

From Backyard to Front Door The Transformation of Macao's Border Spaces

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INTRODUCTION

The Chinese Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macao have become cases of interest for the study of border cities for three reasons: (1) the continuing and unchallenged existence of their borders despite the fact that both regions are, since 1997 and 1999 respectively, officially part of the People's Republic of China; (2) the contradiction between border fortification and the high frequency of border crossings; and (3) the pre-defined "expiration date" of each border fifty years after the handover (Breitung 2009: 102).

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Despite their location on the southern fringe of the Chinese mainland and their geographical distance from the political centre, Hong Kong and Macao play a key role in China's national economy, politics and identity construction. At the same time, as free ports, both cities are places for the exchange of goods and ideas from all over the world. This results in contradictions between the strong forces of globalization and liberalization on one hand, and the important role of both cities for China's national identity on the other (Potter 2007: 240-70). Living between these poles, the populations of Hong Kong and Macao are in the process of searching for their own identities after the end of the British and Portuguese rule. In this process, borders play an important role.

Since the beginning of China's open door policy in 1978, large-scale infrastructure projects have played a role in the integration of Hong Kong, Macao and the Pearl River Delta (PRD). The main idea of visionary developer Gordon Wu Ying Sheung was to build highway projects that would create a continuous economic space similar to that found in the United

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States, where he had studied (Campanella 2008). In 1983, he took a group of Chinese Communist Party officials to visit the efficient crossing points at the US/Mexican border, to consider a model for the future border facilities between Hong Kong and the PRD (Sayer 2006: 58-68). One of Wu's grand ideas proposed in 1988—the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge—is soon to become reality, as the financial agreement between China's central government and the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao was made in August 2008. The bridge will bring the three cities so close together that a daily commute will become possible. This will fundamentally change the perception and condition of these territories that are now still quite separate. Today, most people and goods moving from the west bank to the east bank of the Pearl River Delta travel by ship rather than making the nearly 4.5-hour drive overland via the Humen Bridge south of Guangzhou.

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The most obvious changes Macao has undergone in recent years have occurred along the waterfronts, first in the east and now in the west of the territory, and on the Cotai land reclamation. The waterfront constitutes the large majority of Macao's borders as the territory consists of a peninsula and two islands surrounded by water. The proper location of the borderline in the water was never clearly defined. This created a legal grey zone which has been used by both Macao and Zhuhai for extensive land reclamation (Breitung 2007: 37-52). From 1989 to 2007, Macao increased its land area from 17.4 to 29.2 sq km (MSAR, DSEC 2009), with the biggest reclamation being the 'Cotai' area between the

islands Taipa and Coloane, where Macao's new casino cluster is being built.

In addition, the land border has become increasingly significant. In the years after the handover, this border has become Macao's main entrance (in terms of the number of visitor arrivals). Until the mid-20th century, the peninsula was connected to the mainland only by a narrow isthmus. The current land border resulted from successive land reclamations on both sides, which are also related to the rapid growth of Zhuhai. Most of this Chinese border city was built only after Deng Xiaoping made it a Special Economic Zone in 1984. Within this short time, the population grew from a few thousand to more than 1.4 million permanent residents in 2008 (Zhuhai government statistics 2009) making it significantly bigger than Macao, whose population stood at 557,400 in 2008 (MSAR DSEC 2009).

Despite the integration process triggered by the 1987 Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration, Macao's northern border district and the river space facing Zhuhai continued to deteriorate. With the recent casino boom (2002-8), these areas seem to have reappeared in the consciences of the government and property developers, but, as I will argue below, the projects realised there have problematic impacts on the future of this area.

The Macao government has also been negotiating over development rights for the island Hengqin, which is located just next to Coloane and Taipa but which is administratively part of mainland China. Originally consisting of two islands that, in parallel to Taipa and Coloane, were joined together by land reclamation, Hengqin Island is now around 26 sq. km. in land area, almost as large as the entire Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), which explains its attractiveness for the notoriously congested Macao. The reclaimed lands of Cotai and Hengqin are connected to each other by the Lotus Bridge, another crossing point, which complements the crowded northern checkpoint in Gongbei and sets the scene for the future development of this area.

This paper focuses on Macao and asks how the condition of its borders affects its transformation at the street level, and what the consequences of this

Fig. 1: Macao map.

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transformation are for the lives of the city's residents. It addresses the following questions: what possibilities and challenges are created by the large-scale infrastructure projects designed to integrate Macao into the PRD? Considering the 'expiry date' of the border in 40 years, will Macao and Zhuhai become a single integrated urban space, or even one city, similar to the way the Chinese and Christian cities that once existed side by side on the Macao peninsula eventually blended together? What are the consequences of Macao's ambiguous border conditions and infrastructure projects for its self-image and its image to outsiders? After a short sketch of Macao's history that focuses on the effects of its border conditions, I examine Macao's transformation in relation to its borders and the opportunities and challenges that result.

