

The *Ambivalent Identitarian*: Macanese Metamorphoses in Times of Change

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ABSTRACT: This article examines two different topics related to the concept of ambivalence and its phenomenological experience applied to the Eurasian Macanese community case study. The first section, from an ethnographic point of view, addresses a set of intersubjective dynamics of identification and differentiation developed by a group of friends during an intimate reunion of commensality. During this particular event, the social actors highlight their ambivalent condition, deploying this as an improvised and positive strategy to adapt to changeable external circumstances. The second section recasts the narrative of Macao's hybrid history, which lies at the origin of the Macanese community and characterises its permanent redefinition, thus drawing political and cultural dimensions into the discussion alongside the identity-building project implemented in the recently-established Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao SAR). In this case, there is an implicit ambivalence to the Sino-Portuguese negotiation process over the application of the People's Republic of China nationality law to Macao-born residents, in particular to ethnically mixed Macanese, within the context of the handover of sovereignty to China.

KEYWORDS: Eurasian Macanese; Macao SAR (China); Identity ambivalence; Commensality; Citizenship.

Introduction

*Historically, Macao and the Macanese are the result of a daily negotiation. The Macanese community [...] was able to adapt constantly [...] this is a feature of Macao itself and [by extent] of the Macanese people.*¹

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As a product of colonial history, the Eurasian Macanese emerged out of a complex and prolonged biological and sociocultural blending of Europeans (mainly Portuguese) and Asian women over centuries in Macao. This gave rise to a Eurasian appearance and, even though they have remained Portuguese citizens, primarily Catholic, and literate in Portuguese, they tend to be fluent in Cantonese (the dominant local Chinese spoken language) and have developed a distinctive lifestyle. This also inspired the development of a series of 'mixed' sociocultural markers such as a Creole language and a specific type of 'fusion cuisine', and also managed to establish their own professional occupations, serving as intermediaries between Chinese interests and the Portuguese administration.

Ethnic relations in Macao, in contrast to those of the British Empire in neighbouring Hong Kong, for instance, largely resulted from the personal identity options of individuals and were not externally imposed on Eurasians due to their physical appearance (Pina-Cabral 2002: 22). However, the Macanese community, which itself gave rise to this particular identity, still remains marked by an ambivalent dimension: resulting from procedures of inclusion and exclusion according to individual interests and motivations that developed over time and history in relation to external environments; and with their boundaries remaining both undefined and fluid as they constantly moved between distinct social universes.

The literature conceptualises *ambivalence* as regards to its meanings and sociological applications as an individual experience, which embodies the quality of that with two values (opposite or different), the co-existence of contradictory and mixed feelings or emotions stemming in part from countervailing expectations about appropriate individual actions (Smelser 1998, Weigert 1991). At a social level, the ambivalence approach serves to explain the ambivalence of subjects in accordance with their structural features, rather than with their personal characteristics, by revealing inconsistencies and ambiguities in those social structures. Much of the ambivalence concept's sociological application implies these conflicting denotations, and this volatile experience is mostly treated as the result of contrasting social pressures exerted on social actors (Coser 1966, Merton 1976, Yair 2007). More recent attempts to reformulate the existing conceptualisation of ambivalence places the emphasis on both social relations and individual agency, as structurally created contradictions experienced by individuals in their ongoing interactions with others. Specifically, research about intergenerational family ties points out the advances made in treating ambivalence as a 'multilevel phenomenon that requires ongoing negotiation' (Connidis 2015: 91) to understand the intricate dynamics and contradictions of family

life (Connidis and McMullin 2002), and of family separation and reunification across time and space (Puppa 2016, Sun 2017).

In all possible formulations across the extensive applications of the ambivalence concept, we may note the emphasis on its usage as an analytical tool embedded in a theoretical framework that allows us to deal with situations of manifest contradictions in which there is no observed correspondence between cultural assignments, verbal formulations and shared actions. Nevertheless, no one conceptualises ambivalence as a permanent condition of identity, which individuals make use of as an improvised strategy for positive manipulation, motivated by the personal and/or collective benefits they might obtain while dependent on their suitable and appropriate adaptation to external conditions. Long-term ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews with Eurasian Macanese returns experiences of these inconsistent attitudes and informant discursive uncertainties, their evolution and the sophistication deployed whenever unexpectedly confronted by their multiple identity affiliations.

Based on a more extensive research project (Gaspar 2015), the ethnographic research for this article took place in Lisbon between 2010 and 2011, within an informal group of relatives, friends and former classmates from Macao.² The article explores the condition of ambivalence inherent to individual identities as critical and affirmative strategies by social actors permanently negotiating and redefining their place within the constraints of social structures. To illustrate how Macanese people actively produce this ambivalence, rather than covering it up as an inability to decide and act, I begin by describing an intimate social interaction between old friends during a meal in which I participated.

Considering the fact that commensality and food practices may serve as strong cultural and ethnic identity markers (Anderson 2005; Belasco 2008; Johnston and Baumann 2010; Kershner 2002; Sutton 2001), which may reflect ongoing group

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and individual attachments to multiple identities as well as to various social positions within a contemporary situation (Chapman and Beagan 2013), they constitute a privileged field for observing simultaneous ambiguities such as those expressed during this particular reunion of Macanese friends. The event illuminates how through the manipulation of various actions, individuals developed a 'dynamic situation of identification and differentiation' (Pina-Cabral 2010: 176). We furthermore experienced two phenomena during the meal: (a) that the Macanese, ethnically and culturally, are neither Portuguese nor Chinese; (b) despite not belonging to either of these two categories, the Macanese share affinities with both and correspondingly know how to interact with both, which enables them to access these two different social circumstances.

In the final section, the ambivalence analysis extends to the evolutionary narrative of historical continuity applied to the current context of transient values and hierarchies in the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), which reinforces the Macanese identity by legitimising it in symbolic, political and economic terms while nevertheless also standardises the ambivalent domain the Macanese apply to themselves. This thereby argues that the phenomenological experience of *identity ambivalence* reflects the hybridisation process that both lies at the origin of and in the permanent redefinition of the Macanese community. Also reproduced formally by political powers and social elites, identity ambivalence exemplifies how collective identities have been conceptualised in a way susceptible to gaining public recognition in contemporary postcolonial Macao.

An improbable Macao friend's dinner

Over a year since the beginning of my fieldwork within the Macanese community and here I was, taking part on this special, select occasion: eating with a restricted group of thirteen close friends at the welcome dinner for Francisco³, who had just arrived



Francisco's welcome dinner at the restaurant Repasto das Flores, Lisbon 2011. Photo by the author.

from Macao. Francisco's visits to Lisbon are always anticipated with great expectation in keeping with his role as a leading figure within the community, succeeding his father, and involved in the leadership of the main association activities in Macao, which are the most visible expression of this small community. Victoria — my 'host mother' within the group — took over organising the meeting and, to my surprise, asked me to choose the restaurant. This provoked a feeling of accomplishment for an anthropologist doing fieldwork with a strongly participatory nature: I was no longer the 'stranger', some ethnographer attending extended Macanese events; instead, I was now the 'friend' researcher actively involved in bringing about a restricted meeting of longstanding friends (Thomas 2016).

