History *of* and *for* Macao

Some Observations on Teaching Local History and Identity in Macao's Middle Schools

Cathryn Hope Clayton*

I. INTRODUCTION

During the 1990s, the residents of Macao found themselves at a momentous triple juncture, as the territory prepared for the departure of the Portuguese administration, political integration into the geopolitical entity of China under the "one country, two systems" formula, and attempts to restructure an economy that had boomed and then gone bust, entering a slump in 1994 that only worsened with the 1998 Asian financial crisis. Although the three guiding principles of Macao's integration into the Chinese nation-state—"one country, two systems" [一国两制], "Macao people ruling Macao" [澳人治澳], and "a high degree of autonomy" [高度自治]—were crystal clear in the Basic Law, the specifics of their implementation were open to interpretation: what was the correct balance between emphasis on the "one country" vs. the "two systems"? What was the correct definition of "Macao people"? And how much "autonomy" was enough? Such transitions and such questions made the 1990s a moment of rapid change and uncertainty for the city and its inhabitants.

Transformation and uncertainty are nothing new in Macao.[1] The city has always harbored a highly mobile population—a fragmented, migratory population for whom Macao has often been a "stepping stone", a temporary shelter, or a means to some other end. Yet the particular conjunction of changes that occurred in the 1990s led to concerns that Macao was on the verge of losing its unique character and disappearing—politically, economically, and culturally—into the undifferentiated urban sprawl of its south China neighbors. A variety of government and civic institutions identified the lack of a sense of belonging [归属感]to Macao on the part of its residents as a major problem in ensuring that Macao maintained its uniqueness and, thereby, its identity and its ability to function as a politically and economically autonomous part of the People's Republic of China after 1999. The question of how a sense of local cultural identity may be instilled among the residents of a city that is undergoing rapid demographic, political and economic change became an increasingly urgent one during Macao's transition period.

As a cultural anthropologist interested in the question of when and how particular collective identities emerge and become meaningful, I spent two years (1997-99) in Macao gathering data with an eye towards addressing this issue. The present paper, written in 1998 as a preliminary report on research findings, provides some tentative remarks on one facet of this broader project: namely, the attempt to introduce Macao history as a topic in Macao's middle schools, so as to educate young people into the sense of appreciation for and belonging to their city that provide them with a strong collective identity as "Macao people" [澳门人]. The aims of this paper are threefold: to explain the contributions that an anthropological study of the relationship between education, history and identity can make to our understanding of social and cultural change; to use some insights from the field of American and British cultural studies in examining the broad debates about

*Assistant Professor, University of Macao. Ph.D. in Anthropology (University of California), MA in East Asian Studies (Stanford University, USA) and BA (Williams College, USA). Member of the American Anthropological Association and of the Association of Asian Studies. Research interests: Cultural Identity, China, Macau and Hong Kong.

Professora Assistente na Universidade de Macau. Doutorada em Antropologia pela Universidade da Califórnia. Mestre em Estudos da Ásia Oriental pela Universidade de Stanford, EUA e licenciada pelo Williams College, EUA. Membro da Associação Americana de Antropologia e da Associação de Estudos Asiáticos. Investigadora na área da Identidade Cultural (China, Macau e Hong Kong).

history, cultural identity and education in transition-era Macao; and to provide an example of how these theoretical approaches may be used to analyze the very specific ways these debates played themselves out in two different schools in Macao. This kind of inquiry is meant to provoke as many questions as it answers; and, although its focus is on the special conditions that emerged in the final years of the Portuguese administration, I hope it will serve as a jumping-off point for a ongoing dialogue about questions of history, identity, and education that continue to be of vital importance to the future of Macao.

II. ANTHROPOLOGY, IDENTITY, EDUCATION

In the field of cultural anthropology, the term "identity" refers to three major aspects of human experience. As anthropologist Richard Handler defines it, "identity" refers "first, to individual human persons; second, to collectivities or groups of human beings that are imagined to be individuated somewhat as human persons are imagined to be discrete from one another; and third, to the relationship between these two—in particular, to the ways in which human persons are imagined to assimilate elements of collective identities into their unique personal identities" (Handler 1994: 28). The key to understanding this social-scientific concept of identity is that it is a fundamentally *relational* category—a way of defining "who we are" in contrast to "who we are not"—that emerges only in particular contexts of social action and interaction. This is one reason that "identities" change over time, and why certain ways of thinking about "us" and "them" become more socially important at certain historical junctures—why, for example, identification by "class status" [阶级成分] has lost much of the socially divisive force it used to have in the People's Republic of China in the 1960s, or why "Hong Konger" [香港人] has recently become a meaningful way for some residents of a certain district in southern China to classify themselves. In recent years, the ability to define, control, and maintain the collective identity of certain

Students from primary and secondary schools pose in front of Saint Paul's Ruins, one of the most well-known symbols of Macao's history. Photo by the Government Information Bureau of Macao SAR, 2001.

groups has become a widespread cause for struggle in many places around the world.

The struggle comes precisely in the attempt to respond to the fundamental question of collective identity—"who are we?" As Handler notes, "For any imaginable social group—defined in terms of nationality, class, locality, or gender—there is no definitive way to specify 'who we are,' for 'who we are' is a communicative process that includes many voices and varying degrees of understanding" (Handler 1994:30). The processual nature of identity formation is particularly evident in the example of national identities. The emergence of a national identity can be thought of as the process by which everyone in China, for example, or Mexico, understands and can be moved by the words "we are Chinese" or "we are Mexican." This process is not something that occurs "naturally" or spontaneously in the same way for all the people holding the same passports. Rather, it is the product (at least in part) of the communicative process of socialization. Because schools are an important site for the socialization of young people in modern societies, they often play a key role in the process of national identity formation. Studies undertaken by anthropologists and sociologists of education in North America and Great Britain have demonstrated that schools are an especially important place in which young people stake out an identity *vis-à-vis* the culture and ideals of their parents' generation. They have shown that middle-school curricula on topics such as history and civics are a crucial point in the socialization of youth and the reproduction of the cultural and historical knowledge upon which strong collective identities are based. In a recent study of public education in rural France, Deborah Reed-Danahay observes that "schools are often said to play a central role in the construction of national identity in modern nation-states… [as] sites… for the spread of literacy skills and dominant languages, social stratification, and cultural homogenization"—in other words, as places where young people are taught to reproduce the social and cultural norms of their parents' generation (Reed-Danahay, 1996: 3). Reed-Danahay goes on, however, to demonstrate how local schools can function as "a site of cultural production as well as reproduction" (34), a place in which national culture is often reproduced but *with a difference*.

But among studies in the field of education which specifically discuss the relationship between education and cultural identity (cf. the contributors to Brock and Tulasiewicz 1985; Kahn 1992), most assume that something called cultural identity is distinct from and external to the process of modern education itself. While many of them agree that national identity—defined in ideological terms as loyalty to a particular state apparatus (such as the Communist Party) or to a particular set of ideals or icons of governance (such as "democracy," the national flag, the Constitution)—can be and usually is inculcated in the classroom (Chai 1977), they tend to view culture as an aspect of identity that is associated with minority groups and is more tied to the home, the family, religious rituals and other traditions that are incompatible with, or at least outside the realm of, the goals of a modern system of education. Many of these studies are carried out in "plural societies"—unified polities that are comprised of diverse ethnic groups—and discuss the effect of different linguistic, religious backgrounds on learning, attitudes and the general performance of children in the classroom. Others focus on the development of a curriculum that can transcend these "cultural" identities and unify them into a single "national" identity. Very few, however, discuss the role of modern education in actively producing and reinforcing *cultural* identity among students. It is precisely this topic that became the focus of controversy in Macao during the transition era.

III. HISTORY AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

The lack of local history and geography courses and of civic education curricula has been decried in a wide range of publications in Macao as the main reason for the lack of a "sense of belonging" to Macao—the lack of a strong sense of local cultural identity—that some authors deemed necessary for the survival of the city's autonomy into the twenty-first century (cf. Ngai 1995). But what exactly is the relationship between the study of local history and the formation of collective identity?

Historians, anthropologists, and educators alike agree that the study and teaching of history is an intrinsically political endeavor—or, to put it another way, a form of inquiry that is intrinsically subjective and partial, never objective and exhaustive. The language, content, and method of historical inquiry and instruction always reflect "current values and preoccupations" (Slater 1987: 39-45). That is, they

reflect not only the "biases" of the individual historian, but more generally, the concerns that prevail in the particular social and intellectual environment in which that historian lives and works. Thus all historical works, regardless of how closely they conform to the rules of "objective" research and writing, "are not only documentary sources of information about the past, but also 'verbal artifacts'"—literary representations by individual historians, which are always influenced by the position and perspective of that historian in ways that may be invisible to everyone involved (Rigney 1990:xi). Rather than passively recording facts about the past, history is the process of interpreting and actively *creating* a narrative about that past. To admit that "the existence of an 'unbiased' [history] curriculum is a fallacy" (Tan 1994: 31) is not to criticize individual historians or teachers, nor to criticize the process of doing or teaching history in general; rather, it allows us to explore in further detail the process of *how* these narratives are created: what kind of stories are being told, and about whom. By taking a step back and looking at the presentation and interpretation of historical facts, rather than just at the facts themselves, we can understand in greater depth the "values and preoccupations" of our time. The kind of narratives we tell ourselves about our past are one indication of how we see ourselves in the present: in other words, of our identity. Who are we, where did we come from, where are we going?