A SHORT STORY OF MACAO'S COMPLEX BORDER HISTORY

The special condition of the border between Macao and mainland China must be understood in the context of the history of the enclave. When, in 1557, the Portuguese established their settlement on the Macao peninsula, the Chinese government tolerated this settlement, in contrast to earlier Portuguese projects of footholds on its territory. This decision was made in light of the location of the enclave—on the southern periphery of the Chinese polity, far distant from the political centre—and the economic benefits it brought. However, Chinese acceptance of the settlement came with conditions that were carefully enforced.

Fig. 2: Macao's Inner Harbour and its northern land connection to mainland China in 1934 (from: Filipe Jorge and Francisco Figueira, *Macao Visto do Céu*, Lisbon: Argumentum, 1999).



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In 1573, the Chinese authorities constructed a wall at the northern end of the isthmus controlling the land access to Macao. Several Portuguese attempts to fortify their city against attacks were stopped by the Chinese rulers until 1622, when they started to fear the occupation of Macao by the Dutch more than the Portuguese presence (Tang 1998: 81-110).

Until the 19th century, the Macao peninsula was divided into a Portuguese city and several Chinese villages. The Portuguese or 'Christian' city was populated by Portuguese and Macanese, and occupied mainly the hilly parts of the territory (Pinheiro, Yagi and Korenaga 2005), while the Chinese fishing villages were located towards the western and northern waterfronts, where they were better protected against typhoons. City and villages were separated by a wall with gates, and the

Chinese population remained under Chinese authority. Over time, Chinese came to live inside the Portuguese city (Calado, Mendes, Toussaint 1998: 161). Their population grew even faster due to the Opium Wars and the Taiping Rebellion on the Mainland. The establishment of the British colony in Hong Kong in 1842 and the opening of the treaty ports in China further weakened Macao's economic situation. In the second half of the 19th century, the trade in coolies and opium became new sources of income (Calado, Mendes, Toussaint 1998: 165), and the first gambling concessions were awarded. Already in the 18th century, a large entertainment district close to the old ferry piers at the Inner Harbour attracted mainly Chinese customers, offering gambling, opium and prostitutes (Choi 2001: 177-84). With the decline of Macao's

Fig. 3: Macao's Inner Harbour and its northern land connection to mainland China in 1998 (from: Filipe Jorge and Francisco Figueira, *Macao Visto do Céu*, Lisbon: Argumentum, 1999).



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Fig. 4: Peninsula and Harbour of Macao, 1834 (map shows the west side upwards).

harbour, the status of the city's borders created useful legal grey zones for its dubious sources of income.

Between 1846 and 1849, Governor João Maria Ferreira do Amaral fundamentally changed Macao's relationship with China by enacting new policies modelled after other European colonial powers. He claimed Portuguese sovereignty over the entire peninsula (including the Chinese settlements), abolished the payment of ground-rent, and extended urban improvement plans to the northern border gate, which provoked the Chinese community which traditionally had cemeteries in that area. After Ferreira do Amaral's assassination in 1849, Portuguese troops occupied the area between the Portuguese city and northern border gate, and in 1871 replaced the gate with a monumental arch, the *Portas do Cerco* (Calado, Mendes, Toussaint 1998: 169). The Chinese settlements were integrated into the urban area by a modern street network. In the second half of the 19th century, just as the British expanded Hong Kong into Kowloon and the New Territories, the Portuguese used

the weak position of the Qing dynasty to enlarge their territory in Macao. In 1851, they seized Taipa (two separate islands at that time); in 1864, Coloane Island; and in 1890, Green Island (*Ilha Verde*). Nonetheless, several attempts to officially define the border failed (Breitung 2004: 10).

In the 20th century, the Second World War and the foundation of the PRC brought waves of Chinese refugees to Macao. Despite strong anti-Portuguese rhetoric in the post-war years, the PRC did not make serious attempts to regain control over Macao's territory. From 1943 to 1973, Macao played a major role in the gold trade of the PRC. In the peak year of this trade, 1963, 72,000 kg of gold was transferred through Macao. The Macao government's income from gold trade during these years even exceeded the high returns from the gambling concession (Fernandes 2006: 267-77 and 365-6). In 1961, the Macao government granted a gambling monopoly to Stanley Ho, along with his partners Henry Fok, Yip Hon and Teddy Yip. Their company, *Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de*

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Macao (STDM), promised in their bid to promote tourism and to develop infrastructure. In 1966, after tensions between pro-China groups and the colonial government (the '123 Incident'), Macao's political power shifted towards the local Chinese elite with close connections to Beijing (Fernandes 2006: 83-116). Since the end of the dictatorship in Portugal in 1974, Portugal and China used the formula 'Chinese territory under Portuguese administration' to describe the status of Macao.

With Deng Xiaoping's 'Open Door Policy' and the creation of the Zhuhai Special Economic Zone, new economic opportunities for Macao arose in the 1980s, but in the 1990s Zhuhai started to compete with Macao in various areas by building their own airport, race track and container port (Edmunds 1993: 888-9). The Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration of 1987 paved the way for Macao's handover on 19 December 1999.

In 2002, the new Macao SAR Government decided not to renew the gambling monopoly of STDM. One year later, when Macao suffered from the effects of the SARS epidemic, China introduced

the Individual Visit Scheme for residents of several parts of the mainland. The liberalization of gambling and travel restrictions boosted foreign and local investments in the gaming, tourism and property sectors. Visitor numbers from the mainland, where gambling is still prohibited, increased immediately. In 2007, the annual total visitor number reached 27 million (MSAR, DSEC 2008).