On that summer evening, all the guests arrived early to Repasto das Flores — a sophisticated Portuguese restaurant in Lisbon — feeling excited to meet Francisco and competing for his attention with questions about Macao and their folks. The buzz at our large table was, however, interrupted by the restaurant manager who wished to inform the group about his most emblematic dishes. After his intervention, and following an awkward silence, it was time to order. Ignoring the suggestion made by Victoria about

recreating a 'Chinese-style' meal, by ordering and sharing various dishes, individual choices came to the fore and each diner eventually chose their own food.

The dishes began arriving and were distributed among the guests. Soon, people started tasting the (Portuguese) food, which everyone I had interviewed had mentioned as the elected choice in both their Macao and Portugal homes. The reactions that came were then among the most curious and interesting an anthropologist might observe, especially due to the huge mismatch between the rhetoric and the practices of these social actors. The food was only being tasted in a cautious manner and in very small portions. Some reacted to the flavours by saying that the dishes were 'not very familiar', 'without much taste' or even 'badly cooked'. Another behaviour worthy of mention during the dinner includes the way the food would randomly circulate — in all directions — from one person to another. In general, praise for the dishes was only incipient or non-existent, in marked contrast to the previously observed flattering comments poured out about Macanese, as well as Cantonese, food.

The Macanese take open pride in their love for eating and eagerness for fine delicacies. Clearly, the parties they organise in Lisbon always attract large attendances mainly due to the particular Macanese cuisine served. Evidence stems from how most guests attending these events, despite travelling various distances, immediately disperse after the meal ends. In a way, the awkward situation that evening made me realise the lack of Portuguese restaurants on the Macanese gastronomic itinerary. Whenever going out for a meal, Chinese restaurants are systematically chosen as the destination for such occasions. Over the course of the interaction and on confronting the new facets then under introduction, the successive aspects of the individuals involved soon became clear as they shared and revealed the performance of practices and discourses sometimes of identification, sometimes of differentiation. This dynamic of inconsistencies was

particularly highlighted by the context described, not only for having been provoked, albeit accidentally, by the anthropologist, but especially because it showcased the complicity within the group in the field of communicative strategies emerging from the recognition of their own discursive contradictions when faced with the researcher who questioned them about topics that proved amenable to revealing such inaccuracies.

Firstly, the choice of restaurant had been left to an external subject, thus allowing for a predictable 'loss of control' by the group over the evolution of events. While the choice of Portuguese cuisine initially received consent, the dissimulation of the constraint became, as the dinner progressed, harder to maintain and even assumed an ironic stance. The selection of dishes was treated as an embarrassing moment due to their unfamiliarity, and with the subsequent inability to decide, exposing this individualised inconsistency while simultaneously confronted by the inquirer to whom contradictory information had previously been provided. Then, as if to shed this discomfort, we witnessed an assumed identification with the format of the occasion and correspondingly ignored a request for sharing several collective dishes. However, the very moment after the meals were served and the guests had begun trying them, the dishes then embarked on a tour around the table with this practice differentiating itself from the previous intention and in fact resembling the type of behaviour typical of a Chinese meal. Finally, a large dose of irony was used during the food tasting in marked contrast with the regular satisfaction that Macanese and Cantonese food generally elicits. I must mention that, even though I was deeply interested in the actions carried out, the simultaneous recourse to both the Portuguese and Cantonese languages made by individuals must also not be neglected.

These ethnographic interactions enabled me to witness a creative process of successive transformations in the different angles of identification and differentiation. Hence, on behalf of the social actors,

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The Macanese group, Food and Drinks Party (PCB), at one of its events held at the Macao House. The table is always placed in the centre of the room, on which were arrayed various dishes of Macanese cuisine, some of which had been prepared and brought to the party by the guests. Lisbon, 2012. Photo by Gina Badaraco.

there existed a mode of steady manipulation of their ethnic and cultural attributes, as well as the actions and words they shared among themselves, which allowed them to continuously produce identification and differentiation regarding the circumstances they faced in conjunction with a systematic re-evaluation of that fluid process. This dynamism is similarly caused by the reactions of people involved in these social interactions, by the specific ethnic and cultural conditions of subjects and never disregarding their collective memory which, in the end, defines and characterises the Macanese identity.

A few days after this event, I found myself meeting Francisco on his own, and again for a meal, this time lunch in Ta Pin Lou, a Chinese restaurant that is well-known among the Macanese. As the meal evolved and without me asking about it, Francisco wove the following comment:

We have no doubts that our culture is the fruit of a mixture, and in fact we insist that Macao is a fusion. Macao has Macanese and Portuguese culture; is this a lie? It is not! It naturally has a very ancestral Portuguese aspect, but we

also have a lot of Cantonese. The Cantonese [dimension] is extremely important in Macanese culture. For example, the Macanese living here, what do they look for? Cantonese food, you can bet on it! Therefore, it is not the Portuguese food we seek, the Macanese look for Dim Sum and so on. And in Macao, we do the same thing, no time for missing the food from here. Orientalism is part of Macanese culture and is inseparable from the community [...]. Despite the remnants of a Portuguese background: we have Portuguese nationality, we have Portuguese names and surnames, we are Catholic, and all of that... This has nothing to do with genetic inheritance, it is a feeling of belonging. The Macanese community inherits from two worlds and transforms them. (August 2011)

This observation came from a need that my informant seemed to experience, to explain the previous negative affective orientation to Portuguese food, which was expressed in different, sometimes even contradictory, ways as the actors sought to eat a simple meal. To hear his explanation of that paradoxical event, in a *posteriori* reflection, I would say that the informant availed himself of the very notion of ambivalence produced by practice and inherent to the natural condition of Macao and the Macanese in order to present a plausible justification for the behaviour of the participants. The evidence that there was indeed a divergence between the rhetoric and the actions of individuals seemed clear to me. Nevertheless, what intrigued me most in his discourse was hearing, for the first time, the negation of a higher affinity of the Macanese with Portuguese culture to the detriment of Chinese culture.

The argument developed above incorporates the association with some of the Macanese *Portugality*, bequeathed by some distant past in the history of Macao, which represents part of the community's origins. However, this also clarifies how in their daily

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A Chinese New Year celebration, which was held at one of the Macanese favourite Chinese restaurants in the greater Lisbon area. The menu for the Ta Pin Lou was carefully chosen, striving to include preferred ingredients, duly adapted for the fondue, so as to ensure that everyone had an auspicious year. The gifts, carefully disposed on a table, were drawn among the guests at the end of the lunch. Oeiras, 2018. Photos by the author.



social lives the Macanese remain closer to the *oriental Macao*, either due to the special feeling of belonging this evokes or because it is there that he/she feels integrated by enjoying the food, the language he/she masters and the peaceful coexistence with the other residents occupying the same narrow territory. Furthermore, the very own space of the Macanese arises out of the inheritance bequeathed by these two worlds, which he/she has transformed and turned into something new and unique. I would borrow Homi Bhabha's words to analyse the oft described Macanese cultural identity as a phenomenon that emerges in a 'third space of enunciation' (1994: 37); a contradictory and ambivalent space which, for the author, renders conceptions of cultural 'purity' and cultural hierarchy obsolete.