As mentioned above, the teaching of the history of a community is one of the fundamental ways of reinforcing a sense of identity among the members of that community. It is no coincidence, then, that in most government-run schools in the United States, for example, U.S. history is a required subject. The study of national history provides citizens with a sense of national belonging, an idea of their place in relation to a national community of people with a past and a future. The same holds true for histories of other groups—which is why subjects like women's history, black history, Asian-American history, working-class history, and local history have begun to be introduced into the curricula of many North American schools. These are all ways of defining and legitimizing collective identities that have often been ignored or underestimated by conventional approaches that focus on the political history of nations.

In fact, the sense of belonging may be even stronger when the unit of study is smaller. As one practitioner and teacher of local history in the southern United States comments, "local history has an immediacy that national history lacks. We can see it and interview local people about it" (Sprague, 1993: 814). A focus on local history changes not only the collective protagonist of historical inquiry, but often requires different research and pedagogical methods (for example, the use of oral interviews as well as written records, and "field trips" to sites of historical importance). These methods *can*, in theory, provide students with a far more concrete sense of their relationship to the community than can the more abstract, mass-produced, textbook-based method of studying national history.[2]

In practice, however, the question of precisely who is the collective protagonist of the historical narrative remains an important one even at the level of local history. The definition of what, and who, is "local" is often not as obvious as it might seem at first. As one anthropologist has noted, "local areas are often treated as if they were self-evident, to be defined in purely physical geographic terms… However, the identification of a region is only partly dependent on such objective factors; regions are also socially and historically constituted. Factors from outside the local social group, such as external political influence over an area, can also be said to constitute the local region" (Tanner 1996: 230).

In a region such as Macao, it would be difficult to overestimate the influence of external political forces as well as of other supra-regional factors such as international commercial activity, major waves of immigration and emigration, and the influence of international mass media. Given this situation, the question of how to define the "local" in local history becomes even more difficult. In this sense, the question of local identity—"what, and who, is local?"—is a question that is fundamental to the enterprise of doing and teaching Macao history.

Answers to this fundamental question, in Macao as elsewhere, often emerge in the details of historical texts or curricula. Some local histories in other regions have focused on the development of communities at the level of the village, town, city, or neighborhood, highlighting the difference between these communities and the larger national (or ethnic or class) community; others have maintained a focus on national identity by investigating the impact of national policies or events at the local level, and the role of the local unit in larger

national historical processes. Local histories of port cities, or regions in formerly colonized nations, for example, can focus on international influences by defining their "local" subject as part of a trade route or political empire. More comprehensive studies or school curricula may combine several of these foci in discussing a single locality.

In short, the relationship between local history and the reinforcement of a local identity is not as simple or straightforward as it might at first seem. During the transition era, the debates that surrounded the introduction of a local history curriculum in Macao's secondary schools, and the different methods employed

Despite the debate [to teach or not to teach local history], some schools in Macao did opt to begin introducing more elements of local history into their curricula in the years just prior to the handover

to teach such history in different schools, reflected the complexity of this relationship as much as they did the importance of the question of "Macao identity" at this historical juncture. A closer investigation of the context in which these debates emerged is necessary before we can grasp the implications of the departing Portuguese government's attempts to promote local history in Macao.

IV. EDUCATION IN MACAO

During the 1990s, studies on the education system in Macao proliferated, in English, Portuguese, and Chinese alike.[3] Many of these studies were sparked by the major education reforms initiated by the government of Macao in 1990. Rather than undertake a comprehensive review of these studies, in this section I will do two things. First, by way of providing some background information on the structure of Macao education in the 1990s, I will outline some of the major observations about Macao education that these studies share. Second, I will address, in a theoretical framework, some of the questions that my interviewees addressed in a more practical context, by reviewing in more depth the contributions of a handful of studies that have particular relevance to the debate about the teaching of local history in Macao. Though none of these studies directly addresses the question of cultural identity and local history instruction, they tiptoe around the question of what, and who, is "local," that is the main focus of the present inquiry.

Many of the studies of education in Macao have approached the issue from the perspective of the large literature about the social and political role of education in colonial or decolonizing societies (see, for example, Bray 1992; Yee 1990). Studies that take this perspective almost uniformly find that Macao does not quite fit this model. In addition, several of the most recent of these previous studies have been undertaken by scholars from Hong Kong, who are interested in comparing Hong Kong and Macao in terms of education policy and finance, curriculum changes, and the implementation of reforms. As these scholars observe, given the commonalities between the two territories,[4] this comparison is a logical one to make; however, they find that the differences in their educational systems are significant in a variety of ways. In general, the studies note that Macao is distinct from Hong Kong (and from many other territories, "colonial" or not) in two major ways. First, the style of governance practiced by the Portuguese government in Macao was long characterized by a markedly *laissez-faire* attitude towards education. Unlike Hong Kong, Macao has never had a unified, universal, compulsory education system; the only schools whose curriculum and administration is directly under the control of the Macao government are the "escolas oficiais" or government-run schools, which in 1994 accommodated something less than 7% of the total student population, but received approximately two-thirds of the total government funds allocated for education. [5]The rest of Macao's schools are private institutions run largely by religious or other types of civic organizations (such as neighborhood associations, clan associations, unions, and so forth).

Mark Bray characterizes Macao's schools as not exactly a system, but rather an "uncoordinated collection of institutions based on models in Portugal, the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong" (Bray 1992: 328).

Young Macao students, between classes. Photo by Government Information Bureau of Macao SAR, 2001.

In the absence of a strong, centralized bureaucratic control of curriculum and school administration, and of a territory-wide school-leaving examination, in the 1990s Macao's many private schools enjoyed a *de facto* autonomy which they were hesitant to relinquish, even when offered financial assistance from the government (see Section V below).

The second difference remarked upon by several of these studies is the relationship between Macao's small population and the lack of locally produced textbooks in Macao. In the first place, the small market potential for textbooks in a territory with a total population of approximately 450,000 and a total student population of approximately 96,800 makes the local publication of textbooks unprofitable for private publishers.[6] Secondly, the fact that many of Macao's schools are run by organizations with pedagogical and political affiliations to regions outside Macao—a fact that is reflected in, and reinforced by, the tendency for the majority of Macao middle-school graduates pursuing tertiary education to do so somewhere outside of Macao—means that textbooks produced in these regions are often preferred to the few local publications that do exist. In this sense, the curricula in most of Macao's private schools are dictated largely by the demands of university entrance examinations in Taiwan, the PRC, and Hong Kong (cf. Bray and Tang 1994; Bray and Hui 1991; Tan 1993). The ramifications of this simple fact for the study of Macao history at the secondary level will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

One further characteristic affecting Macao's education system, argues Albert Yee, is the fact that Macao's "colonial bureaucracy… has been overhauled each time a new governor is appointed. Since governors typically serve only three years before being replaced and must heed the political climate back home, few Portuguese civil servants have developed real commitment to Macao as a community" (Yee 1990: 69-70). According to the author, this meant that there was little incentive for any given administration to institute a long-term strategy to bring Macao's schools into a centralized and strictly regulated system of free, compulsory and universal education. Even when certain administrations did attempt reforms in this direction, Yee claims, the thorough reorganization of bureaucratic

structure and goals that usually accompanied the arrival of each new governor tended to thwart those efforts.