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Macao's economy is highly dependent on the tourism and gambling industry. Income from casino gambling provides two-thirds of the Macao government

Fig. 5: Ponte 16 in the 1950s.



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revenue. In addition, a single product category, textiles and apparel, officially accounted for about 64.9 percent of Macao's goods exports, which was explained as a way for mainland exporters to evade WTO export quotas. After the abolition of the textile quota system in 2007, these exports consequently declined by around 14% for the first ten months of that year. Partly in order to counter these losses, Macao and the PRC implemented a free-trade agreement, the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), and built a cross-border industrial zone between Zhuhai and the northern part of Macao.

In October 2008, concerned about the amount of money spent by mainlanders in Macao's casinos, the Guangdong government restricted the scope of the Individual Visit Scheme. Visitor arrivals declined by 11.8% from March 2008 to 2009, and visitors from mainland China by 11.1% (MSAR, DSEC 2009). The reduction of visitor numbers and the global financial crisis brought the Las Vegas Sands Corporation close to bankruptcy after the completion of the world's biggest casino—The Venetian Macao—and its further projects on the Cotai Strip were put on hold. This brief overview suggests that both historically and today, Macao has been highly dependent on both the existence of its borders and the permeability of those borders, which allows the exploitation of specific economic niches and the absorption of global money flows.

TRAFFIC CHALLENGES AT THE NEW MAIN ENTRANCE GATE

On the ground, the planned new infrastructure projects and the changing direction of the visitor flow are starting to affect Macao's urban geography. Before the handover, most visitors arrived on ferries that docked at the eastern Outer Harbour (388,627 of a total of 605,318 visitors in December 1998, MSAR, DSEC 2009). With the casino boom and the introduction of the Individual Visit Scheme, Macao's main entrance has shifted to the northern border gate. In December 2008, 1,438,227 of a total 2,546,079 visitors arrived at this northern gate (MSAR, DSEC 2009), which opens onto the most densely populated district of the city, that has so far functioned as Macao's social 'backyard'. There is still no rail connection between Macao and other cities in the Pearl River Delta. As a result, all visitors entering at the northern border arrive by car or bus. Future vehicle traffic is set to increase due to a planned highway from Guangzhou and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (Lam 2008), which would allow commuting from Macao to Hong Kong in less than an hour. An extension of Hong Kong's highly efficient rail network (e.g. from the Hong Kong airport) to Macao was not considered.

Macao's local traffic is already increasing due to the rapid rise in car ownership: from 2005 to November

Figs. 6 and 7: Macao's northern border district with the Istmo Ferreira do Amaral (the old isthmus) and the waiting casino shuttle buses (Photos H. Tieben 2008).



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2008, the number of vehicles on Macao's roads grew from 152,542 to 183,264 (MSAR, DSEC 2009). The capacity of the road system during rush hours is rapidly approaching its limit. In 2006, the American magazine *Forbes* listed Macao as one of the world's ten most congested cities. The increase in car noise and exhaust fumes is commensurate (Wang 2002).

In the last two decades Macao invested mainly in roads and car bridges. They link the northern border with the Outer Harbour, Taipa, Cotai, Coloane and, via the Lotus Bridge, Hengqin Island. Macao has thus followed the urban development trend of the larger PRD, which for a long time invested more in highways than in rail systems; this in turn was an urbanization pattern modelled on the United States, in line with Gordon Wu's vision (Campanella 2008: 216-39). The layout of the Cotai strip and Hengqin Island, especially, resemble the car-dominated layout of the Las Vegas strip rather than the more sustainable models found in Hong Kong or Singapore. The older parts of Macao with their high density, functional mix and short distances were generally very pedestrian-friendly, but unfortunately with the increasing traffic noise and exhaust emissions, walking has become more and more unattractive. A railway between Macao and Guangzhou has been planned since the early 1990s, but has yet to be built (Edmunds 1993: 890).

Since 2002, the Macao government has been investigating options for a LRT line (Light Rail Transit System), after having dismissed the possibility of a proper subway system (Liu 2006: 149). The LRT will connect the major arrival points with the city's historical centre, the old and new casino clusters, and the airport. The government also dismissed an alternative option for a monorail system, which was proposed by the Architecture Association Macao because it would have had less impact on the historical streetscape. The currently planned line will not reach most of Macao's most densely populated residential areas.

SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE NORTHERN BORDER DISTRICT

Due to the small size of the territory, changes in one part of Macao affect the others. In the 1980s and 1990s, a part of Macao's middle- and high-

income population moved to the then less-populated Taipa Island, which had been connected to the main peninsula by a bridge in 1974. Here they found housing and investment opportunities—as did investors from Hong Kong and Taiwan, who speculated on the increase in value of these properties after the completion of the adjacent international airport (Edmunds 1993: 897). The recent boom years—until 2008—saw ever-more luxurious residential towers being constructed on Taipa Island. The high prices of these apartments, starting at around US\$500,000, puts the new residential towers out of reach for most local residents. Although the median monthly employment earnings have increased since the handover, it reached a high of only US\$996 in 2008 (MSAR, DSEC 2009).

