ECHOES
EUROPEAN COLONIAL HERITAGE MODALITIES IN ENTANGLED CITIES

Shanghai History Museum / Shanghai Revolution Museum Report #2

Decolonizing Chinese Museums?
An Analysis of the Shanghai History
Museum / Shanghai Revolution Museum
through Project ECHOES Modalities

By: Laura Pozzi (University of Warsaw)

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Introduction

This report was developed within the Horizon2020 project *ECHOES: European Colonial Heritage Modalities in Entangled Cities* as part of its work package 3 on 'City Museums and Multiple Colonial Pasts.' This work package conducts in-depth, qualitative, comparative analyses of three city museums – Amsterdam Museum, Museum of Warsaw, and Shanghai History Museum – each representing distinct positions within colonial history.

The Shanghai History Museum/ Shanghai Revolution Museum (from now on SHM/SRM) provides a case study from a city museum located outside the European framework, while the Amsterdam Museum (Ariese 2019b) and the Museum of Warsaw (Bukowiecki & Wawrzyniak 2019), present case studies from Western and Eastern Europe. A first set of reports, published earlier this year, focused on the history and evolution of these three city museums and their current state (Ariese 2019a; Bukowiecki 2019; Pozzi 2019). These first reports provide a contextual background to the institutional histories, the histories of the cities, and the position of the museums within their local and national sphere. The research on all three of these case studies is still on-going and will result in one more set of reports, thus ultimately forming a nine-part final report of the research conducted on city museums within project ECHOES. As the research is still in progress, the results presented in this report may still be altered or expanded due to new findings.

The main aim of this report is to test the usefulness of the ECHOES modalities – **reframing, repression, removal** and **re-emergence** (Kølvraa 2019) – in the context of Chinese museums, to discuss their limitations, and to propose possible rephrasings to enhance their effectiveness. Through the analysis of the SHM/SRM's engagement/disengagement with the city's colonial heritage, this paper attempts to answer the following questions: can the ECHOES modalities be applied to the case of the SHM/SRM? What does it mean to engage in decolonial practices in the Chinese context? The SHM/SRM, and Chinese museums in general, are extremely critical of foreign colonialism, but are they challenging what Walter Mignolo calls the "colonial matrix of power" (Mignolo 2011) or are they just perpetuating Western views of modernity?

To answer these questions, I will first introduce the ECHOES keywords, before then discussing the establishment of the SHM/SRM in the framework of the scholarship on China's path to decolonization and decoloniality. After a presentation of sources and methodology, I will present a series of case studies of how the SHM/SRM's permanent exhibition presents the city's colonial past by engaging in acts of reframing, repression, removal and re-emergence (Kølvraa 2019). I will conclude with my observations about the usefulness of applying the ECHOES modalities to the Chinese context, outlining their limits and proposing adjustments to enhance their effectiveness.

ECHOES Modalities and Methodology

In this paper I will analyze the management of colonial heritage in SHM/SRM employing the four ECHOES modalities – repression, reframing, removal, and re-emergence (Kølvraa 2019) – as heuristic tools to examine the museum's engagement with Shanghai's colonial past. Repression is a heritage practice which consists in ignoring an object's or a site's colonial history, often reproducing apologetic discourse around colonialism; while reframing entails inserting and staging colonial legacy into new narratives to inform the audience about colonialism, but also runs the risk of depoliticizing a site or an object for audience consumption. Removal is a heritage practice in which the colonial past is left behind and sometimes physically removed in the attempt to discard signals of colonial domination to change the memory of the past; and finally, re-emergence allows the ghosts of the colonial past to return to haunt us, but it also allows us to reflect about the past and create a new future.

These modalities can be used to analyze the practicing of heritage in sites, museums, and art. The definitions of the ECHOES modalities are neither fixed, nor mutually exclusive. For instance, every case of heritage management is different and might contain elements of more than one mode, furthermore they can change their meaning when applied in different geographical, political, and cultural spaces.

While alternative curatorial practices besides the defined idea of Western modernity survive in the contemporary world (Kreps 1998), modern museums are generally thought of as Western and modern cultural products which find their origins in colonialism (Bennett 2014). In recent years, some museums in Europe, the United States, and beyond have attempted to de-colonize their permanent exhibitions by returning objects to their countries of origin, by collaborating with curators, activists, and artists from ex-colonies, and by rethinking the contents and narratives they promote (Thomas 2010). Despite their attempts, however, the road to decolonization is still long, and many have even wondered if it is possible to decolonize museums at all (Kassim 2017).

Is it possible to apply the ECHOES modalities to the analysis of Chinese museums? How do curatorial practices employed in China contribute to the debates about the decolonization of modern museums? In this paper I will present four case-studies (some of them already partially discussed in Ariese *et al.* 2019) of management of colonial heritage in the permanent exhibition of the SHM using the ECHOES modalities as heuristic tools to understand how the history of colonialism is employed to shape visitors' understanding of the city's (and country's) past and present. Each case study is analyzed through one specific modality, but I will always underline how elements of different modalities coexist and interact. Removal and re-emergence are discussed in the same section, since in the case of the SHM, they are closely interconnected. These two modalities are often, but not exclusively, associated with bottom-up initiatives. In museums, re-emergence is associated with activists' and artists' alternative tours or initiatives which provide a new perspective on the content of the permanent exhibitions (Ariese 2019a: 21). These sorts of activities are not common, to not say non-existent, at the SHM, but other forms of re-emergence and removal can be found in the exhibition.

The content of the permanent exhibition is the main source of my research (see the data collection section below); however, in my analysis I connect the management of objects in the museum with their history, original function, original location in the city, and their cultural meaning for different social groups. While selecting case studies, I tried to consider the fact that between

the hundreds of objects displayed in the exhibition, some of them attract the attention of visitors more than others. The objects discussed in this paper are among the most popular among visitors.[1]

Finally, although this paper concentrates on the management of European colonial heritage, when relevant I will address the problem of how **epistemic coloniality** plays a role also in SHM's representation of the national and city history, especially when avoiding sensitive discussion about ethnicities, religion and China's own colonization history.

Data Collection

This paper is based on a variety of data I collected during my two visits in Shanghai in November 2018 and May 2019. The main data cited are: the content of the permanent exhibition, the content of the museum's audio guides (English version), the content of the tours guided by volunteers (in Chinese), interviews with museum staff, publications about the SHM, and when useful a comparison with the permanent exhibition of the Shanghai Urban History and Development Exhibition Hall in the Pearl Tower where some of the objects now in the SHM were previously displayed (Pozzi 2019).

The permanent exhibition, in particular the '*Modern Shanghai*' section, is the most important source for my research (Pozzi 2019). I visited the exhibition several times. Firstly, I walked around the galleries by myself just reading labels, while in other occasions I carefully followed the audio guide. Furthermore, on at least three occasions I followed the guided tours organized by the museum staff. My approach was to experience the museum as a visitor before interviewing curators.

Interviews with the staff of the SHM added a second layer to my research, as they informed me on the making of the exhibition, the guiding ideas behind the selection of objects, and the selection of information presented to the public. I interviewed five members of the museum's staff at different levels inside the organization: the vice-director, one of the main curators of the permanent exhibitions, a member of the education department, an education assistant, and a curator of the *Ancient Shanghai* gallery. I asked them similar questions about their work in the museum and their vision of the aims of the exhibition, sometimes focusing on the story behind specific objects. They signed a consent form for the use of their anonymized quotes in this report.

I also examined the contents of the audio guides and of the tours led by volunteers to understand what kind of information is provided to visitors about individual objects and the colonial history of the city in general. Publications about the museum and by the SHM publishing house were precious sources to understand the history of the collection and of some of its objects. I also found it useful to compare the SHM to other history museum in China. In particular, my visit to the Pearl Tower's Shanghai Urban History and Development Exhibition Hall helped me to understand how the same object can be reframed in several ways to tell different stories, revealing how dissimilar aspects of Shanghai's colonial history can be emphasized, repressed, and removed even in the same political setting.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of time and institutional rules, I was not given access to the archives and the storehouses of the museum. On several occasions the members of the staff told me that the SHM has a relatively poor collection, at least in comparison with other prominent

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[1] Report three will be dedicated to visitors' reaction to the exhibition.

museums in the city, such as the Shanghai Museum; nevertheless, it would have been intriguing to see which objects in the collections have been left in the storages and why so, as it would have allowed me to better analyze how removal occurs in the management of colonial heritage in this institution.

China's Museology through the Lenses of Decolonial Theories

The history of the establishment of the SHM is discussed in depth in '*A City, its History, and its Museum(s): Making the Shanghai History Museum/Shanghai Revolution Museum*' (Pozzi 2019). In this report I would like to further discuss the importance of the double nature of the SHM/SRM for project ECHOES, analyzing it through the lenses of decolonial theories.

In the 1950s the Shanghai History Museum and the Shanghai Revolution Museum were originally planned as two distinct institutions, but in 2015 the city government decided to unite them into the SHM/SRM to be opened at the ex-Shanghai Race Club (Pozzi 2019).

When asked about the decision to combine the two museums into one entity, the vice-director of the SHM/SRM answered that this choice proved "troublesome," and that "We [those involved in the making of the museum] followed the Municipal Committee City Government's directives about the 'spirit/vitality' [of the city]" (SH_S1_04/12/2018, my translation). Curators needed to solve several problems when designing the permanent exhibition. For starters, they discussed if it made more sense to unite the collections of the two museums into one permanent exhibition, or to keep them divided into two separate ones (SH_S2_07/12/2018). This might seem like a simple organizational issue, but the decision to design one or two exhibitions hides more complex questions: Is there a distinction between the 'history' of Shanghai and its 'revolutionary history'? How can the borders between the two be defined? According to the main designer of the galleries, after several discussions the board decided to merge the two collections into one permanent exhibition covering all the history of Shanghai (SH_S2_07/12/2018).