In 1993, John Kang Tan conducted a comparative study on "the history of the history curriculum" in four middle schools in Macao and four in Hong Kong. Tan's article focuses on the differences and convergences between the history curricula implemented in Hong Kong and Macao, which he views as European colonies in the process of "consensual decolonization," defined as "a process of transferring colonial political authority in which there is a large measure of agreement among the participants that the outcome of the process is to be high-level autonomy" (Tan 1993: 16). The study covers the broad spectrum of history subjects taught in middle schools, including world history, Chinese history, and local history, and Tan is interested in comparing the relationship between colonial educational policies and the teaching of history. Tan found substantial differences among the history curricula of the four Macao schools he studied; these included not only differences in perspective, interpretation, and emphasis, but also in which subjects were considered important enough to merit classroom time.[7] However, he provides an equivocal evaluation of the government's *laissez-faire* attitude towards curricular policy that allowed such inconsistencies to emerge in the first place. On the one hand, he faults the Macao government for not putting more money and effort into creating a unified curriculum that would focus on "local" interests and keep a tighter lid on the influence of "outside political forces;" on the other, he grants that this lack of centralization made possible a much broader range of curricular innovation at the level of individual school. [8]

Although he does not directly address the question of education, history, and cultural identity, it is evident that Tan sees a clear link between them. He notes that many of the reforms were inspired by a desire on the part of the Macao government "to preserve or even strengthen the Portuguese culture as Macao is preparing to be returned to China" (Tan 1993: 162). Tan remarks upon the limited success of these efforts, due to the decentralized nature of the education system, but his evaluation of their effects is ambivalent as well. Although he implies that the government's attempts to beef up courses on Macao history are a nothing more than a continuation of colonialism by other means, he is equally critical of those schools which do not offer Macao history at all or which mention the Portuguese presence in Macao in an overly critical way. Tan's position is clear: Macao's history, *properly defined*, should be included in the history curricula of Macao's schools.

But what is the proper definition of this history? Ricocheting through Tan's article is the unspoken question of "whose history is local history?" This question takes on even greater significance in Bray and Hui's 1994 article on the effects that imported textbooks, which are used in the majority of Macao's classrooms, might have on students. The authors take mathematics textbooks as their point of comparison, precisely because such texts are commonly thought of as "neutral": devoid of any specific cultural bias and "more easily portable across national boundaries than such subjects as social studies, history, and geography" (34). Nevertheless, the authors remark upon the prevalence in mathematics textbooks of examples, drawings, and units of measurements taken from Hong Kong, the PRC, England, or Portugal. For them, "it does seem regrettable that the lack of local textbooks fails to make the subject relevant to the local context." This lack is regrettable not textbooks fail to promote local pride or a sense of belonging, but rather because "an opportunity may have been missed to make schooling more relevant to daily life" (Bray and Hui 1994:37). Yet this assertion begs still further questions for an anthropologist whose eye is trained on the supra-local aspects of the lives of many Macao residents. Geographical proximity is, after all, but one way of defining relevance.

In their conclusion, Bray and Hui implicitly raise another question that touches on the concerns about local history instruction voiced by the educators I interviewed. They raise this question in the form of a commonly-held assumption, namely, that from an educational perspective, Macao's overwhelming dependence on imported textbooks may be considered a problem, since in subjects such as social studies, history, and geography, "it may be argued [that] it is particularly important for pupils to learn about the histories of and other features *of their own societies*" (Bray & Tang, 1994, p. 37; italics added). However, in what follows, I show that the debates about teaching local history in Macao schools hinged precisely on the question of how to define "our own society," and in this sense, they are debates about identity. For some of the teachers and administrators who participated in this study, teaching students about "their own society" is precisely what they are doing when they teach students the history of the China instead of the history of Macao.

V. CURRICULUM REFORM AND NEW EDUCATION POLICIES

Before delving into the specifics of the debates surrounding "local history" in Macao's middle schools, it is instructive to provide some background on the reform efforts that began to change the structure and content of education in Macao in the 1990's. Of special importance to the current paper are the curricular reforms associated with this more general reform initiative. As many sociologists of education have noted, there is a strong correlation between curriculum change and social change. By providing us with insights into how and why certain topics gain and lose educational significance at certain junctures in certain societies, the study of curriculum change can help us to "understand larger political and social processes of change, control, and reproduction" (Goodson, in Goodson & Ball, 1984:26). The debates that surfaced in transition-era Macao over the educational significance of local history are a prime example of the indexical relationship between social-political and educational change.

In his paper on the history of the history curriculum, John Tan notes that "the Joint Declaration of 1987 has initiated desires for reforms in the general aspects of the education system" (Tan 1993: 160). As a whole, the reforms reflected a move towards coordination among, if not exactly centralization of, Macao's schools, and a more active state role in education. In terms of finance alone, the amount of government spending on education proportionate to the entire annual budget increased markedly between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s, although, according to some scholars, the starting point for these increases was "extremely low" by international standards.[9] While careful to reiterate a respect for the pedagogical and administrative autonomy of private schools, the administration expressed its interest in enabling free and compulsory basic education for all Macao residents. Towards this end, it established a "free education network" for the first seven years of instruction, and gave private schools the option of joining this network on a voluntary basis. In return for agreeing to abide by certain rules (such as limits on class size and on extra fees that could be charged), private schools were given per capita tuition subsidies based on annual enrollment figures.[10] A detailed analysis and evaluation of this and other reform measures is outside the scope of the present paper; however, such measures do indicate a strong interest on the part of the government in expanding its role in education by providing financial and curricular support to interested schools.

A crucial aspect of these reforms was the passage of the first law governing the education system in Macao.[11] This law set out the principles governing the organization, finance, administration, development and evaluation of a single system of education comprised of both official (state-run) and private schools. The law stipulated nine basic objectives that should guide the reforms of Macao's educational system. First among these objectives was "to promote the development of civic consciousness through the transmission of the culture unique to Macao that is essential to reinforcing and consolidating its identity" (Governo de Macau, 1992: 5).[12] While this article left undefined precisely what this "culture unique to Macao" may be, it did codify into law the role that education has (or should have) in imbuing Macao's youth with a sense of the importance of local culture.

Pursuant to this law, a series of curriculum reforms were initiated in the early 1990s. Most relevant for the present paper is the *Junior High School History Curriculum Guidelines*, initiated in 1993 and subject to annual review and revisions.[13] This Chinese-language document had been compiled by the Curricular Reform Working Group, comprised of government administrators and educators from both official and private schools. Designed as a curriculum outline for history teachers of Forms 1-3 (grades 7-9) in official schools, this document provides a sketch of the topics that should be covered during each academic year, the approximate number of classroom hours to be spent on each topic, the specific educational objectives associated with each topic, and suggestions for classroom activities. According to these guidelines, two years of Chinese history instruction are to be followed by one year of world history,[14] and Macao history is slated to be taught during the third year (Form 3), after completion of the three major units on world history.

The general policy put forward in the *Guidelines* for Macao history instruction indicates that the objective is to provide students with an understanding of "Macao's role as a meeting-point between China and the West" (Governo de Macau 1995: 3) and to affirm a "positive attitude towards the process of cultural exchange between China and the West…an attitude of openness" (4). The preface explains,

"The history of Macao originates in China, but is closely linked with Portugal. Amicable contact between China and Portugal has a history of more than four hundred years. Thus, explorations of issues such as the early history of Macao, the Portuguese arrival in the Far East, Sino-Portuguese relations, cultural exchange, economic development, and Macao's [impending] return to Chinese administration, form another aspect of this Outline." (Governo de Macau, 1995: 3)

The details concerning the suggested classroom hours and activities for the Macao history portion are not included in this edition of the *Guidelines*, which provides such details only for Form One.[15] However, the authors of the *Guidelines* do suggest breaking the Macao history unit into four subunits:

- the early history of Macao;
- Macao's cultural characteristics;
- the social and economic development of Macao;
- Macao's return to Chinese administration [in 1999].

The inclusion of this section on Macao history in the reformed history curriculum for official schools illustrates the fact that, for the Macao government at least, local history took on a new "educational significance" in the years following the signing of the Joint Declaration. Yet this is not the only significance of this document. By stating publicly the rationale for, the aim of, and the general areas to be covered in the study of Macao history, the *Guidelines* also provides a policy statement on how the historical narrative should be created. In other words, it is itself a statement about who and what Macao is: a "meeting point between east and west," a city whose long history of openness and "amicable" commercial relations commerce has imbued it with a unique culture. As we shall see in the following section, this identity is one of a number of issues at the core of the debates about the implementation of local history curricula in Macao schools.

VI. TO TEACH OR NOT TO TEACH? LOCAL HISTORY IN MACAO'S CLASSROOMS

All the educators interviewed for this study said they were aware of the fact that, in the wake of the educational reforms, the state had made various attempts to encourage local history instruction at the secondary level, and even to compile and distribute a unified curriculum that teachers at different schools could use on an optional basis. What was most striking in this context, then, is the difficulty the government met with in promoting such courses. "They've been talking about it for several years now," said one teacher at a privately-run Chinese-medium school, "but they have not made any progress. As soon as they start asking local schools for their input, the whole project comes to a standstill." In the initial stages of my research, when I was trying to locate schools that might be interested in participating in this study, my question "which schools in Macao teach local history?" was met with quizzical looks and puzzled silences from almost everyone—educators, administrators, education researchers, students and former students alike. "The majority of schools do not offer courses in Macao history," one retired government official who is knowledgeable on the subject told me, "There is still much promotion work to be done." Given the amount of effort and funding that was expended on this objective, and the publicity it received, why did these measures fail to be implemented in the years prior to the handover?