To ease the congested living conditions in the residential districts in the north of Macao, a team lead by architects Lima and Soares envisioned a new town on the Cotai land reclamation to house approximately 150,000 residents (Gaspar 1999: 51); but these plans were abandoned by the post-handover government in favour of building an 'Asian Las Vegas' on that site. As the NAPE district at the Outer Harbour became less attractive for families due to the red light activities that sprang up around the new casinos, and the historical centre enjoyed stricter protection, many local residents have turned to Macao's north or across the border to find affordable housing.

In the northern border district, new developments are transforming the traditional low income areas. Without enforcement of height limits, new apartment towers such as The Praia reach up to 56 storeys. The name of this development reflects the intention to re-brand this part of the northern district (Bacia do Patane/Fai Chi Kei) facing the waterfront of the Inner Harbour as a new 'high-class' area. Macao's original Praia is located on the opposite side of the peninsula and will be described below.

Macao's northern border district is already being affected by the planned Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, whose Macao terminus will be located at the north-eastern waterfront close to the border. In recent years, real-estate developers secured the land parcels next to the bridge's landing point and completed apartment towers which they are promoting as convenient due to their proximity to the future bridge and the mainland border (e.g. La Baie du Noble, La Cite, La Residencia,

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and Villa de Mer). Obviously, the developers perceive the border space here not as a constraint but as a particularly attractive feature.

Further west and close to the border, there still exist squatter settlements of former immigrants and refugees. Across the border in Zhuhai, new high-standard residential areas can be seen. In general, Zhuhai now offers many modern and well-designed residential projects with lower density and bigger apartments. With its lower prices, Zhuhai also buffers some of Macao's poverty problems as poorer residents from the northern district buy their goods there, find opportunities to earn a small income by smuggling, or live part-time on the other side (Breitung 2009: 114). With Zhuhai's rapidly increasing living standard and price levels these possibilities will disappear in the future, and Macao will need to cope with its own poverty problems.

BORDER SPACES AS SPACES OF REPRESENTATION I: CHANGES TO MACAO'S HISTORICAL 'FRONT DOOR'

Macao's border spaces along the waterfronts and around the checkpoints are also spaces of representation. Here, towards the edges of the territory, Macao constructs a new image with each additional layer of reclaimed land.

The south-east side of the peninsula with the Praia Grande, a promenade with banyan trees and large mansions facing the sea, was historically Macao's representative main façade welcoming arriving ships. While up to the 18th century the seafront was marked by a defence wall, as can be seen for instance on Pedro Barreto de Resende's map of 1646, most later representations of Macao until the early 20th century depict the Praia. It was a leisure space for Macao

Fig. 8: Macao's Praia Grande in the 1930s before the land reclamations for the new Outer Harbour.



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Fig. 9: Macao's Praia Grande in the 1930s after the land reclamations for the new Outer Harbour.

residents and foreign traders who were attracted to come here with their families after the Canton trade season or later to escape Hong Kong's busy life. Until the 1920s, the Praia was described in international tourist guides as Macao's most 'scenic' site until its northern part was sacrificed, at the end of the 1920s, for the facilities of a new Outer Harbour, which, it was hoped, would attract entrepreneurs who would help industrialize the stagnating enclave. The Praia then lost its role as Macao's main façade (Forêt 2006: 115-7).

In 1970, the STDM located its flagship Casino Lisboa to a key position on the reclaimed land in front of the northern Praia, which was visible from both the

sea and the old city centre. The position chosen was precisely the point where the construction of the bridge to Taipa Island was begun in the same year. STDM went on to create a large casino and hotel cluster between the 'Lisboa' and the new ferry terminal at the Outer Harbour.

In the 1980s, the 'NAPE' land reclamation (Novos Aterros do Porto Exterior) was created to the south-west of this cluster, in an attempt to change Macao's gambling image and attract modern service industries, and to ease development pressures on the historical core that had been mounting during the boom years following the establishment of the Zhuhai SEZ (Prescott 1993: 52-7).

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Figs. 10 and 11: The old and new border gates from Macao to Gongbei (Zhuohai).

One year after the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration, Macao's government awarded the contract for a new passenger ferry terminal building at the Outer Harbour, which was completed in 1993. Architect Leonor Janeiro placed light constructions, reminiscent of sailing ships, on the roof. Next to it, he arranged helipads for helicopter service to Hong Kong. The modernist image created by the white, low building and its light steel constructions corresponded to the earlier image of STDM's infrastructure projects, such as the Shun Tak Centre in Hong Kong (1974-86) from whence ferries to Macao and other destinations in the PRD depart. Its architects had aimed to create a science-fiction image by including elements from films such as 'Star Wars' and 'Battlestar Galactica' (Spence Robinson Ltd. 1993: 38-43). Futuristic hydrofoils allowing faster connections between Macao and Hong Kong were already introduced by STDM around 1974. In 1993,

the grandstand for the Macao Grand Prix was completed next to the new ferry passenger terminal (Arch. Mário Duarte Duque). The projects of the 1970s-1990s at the arrival point in the Outer Harbour presented Macao as a dynamic, modern and adventurous place. This image was already set in 1974 by Guy Hamilton's film 'James Bond 007: The Man with the Golden Gun,' which was partly filmed in Macao and which contrasted with the earlier image shown in Josef von Sternberg's film 'Macao' (1952), which opens with a shot of a ferry boat passing hundreds of sampans before arriving slowly into the old Inner Harbour with its dilapidated Chinese shops and tenements houses.