This merger is important to understand the political aims of this institution. The importance of a Marxist-Leninist interpretation of history, as well as the Maoist's addendum of nationalism in communist ideology, are the leading principles of Chinese museology (Varutti 2014: 36). The central role of Marxism-Leninism and of the revolutionary tradition of the country are highlighted in the official regulations regarding the management of heritage and museums in China (CNMA 2010). While scholars argue that in China museums' narratives adapt continuously to changing economic and political demands of the state (Denton 2014), it is nevertheless undeniable that the Marxist-Leninist and Maoist interpretation of history remain the guiding principles for the making of permanent exhibitions in China. Marxist-Leninist interpretations of history, as well as the centrality of the Communist Revolution as a turning point of Chinese modern history are never contested in Chinese museums, and the SHM/SRM is no exception.

From this perspective it is easy to understand why the board of the SHM decided to merge the two collections into one: the history of Shanghai must be a revolutionary one, even if sometimes this interpretation clashes with historical reality. According to one of the curators of the exhibition:

> *It was difficult to include 'Revolution' in the history of Shanghai. The main problem was that the story [of the] development of the city in this period was not much connected with revolutionary war. The city was mostly under the role of the Nationalists, and there was intense fight against*

Communism. The two stories, the story of the city and the story of the Revolutionary war, are difficult to merge together.

SH_S2_07/12/2018, my translation

The words of the curator show how difficult it is to escape a Marxist and Maoist interpretation of history when constructing exhibitions in the PRC. What does the Marxist-Leninist approach of the SHM/SRM bring to the discussion of its decolonial practices? How should we interpret the ECHOES modalities in the Chinese institutional context? To answer these questions, it is useful to briefly discuss how two sociologists of decolonial thinking, Walter Mignolo and Kuan-Hsin Chen, analyzed China's contribution to the critique of Western modernity and its path to decolonization and decolonial thinking.

The work of Walter Mignolo is mostly based on South-American experiences, but he often refers to China as one of the possible alternatives to Western modernity. In *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (2011), Mignolo proposes two dissonant visions about China's criticism of Western colonization: on the one hand, China is a Communist country whose culture and vision of history still has strong connections to Marxist ideology; on the other hand, however, China is a new powerful participant of the capitalist world economy, able to challenge the economic power of the West (Mignolo 2011).

Is China able to create a new discourse which opposes what Mignolo calls the "colonial matrix of power"? Mignolo claims that Marxism is not a form of decoloniality, as it was born as a Euro-centered ideology which has been naturalized in the colonies. Although it calls for decolonization, in fact Marxism is just the application of Western knowledge to the realities of colonies, and therefore decoloniality should confront it as a "an outgrowth of Western civilization" (Ibid.: 51). When discussing China, however, Mignolo presents it as one of the few countries – together with Russia, some Islamic countries, and India – able to dispute the "colonial matrix of power" since, even though it was founded on Marxist ideology, it has now joined the logic of global capitalism and it is able to compete with the West (Ibid.: XIX). Mignolo claims that China is the leading country in the process of 'dewesternization' which is taking place in Asia. According to him, "dewesternization is not an anti-Western move," but "a moving in a different direction, a regaining of the confidence that the West took away from the yellow race after the Opium War," because "those who have been classified as yellow, do not forget that they have been classified, while those who made the classification often forget"(Ibid.: 34, 45). He claims that as a critique of Western modernity, dewesternization does not aim to end, supersede, or replace Western hegemony with East Asian hegemony, but it is "a project of conflicting coexistence between forces that share the economic principle of capitalism" (Ibid.: 46-47). Mignolo finishes his analysis of dewesternization claiming that China has finally regained self-confidence by eradicating the inferiority complex created by the colonial matrix of power, concluding that "dewesternization" equals "deracialization" (Ibid.: 48-49).

In his analysis, however, Mignolo overlooks the fact that the definition of Chinese 'Han' ethnicity is one the key ideas for the construction, solidification, and expansion of the People's Republic of China. Sociologist Kuan-Hsin Chen provides a more detailed analysis of the processes of de-imperialization and decolonization in East Asia, especially in Taiwan and in the PRC. According to Chen, for Chinese intellectuals it is difficult to deal with the problem of decolonization, since on the one side they feel the pressure to express the sense of suffering created by the Western and Japanese colonization of their country, but on the other side, there is an increasing necessity to

reflect on China's history of its own empire (or imperialism) in the Asian region (Chen 2010: 13). He points out that there is a growing sense of anti-Western triumphalism growing in Asia, with China at the center of it. Scholars must be aware of the danger of strong nationalist feelings promoted by the Communist Party, as nationalism inevitably reproduces racial and ethnic discrimination comparable to those created by colonialism (Ibid.: 83). According to Chen, "contrary to the now-fashionable claim that we have entered the postcolonial era, the mood of triumphalism, which is a clear reaction to colonialism, indicated that we still operate within the boundaries of colonial history" (Ibid.: 68).

To summarize, Mignolo sees China as one of the strongest opponents of the "colonial matrix of power," even if it plays according to the logic of capitalist economy that the decolonial project criticizes. Conversely, Chen argues that China (and before it, Taiwan) is not opposing the logic of colonialism, on the contrary, it has made colonialist logic its own to substitute the West as a colonial power, generating new forms of hegemonic pressure in Asia and beyond.

The way in which a country, or a city, decides to represent its past often indicates authorities' perceptions of its present and hopes for its future. Does the exhibition of the SHM/SRM present a criticism of the "colonial matrix of power" as claimed by Mignolo, or does it reproduce the logic of European colonialism as said by Chen? I will try to answer this question through analyzing the exhibition through the lenses of the four ECHOES modalities.

Perpetuating the "Colonial Matrix of Power" in the SHM

Decolonizing colonial heritage, institutions, curricula, and public spaces means to challenge the cultural and epistemic legacies of colonialism in history, aesthetics, and culture. To decolonize one's mind means to give up the language of the colonizers and false universalism (Andersen 2019). Decolonizing museums also means questioning modern temporalities and linear histories which aggrandize the narrative of colonizers, removing the perspective of the colonized. In this section, I will briefly present how, despite its anti-colonial message, the exhibition perpetuates the set of epistemic beliefs that Mignolo defines as the "colonial matrix of power."

The Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideologies, which drive both the writing of history in China and also its popularization in public institutions, guarantee that the vision of the colonized supersedes the one of the colonizers. The SHM/SRM portrays the imperialist expansion of foreign powers in China as aggressive, and colonialism – or semi-colonialism (Pozzi 2019) – as an oppressive system which limited Chinese people's freedom. Nevertheless, when asked about what message the exhibition aimed to communicate to visitors, the answer of the chief curator was:

> I wanted to communicate that colonialism was negative for the city, but at the same time I tried to show that the economic development of the city owes a lot to European business. So, there is a section in the exhibition on European companies and their influence in the history of the city. The exhibition also shows that roads, transportation, and infrastructures were developed in the settlements and this was a positive contribution to the city that must be acknowledged. Colonialism is related to Western invasion, but objectively, it also drives the development of Shanghai city, from many perspectives.
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> SH_S2_07/12/2018, my translation

The permanent exhibition indeed reflects this understanding of Shanghai's colonial experience: it was painful, but useful for the development of the city. For instance, the museum's audio guide introduces the exhibition underlining the suffering of Shanghai's inhabitants under the colonial system:

6000 year ago, primitive villages had already emerged in Shanghai where our ancestors lived and procreated. In 751 AD the first county of Wuanding was established in the West of Shanghai. Upon the arrival of the contemporary age, foreign powers began their restless invasion and Shanghai was forced to open up when her development became to be defined by semi-colonialism. Shanghai people suffered unspeakable humiliation and bore a heavy burden with forbearing tolerance.[2]

Despite these harsh words against imperialism and colonialism, the audio guide also claims that:

Still, they [people] participated in the development of industry and commerce in the city. The expansion of the municipal construction and of contemporary civilization drove Shanghai to become the economic, financial, and cultural hub of all China and a famous international metropolis.[3]

By mentioning people's effort to participate in the economic development of Shanghai, this short introduction implicitly glorifies the epistemic legacies of colonialism. Likewise, the organization and layout of the SHM/SRM's permanent exhibition shows that China owes its modernization to the Western imperial expansion. The exhibition is divided into two main sections, called '*Ancient Shanghai*' and '*Modern Shanghai*.' The first section covers the history of Shanghai from its inception "6000 years ago" to the First Opium War (1839-1842). The '*Modern Shanghai*' section opens with the First Opium War and closes with the establishment of the PRC in 1949. In general, the SHM shares the same narrative as the other history museums in China: the First Opium War and the opening of treaty ports like Shanghai started the "one hundred years of humiliation" for China, which terminated in 1949 with the Communist 'Liberation' of the country (Denton 2014: 31). This division between 'Ancient' and 'Modern' history, with the modern era starting with the foreign occupation of the country, confirms that the SHM is far from disputing the concept of Western modernity.

The gallery '*Modern Shanghai*' occupies the third and fourth floors. Its preface states that "the destiny of Shanghai was the epitome of modern China," then it describes Shanghai as "the biggest city and the largest base of investment and plunder for the Powers in China" (original in English).[4] Negatively charged terms such as "plunder" are used throughout the exhibitions when describing the activities of foreign powers in the city. There is no ambivalence in the description of the exploitative aims of colonial forces, nevertheless, there is a tension between the openly negative descriptions of the actions of foreign powers and the fact that the city achieved modernity during the colonial era.