To answer this question, it is necessary to take a step back and examine the debates over the usefulness, desirability, and feasibility of actually teaching Macao history at the secondary level. Despite the claims in the media about the urgent need for local history courses, and despite the state's obvious efforts to promote such courses, the argument in favor of the positive effects of teaching local history was by no means a definitive, even within education circles. A cluster of distinct but related objections, both practical and theoretical in nature, revealed the pervasive problems of the definition and significance of the "local" in local history.

A history teacher in one of Macao's top Chinese-medium middle schools, Mr. Sinn,[16] specified two key practical reasons why there was no formal, structured, textbook-based classroom study of Macao history at the secondary level in his school—and why, in all likelihood, there never would be. These two reasons were the most common (and, to a certain extent, the most common-sense) explanations, echoed by virtually all the educators and students interviewed.

The first reason had to do with the time constraints resulting from the fact that the preeminent concern of his students was to pass the various university examinations necessary to continue their studies in Taiwan, the PRC, or Hong Kong. "Of course, none of these examinations includes questions about Macao

history. There is already so much material to cover in order to prepare the students for what they will be examined on," he lamented, "that time simply does not permit adding any other subject matter." This argument was certainly difficult to counter, given the success this school had in getting their students into colleges and universities around the world. Yet consider its implications: such an explanation indicates that there is a fundamental and unavoidable incompatibility between the attempt to educate Macao's young people into a sense of local identity and the attempt to educate them in a manner that will help them, and Macao, integrate into and benefit from the international community. Students leaving Macao to attend the best universities in other regions of the world are precisely those who could benefit Macao the most in the city's attempts to restructure and diversify its economy. According to some, the stronger these students' sense of Macao identity, the more likely they would be to return to work in their hometown. Paradoxically, however, it is precisely these students who must concentrate so completely on preparing for international examinations that they would not have the opportunity to take the courses that designed to instill in them this sense of local identity. In this sense, an emphasis on local history in the classroom was a luxury that had to be sacrificed to these students' international pursuit of precisely those skills that Macao so keenly needed. Although this teacher felt that local history instruction was an important endeavor in order for Macao people to "understand Macao," his priorities in the classroom lay in providing students with the tools they would need to further their education—which, for most of his students, meant attending institutions of higher education abroad.[17]

The second "practical" reason Mr. Sinn gave focused more on the problem of producing and promoting a single, unified local history curriculum or textbook for use in Macao's schools. His point was that one of the main reasons Macao history was not taught on a more widespread basis was the lack of teaching materials; even if teachers had the time to fit Macao history into their curriculum, the task of collecting materials and compiling a textbook would prove too daunting and time-consuming. Yet, in his view, this problem could not be solved by providing these teachers with a unified, ready-made curriculum that the government would distribute free of charge. His colleague, Mr. Ho, a secondary-school teacher known for his dedication to research and teaching about Macao, agreed: "They've tried," he said. "They've tried to produce a unified curriculum, but because of the different interpretations of history between the Portuguese government and the Chinese, they came to an impasse and gave up. The Portuguese say that China gave Macao to them, but of course, the Chinese cannot accept this interpretation. They can't even agree on this single basic fact about Macao's origins—how can they produce an entire curriculum?" It is at this juncture that the "practical" reasons intersect with more theoretical ones.

One teacher who participated in this study had been responsible for compiling a curriculum outline called the *Essentials of Macao History* [澳门历史纲要]," that was to be distributed for use in government schools (see Section VII.a below). He indicated that this document was a very rough and incomplete set of notes, but admitted that he had no desire to expand these notes into a textbook for publication. He said, with a laugh,

"Whatever you write, some group of people will get angry at you. If you write one thing, the Portuguese won't like it. If you write something else, the Chinese won't like it. So the average person, even if they are capable of writing such a textbook, is not willing to write it. What for? All that work and you just end up getting yourself in trouble."

Ms. Chu, a history teacher in a Luso-Chinese government school that was planning to use this *Essentials of Macao History* outline for a short course on Macao history in the near future (see below), echoed this polarity between "Chinese" vs. "Portuguese." She noted the difference between the way Macao history was taught at the Portuguese-medium, government-run Liceu Nacional and the way it would be taught at her school. The Liceu's local history curriculum, she says, is not designed for local people; that is, it does not focus on China or Asia or the history of the Chinese in Macao. Rather, it focuses on the Portuguese. "We don't use it [a Chinese translation of the Portuguese-language textbook on Macao history formerly used by the Liceu] because the Portuguese have a different concept [观念], a different interpretation of history from us Chinese. Their curriculum is entirely different, it is in the Portuguese style, and so they study more about Europe and Portuguese history." Whereas Mr. Sinn and Mr. Ho indicated that the main problem had to do with a difference of opinion regarding the interpretation of

specific political events, Ms. Chu put a slightly different spin on the problem when she brought up the question of the "local." She cast the difference in ethno-geographical terms: the Portuguese, while they were "in" Macao, were not "of" Macao, and thus a history of Macao that began from the European point of view would be inappropriate because it would not be "local" enough. It is significant in this context that, when I asked whether the local history course at ESLC would include any references to the history of the Eurasian Macaense community, Ms. Chu replied in the negative. Despite the fact that most Macaenses meet almost any conceivable geographical criterion for being "of Macao," their mixed ethnic heritage and their historical tendency to identify with Portuguese culture put them outside the scope of the "local," defined in ethnic terms.

However, during the course of our interview, Ms. Chu went on to mention the fact that the difference in interpretation of Macao's political history had been no small obstacle to the government's attempts to promote local history. All three of these educators noted two main topics that were especially controversial, both having to do with the question of Macao's political sovereignty. The first was the question of precisely how the Portuguese established their presence in Macao. Was the territory of Macao a gift to the Portuguese from the Ming court or had the Portuguese occupied it without permission? Did the "land rent" paid to Chinese officials by the Portuguese settlers constitute a bribe paid to local officials or a legitimate transaction indicating the Chinese government's acknowledgment of the Portuguese right to settle there? While both of these questions have been the subject of a flurry of research in recent years that has significantly complicated and compromised both sides of the debate, what is salient here is the perception among teachers during the transition era that ideological controversies over Macao's political identity created the biggest obstacles to teaching local history.

As to the possibility of using a textbook that would present the students with these debates themselves, instead of simply a single historical narrative that comprised one "side" of the debate, Mr. Sinn gave some pedagogical reasons why this would not be appropriate: "It is extremely difficult to present controversial topics in textbooks. Of course everyone is entitled to their opinion, and is entitled to write books and articles advocating that opinion. That is entirely appropriate in the realm of scholarly debate among adults… Even for continuing education classes I have taught, that are attended by adults, I have presented these controversies to them for discussion… However, for the purposes of secondary education, you simply cannot have such controversy. Although these students—at the age of 15 and 16—are competent and thoughtful, still they are quite young. Their powers of judgment are not fully developed, and need the guidance of the teacher."

For this reason, he indicated, they must be presented with a sort of "unified front"—a single interpretation of history that they may grasp as "truth."

Mr. Sinn indicated that this problem might cease to be a problem after 1999, when the Portuguese administration would leave and, presumably, take the "Portuguese" interpretation of history along with them. For others, though, the problem of the interpretation of history was not something confined to single events or specific controversies; it was a more pervasive and existential condition that influenced not only the way local history is taught, but their evaluation of the relative (un)importance of Macao history itself.[18] Most people interviewed—even those who did not consider local history to be a feasible or "convenient" topic for classroom instruction—agreed that it was something that Macao residents should learn about and view as a source of local pride and identification. As Mr. Pun, a government education official and an enthusiastic supporter the policy of emphasizing Macao history in schools, argued,

At least by doing this people come to believe that Macao is important, and worthy of study. Even if their opinions or perspectives on the history of Macao are different from those that they learn in school, they at least get the basic idea that there is something about Macao that is worth discussing.

Some people, however, questioned even this assumption. A different education official expressed his ambivalence towards the new *History Curriculum Guidelines* bluntly, saying that while he did not think the implementation of a Macao history curriculum was particularly objectionable, neither did he think it was particularly necessary, nor worthy of too much time, effort or funding. As he put it, "My opinion is that Macao is part of China — the same way that, for example, the Algarve is part of Portugal, or California is part of the United States. Are there history classes about the Algarve, or about California? Perhaps there are a few classes in individual schools that discuss the region's

place in the history of the nation as a whole. In any case, such courses are certainly not a priority. This is how I try to explain it to people."

For him, it was clear that by furnishing students with information about the history and society of China, Chinese history courses were already doing enough to teach young people about "their own society;" the only purpose served by local history would be to further demonstrate to students how their local community is part of the Chinese nation.

