

Minority Cultural Policy-Making in a Casino City— The case of Macau

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Abstract

Music is a popular interests in the Western societies where the population may not be as highly concentrated as a city of a country, such as China, but the policy goal of promoting music may not be pertinent to the economic achievement of that country. Whereas the size of a given country may be vary or even smaller than other places, public resource and positive endeavors allocated to support policies regarding such minority performing music or minority culture may be larger than a city with high economic growth. Although music is one of the traditional and popular interests for centuries, public policy focusing on this area may be able to reveal the economic performance of that city. In Macau, a city where the GDP per capita ranks among the top ten of the world for many years, and that the government has set up bureaucracies to deal with the educational and promotional affairs of music related issues for years. What makes the musicians, non-government organizations, music performers, or even the music lovers query about the firm intention of government policy in promoting music and making it a social interest are in question. This paper will study the bureaucratic settings the Macau government made in past years and the ways it cannot satisfy the public's expectation in promoting minority music.

Keywords: performing arts, minority music, public choice, bureaucratic process

1. Introduction

Since the opening of gaming franchise in 2002, total number of gaming licensees suddenly expanded from one to six, the GDP performance of Macau has been growing up rapidly. According to the 2015 Policy Address of the Chief Executive of Macau, the Chief Executive (CE) Mr. Fernando Chui announced that “Macau is aiming to become one of the world tourism and leisure centre, casinos and resorts are built to attract tourists and consumers”.¹ Citizens will expect amore policies favoring arts and culture promulgating within his term of office. In fact, Chui had announced to promote arts and culture in his previous policy announcement in 2010 that, his government “will strongly support the local artistic creation, promote local and foreign art exchanges, increase the popularity of Macao's cultural and creative industries, strengthen the cultivation of talents in the cultural and creative industries, and establish a cultural and creative industry base...constructing local cultural tourism brands, so as to support Macau to become the World tourism and leisure centre”.² The Policy Address clearly illustrates that Arts will be one of the benchmark policies of the city. Apart from the fine arts, performing arts or linguistic educations, music is one of the crucial and common area in arts and culture. However, current social trends in professional music trainings and skills are usually treated as only a minor subject comparing with others. (Storr, 1993)

Art is nonetheless important for every society in forming the connotation of culture, and music is one of having explicit development in recent years. Music in certain degree is beneficial in doing all-rounded personal development. The original goals of society arts program are to accelerate development and increase living comfortableness in the society. (Dreeszen, 2000) People has gradually found society arts programs more important, especially in being part of education for the youths. Society arts programs aim at promoting social interest, focusing on minorities' interests and ignoring commercial value. Therefore, it will be the sole responsibility the government to take in order to enrich cultural satisfaction of the public.

¹ Full version of the CE Policy Address, please visit the official website

https://www.gov.mo/zh-hant/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/10/cn2015_policy.pdf, 20-4-2018

² Chui (2010), *Strongly Support Local Creative Arts*, Government Information Bureau,

<http://www.gcs.gov.mo/showNews.php?DataUcn=47305&PageLang=C>, 18-4-2018.

2. Cultural Policy-making of Macau

The public will seldom query the necessity to maintain music as one of the society arts programs, what makes them pay attention to as the effectiveness of the cultural policies. Policy planning can be classified as long term strategic planning and short term operational planning. (Houston, 2015) Strategic planning have a time span of three to five years which aims to achieve a specific mission through setting of objectives. Operational planning is to achieve objectives in a strategic planning so as to create value. (Houston, 2015) Time and hardware are then becoming important to the success of the development of music.

As a tiny ex-Portuguese enclave in the Far East, Macau has already built several facilities for promoting cultures, such as the Macau Cultural Centre, Macao Conservatory, The Macao Museum of Art, etc., among those, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (CAB) will deal with policies about arts in Macau. Policies made by this Bureau then turns out to be a crucial factor promoting arts. However, bureaucratic process appears in the cultural policy-making undermining the promotion of minority music. In the following analyses, this paper will discuss the context of public choice and adopt 3 cases to study how the policy affected by bureaucratic process.