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[2] English version of the audio guide of the SHM, '001: Introduction to the Shanghai History Museum.'
[3] Ibid.
[4] See Pozzi (2019) for a detailed outline of the history of modern Shanghai.

The picture/wall which follows this gloomy introduction is another example of the fact that the pair colonialism/modernity is not attacked in the exhibition. After reading the introduction, visitors must walk in a corridor towards the entrance to the exhibition hall. The wall on the right is covered with panels forming a black and white view of the Bund before the constructions of the colonial landmarks which distinguish it as one of the most iconic cities in the world (see Figure 1), but if the visitor turns around, they will notice that from a different perspective the panels form a more recent and colorful view of the Bund presenting all the famous buildings which functioned as the headquarters of foreign companies, banks, and institutions during the colonial era (Taylor 2002) (see Figure 2). The pictures, evidently chosen to demonstrate the transformation and beauty of the city, are unwittingly a celebratory monument to the achievements of the colonial powers in Shanghai.

Figures 1 & 2: Two faces of the Bund at the entrance of the '*Modern Shanghai*' Gallery on the third floor of the SHM. Photos by Laura Pozzi, November 2018.

Another example of how the exhibition tends to support the stereotypical vision of China as a feudal and underdeveloped country before the arrival of foreign forces is the animation of the satirical cartoon "Map of the Current Political Situation" (*shijutu*, 时局图) (see Figure 3). This map, a representation of foreign powers assaulting China, was originally published in 1898 during the First Sino-Japanese War in the paper of the Furen Literary Society (*Furen wenshe*, 辅仁文社), a patriotic association based in Hong Kong with the aim to organize a revolution against the Qing Dynasty and establish a Republic in China (Gan 2008: 39-40). The original map shows Japan (the sun), Germany (a sausage), Russia (a bear), France (a frog), England (a bulldog) and America (an eagle) attacking China from different directions. The video in the museum, however, is based on a later version published in Shanghai in 1903 (Gan 2008: 39-40). The two versions differ substantially: the earlier cartoon showed only foreign imperialist ambitions, while the later one also added the images of lazy Qing officials too busy dining, resting, and making money to care for the future of the country. The decision to select the latter version fits the narrative proposed by the exhibition, in which the Qing dynasty is consistently portrayed as too weak, corrupt, and underdeveloped to fight against foreign invaders. The underlying idea is that the imperial system, and in particular an imperial system headed by the Manchus, could not compete with nation states and constitutional monarchies. The weakness of the imperial system and its technological backwardness are often cited in Chinese historiography, and by default in the SHM, as the main causes of China becoming prey for colonial powers. The idleness of the Qing is cited as the main cause of China's fall under

colonialism, justifying the importance of a series of revolutions which would eventually bring about the establishment of the PRC.

As pointed out by Kuan-Hsin Chen, Marxism-Leninism is an ideology still connected with colonial ideas of modernity: colonial powers must be defeated, but also emulated (Chen 2011: 68). Similarly, social-Darwinism is still very much represented in the exhibition: in a world in which different nations and races compete for supremacy, it is important to learn from your enemy to survive. The dichotomy in the development of Chinese culture and business, presented as traditional, and western technology, described as modern, perpetuates the idea that China had to "learn from the West," and it absorbed not only technology and knowledge, but also colonial aspirations.

While the exhibition is still very much influenced by the "colonial matrix of power," the management of colonial heritage in the museum is not mono-directional. On the contrary, the way in which different objects are framed and presented in the exhibition highlight how contrasting visions of Shanghai's and the country's colonial history coexist in Chinese institutions.
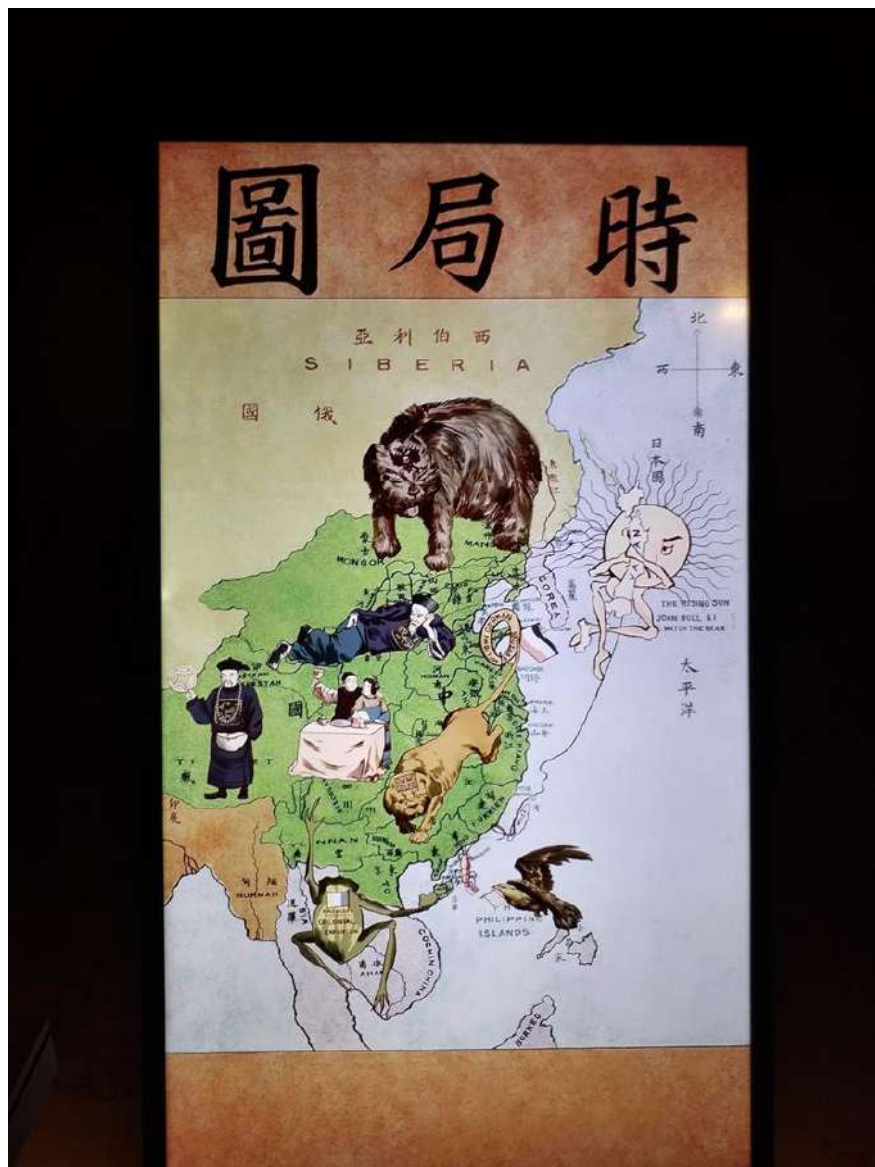

Figure 3: Animation video of the 1903 "Map of the Current Political Situation." Photo by Laura Pozzi, May 2019.

Reframing: the Shanghai Race Club

If colonialism is the cause of "one hundred years of humiliation," how does the museum explain the decision to protect objects and buildings that document the city's colonial past? I will provide an example of how the SHM supports the protection of colonial architecture by reframing the history of the building that hosts its permanent exhibition: the Shanghai Race Club (*Shanghai paoma zonghui dalou*, 上海跑马总会大楼).

In his book about narratives and ideology in Chinese museums, Kirk Denton points out that "the symbolic power of a museum's exhibits derives as much from its building and its location in the urban landscape as from anything inherent in the exhibit's content or style" (Denton 2014: 15). This is particularly true for the SHM, whose buildings once hosted the Shanghai Race Club, one of the most elitist and colonial institutions in the city. How is the decision to open the SHM/ SRM in this colonial building justified by the museum?

The Shanghai Race Club was established in 1845. It supported the construction of three different racecourses in different locations in the city, the newest of which was opened in 1862 in today's Nanjing West Road (Xue 2014: 96-111). The neoclassical building of the Race Club House, designed by the British firm Moorhead & Halse, was erected in 1934 (see Figure 4) (SHM/SRM 2018, 29).
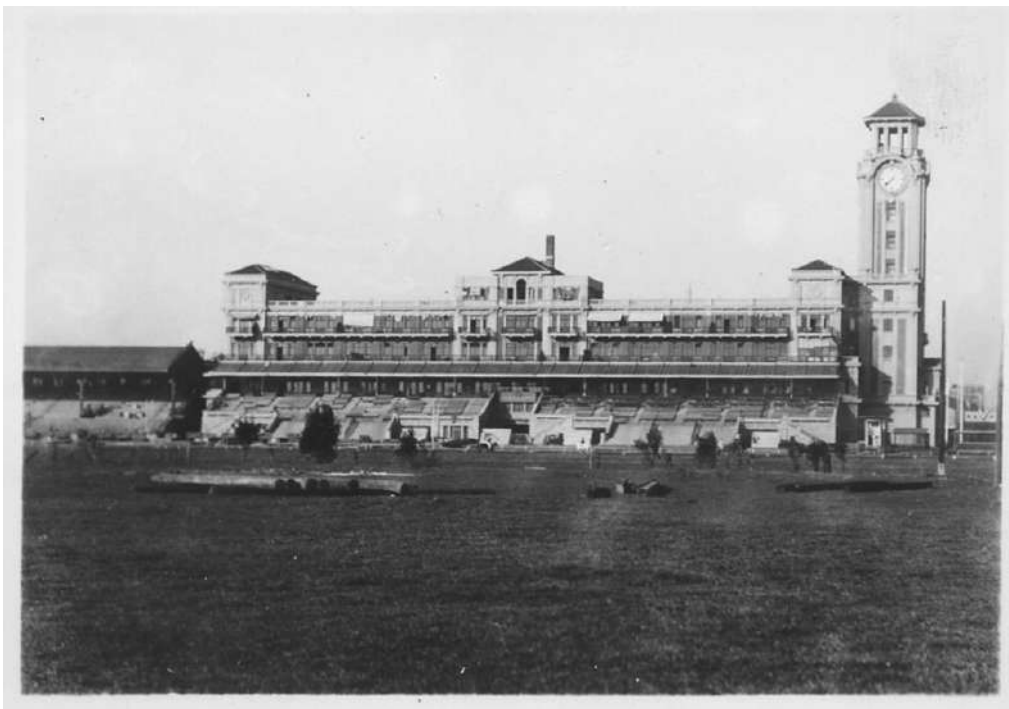