According to Bhabha, this liminal space constitutes a hybrid site that effectively witnesses the production — and not just the reflection — of imagined identity 'constructions'. In the representation of the 'other', the author argues for the recognition of an authorised hybridity that supersedes the reductionist view of cultural diversity as mere exoticism. As such, he discusses the issue of difference by resorting to the use of *(de)construction* as a critical and positive strategy enabling us to highlight the ambivalence involved in the process of identity construction, rather than considering

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Publicity material for the conference 'Macanese: a Collective Look about the Community', organised by the ADM, at the Portuguese School of Macao on 27–28 October 2012. Source: ADM Facebook event page on 8 October 2012.

this merely as a negative mechanism that objectifies the subject and mutilates the various social senses. Bhabha therefore suggests that identity (cultural or national) is always hybrid, unstable, ambivalent and negotiated between private interests and the meanings publicly ascribed to them and held for a given historical period. In the same way, the Macanese ethnic and cultural identity is revealing of that hybrid, ambivalent and changeable character associated with the category of 'mixed racial identities', in which the Macanese are ideologically framed.

Thus far, we have seen the strategic use that individuals make of identity ambivalence in their daily social choices for any given cultural and social orientation, as well as how the difference is kept alive through active and ongoing demarcation, both individually and within the group, towards extra-group subjects and other groups. Although much is shared between the Macanese, it should be clear that there is no unanimity of views or of interests among community members. While this aspect also reflects the ambivalent nature of ethnic groups in general, this ambivalence is also fuelled by the lack of consensus concerning how individuals imagine themselves as part of a particular ethnic community.

In the Macanese case, this topic becomes even more delicate because of the relative freedom of choice regarding personal identity that is characteristic of the Macanese, and further strengthens its ambivalent

expression. *Who are the Macanese? What does it mean to be Macanese?* These questions reverberate within the community and are currently discussed as if constituting some unsolved case. At the level of local Macanese associations, there is a felt need for debate, framing and community preparedness to cope with Macao's quick transformation and internationalisation at the socio-political and economic levels. *Who are we after all?* was one of the last reflections for and about the Macanese proposed by the Macanese Association (ADM) in an colloquium in October 2012 with the theme 'Macanese: a Collective Look about the Community'. The event featured three different panels: Identity, Economics and Politics, structured to allow discussion to flow through all these areas. According to the president of ADM and mentor of the initiative, Miguel Senna Fernandes, it was expected that the Macanese would evaluate the current state of their situation, followed by plausible proposals for the community's ongoing legitimacy in Macao in the near future. Despite the difficulties encountered in organising an open debate that stirs many sensibilities, Senna Fernandes claimed that:

[...] on present times the Macanese community is suffering from problems of various orders [not just political] related to [its] identity which deserve a collective reflection, something that is fundamental to our survival as a community, [including the] youngsters and new Macanese generations — our supposed successors and the future of our community. What will they inherit if the current generation does not discuss what should be discussed? Of course, we have to be us and not others, we must dictate this [community's continuity].⁴

Despite the variety of opinions that often proceed in opposite directions, we may also sense the Macanese community's freedom and willingness to search for common past and present interests so that, together, they can trace their own future expectations.

Threats and opportunities, past and the future

Macao's recent historiography has consecrated the 'Macao formula' (Fok 1996) to explain the continued Portuguese presence in the territory through the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, without any consensus among Portuguese and Chinese historians about the nature of the Portuguese settlement in Macao. These different historical opinions oscillate from questions concerning the purchase, lease or donation of that piece of land, to the Beijing court strategy as regards both China's economic interests in the region, but also the need to repel invaders, rebels and pirates, which Portuguese military superiority could then neutralise. Indeed, the fact remains that the implementation of Portuguese rule in Macao still today constitutes a subject of ongoing research. Moreover, the process in every way resembles that of the Portuguese expansion itself, which was never monolithic and instead floated forwards in accordance with the existing currents and crosscurrents and the hegemonic trends of pressure groups. We may state that the Portuguese *modus operandi* differed from the other European powers that also had a presence in the Far East. This difference was mainly felt in reference to the forms of economic, financial and political management based on a decentralised system which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had already been revealed in the constitution of the Senate of Macao Council (*Senado da Câmara de Macau*) and the Holy House of Mercy (*Santa Casa da Misericórdia*), evolving differently thereafter.

The origin of the Senate of Macao Council, later called the Loyal Senate (*Leal Senado*), dates from 1583 and was a form of local government similar to that practised in the cities of the Kingdom of Portugal and of the State of India (*Estado da Índia*). It consisted of a Municipal Council comprising common judges, aldermen, an attorney and a secretary, 'all of them respectable white citizens' with no ties among them 'either by blood or business' (Boxer 1963), and the chairman position being held alternately by each



The Leal Senado building in the Senado Square. Macao, 2015. Photo by Maria José de Freitas.

of the councillors. All of them were entitled to vote in council meetings and were collectively known as officers (*oficiais*) of the council. These officers were elected by a complicated system of secret ballot voting lists that were prepared every three years under the superintendence of a judge of the Portuguese Crown. Regarding the composition of the class and race of colonial councils, it is clear that the requirements regarding the purity of blood could not have been fulfilled in a place like Macao, with a small white population already engaged in similar activities (*ibid.*). Still, the Municipal Council of Macao was, consistently and for over 250 years, the most important organ of governance in the colony. The Chinese authorities only traded with the council, which was represented by its attorney, not the Macao's governor, whose authority was limited to command of the forts and garrisons. The Macao Council also stood out from all other similar forms of colonial government in having kept all of its powers until 1833, while other municipalities found themselves deprived of their functions (except for administrative ones) already in 1822.

Alongside his well-documented historiographical study of the origins of the Senate of Macao, Charles Boxer (1965; 1969) also researched another, equally peculiar, institution of local government: Macao's Holy House of Mercy (*Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Macau*).⁵

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The Leal Senado building in 1939. Source: *Review of Culture* 36-37, 1998.