3. Public Choice in Bureaucratic Process of Macau's

Goodsell (1985) has concluded public choice economical view over the operation of bureaucracy. He has asserted that bureaucracy acted as an interference to the market as government departments relied on only one single sponsor, that is, the government revenue. Department heads are assumed to hanker for high salary, subsidy as well as power. (Goodsell, 1985) They does not aim at expanding interest but allocation of budgets instead. They initiate to claim for more money no matter there is an actual need. In this case it has increased the cost and created an illusion of a false demand. This can also create unlimited expand of budget and inefficient distribution of resources.

According to Goodsell's observation, sociologists take an intrinsic property in Weber's organization model. Organization members tend to keep the rules strictly and they see procedures more important than the outcome itself. It is also claimed that in Weber's organization model, superiors always face conflict with their subordinates which makes very common for staff to pass the bucks to others. While there is a blocking of communication,

bureaucracy is rigid and it lacks the ability to have reform. All of the above gather an idea that bureaucratic process is not as efficient as one may expected. (Weber, 1968)

Downs has applied theory from marketing economics' view on public choice to analyze the bureaucratic system and public administration. (Downs, 1967) In his observation he assumes that organization agents are utility maximizer. When the cost of attaining goals is smaller than the value of the goals itself, they will reach the goals rationally. Agents have complex sets of goals, for example, security, power, income, pride in excellent in work as well as desire to serve the public interest. (Downs, 1967, Elgar, 1993, Mueller, 1997)

In short, bureaucratic process may be influenced by different factors, and bureaucrats' personal choice appear to be one of the factors. It is argued that the difficulty in cooperating with other departments and complex administrative procedures can reveal the failure of Macau's performing arts in minority music development. As in the long term education, one of the very important elements to develop music environment and create sustainable is the demand in music production, including popular and minority music.

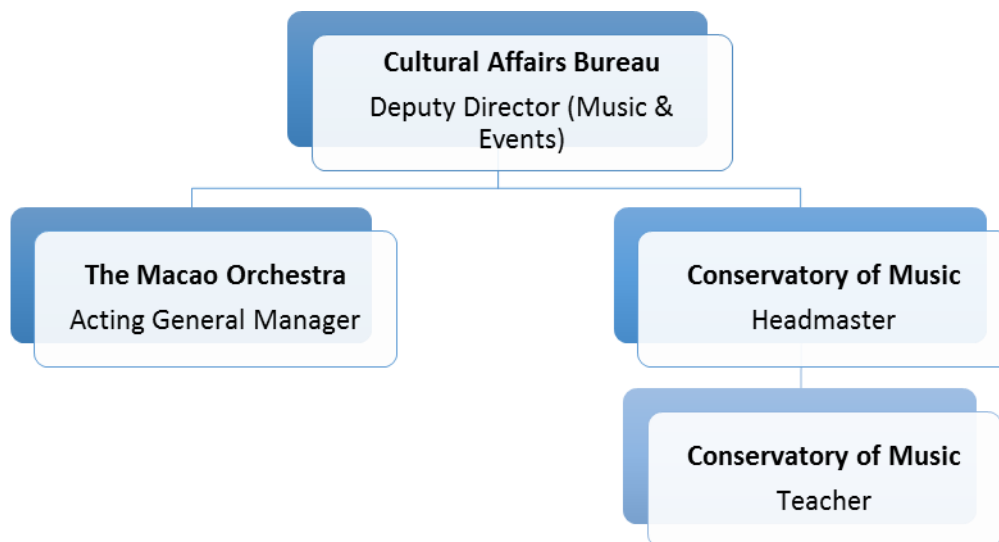
Horizontally, the Macau minority music is in lack of policy support from the Education and Youth Bureau and educational organizations to widen the scope of views of local students. Master classes and regular in-school concerts can be conducted to increase students' chances to expose to the music environment. Vertically, promotion of minority music lies in the hierarchical structure of the Cultural Affairs Bureau (CAB). Macau Orchestra, for example, is not the only arts organization within CAB, whenever they need promotion, human resource arrangements, printing or stage arrangement are supported by the Bureau, sometimes they need the hands from other departments. Complexity in administrative procedures is also one of the main reasons that dragging down efficiency. Daily documents always have to pass through different departments for approval and it takes a long time for travelling around various departments even for very simple tasks such as an application for office appliances or payments of oversea guest musicians.