Figure 4: A picture of the Race Club in the 1930s. Source: Virtual Shanghai
https://www.virtualshanghai.net/Data/Buildings?ID=790

The racecourses were places of leisure, where foreigners gathered to watch the races, but also to exercise and enjoy cultural events. In 1870, however, gambling became the most remunerative activity of the racecourse (Xiong 2011: 479). In 1909, the Shanghai Race Club allowed Chinese to purchase admission tickets and to watch the races, while in 1911 it allowed some wealthy Chinese to be honorary members or invited members of the Club. The admissions for foreigners or Chinese to the Club were, however, never equal (Xiong 2011). In 1941, when Shanghai was under

the control of the collaborationist government of Wang Jingwei 汪精卫 (1883-1944), the Japanese transformed the premises of the Shanghai Race Club into a military garrison. At the end of the War of Resistance against Japan (1936-1945), the building was first used by American military forces, and then given to British authorities (Chen 2011: 119). In 1946, the leader of the Nationalist Party and leader of the Republic of China Chiang Kai-Shek 蒋介石 (1887-1975) celebrated the return of the city to the Nationalists on the premises of the racecourse, an event that, according to the Generalissimo, testified foreign powers' respect and trust to his government (Xiong 2011: 485-486).

While the racecourse and the building of the Race Club changed hands several times and stopped being a secluded foreigners-only spaces before the establishment of the People's Republic, after 1949 the propaganda machine of the CCP succeeded in popularizing the description of this space as a symbol of foreign imperialism (Braester 2015). In 1950, the first Communist mayor of Shanghai, Marshal Chen Yi 陈毅 (1901-1972) approved a plan to transform the large racecourse into a park for the people of Shanghai – now known as People's Park (*Renmin gongyuan*, 人民公园) – while in 1951 the building of the Race Club accommodated the Shanghai Museum and the Shanghai Library (Chen 2011: 119). In 1989, the building became a cultural protected relic. The Shanghai Art Museum occupied the premises between 2000-2012, and finally in 2015 the building was assigned to the SHM/SRM.

How is the building of the Race Club presented to the public nowadays and how is it used to describe the history of the city? I will argue that museum curators reframed the history of the building to celebrate the end of colonialism, but that in doing so they also engaged in removal to eliminate those elements that do not fit the vision of history approved by the CCP. Repression also plays a role in the management of the building.

The Shanghai Race Club, a Cultural Heritage Protection Unit and a Shanghai Outstanding Historical Building (SHM/SRM 2018: 29), is located in one of the most prestigious areas of the city. When asked why this building was chosen for the SHM, the vice-director answered that a heritage preservation site and a cultural landmark such as the Shanghai Race Club looked very suitable for a history museum (SH_S1_04/12/2018). On the contrary, the main curators of the exhibition argued that while the building is certainly beautiful and its prestigious location in the heart of the city enviable, the Shanghai Race Club was not the best choice for the SHM, as naturally it was not constructed to host exhibitions. According to the designer, curators encountered several technical issues when designing the galleries because the rooms of the building are too small and its ceilings too low (SH_S2_07/12/2018).

Both interviewees cite the architectural and historical value of the building to explain the choice of the Shanghai Race Club as the site of the museum, but this choice was not always considered obvious. In 2011, the Urban Footprint Pavilion (*chengshi zuji guan,* 城市足迹馆), constructed for the 2010 Shanghai Expo, was also proposed as a possible location for the SHM, but this option was discarded in favor of the Shanghai Race Club (SHM 2011).

The museum's audio guide provides a more political explanation to the choice of this building. According to it:

Built in 1933, this building [the Race Club] became a Cultural Protected Relic in 1989. It is one of the best examples of neoclassical style of architecture. After the Liberation, it was transformed

from an entertainment venue for few people, to a cultural landmark. It was reopened to the public in 2017.[5]

During their tours, the volunteers of the museum – who according to one of the members of the education department are trained to give a coherent narrative of the museum and vision of the exhibition – also emphasize the history of the building after 1949 (SH_S3_28/05/2019). During the two guided tours I followed in November 2018 and May 2019, some visitors said that they had visited the building when it was still the Shanghai Fine Art Museum.[6] The information of the audio guide and the volunteers fulfilled two aims: firstly, by highlighting that the Shanghai Race Club is preserved as one of the most iconic examples of the neoclassical style, they indirectly praise the authorities for taking care of the city's unique heritage; secondly, by consistently underlining that after 1949 the building became a public space, they show the moral superiority of the Communist government in comparison to previous ones.

The introductions by guides and the audio guide reframe the Shanghai Race Club into a site of resistance against foreign imperialism and a symbol of the Communist Party's fight against colonialism and its classist and racist discourses. The same rhetoric is also used to reframe some of the objects related to the Shanghai Race Club exhibited in the museum. For instance, 'A Champagne Ticket' to the races is exhibited in a cabinet of the fourth floor entitled 'The Dark Side' (in Chinese '*Doushi liubi,* 都市流弊' a more literal translation would be: 'The metropolis' long-lasting mismanagement') (see Figure 5). The cabinet displays this ticket together with other objects – opium pipes, pictures of prostitutes, biographies of famous gangsters, and tickets related to other forms of gambling beside horse racing – as proof of the degradation of Chinese society under colonialism (Wakeman 1996).

Figure 5: 'A Champagne' first class ticket to the Shanghai Race Club, in the section 'The Dark Side'. Photo by Laura Pozzi, May 2019.

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[5] English version of the audio guide of the SHM, '001: Introduction to the Shanghai History Museum.'
[6] I took the guided tour of floors 3 and 4 of the '*Modern Shanghai'* gallery both in November 2018 and May 2019. On both occasions the volunteers presented the history of the Shanghai Race Club to the public employing a similar rhetoric.

In this perspective the Shanghai Urban History and Development Exhibition Hall in the Pearl Tower is even more vocal in denouncing foreigners' attempt to cheat local Chinese with gambling businesses. A video in the museum claims that the Shanghai Race Club worked like a casino, in which the only winners were the foreign owners and shareholders, while the Chinese were only losing their money in a useless attempt to become rich.[7]

Through its introductory notes and items, the exhibition reframes the building as a previous site of social and racial division, and as the center of gambling aimed at extorting money from the locals for the profit of the colonial powers, whose sins have been exorcised by Communist Mayor Chen Yi, who by transforming the Shanghai Club House into a place for culture and the area around it as a public space returned the building and the racecourse to the people.

The reframing of this colonial building is extreme, since it is transformed from a symbol of the evils of colonialism, imperialism, and racism into a place for the acculturation and education of the common people. In this sense, it is possible to speak of the **redemption** of this building, uplifted to the point of finding a place in the glorious history of the Chinese Communist Party.[8]

This developmental view of the history of the Race Club perfectly fits the CCP's vision of the history of Shanghai, transforming from a sinful capitalist city into a revolutionary industrial center; nevertheless, to create this spotless tale several essential details have been removed from the SHM's presentation of its own building. The removal, in this case, is not about the physical elimination of the building, statues, or objects, but of historical information about the city and the Shanghai Race Club. The SHM never refers to the history of the building during the war years and it does not acknowledge the fact that the area occupied by the racecourse was returned to the city government way before 1949. In a long article, Jennifer Chang described in detail the public discussion which took place in the late 1940s about the best way to manage the area and its infrastructures (Chang 2005). Several proposals were mentioned, among which the idea to create a public park, a museum, or to build houses for city dwellers. The projects were stopped by issues with ownership of the land and money, since the post-war years were plagued by inflation and hyper-inflation. To re-establish the races was also considered as a possible solution to the economic issues of the city, as taxes over gambling and charity donations could help the city government to ease the severe money shortage. Certainly, the idea to create a park and a museum on the land of the racecourse was not new (Chang 2005). All the information about the discussions and management by the Nationalist Government before the Communist takeover in 1949 are removed from the exhibition, what remains is the certainty that it was the CCP who transformed the colonial institution into a center of culture.

Finally, while reframing and removal are the main management modalities for the building of the museum, the exhibition sometimes tends to repress the colonial history of the Shanghai Race Club by emphasizing the beauty and luxury of the building and forgetting its original functions. For instance, on the fifth floor of the SHM, visitors can use a touch-screen to visualize the old pictures of the building and to read information about the conservation works of the structure and its bronze bell (see Figure 6). In here, the Shanghai Race Club is presented as a unique edifice, one of the most luxurious in East-Asia and a representative of the neoclassical style of architecture. There is no mention of how the club could afford the expensive materials used to

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[7] Based on the author's visit at the Shanghai Urban History and Development Exhibition Hall in the Pearl Tower (Pudong) on June 2019.

[8] I am grateful to my colleague Csilla E. Ariese for her suggestion to add the idea of redemption in this section.

build it, instead the presentation emphasizes the luxury offered by the infrastructure and the quality of the material over the function of the building.