Boxer claimed that both institutions, whilst enjoying great freedom from the distant power of the State of India, which in turn represented the Portuguese Crown, played a similar and key role in the dynamics of power and government in Macao, which can be described as the twin pillars of Portuguese colonial society. The colonial branches of Mercy were generally founded at the same time as the local Senate was established, and all colonial Holy Houses of Mercy followed the template from Portugal, more specifically of the parent institution in Lisbon. This brotherhood of charity kept, in the larger cities, its medieval organisation of dividing its members between nobles and commoners until the nineteenth century. Macao's Holy Houses of Mercy, founded in 1569 in order to support orphans and widows of sailors who died at sea and all those in need, regardless of race or colour was composed entirely of brothers of higher condition (*irmãos de maior condição*) and a special

attorney (*provedor*) — or chairman of the trustees' board, and the most eminent of the officials elected to serve the House — which came from identical social stratum, or were comparable to the councillors of the Municipal Council. Together they constituted the colonial elite and were, in fact, often the same people. Initially individuals elected to occupy positions in one of the institutions should not simultaneously hold positions at another, but this condition became increasingly relaxed, especially in small colonies like Macao, with a small population and a consequent shortage of skilled men. However, despite the preference for European individuals to exercise these positions, the permanent lack of white women in all Portuguese colonies — and consequently, the lack of 'pure' European descendants — created pressure for the inclusion of instructed Eurasian men. In different ways, the Council and the House of Mercy thus provided a refuge and a means of representation for all classes of Portuguese society.

Another distinctive aspect that prevailed and found in Macao its best expression, among other Portuguese-language speaking places, was a colonial policy of ‘mixing’ (*miscigenização*) with native communities as well as a strategy of political relations and diplomacy. Brockey suggests that although Portuguese cities, as cultural and political spaces, commonly supported missionary and trading posts across a wide geographical area — boasting enough autonomy from central Portuguese power — their locations and individual characteristics inevitably affected the local forms of religion and trade that developed in each particular case. The author actually states that these cities ‘could not exist independently of their exotic surroundings’ (2008: 8). In Macao’s case, besides the colonisation policy based on miscegenation with local populations, one distinctive prevailing aspect stemmed from the political strategy directed towards establishing and deepening diplomatic alliances by adapting different forms of integration, shaped according to the local networks and making recourse to any applicable local procedures.

The chronology of Macao is also punctuated by political and social events with greater or less impacts, the most significant one was resulting from the collapse of negotiations between the Portuguese government and the Chinese authorities, especially when informal mediation neglected Chinese interests in the city. In the years leading up to the inevitable reintegration of Macao with China, the future of Macao’s citizens was presented as unsafe. Even for those Chinese who advocated China’s sovereignty over the territory but did not want to lose the benefits they derived from living under Portuguese administration, the proposed policy of a self-governed region and, above all, retaining a ‘unique historical and cultural identity’, eased the transition and successfully underpinned the principle of ‘one country, two systems’.

The two decades that preceded Macao’s handover were, surprisingly, a period of incomparable prosperity in the city. Deng Xiaoping’s policies of opening up the



The Holy House of Mercy. Macao, 2015. Photo by Maria José de Freitas.

Chinese economy, the growing number of Chinese visitors to Macao’s casinos, and finally, Portuguese investment in the full modernisation of the city’s administration, helped the Macanese succeed in renovating their ethnic monopoly and reconstructing themselves as an ‘administrative elite’ in Macao (Pina-Cabral 2000). The new Macanese generation that came into power in the newly prosperous Macao then began downplaying their identification with Portuguese culture and correspondingly cultivating new discourses of identity. In fact, during the transition period, a massive campaign was launched by both Portugal and China to praise the ‘glorious past’ of Macao and to recreate Macao as a ‘unique place in China’, a product and ‘a symbol of the cooperation and cultural sharing between the East and the West’. The Macanese thus became the symbol *par excellence* of this hybridity, and the ultimate expression of generative exchanges between peoples.

In her book *Sovereignty at the Edge*, about the practices of sovereignty operating in Macao during the 1990s, Clayton (2009) offers an ethnographic study focused on this political-ideological propaganda based

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on the ‘unique identity of Macao’. Grounded in the ‘true’ historical identity of that singular place, the promotion of this small city located on the southeast coast of China to the west of the Pearl River Delta is made by branding it as a major commercial *entrepôt* and a point of intersection between East and West. Some 450 years of Portuguese territorial administration recognised Macao as Chinese sovereign land with its specific civilisational structure, and the first and last place with the longest-lasting relations of friendship and respect between the Chinese and Portuguese societies. Macao is, likewise, promoted as an example of ‘harmony’, ‘tolerance’ and ‘multiculturalism’, which could only emerge due to the specific practice of a ‘sort-of sovereignty’ — a shared sovereign power marked by flexibility, compromise and ambiguity (Clayton 2009: 51). In the end, Macao exemplifies a mode of governance unique in the modern world and, moreover, a model followed by the People’s Republic of China (PRC), as well as a source of inspiration to globalisation efforts worldwide. According to Clayton, this subjective form of power that articulates specific symbols of history, culture, and the experiences and desires of collective subjects, has managed to establish a coherent vision of a new Macao. This vision appears quite meaningful to the communities living inside and outside the city



Macao House (Casa de Macau) seen from outside. Lisbon, Portugal, 2018. Photo by the author.



In these images it is possible to observe some of the interior rooms of the Macao House, including the dining room that once served as a restaurant of Macanese food open to the public. Photos provided by Casa de Macau, Portugal.

through its appeal to a sense of belonging to the place and pride in their Macanese origins.

Beyond circumscribing this promotion of a new Macao identity within the limits of its tiny geographic scope, the city’s transnational character was soon noticed, and special attention was paid to the role this had played as an integral part of Macao’s

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history and, in my opinion, the more visionary aspect of the identity-building project for the new Macao SAR. The Macanese diaspora, dispersed across different continents, founded institutions in many of their host countries to serve as places of gathering for Macanese culture and leisure activities. Through these recreational associations, embodied in the foundation of the various Macao Houses (*Casas de Macau*)⁶, since 1990 with substantial financial support from the Macao government — both for local and overseas collective entities — a new series of initiatives and activities to promote Macao and the Macanese culture proved possible. These initiatives were carried out through lectures, book launches, exhibitions, culinary workshops and festivals, theatre in *Patuá* Creole language, choral groups, in addition to the *Fat Tea* (*Chá Gordo*) traditional meal on feast days. In the words of a former leader of the Macao House in Portugal:

[Macao House] aggregates and maintains the traditions, Macanese culture and Macanese families. There, Macanese people get together to cultivate several of their cultural patterns, beginning with cuisine practices. There is Macanese food [...] this was always one of the traditions that Macao House promoted: this thing of bringing people together at the table, typically Portuguese, Macanese and Chinese. With periods of strong animation and other quieter ones [...] since 1990, we had in Macao the governor Rocha Vieira who supported the Houses with much valuable monetary support and allowed us to form the Macao House Foundation which, in turn, acquired the building in Avenida Gago Coutinho [Lisbon], since the previous one could no longer accommodate all of the associates. On the ground floor is the dining room where Macanese meals continue to be served and the above floors contain games rooms, a bar, a small library and the meeting room of the board.