4. Case Studies

4.1 overlapping of leaderships within the CAB

According to Law no. 15/2009, the role of leader and supervisor in an organization cannot be occupied by the same person.³ The Deputy Director of the CAB is also the acting general manager of the Macao Orchestra, the headmaster of the Macao Conservatory of Music, as well as teacher of the Macao Conservatory of Music. The organization chart shown in Chart 1 below illustrates how the Deputy Director of CAB plays the three other subordinative roles at the same time. This quadruple identities expose a weak mutual supervisory function among the posts. Also, the nature of the Macao Orchestra and the Conservatory is closely inter-related, making the transparency of the appointment of music school teachers dropping to very low degree. Musicians and staff of the Macao Orchestra and the Macao Chinese Orchestra are usually hired as part-time teachers at the School of Music of the Macao Conservatory, in which no recruitment and assessment processes can be traced.⁴ This case displays such “three for one” leadership role not only exposes monitoring insufficiency, but such bureaucratic process would also likely build up a bureaucratic imperialism.

Chart 1: quadruple roles play by the Deputy Director of CAB



Source: extracted from the Organizational Structure of the Cultural Affairs Bureau. <http://www.icm.gov.mo/en/structure>, 22-4-2018.

³³ For full details of the Law, please see *Fundamental Provisions of the Staff Regulations of Directors and Officers*, <http://www.al.gov.mo/uploads/attachment/2016-10/905375811bbdac409a.pdf>, 21-4-2018

⁴ “Letters to the Editor”, *Sonpou*, 18-6-2015.

The above cases show that the organization structure of the music sector under CAB is a typical kind of confusion of roles within a bureaucracy. Problems obstructing the orchestra from performing an effective function in Macau's music development actually lies in the effective and efficient bureaucratic system within the organization. The orchestra is under the management of Department of Cultural Action in the organizational structure, however when the Deputy Director is at the same time the general manager, he can make direct decision over the orchestra without seeking an approval from the Department of Cultural Action. In this way, it is clear to assert that bureaucratic process in the hierarchical structure can override normal bureaucratic procedures allowing rooms for concentration of power. Eventually, development of cultural arts will be influenced by the decision made by one.

4.2 questionable declaration of interest evaluation mechanism

Informant A is the administrative director of a dancing association. In the seventeenth anniversary, the association organized a series of Chinese and modern dance. Informant A applied for the financial subsidies under which it has been provided by the CAB for several years. Informant A had, with her rich experience, submitted several useful information and supportive reasons advantageous to get the subsidies eventually.

The routine assessment process conducted by the CAB is that the Bureau will invite several personnel experienced in the sector to form a consultation and evaluation group to analyze the applications. Since many of the evaluators are also players of the sector, therefore, a mechanism of "declaration of interest" is set up to avoid conflict of interest happening during the evaluation process. If the evaluators are either the advisers or members of the association, or people who have conflict of interests of the projects, etc., they have to follow the recusal system issued by the Commission Against Corruption (CAC) of Macau.⁵ What makes it more interesting to note is that informant A, who had attended the evaluation interview, expressed that the recusal mechanism seemed to be dysfunction. Many members of the consultation and evaluation groups, which were formed by players of the sector, were friends or members of some dancing associations. In the case of informant A, she could recognize

⁵ For details of the system, please read the *Guidelines on the Professional Ethics and Conducts of Public Servants*, Commission Against Corruption, <http://www.ccac.gov.mo/gov/en/guide/download/G-EN-ALL.pdf>, 22-4-2018.