In the years before the handover—a period of economic stagnation—the Portuguese government started to promote Macao as 'City of Culture' (Cheng 1999: 213), and the Macao Cultural Centre, where the 1999 handover ceremonies took place, was constructed on the waterfront of the NAPE district in view of the new ferry terminal.

After the handover and the liberalization of the gambling industry in 2002 this view was obstructed by the new casino, The Sands (2004), which made very visible the arrival of foreign casino corporations in Macao. Two years later, the Fisherman's Wharf theme park, featuring images of seaports around the world, opened on 111,500 square meters of reclaimed land in front of The Sands. It was planned by the Hong Kong developer David Chow and Laurence Ho (son of Macao's casino tycoon Stanley Ho). Both projects show the shift in Macao's image construction from a 'City of Culture' to an 'Asian Las Vegas' (Tieben 2009). Fisherman's Wharf offers mainland visitors images of the world beyond the Chinese borders, and caters to the expectation of experiencing something different from home. This is one example of how Macao presents itself as a 'meeting point of east and west' without making use of authentic historical sites such as those near the Praia or the dilapidated Inner Harbour, which could tell this story equally as well. Instead, visitors are lured to a theme park of the type that can be found—in far more impressive forms—in plenty of other Chinese cities, e.g. 'The World' in Beijing, 'Windows on the World' in Shenzhen, or the South China Mall in Dongguan (Campanella 2008: 256-65). It has, however, been discovered that most visitors prefer the bustle of Macao's historic centre to Fisherman's Wharf (Du Cros 2009: 88).

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In 2009, the Hong Kong romantic comedy film 'Look for a Star' (written, produced by and starring Andy Lau) used the new MGM Grand Macao casino as its main location. With its Grande Praça, the MGM Grand Macao re-invents Macao's Portuguese architecture in the atrium space of a modern high-rise with an undulating coloured glass façade. The casino was built as a joint venture between MGM Mirage and Pansy Ho Chiu-king, Stanley Ho's daughter. The production of this film was supported by the Macao Government Tourist Office as a way to show off Macao's new generation of themed casinos in harmony with Macao's heritage sites such as Guia Lighthouse and Coloane Village. This sponsorship was in line with a 1994 recommendation by PATA that Macao should use feature films to promote the city's image for tourism (PATA 1994).

BORDER SPACES AS SPACES OF REPRESENTATION II: CHANGES TO MACAO'S FORMER 'BACKYARD'

In contrast to the projects around the ferry passenger terminal at the Outer Harbour, the area around the northern border gate was a residential area mixed with some commercial and industrial functions. It represented the other side of the border city Macao: the fate of migrant workers, refugees and the urban poor who had to find their place on the overcrowded northern fringes of the territory, far from the city's historical centre and the glamorous world of the casinos.

The street layout on the north-western side of the isthmus developed as the result of a series of reclamations for harbour and industrial facilities. It lacks clear orientation points and structure. After the end of the Portuguese dictatorship, social and economic housing estates, such as Manuel Vicente's internationally recognized Fai Chi Kei project (1977-8) were built in this area.

In the year of the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration, a park opened along the north-western border. Like many other public parks and museums dating from the transition period in Macao and Hong Kong, it was named after the founder of modern China, Dr. Sun Yat-sen; but despite this designation, intended to recall a shared past on both sides of the border, the park remained separated from Zhuhai by