Similarly, the restaurant 'Roof 325' placed on the rooftop of the museum, employs the elitist history of the building as a marketing device. Despite the fact that the Shanghai Race Club was opened to the foreign elites and only very late to some selected Chinese, the restaurant publicizes its location as a sign of prestige, inviting the clients to feel part of the elitist history of this institution. The classist and racist connotation of the colonial experience are **repressed** to give space to the consumption of a fictional colonial past.[9]

In conclusion, while reframing is the main modality employed to manage the heritage building of the SHM, removal and repression also play a role in the presentation of the building to the public (see Table 1).

Figure 6: Slide from the digital presentation of pictures and conservation work of the building at the fifth floor of the museum. Photo by Laura Pozzi.

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[9] The websites of Roof 375: http://www.roof325.com/en/1933-shanghai-race-club-clubhouse, http://www.roof325.com/zh-hans/1862-shanghai-horse-race-track

The Shanghai Race-Course Club	**Reframing.** The building, once a site of sin (betting) and a symbol of class and racial divisions, is now a cultural institution open to the 'people' and therefore a symbol of the Liberation of the city. Since the 1950s, this building hosted the Shanghai Library, the Shanghai Museum, The Shanghai Modern Art Museum, and now the SHM /SRM
	Removal. Information about the history of the building which is not considered relevant to the history of the CCP (names of the managers, of people who frequented the place, and events between the years in which colonialism ended in China and 1939) are removed.
	Repression. Presentation of the building as a place of leisure where people can experience the luxury of the Shanghai Race Club as in the old times. The classist and racist connotation of the colonial experience are repressed to give space to the consumption of a fictional colonial past.

Table 1: Heritage practices of the Shanghai Race Club (the site of the SHM).

Repression: Emphasizing the Glorious Past of the City

The employment of the past to serve the present is a well-known propaganda technique which has been used in the PRC from its inception up to the present days. But how do authorities decide which traces of the past are worth preserving and which are not? The architectural and artistic value of the Race Club and several other buildings in the city might appear to our eyes as sufficient reason to explain its survival through history and its status as a heritage site; however, colonial heritage was not always considered worthwhile and it was attacked in the past as useless and harmful. The SHM seems to take for granted that objects from the colonial past should be preserved for their aesthetic value or as evidence of imperialist violence, but not only were some of the objects in the exhibition almost destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, also their controversial history has been repressed to give space to the glorification of the city's emergence as an international financial and commercial hub.

One of the most evident examples of repression of the ties that connect cultural relics to the city's colonial past are Steven and Stitt, the two bronze lions once placed at the entrance of the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) headquarters on the Bund, in the International Concession. Steven and Stitt now welcome visitors in the entrance hall of the SHM, and they are among the most popular attractions in the museum (see Figure 7).[10]

The story of the two lions is linked with the colonial past of the city and its development into a financial hub for foreign and Chinese banks in the twentieth century. In the journal *Cultural Heritage of Cities* edited by the Shanghai History Museum, Liu Hua reconstructs the history of the bronze statutes (Liu 2016: 55-62). According to Liu, it was the general manager of the bank Alexander Stephen (1862-1924) to commission the two bronze lions to be placed at the entrance of the new HSBC headquarters in Shanghai. He found inspiration while in Venice, where he noticed

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[10] Most of the visitors stop to take pictures with the lions when they enter the museum, and at least one visitor told me the lions were his favourite objects in the exhibition. This will be expanded on in report #3, forthcoming in early 2020.

the beautiful lions standing in front of the city's Arsenal (Ibid.: 55). The designer of the sculptures of the HSBC lions was sculptor Henry Poole (1873-1928) from the Royal Academy School in London (Ibid.: 56). When the HSBC's new Shanghai building, called by some newspapers "the most beautiful building from the far east to the Bering strait," was completed, the two custom-made sculptures from England were positioned at the main door (Ibid.: 55-57). They were named Stephen and Stitt, after the managers of the two headquarters of the bank in Hong Kong and in Shanghai.

Figure 7: Steven and Stitt, once placed at the entrance of the HSBC Headquarters on the Bund, are now welcoming visitors in the entrance hall of the SHM/SRM. Photo by Laura Pozzi, November 2018.

The two statues attracted the attention of the locals. In August 1936, the journal *Yazhou Zazhi* 亚洲杂志 claimed that: "The Chinese masses do not feel attached to the bank's massive building, but they are very interested in the two bronze lions at its entrance. In the last ten years the paws of the king of the animals have been touched innumerable times since people believe that it would bring them power and wealth" (Ibid.: 57). Since the statues in Shanghai proved so popular it was decided to have copies of the lions made in London for the HSBC headquarters in Hong Kong. The new couple appeared in front of the HSBC Hong Kong building on 10 October 1935 (Ibid.: 59).

During the War of Resistance against Japan, the lions in Hong Kong and Shanghai became the target of Japanese troops, who planned to smelt them down. The Hongkongese lions were even brought to Yokohama, where they stayed in the port for several years until their return to Hong Kong on 18 October 1948. To celebrate their return home, the newspaper *Nanhua Zaobao* 南华早报 published letters from readers declaring the lions as 'mythological animals' and 'protectors of the city' (Ibid.: 59). The lions in Shanghai were also targeted by the Japanese, but while several other statues in the cities were actually destroyed by the army, they were spared and remained to guard the entrance of the building on the Bund (Ibid.: 60).

The article published in the journal of the Shanghai History Museum concludes by mentioning that the HSBC lions disappeared from public sight in 1966 and that those that tourists can see on the Bund today are just reproductions of the originals (Ibid.: 62). The article represses information about the statues which is considered problematic, such as their ordeals during the Cultural Revolution. Despite the fact that a poem published in *Wenhui Daily* in the 1950s reframed the HBCS lions as they "witnessed imperialism, but now belong to the people," in 1966 during the 'Attack on the Four Olds' campaign, the Red Guards decided to destroy the statues as symbols of imperialist and capitalist forces (Ho 2018: 229). Workers of the Shanghai Museum managed to save the lions

from the iconoclasm of the young rebels by storing them in the warehouses of the museum. They later became part of the collection of the Shanghai History Museum, were exhibited in the exhibition of Shanghai Modern History in Hongqiao, and later in the Shanghai Urban History and Development Exhibition Hall in the Pearl Tower (Pozzi 2019).[11]

As the article published in its journal, the audio guide of the SHM not only represses the imperialist meaning of the lions, but also the historical information about the Red Guards' attempt to destroy them:

Grand and robust lions are presented here. June 23rd in 1923 at the inauguration ceremony of the HSBC building and the Bund they were stationed at the entrance, perfectly integrating with the classical style of the building. They were modelled on male lions. When the castings were completed, the molds were destroyed making the lions the only original pair in the world. The pair of lions of the HSBC building in Hong Kong were made with the pair in Shanghai as prototype. In 1941, Japanese troops seized the foreign concession. In order to eradicate the colonialist traces of England and America, and also to supply metallic material to the military, they destroyed the statue of the Goddess of Liberty on the Bund, but they spared the Lions. In 1966 the lions were delivered to the warehouse of the museum, in 1994 the lions were first exhibited in the Shanghai History Museum. The lions witnessed not only the prosperity of Shanghai as the financial center of the Far East, but also the historical vicissitudes of the city.[12]

As the audio-guide, the volunteers who guide visitors through the exhibition emphasize that the Shanghai HSBC lions were created before the Hong Kong's ones, and that they are unique art works of immeasurable value.[13]

The case of the repression and reframing of the history of the HBCS lions exemplifies the above-mentioned tension of the narrative of the exhibition, which is the attempt to criticize colonialism while at the same time eulogizing the economic, cultural, and technical development of Shanghai from the second half of the 19th century. Despite being the symbols of a British bank, a colonial institution, curators decided to repress the darker side of their story, promoting them instead as symbols of prosperity and development of the city. The colonial nature of HSBC is mentioned only to accuse the Japanese of iconoclasm against the beloved statues. Since they are reframed as survivors of the attacks of Japan, which is now described in historiography and propaganda as China's worst enemy (Gries 2014), visitors may never question the importance of preserving the lions as cultural heritage. At the same time, the exhibition represses memories of the Red Guards' iconoclastic attack against the statues, privileging the 1950s view in which the lions are described as witnesses of the historical vicissitudes of the city.

The reframing of the HSBC lions as symbols of the prosperity of Shanghai instead of its colonization, should be understood as an attempt from the side of the SHM to promote the city's role as the financial capital of the country. Whereas during the Cultural Revolution, when the Red Guards attacked the lions, capitalism and all the related practices were criticized and abolished, in the 1990s the Chinese Communist Party relaxed its regulations on investments and finances. As pointed out by Denton Kirk, Chinese museums have to adjust to the political changes (Denton 2014:

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[11] Now, copies of the HSBC lions replace the original ones in the Shanghai Urban History and Development Exhibition Hall in the Pearl Tower.

[12] English version of the audio guide of the SHM, '002: The HSBC Lions.'

[13] Guided tour on 14 May 2019.

4) and – despite remaining Marxist in their representation of history – capitalism, financial gain, and contact with the West stopped being taboo subjects in exhibitions around the country. Some Chinese banks, such as China's Merchant Bank (*Zhaoshang yinhang,* 招商银行) even copied the HSBC's idea to place lions at the entrance of their buildings (see Figure 8). Therefore, repression of the history of the HSBC lions is one of the ways in which the SHM justifies the economic system imported and developed by the colonial powers in China.