And finally, some respondents found the study of Macao history to be fundamentally incompatible with a sense of belonging and local pride. One middle-aged Chinese man I interviewed, who was born, raised and educated in Macao before going to Taiwan for university, had never studied Macao history at any point in his academic career. He did not feel he had missed out on anything; in fact, he found it surprising and ironic that the study of local history had been chosen as one way to instill a sense of belonging and civic pride among Macao's Chinese youth. He summed up his indifference this way: It's like if I invited you into my home one night and you woke up the next morning and started giving me orders, and then stayed in my house giving me orders for many years because I was too weak to kick you out. Why would I want my children to know about that? To remember that? Why would that make them feel proud? In fact, it makes me feel ashamed, very ashamed."

For him, the identity of Macao's past is a colonial identity; to emphasize "local" history is to emphasize Macao's "foreignness" and to remind local citizens of China's "national humiliation." Given this point of view, he implies, for a Macao Chinese to be proud of being from Macao would require historical amnesia rather than historical consciousness.

VII. HISTORY AT SCHOOL, HISTORY AT WORK

Despite these debates, some schools in Macao did opt to begin introducing more elements of local history into their curricula in the years just prior to the handover. The rest of this paper is devoted to a comparative analysis of two such schools, and of the texts and pedagogies they employ in teaching local history. How does a particular understanding of the definition and significance of local cultural identity influence, and permeate, these texts and pedagogies? What kinds of lessons about identity can students be expected to learn from them? What follows can only be a partial answer to these questions, but I hope that this partial answer will be an instructive one, in light of the theoretical and empirical contexts described in the preceding sections.

Escola Secundária Luso-Chinesa

The Escola Secundária Luso-Chinesa Luís Gonzaga Gomes [澳门中葡中学], or ESLC for short) was established in 1985 by the Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude, the government department responsible for the administration of Macao's official schools. It was part of a group of government schools at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels whose language of instruction was Chinese but which maintained an emphasis on Portuguese language and culture. At the time of this study, the ESLC was the only government-run secondary school whose language of instruction was Chinese.[19] The emphasis on Portuguese was one of the major characteristics that distinguished the content of the ESLC education from most private Chinese-medium schools, which usually offered English as the first (required) foreign language and offered Portuguese only a few hours a week as an elective, if at all. In contrast, at the Luso-Chinese school, Portuguese was the first foreign language and was taught six hours a week. The other major characteristic distinguishing the ESLC from the privately-run Chinese-medium secondary schools in Macao at the time was that it was entirely free of charge: no tuition or fees were assessed, and school uniforms and books were provided for free. For this reason, the principal told me, a large proportion of students came from Macao's lower socioeconomic ranks, many of them being "recent immigrants" from the mainland. Because of the emphasis on Portuguese, one teacher indicated, most of graduates of the ESLC would be employed by the Macao government.

The ESLC was one of the target experimental schools for the series of curriculum reforms described above. In the principal's view, these reforms were a long-overdue attempt to "create a curriculum, especially in the fields of history and geography, that would be *of* Macao and *for* Macao people [澳门自己的，给澳门人的]." Prior to the reforms, almost all the textbooks used at the ESLC were imported from Hong Kong; according to one history teacher at the school, the history of Macao was mentioned only in the context of world

The façade of the Escola Secundária Luso-Chinesa, a public secondary school. Photo by IC, 2002.

history topics such as "The Portuguese Discoveries." At the time of this study, however, the ESLC was preparing for the first time to teach Macao history (in the spring of 1998) as a separate subject in accordance with the *History Curriculum Guidelines*. Although the research presented here concluded prior to the beginning of this experiment with the new curriculum, data gathered through interviews with the school director and history teachers provided some indication of the aim, scope, and methodology of its implementation.

In conformity with the *History Curriculum Guidelines* provided by the Education Service, ESLC students studied Chinese History in Forms 1 and 2, and World History in Form 3. One of the history teachers interviewed for this study indicated that Form 3 was an appropriate juncture at which to teach Macao history, since the students would already have a solid background in both Chinese and European history, which would give them the necessary conceptual tools with which to understand the development of Macao.

Since there was still no textbook for this course, the teacher planned to use a photocopied outline of approximately twenty pages, with fourteen supplementary pages of maps and tables of geographic, topographic, and demographic information. This outline had been compiled by a teacher from private school, who had also been consulted by the government in designing the *Junior High School History Curriculum Guidelines*. "But in truth, it doesn't really matter who compiled it," added the ESLC teacher. She indicated that because this Macao history text-outline was developed in accordance with the curricular guidelines, there would be "no conflict" in perspective, and the text-outline did not need to be approved by the Education Service or any other advisory body.

The outline was divided into twelve units, which roughly correspond to the four general areas to be covered according to the *History Curriculum Guidelines*. These included the introduction; three units relating to Macao's early history—The Portuguese Discoveries, The Beginnings of Macao History, and Macao's Golden Age (16th-17th centuries); five units relating to Macao's economy and society—the Decline of Foreign Trade (1644-1840), The Opium War, The Portuguese Occupy Macao After the Opium War, Twentieth Century Macao, and Macao's Society and Economy; two units covering Macao's cultural characteristics—Macao's Religions and Macao as an Exchange Point between

Chinese and Western Cultures; and one unit on the transition period leading up to the 1999 transfer of sovereignty to China.

According to one history teacher interviewed at ESLC, because history classes met for three hours per week, the plan would be to spend one classroom hour on each of the twelve topics, completing the entire Macao history section in the span of one month. However, she also noted that in the World History course taught in Form 3, there was always too much material to be covered in the space of one academic year. For this reason, she said, she would try to spend as much time as possible to cover the highlights of the local history outline, but because of time constraints, she could not be sure that they would be able to dedicate an entire month to Macao history. In justifying her prioritization of World History over Macao history, she cited the practical problem that her students faced in needing to prepare for college examinations. Although students would take year-end examinations on what they had studied in her class, knowledge of Macao history would be "entirely unnecessary" for students preparing to continue their studies at university. "It's just to give them a rough idea," she explained, "just to let them know a little bit about Macao. Because most Macao people don't understand Macao history—many students just know little bits and pieces about the development of Macao's history, but have never studied it in a systematic way." Several times throughout our conversation, the instructor emphasized that Macao history was not an academically important topic, but rather was something with which the residents of Macao who live and work in Macao—and especially those who work in the public sector—should be acquainted.

Let us turn now to the theoretical question posed earlier in the paper, namely: how is the collective "local" identity of Macao defined as the subject of the particular historical narrative used in this school? In order to address this question in greater detail, and to understand the correlation between the way the historical narrative is presented and its implications for the inculcation of cultural identity among students, we must take a closer look at the text-outline used in the class. Education researchers have noted the importance of the textbook in many societies as "the major device for initiating students into paradigms" (Cooper 1984: 47). Studies show that the textbook itself—the language used, the examples given, the photographs and maps depicted—can impart to the student messages about political, social, and cultural beliefs in an extremely subtle way, often unintentionally and without the direct intervention of the teacher (Brown 1985; Kalia 1980; Segal 1997). The case of the Macao history text used at the ESLC was slightly different, since the rough and condensed outline form of the materials meant that the classroom interaction between teacher and students, the interpretation and explanation provided in lectures, and the amount of time spent on each topic in class would be as influential on the students' overall learning experience as the textbook itself. However, since the classroom lectures were to follow the outline closely, and since the outline was to be distributed to students as a study guide, it is both appropriate and informative to take a closer look at how the outline itself is structured. What kind of "message" about Macao's identity might this text be imparting to students?

The first point worth noting is the fact that the historical narrative of the outline begins well before the arrival of the Portuguese in Macao. The "Beginnings of Macao History" section starts from the archaeological record of habitation beginning 6,000 years ago; more recent archaeological records are mentioned by way of indicating that "the ancestors of the Chinese people" who belonged to the same "cultural system" as the inhabitants of Guangdong Province were already living and working in Macao. Written records of administrative creation of Xiangshan County, which included the region now known as Macao, are cited to emphasize the fact that "since ancient times, Macao has been Chinese territory." The combination of administrative, cultural, and ethnic ties linking the region to Guangdong province (and therefore, by implication, to the rest of China) provides a powerful sense of Macao's inalienable Chineseness—that the territory is Chinese not only politically, but also by virtue of its material culture and its ancient, pre-historic links to a group of people which later came to be called "Chinese." The fact that an entire unit is devoted to the history of Macao before the arrival of the Portuguese sets the stage for a clearly Sinocentric history.

