seems unlikely that there would be any other effective way of preserving the continuity of craftsmanship without the help of museums like the ACMC. However, the extent to which they can maintain the sustainable development of the craft community is questionable, given that in this case, the policy was initiated by the ACMC whose main purpose was to attract museum visitors rather than to support the craftspeople. Although such a practice does include the participation of the source community, we do not consider it to be an example of the community participation approach which highlights the active participation of the source community and their role as initiators, and is believed to lead to more sustainable development for the source community and intangible heritage (Blake, 2009; Munjeri, 2009; Davis, 2011).

Museums' promotional strategies, interruptions by visitors, and the craftspeople's working processes

The ACMC pursues a visitor-focused promotional and operational strategy, as do most contemporary museums (Conn, 2011). As Mrs. Chen of the Exhibition Department of the ACMC emphasises:

We don't intend for our museums to be places that only have cabinets full of collections, that visitors never come to ...We need to make it [the ACMC] more attractive to visitors by, for example, conducting interactive activities, strengthening promotions. The display of living craftsmanship is the biggest attraction of the museums.

In order to attract more visitors, the professionals at the ACMC had two key strategies embedded into their promotions and operations. The first was to ask the craftspeople to work in authentic conditions, as much as possible like their individual workshops, rather than to give a 'staged performance' (MacCannell, 1973), as the director of the Education Department of the ACMC, Mrs. Wang explains below:

I do not like the idea of performances, by which I mean fake activities. If the craftspeople wanted to give a performance, they would not be very serious. The visitors' experience would [consequently] be really bad. Therefore, I emphasise that the craftspeople need to work in authentic conditions, producing something like what they do in their actual workplaces...

The second strategy employed by the museum curators involved strengthening interaction between the craftspeople and the visitors. According to Miss. Xu:

We asked the craftspeople to communicate with the visitors and ...teach them how to make the products if they wanted to learn. Visitors prefer that sort of interactive process.

Such visitor-oriented promotion strategies and operations are made primarily from the perspective of museum management, although Miss. Xu insisted that these strategies also coincided with the safeguarding measures listed by the *ICHC*, which include promoting intangible heritage to the public (UNESCO, 2003).

However, at least for the craftspeople, making craft work tends to be a complete process. Thus, visitors' demands to learn and interact with them while they were working had a significant impact on the quality of their work and on their workload, as explained by fanmaker, Mrs. Zhang:

I am here to work, which is also what the ACMC wants. I do not like being interrupted by visitors. I used to teach them if they wanted to learn. But now I don't want to teach them anymore. It's difficult to resume my work if I am stopped by a visitor ... you lose your train of thought ... In addition, my income is closely related to how many fans I make. But they [visitors] always disturb my work...

Such interviews demonstrate that the visitor-based promotion strategies of the ACMC can directly affect the quality of work and the workload of the craftspeople, causing tension between them and the ACMC. The ACMC prioritises visitors over the concerns of the craftspeople because the primary motivation of the ACMC professionals is not the preservation of craftsmanship but attracting visitors. Thus, the different motivations behind different stakeholders' participation in intangible heritage have caused conflict. Following lengthy negotiations between the two sides, visitors are now being charged a small amount in learning fees,

which limits the number of visitors who are able to learn arts-and-crafts-making at any particular time, and consequently increases the income of the craftspeople.

Although the curators and staff at the ACMC insisted that the craftsmanship presented in the museums was authentic, there can be no absolutely objective authenticity because of the interventions of the curators, the participation of visitors, and the compromises that have to be made by the craftspeople. Within museum spaces, the authenticity of heritage is constantly (re) negotiated and (re)constructed. As proposed in Jackson and Kidd's (2011) edited volume, Performing Heritage, museums are like the theatre, where heritage is performed by actors, including curators, heritage experts and visitors. However, it is worth asking if all of the actors involved understand each other's existence and functions. In this study, the craftspeople did not always understand that museum visitors play a role in the performance of craftsmanship. If they had, they would have been more supportive of the visitor-based promotion policy of the ACMC. Endangered heritage often needs the support of visitors and commercialisation, e.g. the purchasing of arts and crafts (Cohen, 1988). Museum professionals must help the source community understand the complexity of heritage practice in museums; this will contribute to a smoother process of collaboration between the two sides.