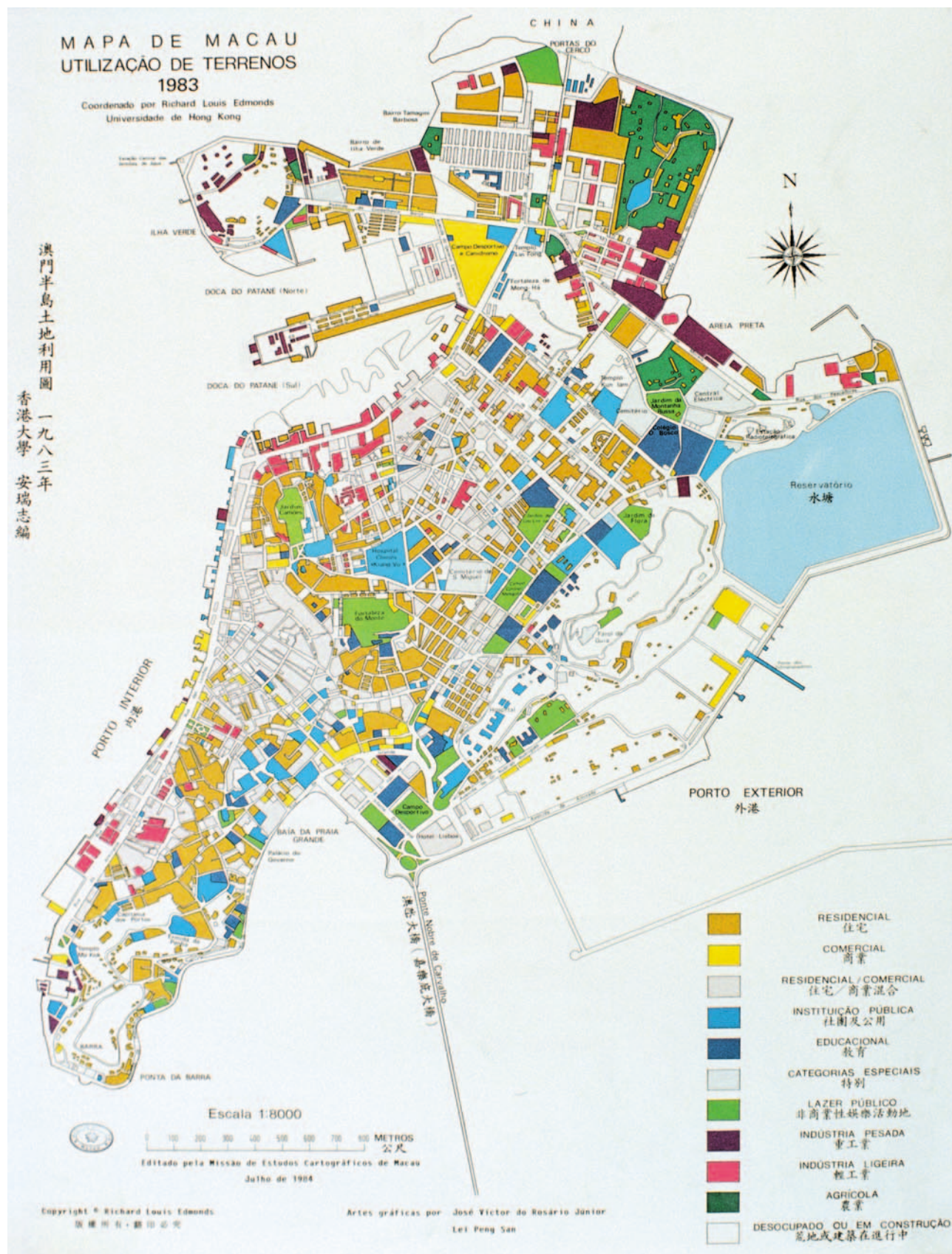
a fence and from Macao's housing areas by a four-lane road.

To the northeast of the isthmus, the first area was reclaimed in the late 1920s for a horse racetrack. It was later converted into a densely built housing area which in part followed the curved layout of the former race track. In the 1980s-90s, more land was reclaimed to the east to cope with the persisting housing demand (Aterro da Areia Preta). The housing projects here were built in a very short period of time in the form of repetitive blocks. Because the goal was to create mass housing, little consideration was given to the quality of life in this area. In the recent casino and real-estate boom, another 'layer' was built as high-class apartment towers along the waterfront. Capitalizing on sea views and the vicinity to the future Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the mainland border, this layer separates the older housing estates from the water like a wall.

Figs. 12 and 13: Waterfronts of Zhuhai and Macao with recent development at the future Hong Kong-Macao bridge landing point (Photos H. Tieben 2009).



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In contrast to Macao's small-scale labyrinth of streets, Zhuhai's Gongbei district across the border was laid out with long boulevards, wide walkways and plenty of trees. The Chinese border checkpoint was placed on a wide open space at the end of the main axis. The building was given a large red roof, underlining the 'Chineseness' of this territory. Zhuhai's border watchtowers were built with similar roofs.

Macao's border spaces along the waterfronts and around the checkpoints are also spaces of representation.

In March 2004 the current checkpoint on the Macao side was opened in order to cope with the rapidly increasing border traffic. In contrast to the earlier border gate, built in the 1990s, its designers abstained from any references to Portuguese and Macanese architecture; instead, its arched roofs call to mind the design of Hong Kong's Chek Lap Kok Airport by Sir Norman Foster and that of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre by Larry Oltmanns of the American architecture firm SOM. With their dynamic forms and sophisticated technology, both buildings created images of progress and prosperity in the years of political and economic uncertainty after the 1989 crackdown on the protests in Tiananmen Square and again after Hong Kong's handover to the PRC in 1997. Macao's current border gate, with its landscaped open space, presents an image of a well-designed interface for the smooth flow of people and vehicles. The old *Portas do Cerco* was left as a relic of the past; but standing as it does between the constant flows of people, it seems to have lost its original place.

In contrast to the strongly fortified border space between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, the river space

between Macao and Zhuhai has only light border protections and thus more potential to become a unifying space for both cities. However, despite the intended integration process, the assigned functions of the Inner Harbour waterfront changed in the Land Use Plans from 1983 to 1994 from harbour facilities to heavy industry (although most old buildings remained in place). Macao turned its back on the rapidly developing Zhuhai SAR at a time when, as mentioned above, the two cities were competing in various areas.