Also, outside there is a garden where we have our summer parties and an annex room, which serves as multipurpose space. Then the Portuguese administration helped to create the habit of the Macanese Encounters, meetings that take place in Macao, having logistical support and some subsidies from there, which help to reduce the cost of travel for Macao Houses associates.
(Vitor Serra de Almeida, Lisbon, 2010)

Also, starting in 1993, the Encounters of the Macanese Community (*Encontros das Comunidades Macaenses*) have been held every three years. This pilgrimage to Macao started out as a partnership between the government, local Macanese institutions, and several Macao Houses and Clubs dotted all over the world, which encouraged members from different associations to participate in these meetings, while fostering closer connections (than those hitherto existing) between these groups and their ties with Macao. Above all, this enabled many emigrants to make return visits to their homeland, in many cases after decades of absence, allowing them to strengthen both their roots and links with the city, to reactivate social networks with family and friends, and to learn about new economic developments and principal political actors in the field.

After 1999, the Encounters of the Macanese Community continued under the guidance of the Association for the Promotion of Education of the Macanese (*Associação Promotora da Instrução dos Macaenses*, APIM), and until the Macanese Community Council (*Conselho das Comunidades Macaenses*, CCM)⁷ was formed, in November 2004. This Council is a Private Law Institution, whose main purpose is the integration of the interests and desires of the Macanese diaspora communities in conjunction with local Macanese bodies. The Council integrates Macanese non-governmental organisations from the Macao SAR, the Macao Houses and Clubs, as well as other similar institutions, either based

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locally or abroad.⁸ The CCM statutes mention the need to foster ties among communities, to intensify relations with Macao, and to organise seminars, meetings and conferences; each should be held in a language that provides evidence of the life of the community. Another of its main goals is to divulge a better knowledge of Macao among young people from the Macanese diaspora, by creating or enhancing forms of contact between them and the Macao SAR, particularly through conducting periodic reunions under education, sports and culture topics (article 3, statutes of the CCM).

As such, and in accordance with its statutory objectives, in 2009 the CCM organised the first meeting of Macanese youngsters, occurring every three years; the second meeting occurred in 2012, the third in 2015, and the last one in 2018. Once again, the chosen young representatives from the Macanese diaspora were provided with a journey to their Macanese origins, as well as a more developed view of the region's economy, beyond the gambling industry and, for many participants, being perhaps a land of opportunity for a future professional career. This meeting between the members of the new Macanese generation and those living in Macao was distinguished, above all, by the commitment made to work more closely in the 'continuity of the community', by jointly treading a safe path for the posterity of the Macanese identity.⁹ One of the products of this project was the foundation in 2012 of the Association of Young Macanese (*Associação dos Jovens Macaenses*), with the main goal to act as a 'platform for the union and community support in and outside Macao', a proposal that the Liaison Office of the Central Government of the PRC in the Macao SAR encouraged, once again, reiterating its support for the Macanese community and belief in its leading role in Beijing for the Macao SAR.

In recent years, the political project of a unified Macao identity, based on the selection and activation of certain cultural references of the past, identified as the inheritance of a historical, cultural and linguistic heritage

site, has focused particularly on the younger generations as their natural successors. The public commitment by the Macao government to disseminate the history and culture of Macao, whether by sharing knowledge of the past in schools or by investing in the creation of tools to facilitate access to this knowledge, reinforces the compelling premises for the condition of *being Macanese*. According to the following testimony, it is clear these requirements stand out positively, in opposition to others which, albeit hesitatingly, are also listed:

To be a Macanese, besides being born in Macao, you must feel it! It's not enough just being the birthplace [...]. The feeling of the Macanese is not only because we were born there, neither by having Western features or not, it's due to identifying [and] living our Macanese [...] traditions and customs. Being born there is certainly a condition for being Macanese, this is indisputable, but otherwise, to be Macanese and not knowing the history of Macao? To not knowing what the Ruins of St Paul's or the Mount Fortress are? To not having interest about the history of the land? So, for me, this is not being Macanese. I always taught the history of Macao and its various monuments to my daughters, since they were little, in order to instil in them the interest.

(Mena, Oeiras, November 2010)

Paradoxical to the political mission initiated to awaken in Macao society a sense of belonging and identification with its historical and cultural legacy — in which the Macanese community is presented as the exemplary product of East-West cultural pluralism — the thesis about the threat of extinction of the Macanese, of their identity and culture thus defined, is transversely shared by the large majority of my informants. Haunted by the demon of dissolution, now as twenty years ago, this generation refers to itself as the *last Macanese*: the last ones who still preserve and reproduce the traditional practices, language, cuisine,



Group photograph in front of the Ruins of St. Paul's during the last meeting of the Macanese youngsters, 'IV Encontro da Comunidade Juvenil Macaense', in October 2018. Various personalities from the Macanese community and founding members of the Association of Young Macanese are in the front rows. Photo provided by Associação dos Jovens Macaenses.

habits and customs of the community. To future generations, *'nothing of this will pass by'*, I was told with the conviction of those who see apathy, letting go, self-indulgence and a lack of community's sense:

Now I feel even more Macanese since the Macao I knew is now gone. It is a rarity to find a Macanese person, therefore, it is a source of pride for us to say we are Macanese. And we are no longer many, and when this generation is over, we'll be even less. I think this is being lost, both here and there. There [in Macao], because people are also disappearing. I think the people there are so well accustomed to it that they no longer notice, they go on with their daily lives, this doesn't even affect them, and maybe they don't even think about it. They always lived like that, life goes on, they had some fear after the handover of Macao to China, but since there was nothing, on the contrary, the standard of living even improved there, everything is great, everything is alright. (Alberto, Lisbon, December 2010)

Two decades after Macao's transition of sovereignty and conversion into a PRC SAR, the city has

been transformed into one of the most prosperous locales of the Pearl River Delta and, much more now than in the past, the city is attractive to tourism and migratory flows. Rushes of daily visitors overcrowd the tiny territory, exposing it and activating its permeability and transformation. Are these hard facts mentioned as the main threats to the Macanese identity? Or rather, will it be in this context of opening up Macao to China and to the world that the Macanese community will find multiple opportunities to present itself as the representation of the so-called unique identity of Macao?

The feeling of a certain identity crisis among the Macanese is coupled to changes in Macao's political, economic and social life. The *'disappearance of that Macao where I lived'* or *'that other new Macao'*, are the focus of the contemporary redefinition of Macanese self-identity that always led to the identification with the city itself. If to suspicious eyes this change can disrupt the comfort about what it is known, the great uncertainty regarding the future of Macao has proved to be advantageous for the collective survival of the Macanese ethnic and cultural identity by offering the community the role of defining an identity for the established Macao SAR. In other words, the definition of the Macanese becomes confused with Macao, and Macao's definition with the Macanese. Or in the words of Francisco:

The attachment to the land is so great that one cannot understand the Macanese without having this reference to Macao [...]. Macao is the beginning and Macao is the end.