The nature of craftsmanship and visitorcentric museum management

Craftsmanship is a process that ranges from the preparation of raw materials to the final product, which reflects the living nature of intangible heritage. How to preserve this within the conventional museum space has been a challenge for both the craftspeople and museum professionals at the ACMC. The following is from a silk-umbrella maker at the ACMC, Mr. Zhang:

It [craftsmanship] is not only about sitting there making stuff by hand, but also about obtaining proper raw materials ... We need to go outside to look for raw materials ... For example, a lot of places have bamboo, but the ones that are suitable for umbrella-making are limited. Furthermore, sometimes we cannot find enough raw materials in one place and have to collect them from different

places. So it is impossible for us to always stay inside ... But the museum asked us to work from morning to afternoon like office workers, because visitors are there during those periods ... They do not understand our job well...

Similar comments were also made by other interviewees, including boxwood-carvers and people doing colour relief work. For these craftspeople, the professionals at the ACMC did not fully understand the nature of craftsmanship and its complexity, and this resulted in conflict between the two sides.

However, the museum professionals answered such comments from their own perspective, as follows:

The ultimate purpose of running museums is to serve visitors. Our museum has opening hours from Tuesday to Sunday. Visitors come during the opening hours to see the craft work. If there is no-one working in the space, what do they see? Craftspeople who decide to work in the museums should understand this.

This clearly shows that the museum professionals consider the visitors to be their priority, despite the fact that, in theory, the source communities should be at the core of safeguarding intangible heritage (Blake, 2009). Similar phenomena have also been documented in other studies, highlighting how source communities often do not control the practice of intangible heritage in Chinese eco-museums and cultural villages (Stanley and Chung, 1995; Davis, 2011).

Furthermore, the approach of management at the ACMC remains similar to that in conventional museums that deal with static objects. The fixed nature of object-based collections allows museum professionals to pursue rigid, unidirectional management policies without any problems. However, the living nature of craftsmanship means that its presentation and preservation cannot be limited to museum spaces, and thus museum professionals must develop bi-directional and more interactive methods of dealing with living 'people' - i.e. the source community of intangible heritage. The empirical evidence in this study supports Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (2004) view that museums should not copy the method of conserving material objects when preserving intangible heritage, for example by locking a material object behind a display window. Although the museum professionals at the ACMC attempted to present the living state of craftsmanship as intangible heritage within the museums, they had not fully developed a suitable method for managing it.

The craftspeople and the museum professionals have recently attempted to solve the above conflicts between them. They concluded that each group of craftspeople (e.g. the colour relief group, the umbrella- making group, etc.) should ensure that at least one of their people was 'on duty' in the working space at the ACMC, so that other members of their group could go out to find and prepare raw materials for production. Such an agreement helped the craftspeople protect and maintain their traditional use of raw materials, one of the key aspects of preserving traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO, 2003). This solution is the result of continuing



Plate 5
A scene in the Knives, Scissors, and Swords Museum of the ACMC.
Photo: Ruohan Mao, April 2015.



Plate 6
An exhibition at the Hangzhou Arts and Crafts Museum Master Workshop of the ACMC.
Photo: Ruohan Mao, April 2015.

negotiation and compromise between the two sides. The craftspeople, as the source community, did not passively participate in the practice of intangible heritage. Rather, they pro-actively exerted their influence on it, which is an important feature of the community participation approach (Damm, 2005; Blake, 2009).

Discussion and conclusion

The current study differs from most research into museums that engage with intangible heritage in China, and it demonstrates that intangible heritage is constructed or performed by multiple communities (Jackson and Kidd, 2011; Smith, 2011) through the process of negotiation and compromise.