With the aggradations of the river bed and the relocation of the ferry terminal to the Outer Harbour, the Inner Harbour declined. Still today many old shop houses and hotel buildings are abandoned despite their proximity to the waterfront and the historic city centre. The river is polluted. With its strong odour and dead fish floating on the water's surface, the waterfront still remains unattractive. A small terminal in the Inner Harbour (Ponte 14) has survived and still operates ferries to the mainland, but it is hidden in a backyard and difficult to find.

In 2008, the casino-resort Ponte 16 was placed in the centre of the Inner Harbour directly on the axis of the Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro (Cantonese name: San Ma Lo) and facing the open space on the island of Wanzai across the water. It borrowed its name from the former Hong Kong ferry pier, which was adjacent to it. The original art deco style building was kept. The casino-resort includes a Sofitel Hotel and is part of Stanley Ho's casino emporium, operated by his son Laurence Ho. The second big project realized by the Ho family in the same years was the Grand Lisboa, operated by daughter Pansy Ho. It is positioned on the opposite side of the historical centre, dominating the skyline of the Outer Harbour. While according to Stanley Ho the shape of the 58-storey-high tower of the Grand Lisboa resembles a lotus flower, the design of Ponte 16 should bring to mind a Mediterranean city. Thus Stanley Ho, himself a Eurasian, plays with Macao's multiple identities according to the situation. Ponte 16, with its forms borrowed from Europe, represents Macao's western heritage as it faces mainland China across the Inner Harbour; the Grand Lisboa, facing the American casino The Wynn, refers to the Chinese lotus flower, which is, as Stanley Ho has pointed out, the dominant symbol on the Macao SAR flag (Pinto 2007: 28-37).

Fig. 14: Land use plans 1983
(from Richard L. Edmonds and William J. Kyle, 'Land Use in Macau: Changes between 1972 and 1994,' in *Culture of Metropolis in Macau. An International Symposium on Cultural Heritage – Strategies for the Twenty-first Century*, edited by A. H. Chen. Macao: Instituto Cultural do Governo da R.A.E. de Macau, 2001).

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The Ponte 16 project wisely integrates the old ferry pier into the new building, while at the same time, there were public protests in Hong Kong against the Hong Kong SAR government's decision to demolish the Star Ferry Pier in Victoria Harbour. Ponte 16 could be the impetus for the revitalization of the Inner Harbour and the river space between Macao and Zhuhai. For the first time since the 1950s, views to the mainland side are wide open. Stanley Ho also envisioned a future tunnel connection from Ponte 16 to the mainland. Already his Shun Tak Centre in Hong Kong has integrated official border checkpoints into a private development. With Ponte 16 being a casino, however, doing the same thing there is still difficult for the government to accept.

However, the views of Zhuhai from Macao's Inner Harbour can be seen only from the upper floors of the casino resort; the view from the street level is entirely blocked by the casino's massive enclosed base. During construction, the casino was almost doubled in size in order to compete with the new American casinos (Macao Success Ltd., Annual Report 2006: 22). The initial plan of a piazza open to the harbour has not been realized. In the now completed version, the casino is out of scale to the low buildings around it, which comprise Macao's most authentic Chinese district but which were not included in the World Heritage buffer zone. It also is out of scale to the protected World Heritage Sites in the city's centre. This becomes clear when Macao is viewed from the Zhuhai side, as the casino blocks the view of the Monte Fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage site, which has dominated the cityscape for centuries. Looking from Zhuhai, one understands the full impact of the casino project, which dominates the entire river space.

CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

1) MACAO'S AMBIVALENT BORDER CONDITION
IN THE CONTEXT OF NEO-LIBERALISM

Macao's ambiguous condition—characterized by a persisting border that is nonetheless highly permeable to flows of money, people and goods—has attracted money not only for the gambling tables but also for speculative real-estate projects. Low taxes, cheap migrant labour, plus the liberalization of the gambling industry and the easing of Chinese visa restrictions together

facilitated the casino boom in the years 2002-08, in an international climate influenced by the doctrines of neo-liberalism (Harvey 2005). Additionally, the former Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Ao Man-long (now in prison for corruption) helped by deregulating zoning plans and height restrictions, and conducting corrupt land sales. The money of the boom came from gains in Macao's own casino industry, and investors in Hong Kong, mainland China and abroad. Especially active were local casino tycoons and those from Australia and the USA. Real estate projects such as the Lorchia residential towers, located on the southern end of the Inner Harbour next to the World Heritage buffer zone, are managed by property developers listed in offshore centres such as the Isle of Man (www.speymillMacao.com/portfolio, retrieved 1.5.2009). Their portfolio also includes towers at the landing point of the future bridge.

In the years from 2000 to 2007, property prices in Macao doubled to US\$2,490 per square meter. This increase was also related to Macao's immigration policy. To shore up the weakened property market in the 1990s and support property developments, the Macao government started a Realty Investment Residency Scheme. From 1996 to 2007, citizenship was offered to investors purchasing properties worth US\$250,000 (in the year 2000, this figure was lowered to US\$125,000). The construction industry was fuelled with migrant labour from the mainland and Hong Kong. After protests from the local workforce—on Labour Day of 2007, for example (Lo 2009: 19-47)—and the beginning of the global financial crisis, the government changed its attitude and is now using the boundary to cut the foreign workforce in order to reduce local unemployment and dissatisfaction (Pina 2008: 33-8). The current moment of the global financial crisis, which has seen an international effort to examine the negative effects of neo-liberalism, is a good opportunity for Macao to reconsider its future.

2) INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS: OPPORTUNITIES
AND CHALLENGES FOR FURTHER INTEGRATION AMONG
MACAO, HONG KONG AND THE PRD

The Macao SAR government, casino tycoons and real estate investors all profit from the existing border. At the same time, they welcome further integration if it is related to infrastructure projects

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that would allow a faster transfer of people and goods. Stanley Ho was one of the earliest supporters of Gordon Wu's bridge connection between Macao and Hong Kong. Despite the expected negative impact for his own ferry business, he sees the potential of the bridge to bring even more visitors (Sayer 2006: 190-1). As pointed out above, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge will bring not only new business opportunities, but also new challenges such as traffic congestion and pollution—especially for the northern district. The example of the Taipa bridges shows how such infrastructure projects can generate extensive real-estate developments, and one can expect that the impact of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

will be even greater. For the World Heritage city of Macao, this means proactive planning is needed to accommodate growth in a way that is less destructive of Macao's cultural landscape and population.

3) IMPACT OF MACAO'S BORDER CONDITION AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS ON ITS IDENTITY

Macao's economy remains largely dependent on its border status—especially being China's only casino city. In a 2005 road show in Hong Kong, the Macao Government Tourist Office (MGTO) and co-organizer Hong Kong Commercial Radio presented Macao with the slogan: 'A World of Difference, the Difference is Macao.' Local and

Fig. 15: Dilapidated and re-invented heritage: Casino resort 'Ponte 16' in the Inner Harbour (Photo H. Tieben 2009).



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international developers alike promote their projects with reference to Macao's World Heritage status and its self-proclaimed title 'The Asian Las Vegas.' Both underline Macao's hybrid identities between east and west. At the same time, advertisements for property developments and hotels increasingly highlight their vicinity to the mainland border.

Instead of respectfully nurturing the long-standing traditions and qualities of Macao, which should be expected from a World Heritage city, projects such as Fisherman's Wharf and the MGM Grand, with its 'Portuguese' Grande Praça, re-invent Macao as a theme park. The recently constructed projects in the Inner Harbour, such as the Ponte 16 and the Lorch development, interrupt Macao's gentle landscape and obstruct significant World Heritage sites. Although Ponte 16 is marked as an adaptation of Macao's Mediterranean heritage, most other casino and real-estate projects could have been built anywhere. In fact, many of them are designed in Hong Kong and the apartments sold to people from Hong Kong or the mainland. While the road show in Hong Kong was designed to convince the public of Macao's uniqueness, the mushrooming condominium towers make Macao increasingly similar to Hong Kong. Thus Macao's identity is undermined. In addition, the bridge will change the perception of Macao, making it, in a worst-case scenario, nothing but a suburb of Hong Kong.

4) SPATIAL INTEGRATION OF THE TWO CITIES MACAO AND ZHUHAI

Seen from the elevated terrace of the Ponte 16 casino resort, it becomes imaginable that Zhuhai and Macao could become one integrated city, just as in the 19th century Macao's Portuguese and Chinese cities fused together. The development of Zhuhai as a Chinese tourist and leisure resort does not contradict Macao's role as a tourist destination. Both cities currently promote a similar image. Zhuhai advertises itself under the slogan 'City of Romance.' This fits well with the image of Macao in Andy Lau's MGTO-supported film 'Look for a Star,' which promotes an elegant, clean and family-friendly image of Macao's new casinos.

The planning for Hengqin Island could become the model case for the development of a joint future and could help Macao solve its historical congestion

problem. Macao and Zhuhai could join forces to clean up the polluted water of the Inner Harbour. However, to develop an integrated urban space, the populations of the two cities and the developers must proactively work together to shape this space. Currently this seems not yet to be the case, as the only realized developments in the Inner Harbour—the Lorch development and Ponte 16—are mainly oriented towards profit maximization without considering the scale of Macao's historical urban landscape. At the moment it is still mainly the central government in Beijing which is pushing for greater collaboration between Macao, Zhuhai and the cities in the PRD. In 2008, the central government put increasing pressure on Macao to put brakes on its casino development and to diversify its economy. It restricted the Individual Visit Scheme and ordered that no new casino licences be granted. In January 2009, 'The Outline of the Plan for the Reform and Development of the Pearl River Delta (2008-20)' was presented by the Central Government to emphasise the need for cross-boundary integration (en.ndrc.gov.cn retrieved 5.05.2009).

Macao and Zhuhai, which in aerial photos look like an already integrated urban space, on the ground still remain disconnected in many respects. And Macao's history suggests that its ambiguous borders will continue to exist—at least for the next 40 years. **RC**

Author's note: After submission of this paper, the National People's Congress Standing Committee of China passed a bill allowing Macao the rental of a plot on Hengqin island for the construction of a campus of the University of Macau. Thus it promotes a shift in Macao's development from the expansion of the gaming industry to education."

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