(Oeiras, August 2011)

Therefore, whenever the discourse about Macanese identity is challenged by the threat of change, its survival appears closely linked to the renewal of the community — or community leaders — by the *emerging generation* of young Macanese.¹⁰ Now that the new sovereign power has reiterated the historical importance of the community, it is expected that the members of this generation have

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a more intense participation in the affairs of the Macao SAR, either in terms of pure politics, in civic affairs, or around structural causes such as the defence of the Macao Cultural Heritage which has assumed absolute centrality within the community. The demands on these youngsters, empowered with higher education degrees received from top universities in Portugal, Europe and the United States of America, some of them gradually returning to Macao and joining the active life of the region, are also more acute. It is also to them that the future of Macanese identity is being entrusted. From Macanese successors, as expected, by their own merit, they come to occupy positions of responsibility in Macao's society and become key players by proving to be indispensable for consultations and decisions concerning the evolution of the Macao SAR.¹¹

A permanent identity ambivalence

In order to advance further in my analysis of Macanese ambivalence, I also draw attention to certain social structures and processes that serve as vehicles for the expression, for the exercise and for the never achieved resolution of both individual and collective ambivalence. Among these feature the political institutions and the executive power (above all, the powers of nation-states) capable of launching opportunities for converting feelings of ambivalence into single preferences and, somehow, delegitimising the ambivalence implicit in these acts.

Whenever I asked the question: *What does it mean to be Macanese?* I clearly observed incoherence, difficulties in choosing words, contradictions, confusion, embarrassment, and even some conflict in the discourses of my informants. As Mena's previous testimony made clear, the question was generally addressed from the point of view of birthplace, and the fact of having been born in Macao does constitute one of the requirements for the condition of being Macanese. Nevertheless, this statement would immediately trigger the following question: *Is a Chinese person born in Macao also Macanese?* This is broadly considered as one of the interpretations that was widely adopted in Macao and generally attributed to all citizens of the Macao SAR, and without

prejudice as regards their prevailing ethnic distinctiveness. However, for my universe of respondents *'being Macanese in itself needs more'*. This *more* — in addition to the fact of having been born in Macao — is defined by reference to a mixed ethnic ancestry; to certain sociocultural practices of being and living, which include their particular customs, traditions, and Catholic religious beliefs; and, above all, to an attachment to the place — an attachment only possible, according to them, for those who grew up and lived in Macao for much of their lives. Suddenly, the demarcation of the Macanese changes direction, now shifting the focus to the Portuguese who:

[...] for having lived in Macao incorporated a way of living which is not part of them. In the words of many Macanese, these Portuguese people 'intruded themselves', these are the Portuguese from here. I do not consider them Macanese. There are no roots, and they aren't going to acquire them in their adult lives [...]. I am Macanese: Macao is my land, and my ancestors [...]. Myself, and all of us, have always considered ourselves Portuguese and our nationality has always been Portuguese. However, we are different from the Portuguese from Portugal. (Tina, Lisbon, February 2011)

The weighting of nationality contained in the identification of these individuals has imposed itself since the outset of this exercise of the Macanese self-definition. For them, the concept of nationality rapidly extends beyond the mere membership within a legal-political system which provides them with Portuguese citizenship. Rather, their Portuguese identity card provides a symbol of cultural belonging to Portugal. The historical origins of Macao, Portuguese nationality and, consequently, the language and certain aspects of Portuguese culture are assumed as the link that unites and partly defines the Macanese both before and after the end of Portuguese rule in Macao. In this context, the application of the PRC nationality law to permanent residents in the Macao SAR from

20 December 1999 onwards, has proven a very touchy subject, not only for the Macanese but also for persons of Chinese ethnicity holding Portuguese passports, who decided to continue as residents in Macao after the handover.

Take, for example, the PRC nationality resolution proclaimed on 29 December 1998¹² that, while considering the historical background and reality of Macao, nevertheless decided to regard all inhabitants of Macao SAR of Chinese ethnicity as eligible for Chinese citizenship and, by rule, Chinese nationality. For residents without Chinese ethnicity and holders of Portuguese identification documents, on the day of Macao's administration transfer, they would retain their earlier Portuguese nationality with full rights of permanent residence in the Macao SAR. As for Macao's population of ethnic Chinese origin holders of Portuguese passports, they were assumed to be citizens of China, and could still keep their foreign travel documents, without any implications for the right of residence after Macao's handover. Finally, in the case of Macao-born citizens of 'Chinese and Portuguese descent' — which includes Eurasian Macanese, or at least a substantial number of them, although the term is never mentioned in the law — Chinese law dictates that each be required to decide between nationalities, with all rights of permanent residence in Macao safeguarded. All Macao SAR permanent residents that are Portuguese passport holders, designated by the PRC as 'Portuguese travel or identification documents', are able to use these documents outside China's or Macao's borders, while within the limits of the PRC's national territory, Macao SAR citizens with Chinese descent cannot be identified as Portuguese nationals. This measure that, in principle, took into consideration the historical and cultural specificities of Macao, would have represented the means found by the Chinese authorities to resolve the dispute around the nationality of Macao residents with Portuguese identity documents who decided to remain in Macao after its return to China.

Nevertheless, critical reactions to this exception in the nationality law of the PRC as applied to Macao SAR residents, emerged from both sides of the fence.

From the Chinese perspective, newspapers in Macao reported that Beijing was censured for adopting a 'bland and even generous law' regarding the Macanese who, during the long history of Portuguese rule in Macao, were frequently associated both with this colonial regime as well as with its racial discrimination, sometimes displaying severe intolerance towards the Chinese community (Clayton 2009: 116). From the view of the Eurasian Macanese, however, China's decision required that they choose between Portuguese or Chinese nationality, and was felt by many as an attempt to erase everything that made them who they were. In their interpretation — considering the loss of rights associated with their Portuguese nationality following Macao's handover — what Beijing was imposing represented the recognition of the Macanese either as foreigners in their own homeland, excluding them both from the full rights attributed to native Macao people, and from access to active participation in the political life of the city; or as no different from any other PRC national, if they decided to apply for Chinese citizenship. Furthermore, this does not even mention all the other Macao-born residents who consider themselves, and are commonly identified as, Macanese but who do not fit in the 'Portuguese descendants' category designated by the Chinese law of nationality.