The units that discuss the history of Macao shortly after the arrival of the Portuguese contain a significant amount of political as well as economic history. Two major characteristics are emphasized in discussing the relationship between political and economic history throughout the chronological periods into which the text is divided. The first is the theme of Macao's status,

throughout the four-hundred-odd years since the arrival of the Portuguese, as a "special administrative region." The history of Macao from 1580 to 1840 is repeatedly characterized as a period in which Macao was a "special region" [特殊地区] whose "administration, legislation, and taxation and other such aspects" were subject to "special management" [特殊管理]. In 1974, after the Portuguese revolution, the Portuguese government declared the end of colonialism, in the following year, the constitution was changed and "Macao was declared a "special region" [特殊地区]: not a colony, but rather a special region which is Chinese territory and simply managed by Portugal." Finally, the outline concludes, in 1999 when the sovereignty of Macao is turned over to China, Macao will become a Special Administrative Region [特别行政区] under the principle of "one country, two systems"; its administration, legislation, taxation, and so on will continue to be subject to special management. In this way, the text-outline conceives of Macao's history as a continuous whole, in which the roots of the current situation can be encountered in the earliest periods of political history. This approach de-emphasizes the sense of 1999 being a radical historical "break," or the "end of an era." Rather, it implies that the status of Macao as a Portuguese colony was an anomaly, a political and historical aberration, and that 1999 represents a return to "business as usual" for this historically "special" region.

The second major characteristic that is emphasized in this early history—the political and military quiescence of the Portuguese—addresses the question of the colonial status of Macao. In discussing the reasons for the establishment of the Portuguese settlement in Macao, the text emphasizes that "at this time, the Portuguese traders did not yet have the strength to force the Chinese government to permit them to reside [in Macao]; the late Ming government certainly did not fear the Portuguese merchants." After they did settle in Macao, the text continues, "the Portuguese obeyed the Chinese government. This situation lasted for approximately 300 years. This is clearly different from the invasion of China by the big powers [in the nineteenth century]."[20] This interpretation has a complicated series of ramifications. On the one hand, it perhaps unwittingly, but nonetheless clearly, resonates with a reinterpretation of Chinese history that has arisen in the 1990s, with the departure from Maoist historiography and the reaffirmation of certain aspects of (Han) Chinese culture and tradition. Rather than dismissing China's entire imperial system and culture as "backward" and "feudal" (as Cultural Revolution-era Maoists did), this interpretation instead affirms the Ming court's original superiority over the Europeans who reached its shores before the nineteenth century, and blames the "national humiliation" of China by the European powers in the nineteenth century on the corruption and erroneous policies of the Qing Dynasty (which, as a Manchu dynasty, was an alien governing force in itself). On the other hand, the statement that the Portuguese merchants "obeyed" Chinese officials—an interpretation that once would have irked many Portuguese nationalist historians—is offset by the implicit comparison with the "big powers," especially England. This comparison depicts Portugal in a positive light and, ironically, concurs with some Portuguese colonialist histories which claim that Portuguese colonialism was of a kinder, gentler type than that of the British (cf. Freyre 1961). This version of political history is one that would fit neither with previous mainland Chinese histories of Macao that focus on the evils of colonialism and the victimization of China at the hands of the European powers (see, for example, Fei 1988), nor with previous Portuguese histories that focus on the glory and strength of the Portuguese empire and the heroic exploits of its representatives in the south China seas (see, for example, Pereira 1995 [1899], or Montalto de Jesus 1984 [1926]). Once again, it bears repeating that this is not to imply that the version of history presented in this outline-text is in any way "false"; indeed, the revised version of Macao's political history was based on a wider set of archival documents, and more intensive research in Chinese, Portuguese, and English-language sources, than the versions which preceded it. However, as mentioned above, it is significant to note the way in which the inclusion of this revised version of events in a middle-school textbook may indicate, and run parallel to, changes in Macao's social and political atmosphere in the years leading up to the handover.

It should also be noted that the entire political history of Macao in the twentieth century—a turbulent time in Asia as a whole, and no less for Macao—is contained in a single unit of this outline. The social effects of political turmoil of the 1910 Portuguese revolution, the 1911 Chinese revolution, World War II, the establishment of the People's Republic of China,

the 1974 Portuguese revolution, and the signing of the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration in 1987 are all mentioned as topics that should be explained in class; however, given the one-unit-per-class breakdown of the teaching schedule, much less time and detail is allotted to these topics than to, for example, the Opium War and its aftermath. The effects of the Cultural Revolution, the events of 1966-67 in Macao, and other such topics from very recent history, are not mentioned as appropriate or relevant topics for the classroom.

In terms of social and cultural history, the text-outline emphasizes Macao's role as a point of interchange between China and Europe in two main areas: religious culture and technological culture. The unit on Macao's religions introduces two major types of Chinese religions, Daoism/folk religion and Buddhism, Macao's three main temples, as well as the development of Buddhist institutions in Macao. In a parallel structure, the outline then introduces two major types of Christianity, Catholicism and Protestantism, three of Macao's churches, as well as the history of some Christian institutions such as St. Paul's University and the Morrison school. The text then goes on to evaluate the two-way traffic of cultural exchange between China and Europe that took place in Macao, emphasizing the role of the Jesuits in "transmitting" European technological culture into China and Chinese traditional culture into Europe. This parallel structure is carried through into discussions of settlement patterns on the peninsula: at the inception of the Portuguese settlement, as the text describes, the Chinese villagers who inhabited the peninsula were clustered mostly along the northwestern coast of the peninsula, on the Inner Harbor, while the Portuguese settled along the southeastern coast of the Praia Grande; gradually, over the years, the two settlements grew towards each other. This image visually and spatially echoes the conceptual point that is the primary "message" of the outline, which is that of Macao as a meeting point between two originally distinct, autonomous and fully-formed civilizations. The neat parallel structure of the section on religions encapsulates and emphasizes, in an easily rememberable way, the historical process of the meeting between two separate but equal civilizations. In this sense, according to this outline, Macao's "cultural characteristics" are not, strictly speaking, characteristics that are unique to Macao in itself. Rather than being an active participant in, and the locus for, the creation of new cultural forms, Macao is portrayed as a passive point at which two pre-existing cultures rubbed shoulders. The process of this coming together or "transmission" of culture is itself imagined as a neutral or transparent process, in which the individual actors involved (Jesuits, Chinese officials, Sinologists, traders) functioned as "conduits" for this process of cultural interchange without altering, or being altered by, the intercultural interactions themselves. It does not, for example, discuss the explosive effects of the Rites Controversy,[21] and the way that the actual experience of the "transmission of technological culture" into China fundamentally altered the ecclesiastical history of the Catholic Church in Europe. Nor does it discuss the possibility of the emergence of something new, something strictly "of Macao," in the process.

Escola Pui Cheng

Escola Pui Cheng [澳门培正中学] was established in Macao in 1938, and is affiliated with the Pui Cheng schools in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Sponsored by the Baptist Church of Hong Kong, Pui Cheng is nominally a Protestant school, although students of any religious background are accepted and the religious content of instruction is limited to one hour per week. Pui Cheng offers Chinese-medium education from pre-school through Form 6 (12th grade), and prides itself on its highly competitive application process. The majority of students are recruited at the pre-school level and remain at Pui Cheng for their entire scholastic careers; only in the first year of junior high school and the first year of senior high school are a handful of students accepted. Unlike the ESLC, Pui Cheng is a privately-run school and, as of 1998, had opted not to join the free education network, arguing that in order to maintain their high academic standards, their operating expenses and overhead were necessarily higher than other schools and thus could not be covered by the set government subsidy for network schools. Despite the steep tuition and fees, however, each year there are more applicants than the school can handle. According to one teacher, approximately 98-99% of its graduates continue on in some form of tertiary education, in the United States and Canada, the PRC, Taiwan, at the University of Macao or in Hong Kong.

At the time of this study, the curricular structure at Pui Cheng was also different from the ESLC. In Form 4 (Grade 10), students chose to follow one of two

Escola Pui Cheng (pre-primary through secondary levels) is housed in the Palacete Lou Lim Ieoc, which the government has classified as part of Macao's architectural heritage. Photo by Mica Costa-Grande, 1998 (IC Archives).

academic tracks, either the Sciences Track or the Humanities Track.[22] History was taught three hours per week in Forms 1-3 (Grades 7-9) and four hours per week in the Humanities Track in Forms 4-6 (Grades 10-12). According to one of the teachers interviewed for this study, most of the instructors, and especially the history teachers, had received their training at schools in the People's Republic of China. Because of the Hong Kong connection through the Baptist church, most of the textbooks were imported from Hong Kong. It is perhaps ironic that although several Pui Cheng teachers were heavily involved in the process of curriculum reform, because of the entirely private and autonomous nature of Pui Cheng's administration, these reforms did not directly affect the curriculum at their school.