some of the evaluators who had conflict of interest in this regards but she did not receive a piece of declaration of interests or even recusing the meeting from the group members. Regrettably, they could do so because it was suggested that they were not the direct stakeholders of the project.⁶

One may easily realize that those evaluators who are invited to do the evaluation would, to certain extent, take advantages favoring the parties concerned. However, bureaucrats are just stick to fulfilling the evaluation process at the absent of considering other obstructing factors. Also, the real-life situation is that the sector is just a small circle and is impossible to invite a real third party to join the group. Therefore, it seems to be another concerns of the bureaucrats of failing to abide by the regulations if maintain justice, such as scrutinizing backgrounds of the evaluators with the applicants and exercising recusal system. Provided that a real third party may not be possible to locate within the city, the CAB can invite players from other places or consult the opinion of the CAC through inter-departmental meeting or matrix arrangement, a bureaucratic process which can commonly be found in a open society.

4.3 secrecy of the evaluation outcomes

Applicants who are not successful in the application of subsidy process prefer to know the reasons behind, so that they can spot their weaknesses through the process and learn how to refine the application next time. The subtle point is that evaluators may sometimes seek additional information on top of the original application required. Applicants are not informed to provide the additional information and the ways the information acquired. Eventually, additional information was added into the evaluation process, accepted and graded and approved by the evaluation group. The bureaucratic problem arising from this practice is that processes of adding extra information are not included in the application form, in other word, applicants do not know the exact information they need to provide in the application, and that sources of the additional information are unknown to the applicants, not to say from the official websites. Informant B claimed that it was the usual practice of the

⁶ Informant A was a veteran player and administrator of a dancing association who were so experienced in applying the subsidies provided by the government. She claimed that she had no personal network inside the Bureau and that some of her applications were rejected within explanations. The interview was conducted in November 2015 in Macau peninsula.

Bureau and there was no bureaucratic proceedings to open such conditions or ways of practice to the public.⁷ That is to say, the Bureau as well as the evaluation group maintain a higher degree of discretion, whereas it does match with the public choice of public servants. Further, the grading procedure of the evaluation group is not supervised by the Bureau and that the evaluation group did not need to submit a report to explain their grading outcome. Therefore, either the assessment group scores those applications a full mark or a zero will not be get involved with.

It is observable that no one, including the public servants would like to work under many eyes, i.e. under monitoring. (Bovens, 2005, Cooper, 1998, Davis, 1979) Therefore, bureaucrats will seek opportunity to work out of the public's focus, and so secrecy or abuse of using discretion power may sometimes be happened at the absent of monitoring mechanism. This case study reveals the ways bureaucrats managing the application process may be affected by other factors, such as the popularity of the program, foundation of the association, the use of public money especially while they are questioned by the monitoring parties, etc., exposing that bureaucratic process may be abused if the responsible parties are not required to make report to the public, or to the accountee. (Bovens, 2005)

5. Conclusion

The cultural arts in Macau is unique because of the Portuguese administration history for more than 400 years. Western ideas of culture has affected in the development of pluralistic culture in the tiny enclave. With the establishment of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, supports of minority performing arts, such as orchestral music performance or minority tribal music performance are provided. In fact, Macau government can be able to launch different policies to cultivate and promote pluralistic music environment, including the minority music. Meanwhile, bureaucratic process may hinder nurturing and promoting music, especially minority music, to the public. Hierarchical structure plays a role in the obstruction of the success of a reasonable application.

⁷ Informant B was a staff of the Bureau responsible to deal with citizens' enquiries. The correspondence was completed in November 2015.

Disadvantageous to local musicians find difficulties in applying for a place for performing a show. Although extra facilities and public agents set up in the past four decades favoring the music performers, chances of performing arts and music are still under acceptable level to those performing musicians. Apart from the aged old reasons such as popularity of the show or background of the association, bureaucratic process appears to be another neglected factor hindering the reasonable development of minority arts and music.

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