The nationalisation process of the Macanese who decided to continue with their lives in the Macao SAR was thus one of the heated moments of the negotiations and preparation for the transition of sovereignty of Macao, generating a prolonged discussion between Chinese and Portuguese political authorities and, outside the formal negotiation arena — once imposed by Chinese negotiators the principle of non-participation of representatives from Macao society — the Macanese local elite (Mendes 2013). Following the discussion motivated by the citizenship problematic applied to the Macao SAR, Clayton (2009: 121–129) clearly exposes that for the Macanese majority, Beijing's decision was nonsensical, it was questioning the unquestionable, i.e.,

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something that they always saw as natural: the nature and legacy of a permanent Portuguese presence in Macao in all its existence, whether it is genetic, educational, religious, linguistic and cultural, or merely by the use of a Portuguese surname. From their perspective, the author also argues, it was not even the case as to whether or not there might be alternatives to their Portuguese nationality, but rather the idea of their full rights as Macao residents with Portuguese nationality in the near future of the Macao SAR, were being addressed like an *issue* and — even more problematic — an issue for which it was necessary to find a *solution* that would involve their individual decisions to choose among nationalities. Over twenty years after these events, I am consistently told by my informants that for them it would never make any sense to renounce their Portuguese nationality. This nicely shows how this delicate and controversial subject continues to fracture the Macanese community.

It is thus possible to understand how the implementation of the PRC's resolution with respect to nationalisation of permanent residents of Macao, was intended to redefine, neutralise and pacify the previous paradoxical and unresolved situations of public ambivalence. That would be the case of about 80,000 individuals born in Macao of Chinese descent and holders of Portuguese passports, as well as Macao-born residents of Portuguese nationality with dual Chinese and Portuguese descent. To remember that the number of Portuguese ID holders reached 130,000 individuals, since with the introduction of 1981 amendment into the Portuguese nationality law, descendants of Portuguese passport holders come to be considered citizens with equal rights to obtain Portuguese citizenship (even when born outside Macao) until the end of Portuguese administration in Macao (Clayton 2009; Mendes 2004). While the legal consent of the PRC government particularly endowed the Macanese with the scope for assuming another citizenship, this also served as a reminder of the *strangeness* of the Macanese, and as a 'denial of the possibility that they could ever legitimately be Chinese. The denial had nothing to do with blood or territory; it had everything to

do with the [...] Portuguese presence in Macao' (Clayton 2009: 125), and their enduring association with it.

It is this strangeness of the Macanese, someone able to choose and who, while holding this freedom to decide, also suffers from a vigilant and suspicious examination as the eventual options are compromised from the outset, which both appears and is reinforced by this political attempt to overcome the ambivalence and foster an unequivocal clarity of uniformity; which in turn stems from the assumption of the inhabitants of Macao as Chinese nationals (even when some also have Portuguese ancestors). It personally seems clear that there is a parallelism concerning the standardisation of Macao SAR residents implicit in the PRC nationality law, and the process of constructing a unique Macao identity. Just as the law contemplates all individuals of Chinese descent as China's nationals, even in those cases blending Chinese and Portuguese ethnicities and/or when holders of Portuguese identity documents; so does the political project implemented in Macao seek to homogenise the so-called *multicultural* society of Macao, projecting upon it some unified identity that, in turn, implies the identification of *all as Macanese*.

In a way, this effectively reinforces suspicions that, despite all the promises of autonomous rights assigned to the local government, as ensured by the 'one country, two systems' formula, since the handover of Macao in 1999, the territory has been incorporated into China's nation-state and, henceforth, all Macao-born citizens became officially identified as nationals of the PRC with certain nuances blurred within the macro-social level of mainland China's panorama. Contemporary Macao is demonstrative of just how the principle of tolerance can lead to the conversion of single preferences through the deployment of an identity policy distorting the prevailing reality, minimises and — in the process — delegitimises the ambivalence of social actors. This example highlights how, within the same framework of Bauman's argument, the burden for resolving the ambivalence ultimately falls on the individuals involved in the ambivalent condition. Even though the

phenomenon of strangeness is socially structured and the status of being strange is assumed, carrying with it 'its attendant ambiguity, with all its burdensome over and under-definition, carries attributes which in the end are constructed, sustained and deployed with the active participation of their carriers: in the psychical process of self-constitution' (Bauman 1991: 75).

In terms of their biographies, past and present, the Macanese are a product of simultaneous livelihoods in both these worlds (Portuguese and Chinese), and it is within these domains that they build their own identity ambivalence. As with all the other roles played in their daily social lives (or perhaps even more so than other roles), the role of *ambivalent identitarian* requires learning, knowledge acquisition and practical skills. While on the one hand, the freedom this offers can provoke a sense of deep uncertainty in these individuals alongside the eternal damnation of never absolutely belonging to any of these worlds; on the other hand, this gets valued as both obvious and inevitable, further reinforcing the demarcation from non-Macanese and legitimising the Macanese identity in order to secure future symbolic, political or economic benefits for the community.

Throughout its history, Macao has always been a crossroads of cultures, of societies, and of economic systems between East and West, and home to several communities separated by language, ethnicity, religion, nationality and ideology, whose livelihood and intimacy is characterised as harmonious, tolerant and mutually respectful. The Macanese — sons and daughters of the soil (*filhos da terra*) — are the ones who emerge from this history as a secular symbiosis of multiple cultures in Macao. Therefore, applying for an identity ambivalence which qualifies them as such is advantageous in different areas: in the use of diverse social tools offered by their special ethnic statute, in the common orientation towards the group's interests, and ultimately, in ensuring the celebration of the community and its survival. It is also from this concrete interpretation of history, which turns Macao in a unique region within China, with its

plural and pluralistic society, that has formally instilled into its inhabitants an identification with the Macao SAR, shaped around their loyalty to the place. The political project commitment to the objectification of Macao's unique identity — which, in turn, validates the successive local governments — has its focus on the role played by Macao as a commercial and cultural *entrepôt* in its historic background and, nowadays, as a privileged platform of cooperation between the PRC and the Portuguese-speaking countries. The economic-nationalist mission to forge local society to a sense of pride and of belonging to the place, by linking its residents with historical past and present, converges fully in favour of a marketing strategy which conceives of Macao as an International Centre for Tourism and Leisure. In the big picture, this globalised and diversified Macao image goes hand in hand with China's commercial expansion and the internationalisation of its business partnerships in Europe and, in particular, with Portuguese-speaking countries. Macao space is accordingly reinterpreted as an international and cosmopolitan destination, holder of a historical, cultural and linguistic hybrid inheritance with a potential that should be developed in economic terms, generating new opportunities for the local population, and ideological ones, building up an identity for the Macao SAR.

Conclusion

This article, about the identity ambivalence of the Eurasian Macanese, begins with the ethnographic description of a reunion that exposes the intimate sociality of a small group of friends from Macao in the course of eating together at a Portuguese restaurant in Lisbon on the occasion of a visit by a respected member of the community. The event described sought to illustrate the dynamic and creative process of identification-differentiation that characterises the Macanese ethnic and cultural Creole identity. The fact that the Macanese, both ethnically and culturally, are neither Portuguese nor Chinese, despite displaying considerable characteristics that allow them to identify

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as either, coupled with the lack of consensus among community members as regards how each one imagines him — or herself as part of the group, reinforces this characteristic ambivalence.