Among several educators interviewed for this study, Pui Cheng had a reputation as a school with one of the strongest records of achievement in the promotion of Macao history. Despite this reputation, and despite the fact that two Pui Cheng teachers I spoke with had been involved in several major research projects and publications on Macao history outside the school, the history of Macao was not a distinct subject in the classroom history curriculum at Pui Cheng. One history teacher interviewed said that while he believed that the study of local history was important for Macao residents, and wished it could be introduced in a more systematic way into the classroom, the constraints on the students' time made it impossible. "When we get to the Ming dynasty [in the Chinese History course]," he said, "I always add some information about Macao. Also when we get to the Opium War, and at other such relevant points, I try to supplement my lectures with as much information about Macao as possible. But there is no textbook, and no formal unit especially about Macao history. And the students are never tested on it."

However, during the 1990s, Pui Cheng took the lead in an experimental form of local history instruction that, according to all indicators, has met with remarkable success. In 1993, as a response to a suggestion made by the students, the history department began an ongoing project called "The Trades of Macao" [澳门百业]. This was a hands-on research project that formed a part of the history curriculum in Forms 5, 6, and 7 (grades 10, 11, and 12, when students are between the ages of 15-18). Students would be divided into groups of no more than six, and, with the guidance of the teacher, would choose a trade or industry in Macao. They would then conduct interviews with Macao residents involved in this trade and collect other kinds of information about its history and development in Macao. After three months of research, they would hand in a report that would be evaluated and graded as part of the history class. The report would have to include information from primary and secondary sources, oral and written sources, as well as a more reflexive section describing the research process, the successes and failures of teamwork, and each student's reflections upon the value of this learning experience. At the end of the semester, all the projects would be displayed in a school-wide exhibition.

The most striking aspect of this program, for this study, is how little classroom time was devoted to it. The teacher would spend a few classroom hours at the start of the project to explain methods—how to plan the research, make contacts, conduct interviews, use evidence—and to help the students choose their topics, but the work students put into their projects was entirely on their own time, and in addition to the regular homework they were expected to complete for their history classes. The teacher agreed that the work was an extra burden for students, especially those in Form 6 who must prepare for college entrance examinations. Nevertheless, he said proudly, "the students get very excited about it. They do all the work themselves, from the research plan, the actual research, the photography, layout, typing, computer graphics, even the cover design" —this last comment he made as he held up one report with an elaborately-decorated cover depicting the history of wedding dress shops in Macao. "Some of them even write reports as long as 10,000 words!"

According to the instructor, the advantage of this kind of history, and one reason they found it so exciting, was that students started from something that had a direct and tangible relevance to their lives. The instructor would encourage them, if possible, to choose to investigate a trade involving their family or friends —partly as a practical consideration, he said, since it is easier for students to gain access to resources and permission for interviews, as well as to ask more probing questions of kin than of strangers. In addition, though, this strategy enabled students to discover more about their own immediate social milieux. This approach shared the advantages that other scholars have noted regarding the practice of social history—namely, that it is an approach whose grass-roots focus enables budding historians to make connections between historical socioeconomic processes (which textbooks usually described in large and abstract terms) and the very concrete changes in the lives of the people affected by these processes. Finally, the nature of this kind of inquiry also meant that most of the historical materials the students collected—both oral and written—dated from the past fifty to one hundred years, which allowed students to understand the historical processes that had most immediately and recently shaped the society in which they were living.

Another advantage to this method is the longer exposure students had to the topic of Macao history. Students were required to conduct such research projects three years in a row, in Forms 4, 5, and 6 (grades 10, 11, 12), with a different topic and a different research team each year. According to their instructor, each year they would become more familiar with the process of doing research and their knowledge base would widen, so they would be able to integrate more and more information into each successive report. By Form 6, he said, "Some of the reports are of excellent quality. Of course, they cannot compare to the work of a professional historian; but for high school students, the quality and the breadth of knowledge about Macao that the reports demonstrate is remarkable."

A final advantage was that rather than detracting from the students' preparations for university, the skills they developed in doing this kind of project directly benefited them in their college careers. The teacher observed,

The ability to do independent research, knowing how to use a library, how to find information, how to structure, write, and edit a paper—all these skills help them in college. One of my students who continued

on to college in Taiwan came back after his first year and told me his professor could not believe he was really just a high school graduate—based on the quality of the student's research paper, the professor thought he must have had some form of tertiary education already.

Thus it appears that, in this approach, the apparently irresolvable conflict between an "education for identity" and an "education for university" was resolved, as the students involved in these projects gained the necessary skills for success in university precisely by doing hands-on research into the history of "their own society." But without a textbook to "initiate" these students into one of the "paradigms" of local identity, what kind of lessons could they learn about Macao's identity and their own? How much could investigations of such limited scope tell students about the larger question of "who we are"?

Some preliminary answers to these questions may be deduced through a closer analytical look at some of the student papers. Twenty-three of the best reports from the period 1993-1995 were published in the 1996 edition of "Trades of Macao" [澳门百业], which was also compiled, designed, typeset, and published by students. These reports cover everything from Macao's "traditional" tradesmen—such as fishermen, herbal pharmacists, cricket-sellers and noodle-makers—to more modern industries such as telecommunications, taxi driving and the Grand Prix. Although the scope of each paper is limited to the history of a single trade, most of the papers manage to take into consideration not only the technical aspects of the trades, but also a wide range of social, cultural, and economic factors involved in the organization and development of each trade.

For example, the lead paper on the history of pawnshops traces the origin of this, one of "humanity's oldest professions," back to the Han dynasty, discusses the etymological evolution of the Chinese term "pawnshop" [典当铺] and evaluates the political and economic factors leading to its growth in the Song dynasty. It then goes on to discuss the factors leading to the establishment of the pawnshop industry in Macao, describing the effects of the Opium War on Macao's economy and of the influx of refugees from the War of Resistance against Japan on "three industries" that had sustained Macao until that era. In short, the authors had to draw on a strong command of the contours of twentieth-century Macao history in order to make their point. They go on to describe not only the technical aspects of how the industry works, but also the social organization of the pawnbrokers' union, the patron gods and folk customs of traditional pawnbrokers, and the history of the relationship between pawnshops and the rise of Macao's gambling industry.

Similarly, the paper on the fishing industry describes in detail an industry that is often mentioned as one which, along with international trade and with the manufacture of fireworks, incense, and matches, was vital to pre-WWII Macao. The authors discuss not only the technical aspects of the local fishing industry (such as the types of ships used, types of fish caught, methods of fishing and of cold storage, the amount of fish exported, the average income of fishermen, and so on), but also the relationship between this industry and the natural and social environment of Macao: the climate and ocean conditions, the demographics of the fishing population, subethnic divisions and the ways of life of the "water people [水上人],[23] the patron gods and religious festivals celebrated by fishing communities, the public administration of fishing and docking rights, and the historical importance of the fishing industry to Macao's twentieth century development. Both the fishing and pawnshop articles evaluate the role of the social and economic changes of the past twenty years in bringing about the decline of these traditional industries, while sparking the kind of "modernization" and development that brought Macao out of a decades-long period of economic stagnation.

Finally, in their reflexive postscripts, several students commented on the "invisible" and under-appreciated nature of many trades that Macao residents walk past on the street every day, such as itinerant cobblers or newspaper vendors. These students remarked on the intellectual satisfaction they gained from not just noticing, but also coming to understand, the environment around them that they had taken for granted in the past. Many students commented on the initial fear they felt in asking for and conducting interviews, and the ensuing elation of overcoming those fears and having the rewarding, valuable, and unforgettable experience of talking to an older generation of Macao people—people who they otherwise might never have had the opportunity to encounter in such a meaningful way. In the words of

one student, "In the process of doing so many interviews, I also learned a lot about other people's experiences and about the art of communication; this was a major, unforeseen lesson in experience that I couldn't have gotten in the classroom." This student's words indicate the extent to which the process of doing this kind of "interactive" history can also an "unforeseen lesson" in identity formation, defined as the process of coming to understand oneself as a part of a larger collectivity.

VIII. LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It should be stressed that the findings presented above are based on research conducted by one researcher in two schools over a three-month period. The conclusions could be broadened and contextualized only through a more comprehensive study of the implementation of local history curricula in a wider selection of schools throughout Macao, both before and after the handover. However, the main limitation on the analysis presented here was the lack of access to ethnographic data from the students themselves. Ethnographic observation in the classroom would have allowed for a much more concrete analysis of how the textual presentation of Macao history was presented by teachers—which aspects were emphasized or de-emphasized, what kind of contextual or anecdotal information or visual aids the teacher provided to illustrate the theoretical and empirical points made in the text. Such an approach could also begin to assess the way in which students encounter this information, for example, by taking into consideration the effect of the general "classroom culture" on students' learning process. Finally, open-ended ethnographic interviews with students before, during, and after their study of Macao history would provide the opportunity to assess their attitudes toward and understanding of the study of local history, as well changes in their perceptions about Macao's collective identity and their individual relationship to it.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

In the words of one historian, "To be is to have been, and to project our messy, malleable past into our unknown future" (Lowenthal, 1985: xxv). In many ways this sums up the relationship between identity and history, and the need to educate the future leaders of a community about that community's past. But as this study has shown, the questions of "whose past?" and "whose future?" determine not only the specific ways the past gets shaped in the process of being projected into the future, but also the very shape that community's future can take. These questions will never be answered definitively. But as long as these political arguments over what aspects of the past should or should not be taught are allowed to thwart the process of teaching itself, the future of the group hangs in the balance.

