

ABSTRACT

The liberalization of Macao's gaming industry in 2002 not only brought in new foreign investors, it also led Macao's gaming industry to a new era that focuses more on the non-gaming aspects – entertainment, accommodations, restaurants, shopping, and so on. The resulting casino resorts exemplify what George Ritzer (2005) calls the “new means of consumption.” The new means of consumption involves the integration of various consumption times and settings into a single place, “a synthesis of leisure and consumption activities previously distinct and located in different sites, preformed at different times or accomplished by different people” (Shields 1992: 6). The entry of Hong Kong and US investors into Macao was made possible by economic and social forces of globalization. As the prototypical example of the new means of consumption in Macao, Wynn Resorts (Macau) S.A. serves as the object of my analysis to understand the new means of consumption, globalization, and the interconnection between these two concepts. The methodology adopted combines ethnographic observation and analysis of the physical setting of Wynn Macau, and in-depth interviews with employees, Macao residents, tourists, and expatriate industry workers in an effort to understand the meanings and uses of such new means of consumption, and their impact on Macao's economic and social fabric. Results show that Wynn Macau has participated in instilling a new consumer environment through the new means of consumption, one which alters not only the amount of disposable income many locals have but the way they choose to spend it. The power of the new means of consumption is not limited to Wynn Macau; rather, this site is merely one example of the type of new consumer environment that is driving Macao's economic and social development. Hence, though my object of analysis

is Wynn Macau, the same rationale is applicable to other new casino hotels in Macao (e.g. The Grand Canal Shoppes of Venetian Macao Resort Hotel, Macau Fisherman's Wharf, MGM, etc.). In essence, the new means of consumption is both a product and progenitor of Macao's transformation into an international city.