Figure 8: Following the example of HSBC, stone lions became a standard presence in front of banks around China. This is the entrance of the China's Merchant Bank headquarters in Shanghai. Photo by Laura Pozzi, May 2019.
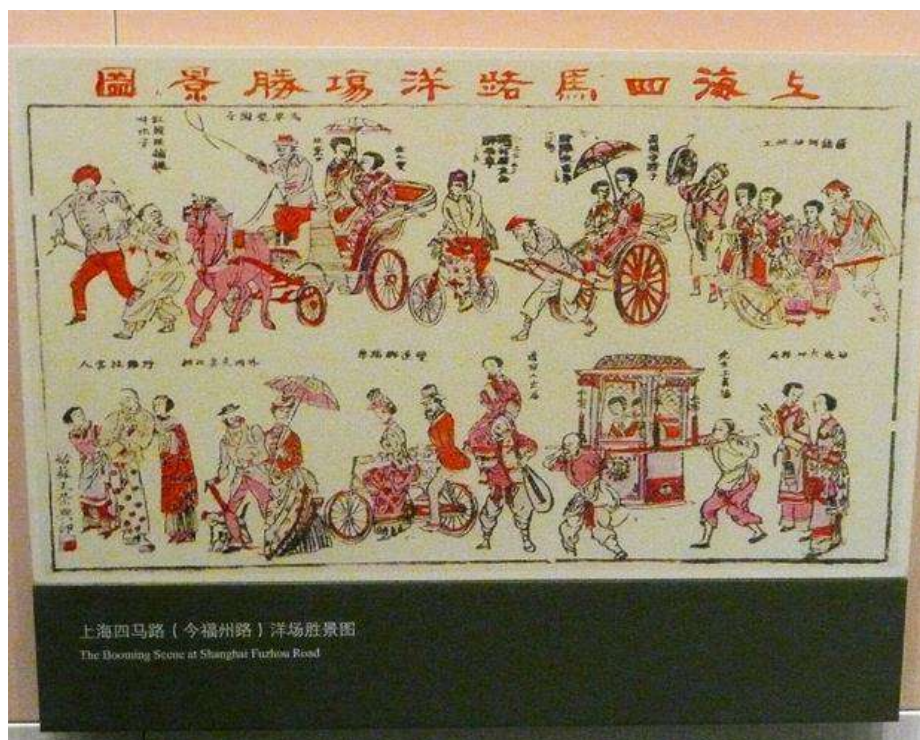
Figure 9: *The Booming scene at Shanghai Fuzhou Road*. Old print to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Date unknown. Photo by Laura Pozzi, November 2018.

The woodcut painting of the 'Booming Scene at Shanghai Sima Road' (*Sima lu yangchangsheng jingtu*, 四马路洋场胜景图) is another example of how the exhibition represses some of the darker sides of colonial history highlighting instead the development of the city under foreign control.

Colorful woodcut prints were traditionally produced in China to celebrate the beginning of the new lunar year. The subject of these prints changed over time according to the taste of the population. Traditional motives, such as chubby children, deities, and auspicious animals always remained in fashion, but at the break of the century woodcut prints adjusted to the new needs and tastes of urban society (Laing 2004: 43-60). SHM visitors can see the wooden matrix of *Booming Scene at Shanghai Sima Road*, one of the many woodcut prints made in the late 19th century. This print shows people moving frantically on the street: there is a palanquin, a bicycle, a cart, a rickshaw, and even a tandem. Most of the people in the image are Chinese, but there are also Westerners, and even a Sikh soldier holding a Chinese tramp by his braid (see Figure 9).

The print is placed in a display cabinet dedicated to the development of transportation and roads in Shanghai in the late-19th and early-20th century, side-by-side with pictures of the construction of Garden Bridge and Nanjing Road, original train tickets, rickshaws licenses and several objects related to the construction, working, and maintenance of tramways in the city. The audio guide also introduces this print as an historical source illustrating the availability of a great variety of transportation means in Shanghai:

> *The woodcut painting of the Booming Scene at Shanghai Sima Road depicts different vehicles used by people in the late 19th century. Sedan chairs, rickshaw, monocycles, etc. Bicycles (the tandem) were often used by foreigners at that time. This was a traditional new year painting from Shanghai area.*[14]

While this woodcut does provide the contemporary public with information about traffic and transportation in the city, to those more familiar with the history of the city and with Chinese popular culture it is apparent that the artist who created *The Booming Scene at Shanghai Sima Road* did not aim to showcase vehicles, but the women who used them. Sima Road was once of the most active streets in the city and inhabited by newcomers from Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces. It was a road filled with shops and businesses frequented by both foreigners and Chinese, which became popular for the large number of opium and gambling dens, as well as hundreds of brothels (Ying 1991: 93). Most of the women portrayed in this print are prostitutes, whose number in the city boomed after the Opium War. The prostitutes were both Western and Chinese (Wakeman 1995: 109-115). Women coming from the nearby provinces looking for work in Shanghai became prostitutes or were kidnapped to work in brothels. Immigration from farther regions also caused a surge in the number of prostitutes from distant locations in the country (Ibid.: 113). Prostitutes from different provinces specialized, providing their services to different groups of clients in the city according to their social class, financial status, ethnicity, and country/province of origin (Goodman 1995: 23-24).

The Booming Scene at Shanghai Sima Road, therefore, is an ironical description of the booming business of prostitution in the city, where girls are transported around as products to fulfil the needs of different clients. The vignettes that compose the scene are accompanied by

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[14] English version of the audio guide of the SHM, '323: Woodcarving of Fuzhou Road.'

short sentences such as "Sister Ah has knocked off work in the silk factory for today," or "The helper has been called to come out" (my translation) that reveal how these girls, who were supposed to work in manufacturing, ended up doing another kind of work. The somehow inappropriate topic of the print was its strength, as buyers were always looking for salacious images of beautiful women.

The lascivious and ironic meaning of this image has been acknowledged by scholars and institutions. An album published by the Shanghai Culture Bureau based on the collection of the SHM admits that *The Booming Scene at Shanghai Sima Road* depicts prostitutes, but it downplays the voyeuristic qualities of the images, explaining how colonialism fostered capitalism, causing immigrations and the consequent exploitation of the masses, especially of women, who were the easiest prey of the new society of Shanghai (Ying 1991: 93). For instance, the Shanghai Urban History and Development Exhibition Hall in the Pearl Tower frames this woodcut (a copy) not as proof of the developed system of transportation in Shanghai, but in a gallery entitled '*Bustling Scene of Old Shanghai, Paradise of Foreign Adventures*' entirely dedicated to the economic, commercial, and cultural boom in the city. In it, visitors can observe the woodcut in detail through a machine (see Figure 10). Once observed one by one, the lascivious and playful meaning of each little vignette, matched with the recreated soundscape of the street, becomes much more obvious to the viewer.

Figure 10: A copy of the woodcut is exhibited at the Shanghai Urban History and Development Exhibition Hall the Pearl Tower in the gallery about economic development. Visitors can see the details of the image by looking into the machine. Photo by Laura Pozzi, May 2019.

The curators of the contemporary exhibition of the SHM are aware of the real meaning of this woodcut. A young curator of the SHM explained the content of the scene in detail to me (SH_S4_28/05/2019). However, the curator also told me that it was deemed more appropriate to employ this specific image to show vehicles and transportation, instead of illustrating the social problems which pestered the city. The museum did not have so many objects about the construction of roads and the development of transportation in Shanghai, so this item was selected to enrich the display about transportation (SH_S4_28/05/2019).[15] But there might have been other reasons for this choice, for instance, representing prostitution as one of the traits of a booming economy might have been considered inappropriate. Certainly, by hiding the real meaning of the image, curators have repressed the historical information that colonialism caused a boom in prostitution and that Chinese artists seemed to have found this more amusing than problematic.

The HSBC lions and *The Booming Scene at Shanghai Sima Road* are just two examples of how the SHM manages heritage by repressing the memory of the darker side of colonialism, emphasizing instead the positive effects that foreign presence over the city, such as the transformation of Shanghai in a financial hub and the development of a modern system of transportation. Repression is therefore present even in exhibitions which at first can be easily defined as anti-colonial.

Removal & Re-emergence: Multicultural Shanghai

Since I was not allowed to access the entire collection of the museum, it is difficult to assess removal of physical objects from the exhibition of the SHM, while re-emergence is hardly seen in institutional settings such as Chinese museums, which are very attentive in representing a standard history of the city/nation without trying to complicate the narrative approved by political authorities. In light of this information, it is important to rethink the meaning of removal and re-emergence to make them useful tools to analyze Chinese museums' management of colonial heritage.

In the SHM, the removal of objects, persons, and stories is employed to eliminate those elements or information which do not fit the CCP's vision of history. This does not mean that the colonial past of the city is fully removed, but that the elements which are not considered appropriate are side-lined. Sometimes, however, the extent of the removal of historical events or persons from public discourse is difficult to assess, because the version of history provided by Chinese museums/schools/public spaces is so consistent that no space is given to the emergence of dissonant elements. In this sense, removal as a modality is useful in analyzing Chinese museums if we use it to ask: What is missing in this narrative? Who does not find space in this exhibition? Who or what has been removed and for which reasons? When asking what is missing, and therefore what has been removed, it becomes possible to rethink how some of the objects and displays in the exhibitions do provide windows for the re-emergence of colonial ghosts which are not discussed, acknowledged, or decoded by the institutional vision of history of the museum. This means that, though antithetical heritage practices, some forms of removal can give space to forms

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[15] Prostitution as a problem is mentioned in the exhibition in the display '*The Dark Side*' (*Doushi liubi,* 都市流弊) where pictures of famous courtesans are exhibited.

of re-emergence (Kølvraa 2019). In the SHM, however, re-emergence is rarely the result of a genuine attempt to propose a more complex version of history; on the contrary, cases of re-emergence are often incidental, a glitch in the well-oiled machine of PRC's history making.