The kind of history done by the students of Pui Cheng may not be appropriate or feasible for students at all schools; yet it does provide some insights into how one school has dealt the seemingly impossible circumstances surrounding the process of teaching local history in Macao middle schools. Taken together, the essays in "The Trades of Macao" provide pieces of a mosaic that sketch out, but do not circumscribe, a collectivity loosely bound not merely by geographical proximity, but also by socioeconomic forces and social interactions. While this method is thoroughly "local" and firmly Sinocentric—the only Macao "trade" discussed in the book which involves non-Chinese actors or perspectives was the Grand Prix—the process of doing this kind of extra-curricular history does not provide students with a single formal paradigm of cultural identity which they should take on as their own. Rather, it provides them the guided opportunity to forge elements of their social and cultural identities through interaction with and analysis of their immediate surroundings. This sidesteps, rather than glosses over, the controversies over the interpretation of political history that plague more conventional methods of teaching local history. This kind of history cannot be a substitute for the more conventional, textbook-based political history and ancient history as taught at the ESLC; each type of historical knowledge has its own significance and value. However, the "interactive" history projects that Pui Cheng students do remind us that classroom education is but one way, among many, that the local knowledge necessary for a strong sense of belonging can be both imparted by teachers and acquired by students. RC

Author's Note: This article began as a report on research findings for the Cultural Institute of Macao during my tenure as an ICM scholarship holder in 1997-8. I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to the Cultural Institute, as well as to Mr. Wong Chao Son [王就顺], Mr. Chan Jileung [陈子良], the administration and teaching staff at the Escola Luso-Chinesa Luís Gonzaga Gomes, and the many Macao residents I have spoken with over the course of this study. Their generosity with their time and information — and patience with my incessant questions — is constant source of inspiration. All shortcomings of the final version are my responsibility alone.

NOTES

1 For example, see Jonathan Porter, *Macao: The Imaginary City, Culture and Society, 1557 to the Present* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

2 I have seen this argument advanced by many practitioners and advocates of local history; however, I have not seen any studies that either substantiate or negate the relationship between pedagogical methods and identity formation.

3 One significant aspect of this proliferation, which must remain outside the scope of this paper, is the renwed interest and attention being paid to the history of education in Macao by the Macao government. Several new publications, compilations of archival documents, and reprints of early twentieth-century works have been published in the past few years (e.g., Claro & Alves 1997; DSEJ 1994, 1996a, 1996b; Mendes 1996), and several more are in progress.

4 Mark Bray describes these commonalities: "Both are colonies of European powers, populated mainly by Chinese, heavily dependent on commerce, and scheduled for reintegration with the People's Republic of China at the end of this century" (Bray 1992: 322).

5 See So 1994 and Hu 1994 for these figures. They were the most recent reliable figures available to me at time of writing, although all indications are that the implementation of the free education network in 1993 changed considerably the allocation of government funds for education.

6 Statistics from *Macao in Figures*, 1997.

7 For example, different schools included or excluded, to varying degrees, such topics as Macao history, post-1949 Chinese history, twentieth-century world history, and Portuguese imperial history.

8 This equivocation is reflected in his alternating usage of the nouns "neglect" (implying a negative abdication of governmental responsibility) and "decentralization" (implying a positive dissemination of authority) to describe the educational policy of the Portuguese government in Macao.

9 For this and further information on financing education in Macao, see Bray 1989 and 1992; Hu 1994; and So 1994.

10 This system was introduced in 1995 and has met with some resistance from schools fearing that entering such an agreement would irrevocably compromise their autonomy. However, the popularity of the network grew through the 1990s, some say in response to pressure from families who would otherwise be burdened with high tuitions. See *Panorama de Macau,* pp. 368-369.

11 *Sistema Educativo de Macau*, Lei Nº 11/91/M de 29 de Agosto, 1991.

12 This is my translation from the Portuguese original, which reads: "Promover o desenvolvimento da consciência cívica através da transmissão da cultura própria de Macau imprescindível ao reforço e consolidação da sua identidade." It is significant that the Chinese version of this article does not use a term that translates as "identity." The Chinese original, 透过对本身特性的加强和巩固所不可缺少的澳门本身文化的传递，促进公民意识的发展," translates more accurately as "to promote the development of civic consciousness through the transmission of Macao's own culture, which is necessary to strengthen and consolidate its own *characteristics*" (Chinese version, p. 4, italics mine). This discrepancy is due in part to the fact that the Western concept of "identity" does not have a widely-used Chinese counterpart. This fact in itself is worthy of consideration, but is outside the scope of this paper. For the purposes of this paper, the significance lies in the *similarity* between the Chinese and Portuguese versions of the law, which both stipulate an emphasis on "culture" and "localness," and the important role of education in developing a consciousness of these things.

13 The most recent edition of these *Guidelines* available at the time of this writing was the Trial Edition issued for the 1995/96 academic year.

14 The two years of Chinese history are organized chronologically: Form 1 covers the period from the mythic origins of the Chinese people through the fall of the Ming dynasty (1644); Form 2 covers the establishment of the Qing dynasty (1644) through the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949). The one year of world history, taught in Form 3, is divided into three periods – the prehistoric period, middle antiquity, and a cluster of topics surrounding political and cultural history since the European Enlightenment.

15 I was told that this is simply a matter of time: the Curriculum Reform Working Group had the responsibility of overhauling the entire K-12 curriculum, and at the time of this writing they so far only had time to complete the details of the curricular outlines for primary school and Form One. It is also the case that as of 1995, the "free education network' was in effect only for the first seven years of instruction; for this reason, the curricular reforms at the primary level have taken priority.

16 All names have been changed to protect informants' confidentiality.

17 Although the establishment the Universidade de Macau and the Instituto Politécnico de Macau provided local options for tertiary education in the 1990s, limits on the capacity, course offerings, and international recognition of these institutions meant that universities in Taiwan, China, North America and Hong Kong were still desirable and, for some fields of study, necessary destinations for Macao's college-bound young people.

18 One history teacher interviewed by John Kang Tan in 1993 justified his school's decision not to teach local history by arguing that, "Anyway, Macao does not have a long history" (Tan 1993, 140). Although Tan did not elaborate upon what the teacher may have meant by this comment, it appears that the teacher's interpretation of Macao's history as "inglorious" led him to two conclusions about the nature of time and history: first, that a historical period of more than 400 years should be considered "brief"; and second, that the significance of any given historical narrative should be measured by its chronological duration.

19 In 1999, another official Luso-Chinese secondary school opened in the densely-populated northern district of Macao. The new school focuses more on technical-vocational education, while the ESLC maintains its focus on liberal arts education.

20 The original text reads: 此时葡萄牙商又还没有强迫中国政府接受他们居留的力量，晚明政府也还不至于惧怕葡萄牙商…在澳门居留后，葡人是服从中国政府管理的。这种情况持续了差不多三百年之久。这与列强对华入侵的情况迥然有别.

21 A deeply divisive issue that focused on the question of whether Chinese practice of paying reverence to ancestors and to Confucius, by performing rites involving bowing, burning incense and so on, should be considered "religious" practices and therefore be outlawed by the Catholic Church, or "secular" cultural practices that would not be incompatible with Catholic belief in one God. The Jesuits advocated a "cultural accommodation" policy that would allow Chinese Catholics to continue performing these Rites; other orders strictly prohibited them. This debate, including the many linguistic and cultural controversies it involved, divided the Church in the 17th-18th century. The resolution of this debate in favor of the "prohibitionists" was partly responsible for the Kang Xi emperor prohibiting the practice of Christianity in China, for the Portuguese government banning Jesuits from all Portuguese territories, and for the Pope dissolving the Jesuit Order completely.

22 By way of comparison with the ESLC, it is interesting to note that at Pui Cheng, Portuguese language is offered as an elective, three hours per week, for Humanities-track students starting in Form 4.

23 The fishing communities in southern China who live entirely on their boats are commonly understood to be "at the lower end of the social strata, and they are usually referred to pejoratively as Tan-ka [蛋家], which the rest of the Cantonese regard as a distinct ethnic group" (Brito Peixoto, 1988: 8).

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