The findings suggest that the community of craftspeople and the community of museum professionals at the ACMC were driven to collaborate by different motivations and interests. The professionals at the ACMC were keen to attract more visitors and thus dispensed with the conventional strategy of displaying static objects (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998 and 2004) by inviting craftspeople to offer presentations of living craftsmanship in the museums. The planning of the ACMC demonstrates that its development is in line with 'the second museum age', which emphasises the connection between visitors and museums (Philips, 2003, p.83). For the craftspeople at the ACMC, their collaboration with the museums was an effective strategy to ensure their survival, given that the museums usually receive government funding and gain

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Plate 7
A showcase in the Umbrella Museum of the ACMC.
Photo: Ruohan Mao, April 2015.

higher social recognition (Kurin, 2004 and 2007), thus making it more likely they would receive sustainable incomes and spiritual satisfaction. This differs from the earlier studies that emphasised that safeguarding intangible heritage as a common goal promotes the collaboration of different stakeholders in heritage practice (Blake, 2009; Alivizatou, 2012). The Chinese community of craftspeople in this study was marginalised from mainstream Chinese society because of their low incomes, low social status, and endangered craftsmanship. Thus, this study confirms that collaboration between the source community and the (museum and heritage) professional community is necessary in order to preserve the continuity of intangible heritage.

However, it also found that the different motivations of the two communities caused tensions and conflicts. Two types of conflict were highlighted. First, the focus on visitors had an adverse impact on the work of the craftspeople because the visitors were encouraged to interact with them, which distracted them and affected the quality of their work, added to their workload, and ultimately reduced their income. One of the solutions to this particular conflict was to charge visitors a small fee in an attempt to compensate the craftspeople for the inconvenience of having to deal with them. Second, the visitor-orientated policy required the craftspeople to be permanently on display and this conflicted with the nature of craftsmanship because it ignored the fact that craft is a 'living process' (Seitel, 2001, p.13), and prevented the craftspeople from going out to look for the raw materials they needed. The solution to this was for every group of craftspeople to guarantee that at all times at least one of their members would be working in the museums.

The process of solving the conflicts in this study revealed that partnerships in heritage practice are not easily constructed, but rather involve complex and difficult on-going negotiation and compromises between the parties (Arantes, 2013). The influence of craftspeople as source communities on the process of solving conflicts also demonstrates that their active participation in the practice of intangible heritage was not considered superficial, but was in fact a form of community empowerment (Damm, 2005; Chirikure, Manyanga, Ndoro and Pwiti, 2010). However, it cannot be concluded that the community participation approach worked particularly well in this case, because it was the museum professionals who initiated the project, which then relied on their interest, whereas the craftspeople did not play a core role in setting the policy.

Similar issues have been found in intangible heritage practice in other museums and cities in China (Stanley and Chung, 1995; Davis, 2011). This is related to the political and cultural fact that China is not as democratised as western countries where the heritage industry is usually controlled by governmental administration (and public institutions that are administrated by governments). If, in China, source communities cannot achieve a key, leading position in intangible heritage practice in the short term, it is important to encourage them to be active in interacting with governments and experts in pursuit of their own interests, rather than criticising the extent of their participation in China from a western democratic perspective.

The study echoes the views of Jackson and Kidd (2011) and Smith (2006), for whom heritage is not a 'thing' but a performance or cultural process in which multiple communities are involved. Although the communities of craftspeople and of museum professionals are the primary focus of this study, there are other communities and parties involved in the process of intangible heritage construction, production, and presentation. For example, art-and-crafts enterprises also play an important role in the ACMC's work in an indirect way, as they support and employ some of the craftspeople who work there. Visitors to the ACMC also have an influence through interacting with the craftspeople and buying their work. Therefore, it is important for future studies to provide richer empirical evidence of the interactions between broader groups of stakeholders or the 'cultural mediators' involved in intangible heritage practice (Arantes, 2013, p. 39). This will contribute to the research on community participation in the context of intangible heritage, and will also help to develop a 'people-centred museology' (Alivizatou, 2012, p. 16). 👺

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