I will analyze two examples of removal and re-emergence: the representation of people's daily life and minorities in Shanghai, and the case of the '*Roll of Honour*,' a bronze plaque which celebrates English soldiers, members of the Shanghai Race Club, who fought and died during the First World War.

One of the examples of how removal can give space to re-emergence is the absence of representations of daily life in colonial Shanghai. The issue of how people are represented in the exhibition was brought to my attention by a visitor, a local, who spontaneously approached me to ask me what I thought of the museum and to complain about the fact that the exhibition fails to represent the life and work of those who built the city with their hands.[16] While in its introduction the exhibition mentions that "Shanghai people suffered unspeakable humiliation and bore a heavy burden with forbearing tolerance, still, they participated in the development of industry and commerce in the city," the daily life of ordinary/working class people, both colonizers and colonized, disappears in the narrative. The exhibition is divided into themes such as economy, infrastructure, education, culture, *etc.* and while an array of famous personalities is introduced, the lives of commoners are never really explored.

This approach is partially due to the high number of memorabilia inherited from the collection of the Shanghai Revolution Museum. Half of the third floor of the museum and part of the fourth floor are dedicated to the revolutionary history of the city, and the number of personal belongings of famous revolutionaries and communist party members (Chen Duxiu, Mao Zedong, *etc.*) is quite overwhelming, at the point of leaving almost no space for those of common people. The exhibition displays some objects of daily use (work tools, clothes, furniture, household appliances) but it does not attempt to recreate a more vivid image of life in the city. In this respect, the SHM differs from its predecessors and from the Shanghai Urban History and Development Exhibition Hall, which through the reconstruction of shops and houses as well as through multimedia installations such as '*Life in a City Alley*' attempted to recreate the atmosphere and living conditions of ordinary people in Shanghai (Duan 2009).

Yet, although some objects might still offer a glimpse of regular life, what curators removed, or at least did their best to hide, from the exhibition is the cosmopolitanism of Shanghai in the form of the ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity of its inhabitants. Not only the everyday life of foreigners is dismissed in the exhibition, but somehow also the vibrant life of the Chinese community is partially lost. Certainly, the cultural differences between different groups of sojourners is greatly restrained. People coming from different provinces of China had their own associations, buildings, temples, and even professional specializations which defined their identities and lives in the city. These people brought with them their dialects, foods, music, and religious practices (Goodman 1995). The exhibition downplays, or even deletes, the importance of provincial identity, while it highlights nationalistic feelings, a tendency very evident in the section dedicated to the Japanese invasion of the city. For instance, the exhibition removes the grey areas that do not fit the Han-centered history of China, such as the fact that Shanghai's population was composed of immigrants (known as "sojourners") for whom provincial associations were much

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[16] Informal conversation with a visitor who did not know I was a researcher, on the fourth floor of the SHM, November 2018.

more significant than their 'Chinese' identity and that many Chinese massively profited from the special status of the city (Goodman 1995). Furthermore, the exhibition removes all the possible documents or objects which might confute the idea that the Chinese, or rather the 'Han Chinese,' were united in the fight against imperialist forces, namely European, American, and Japanese.

Objects or descriptions of foreigners are also seldom addressed. Documents signed by foreign diplomats and merchants are exhibited, but there are barely any mentions of their daily lives. While the decision to remove information about foreign oppressors can be seen as an attempt to avoid glorification of their actions, the exhibition also disregards the lives of thousands of Sikhs, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Russians *etc.* who lived in the city. The existence of love affairs between foreigners and Chinese – such as the relationship between American writer Emily Hahn (1905-1997) and poet Shao Xunmei (1906-1968) – and mixed marriages are bypassed by the exhibition (Hahn 1988). Another taboo subject is the presence of biracial children for whom special schools were built (Hawks Pott 2009: 120).

Despite being reframed to fit a different narrative, some objects allow glimpses into the variegated humanity of Shanghai: in the plate *The Booming Scene at Shanghai Sima Road* (Figure 9), as well as in other pictures in the exhibition, the presence of Sikh soldiers, Westerners, and Chinese of different social classes re-emerge to reveal a more variegated social, cultural, and ethnic reality than the one promoted by the narrative of the museum. This re-emergence, however, is unintended, since curators did not mean to make it visible. Only visitors willing to ask: 'What is missing? What has been removed?' could find a second layer in these items besides the information provided in the captions offered by the museum.

An exception to the removal of the life of foreigners in the city are the references to the Jewish community, to which curators dedicated the display *All cities denied access for Jews, Shanghai was the only exception* (see Figure 11). When asked why the Jewish community is the only one represented in the exhibition, the head of the education department explained that they differed from other communities living in the city because during the Second World War they could not live in Europe, while the other groups (Russians, Indians, Philippines) could have stayed in their home countries and lived a normal life in there (SH_S3_28/05/2019). I would argue that the decision to include the Jewish community in the exhibition and the words used to describe their life in Shanghai are strongly political, as they emphasize the moral superiority of Shanghai over European cities during WWII.

Despite the fact that the content of this display is historically inaccurate (Jewish immigration to Shanghai began long before the beginning of the Second World War) and the decision to use miniature dioramas (see Figure 12) – an exhibition technique which reduces in scale and importance the complexity of the communities represented (Varutti 2011: 3) – is problematic, the mentioning of the Jewish community is an occasion of re-emergence of the repressed representation of multiculturality of Shanghai.

Figure 11: The display '*All cities denied access for Jews, Shanghai was the only exception.*' Photo by Laura Pozzi, May 2019.

Figure 12: One of the miniature dioramas exhibited in the display about the Jewish Community. These are the only representations of everyday activities in the city in the exhibition. Photo by Laura Pozzi, May 2019.

Another example of removal and consequent re-emergence is the representation of foreign colonizers. As noted above, while colonial institutions and legal frameworks are described and represented in the exhibitions, the names of foreign individuals are seldom mentioned. With a few notable exceptions, the stories, daily lives, and habits of the colonizers are removed from the exhibition, probably to avoid a possible glorification of the imperialist forces which invaded the country. In some instances, however, curators manage to give visitors hints to a more complex vision of the life of colonizers. An interesting case of re-emergence is the bronze plate '*Roll of*

Honour' (see Figure 13). This plate was commissioned by the Shanghai Race Club to honor its members who died fighting during World War I (1914-1918), in which the Republic of China and the British Empire fought as allies. As explained above, the SHM portrays the Shanghai Race Club as one of the symbols of the evils of colonialism in China, nevertheless, the curators decided to keep the *Roll of Honour* in the exhibition, humanizing the colonizers and therefore providing visitors with a more nuanced interpretation of the political relations between China and foreign powers.

A junior curator told me that some members of the museum are researching the origin of this plate (they do not have a full record of its story) and are working in the National Archives in Kew Gardens, London, to learn more about the people inscribed on the plate. The curator did not hesitate to call these soldiers 'heroes' (*yingxiong*, 英雄), whose lives and actions are relevant for the museum staff despite their country of origin or their position in the colonial system (SH_S4_28/05/2019). While certainly not the most popular object in the exhibitions (it has a caption, but is placed in the secondary stairwell of the building), the *Roll of Honour* is an example of how Chinese museums can support the re-emergence of the complexities of colonial history.

Figure 13: '*Roll of Honour*' placed in a stairwell of the SHM. Photo by Laura Pozzi, November 2018.

Conclusions

I started this paper by asking if and how the ECHOES modalities can be applied to the case of the SHM, and what decoloniality means in the Chinese context. In my conclusive remarks I would like to show how the answers to these questions are entangled, as an analysis of the employment of the ECHOES modalities to the Chinese setting provides us with information about the understanding of decoloniality in Chinese institutions.

The ECHOES modalities are useful to examine how the SHM manages the city's colonial heritage – especially reframing and repression, the most used modalities. Nevertheless, when applying the ECHOES modalities to Chinese museums, one should never forget that in the PRC exhibitions are guided by a Marxist-Leninist and Maoist vision of history. This means that while the four modalities remain valid tools for the analysis of the contents of the museum, their meaning should be adjusted to the Chinese institutional context.

In the SHM, colonial heritage is reframed to support the archetypical history of Communist Liberation approved by the authorities, sometimes with the result of redeeming colonial buildings or objects from their colonial pasts. Repression is used to maintain and celebrate the elements of the colonial system that the CCP assimilated into its political agenda (*i.e.* modernity, development, and now capitalism).

The usefulness of removal and re-emergence for analyzing the contents of the SHM are more controversial. As previously explained, these modalities are highly politicized and generally associated with activists' mobilization (Kølvraa 2019). If we think of Marxism or Maoism as ideologies which are antithetical to the "colonial matrix of power," then we could understand the SHM/ SRM's permanent exhibition as an exercise in removal of colonial histories in favor of a story of revolution and fight against imperialism and colonialism. Nevertheless, although the permanent exhibition of the museum is highly politicized, the SHM's management of heritage still naturalizes epistemic legacies of colonialism in its narrations of the history of the city (Mignolo 2011), making re-emergence a difficult modality to apply in the Chinese setting. It is also necessary to remember that Chinese museums, especially those financed at the national level, aim at providing a uniform vision of history in line with the CCP's guidelines. Alternative tours, performances by political groups in museum, spontaneous artistic interventions – all activities connected with re-emergence – are not welcome in museums, which are strictly monitored and often heavily guarded by security. Nevertheless, while curators must reframe items and repress parts of their stories to fit the history of revolution and nationalism promoted by the CCP, once visitors start asking 'what's missing?' some objects and installations included in the exhibition can tell different stories, providing a more multifaceted testimony of history. Furthermore, curators seem to be very well-informed of the history of the objects in the exhibition and they are able to overcome some of the limitations imposed by the institutional setting in which they work to give space to some timid yet important, cases of re-emergence.