During the social interaction, I was able to observe the alternation between identification and differentiation by the participant actors, who constantly and successively manipulated their ethnic and cultural attributes, and the discourses they shared. It was argued that this Macanese identity ambivalence enables the highlighting of the hybrid and fluid character of this community, which has been present ever since its formation. This also revealed the strategic usage that individuals make of it with respect to their everyday choices over a certain cultural orientation and overactive individual and group demarcations, thereby sustaining the group's uniqueness and difference. Today, the Macanese are discussing the maintenance and survival of their identity in debates organised by several associations based in Macao and abroad, as well as on Internet-based social networks. Despite the diversity and divergence of opinions within the group, there is now a coming together of common interests, past and present, striving for the alliance of the Macanese around causes such as the safeguarding and revitalisation of the community's intangible heritage.

The current political, social and economic conditions of the Macao SAR — one of the most prosperous regions in the Pearl River Delta, with an economy driven largely by gambling, tourism and speculative investment, generating enormous profits, and exposing the city to intense permeability and rapid transformations (Chu 2015), something that may be understood as a 'biopolitical laboratory of consumption' (Simpson 2014) — have motivated reflections about the

future role the Macanese community should be playing both inside and outside Macao. Adaptation to these new circumstances, rather than threatening the existence of their identity, might represent an opportunity — never before possible — for their symbolic legitimacy at a time when the vaunted East-West cultural pluralism of Macao is being crowned politically by success and singularity. It is as representations of this particular vision of Macao's history, and confusing themselves with it, that the Macanese reposition themselves ethnically and culturally in the present context of the Macao SAR all the while the structural configuration of the community takes on new shapes as a new generation of young Macanese replaces their elder peers.

Furthermore, this also demonstrated how political institutions and executive powers can nevertheless convert the ambiguity and ambivalence of social actors into single acts and exclusive preferences by handing down a national policy based on a distorted vision of reality. Such will become the case should any unique identity be established for Macao, which is already imposing itself on the cultural diversity that has always characterised Macao's society and hence also on any of Macao's inhabitants that identify themselves with such diversity. Similarly, this involved the effort to standardise citizens of the Macao SAR, both the ethnically Chinese and Portuguese, as nationals of the PRC even when they apparently held the right to choose between these nationalities. Despite the legal resolution enabling the Macanese to become Chinese, the Chinese nationality law as applied to Macao caught them in a paradox of potentiality that ended up reinforcing the strangeness and the identity ambivalence of the Macanese. **RC**

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NOTES

- 1 Quote from a personal interview with the last Mayor of Macao under Portuguese rule, José Luís Sales Marques. Macao, July 2010.
- 2 The group consisted of about 50 members, aged between 55 and 70, with an average informant age of 63, who moved to the metropolitan Lisbon area in different periods between late 1960 and early 2000.
- 3 All names of persons and specific places such as business establishments are fictitious in order to preserve informant anonymity and confidentiality.
- 4 Interview given to TDM, the public Portuguese TV broadcasting in Macao, on 28 October 2012. YouTube channel viewing at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuwDVLJjttQ> (accessed 16/09/2020).
- 5 More recent studies, like the ones from Isabel dos Guimarães Sá (1997) and Isabel Leonor de Seabra (2011), are examples of the Macao's Holy House of Mercy history and the important role that Macanese people played throughout centuries in this institution.
- 6 The following are among the principal Macanese associations abroad: UMA — Macanese American Union, Walnut Creek (USA); Lusitano Club of California, San Francisco (USA) Casa Macau USA, San Francisco (USA); Casa Macau, Lisbon (Portugal); United Kingdom Macau House (UK); Casa Macau, São Paulo (Brazil); Casa Macau, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil); Casa Macau, Sydney (Australia); Club Lusitano, Hong Kong (China); Casa Macau, Toronto (Canada); Macao Club, Toronto (Canada); Casa Macau Club, Vancouver (Canada); Macau Cultural Association of Western Canada, Vancouver (Canada).
- 7 CCM has its website at <http://www.conselhomacaense.com> (accessed 17/12/2017), where it makes available the legislation relating to its statutes.
- 8 Besides the 12 Macao Houses (listed in footnote number 6), the following belong to the CCM general board: Association for the Promotion of Education of the Macanese (*Associação Promotora da Instrução dos Macaenses*, APIM), Association of the Macanese (*Associação dos Macaenses*, ADM) Association of Macao's Retirees and Pensioners (*Associação dos Aposentados, Reformados e Pensionistas de Macao*, APOMAC), Macao Club, the Holy House of Mercy of Macao, the International Institute of Macao (IIM), the Military Club of Macao, and singular people or collectives from the Macao SAR or from one of the recognised diaspora regions (Article 8, statutes of the CCM).
- 9 It should also be mentioned here the online survey, developed by researcher Roy Eric Xavier, applied to the 'Portuguese-Macanese' residing outside Macao during August and September of 2012. Xavier collected 168 responses (results published at <http://www.macstudies.net/2012/10/15/2012-portuguese-macanese-survey-results/>, accessed 29/10/2012) and based on the results, he concluded that the new generations of Macanese are more connected than ever before. Through the use of new technologies and electronic devices, communication across national and linguistic borders among young Macanese in the diaspora — to whom the existing associations are not very attractive — reveal to be very intense in chat forums on the Internet where they carried out discussions about the sense of belonging to a community with certain cultural characteristics and families background. This phenomenon is binding them together and offers a unique opportunity in the reconstruction of an identity that can be at risk of extinction.
- 10 Pina-Cabral and Lourenço (1993: 75–76) have identified three Macanese generations in terms of political power: the 'declining generation', born between the 1920s and 40s, which in the beginning of the 90s would have abandoned positions of power; the 'controlling generation', which includes people who would be at the time exercising leadership in Macao society and that would have been born between the 40s and 50s; and, finally, the 'emerging generation', formed by the young people who, in the early 90s were starting to position themselves within the professional life of the region, and therefore would have been born between the 60s and 70s. In my analysis, the distinction between generations follows the same line which, moreover, is the natural succession between parents and children, and equivalent to a gap of roughly twenty years. When today we speak of the 'new generation' of Macanese, we are talking about individuals between 20 and 40 years old.
- 11 *Revista Macau*, issue no. 20 (September 2010), presented a cover story which intended to take stock of the first decade since the establishment of the Macao SAR. In this article, journalist Carlos Picassinov evoked several striking figures — *remarkable dinosaurs* — of the Macanese community and wrote about its identity crisis, and its future, considering the generation of young people coming from the Macanese elite (in which Picassinov highlighted some names such as Daniel Senna Fernandes, Sérgio Perez, Rodolfo Nogueira Fão, Rafael Sales Marques, Duarte Alves), who are ready for both the present and the future.
- 12 Standing Committee Resolution of the 9th National People's Congress implementing the PRC nationality law in the Macao SAR, according to Article no. 18 and no. 3 of Annex III of the Macao SAR Basic Law, published on the Macao SAR Official Gazette, website: <http://bo.io.gov.mo/bo/i/1999/leibasica/index.asp> (accessed 27/12/2017).

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