To conclude, while the SHM can be described as anti-colonial museum, decolonial practices are not at the center of its agenda. The language and practices used in the exhibitions are still ingrained in the colonial matrix. The assumption of modernity and development are epistemic legacies of colonialism that the SHM is not challenging, but makes its own. Furthermore, to really decolonize, the SHM should discuss issues of the city's history, colonial or post-colonial, that do not fit the CCP's history of Liberation. For instance, as explained by the main designer, the exhibition ends with the Liberation of Shanghai in 1949 because the history of the early PRC years

is considered too problematic to be dealt with (SH_S2_07/12/2018). From this perspective the SHM is a space in which problematic issues are skipped and the blurred zones never explored.

Acknowledgements

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Shanghai Urban History and Development Exhibition Hall (*Shanghai chengshi lishi fazhan chenglieguan,* 上海城市历史发展陈列馆).

Interviews with Staff

Interview with the vice director of the SHM/SRM in Shanghai on 4 December 2018. SH_S1_04/12/2018

Interview with one of the main curators of the exhibition in Shanghai on 7 December 2018: SH_S2_07/12/2018

Interview with the head of the Education Department of the SHM/SRM on 28 May 2019. SH_S3_28/05/2019

Interview with junior curator in the Education Department of the SHM/SRM on 28 May 2019. SH_S4_28/05/2019

Participant Information Sheet

Study title: City Museums and Multiple Colonial Pasts

Name of researcher(s): Laura Pozzi

We would like to invite you to take part in our research study. Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read this information, and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please ask us.

Information Sheet Dated:
08 May 2019

What is the purpose of the study?
To study how the Shanghai History Museum represents the history of European Colonialism in Shanghai, how the permanent exhibition has been organized, and how the visitors understand and interpret the message of the exhibition.

Why have I been invited?
We are interested in speaking with curators, museum staff, and visitors to understand the aim of the exhibition, how it was made, and what visitors think of it.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this research study. Taking part is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet along with a privacy notice that will explain how your data will be collected and used, and be asked to give your consent. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you decide to participate, I will record your interview. The content of this interview will be used in future report and publications. If you prefer, you can be anonymous. In this case, your name will not be mentioned in published documents.

What are the possible benefits, risks and/or disadvantages of taking part?
Researchers and museums staff can learn more about the effectiveness of the exhibition. We can exchange ideas and views on the exhibition, and understand what visitors' think of it. There are no special risks. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can decide not to answer.

What are my rights as a participant?
Taking part in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or subsequently cease participation at any time.

Will I receive any payment or monetary benefits?
You will receive no payment for your participation. The data will not be used by any member of the project team for commercial purposes. Therefore, you should not expect any royalties or payments from the research project in the future.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material.

Privacy Notice

We have several different ways that we will be using to collect and share data for this research project. We are providing this sheet so that participants can see the various ways that their contribution will fit into the work. This includes:

- Interviews. We are conducting interviews with museum staff and visitors. You will be given a copy of the questions beforehand.

- Audio-Visual Teams. We will be using a team to take audio recording (sound) for this study. The reason for using these is to keep record of the interview content.

- Sharing our findings. There are several ways that the data we collect in this project will be shared. We will be writing several academic articles. All material will be available on the website (www.projectechoes.eu).

For more information:

Name of researcher：Laura Pozzi

Full address **Institute of Sociology University of Warsaw, ul. Karowa 18 00-927 Warszawa Poland**

E-mail: **pozzil@is.uw.edu.pl**

What if I have concerns about this research?

If you are worried about this research, or if you are concerned about how it is being conducted, you can contact the Project Principle Investigator: Prof. John Oldfield, University of Hull Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation, Oriel Chambers, 27 High Street, Hull, HU1 1NE, UK; john.oldfield@hull.ac.uk.

研究题目：城市博物馆与多元殖民过往

研究员：Laura Pozzi

我们邀请您参与我们的研究。在您决定之前，我们希望您能了解调查的原因和对您的带来的影响。请您仔细阅读看些信，如果您愿意，也可以与他人讨论。如果有任何不清楚的地方，或者您想了解更多信息，请咨询我们。

信息表日期
2019 年 5 月 8 日

这项研究的目的是什么？

这项研究的目的是研究上海市历史博物馆如何再现上海的欧洲殖民主义历史，博物馆怎么组织常设展览的内容，以及参观者如何理解和诠释展览的内容。

为什么我被请参与这项研究？

为了了解展览的目的，我们希望与博物馆工作人员和参观者交流有关其展览方式以及参观者对此的看法。

我必须参加这项研究吗？

您可以决定是否参加这项研究，完全自愿。如果您决定参加，您将获得此信息表以及隐私通知单，该通知单将说明您的数据将如何被收集和使用，并会取得您的同意。 即便是您决定参加，仍然可以在不提供理由的情况下随时退出。

如果我参加，会发生什么？

如果你决定参加， 我会对您进行专访，采访的内容将会用于未来的报告和出版物中。如果您愿意， 采访专访可以匿名，在这种情况下，您的名字将不会在文档中提及。

这项研究的可能的好处，风险/或缺点是什么？

研究人员和博物馆的工作人员可以更好地了解展览的实效性，我们可以交换对于展览的看法，了解您的想法。没有特别的风险。 如果您对某个问题感到不舒服，可以决定不回答。

作为参与者，我的权利是什么？

参加这项研究是自愿的。 您可以随时选择不参与或随后停止参与。

我会收到任何付款或金钱福利吗？

您不会收到任何参与费用。研究团队的成员都不会将这些数据用于商业目的，因此也没有版税或付款。

我在这项研究中所说的话会保密吗？

收集的所有信息将严格保密（受法律限制）。 我们将确保收集，存储和发布研究材料中的机密性，隐私性和匿名性。

隐私注意

我们使用几种不同的方式来收集和共享此研究的数据。我们将提供这张表格为了让参与者可以看到他们的贡献将适合工作的各种方式。 这包括：

1- 访谈： 我们采访博物馆工作人员和访客. 采访之前，您获得一份问题的副本。
2- 视听： 我们有团队将通过音频来记录这项研究，目的在于记录访谈内容。
3- 分享我们的发现：主要是以学术文章的形式呈现， 所有材料都可以在网站上找到（www.projectechoes.eu）。

更多信息：

研究员: Laura Pozzi 劳拉
地址：Institute of Sociology University of Warsaw
ul. Karowa 18 00-927 Warszawa Poland
电邮： pozzil@is.uw.edu.pl

如果我对这项研究有疑虑, 我可以作什么？

如果您对这项研究有问题，或者您对这项研究的研究方法有顾虑，您可以联系项目主要研究员： John Oldfield 教授，Oriel Chambers，27 赫尔高街，HU1 1NE，英国; john.oldfield@hull.ac.uk。
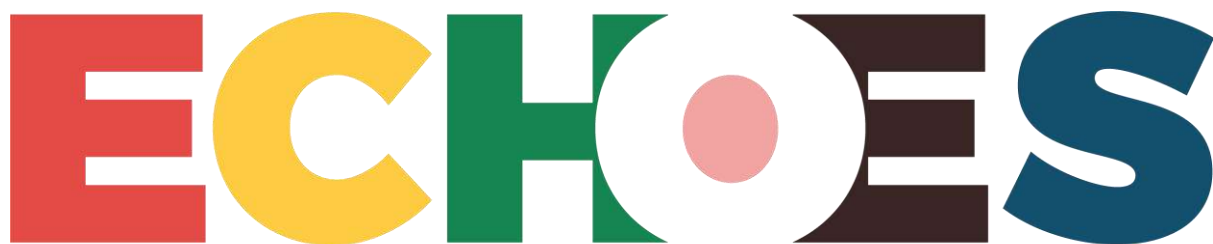
Participant Informed Consent Form

Study title: City Museums and Multiple Colonial Pasts

Name of researcher(s): Dr Laura Pozzi

	YES	NO
1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 08/05/2019 for this study.		
2. I confirm that I had the opportunity to consider the information above, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.		
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.		
4. I agree to audio recording.		
5. I agree to the use of my quotes in research reports and publications.		
6. I agree to the use of my real name when quoted in research reports and publications (if you give us your permission to use the quotes under section 5. but not to use your real name in section 6. the quotes will be anonymised).		
7. I understand that individuals within the project may look at relevant sections of my personal details and data collected during the study. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records. I understand that these will not be revealed or accessible to individuals outside the project.		
8. I agree to take part in this study.		

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   *Date*   *Signature*

_____   _____   _____
Name of Person taking Consent *Date*   *Signature*

1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher.

研究题目： 城市博物馆与多种殖民主义

研究生名字：Laura Pozzi

这个研究是 ECHOES 项目的一部分，这个项目已经获得了欧盟的 European Union's Horizon 2020 研究和创新计划的资助根据第 770248 号赠款协议。

	是	否
1- . 我确定我已经看了这项研究的 2019 年 5 月 8 日的信息		
2 我确认我有机会考虑上述信息，提出问题并得到满意的答复。		
3- 我理解我的参与是自愿的，我可以随时自由退出。		
4- 我同意录音。		
5- 我同意我的引用在研究报告和出版物中使用。		
6- 我同意在研究报告和出版物中引用时使用我的真实姓名（如果您允许我们使用第 5 节中的引号，但不在第 6 节中使用您的真实姓名,报价将被匿名化。）		
7- 我理解 ECHOES 项目中的个研究生可能查看我在研究期间收集的个人详细信息和数据的相关部分。 我允许这些人访问我的记录。 我知道 ECHOES 项目以外的人不会透露或访问这些内容。		
8- 我同意参加这项研究。		

_____   _____   _____

参与者的姓名   日期   签名

_____   _____   _____

研究生的名字   日期   签名