

Navigating Ideologies: Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Macao and Hong Kong

ROY ERIC XAVIER*

ABSTRACT: Well before Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, and England sailed the seas to compete for colonial wealth, the diffusion of printing after 1450 in Europe became a major stimulus to development. Like ripples on a pond, economic and social ‘spillovers’ led to increased literacy, public knowledge, commerce, and mass migrations across the continent.

Printing soon moved through Portuguese territories as well. The earliest moveable-type press in Goa was imported from Lisbon in 1545, producing religious and scientific manuscripts. Production increased when another press arrived in Macao from Lisbon in 1588 at the Jesuit residence. As the Portuguese Empire faded in the seventeenth century and Macao declined, printing entered a period of stasis until the British East India Company was permitted by Macao’s Loyal Senate to build factories and take up residence in 1738. Following the Opium Wars, a new era began in nineteenth-century Macao, Hong Kong, and other European ‘treaty ports’, signalling a turning point in which journalism, ‘free trade’, and liberal discourse gained prominence.

This paper discusses the uses of print journalism in nineteenth-century Macao and Hong Kong, moving from religious origins through the advocacy of new social ideas and commercial interests that marked these early years. The focus will be on *Macaense* trained in Macao as printers and compositors, who migrated to Hong Kong after 1841 to set up their own businesses. As evident from their personal histories, these entrepreneurs were well aware of the tensions between liberal and conservative factions in Lisbon and Macao, as well as the rising dogma of ‘free trade’ in Hong Kong, which both attracted and repelled them as they asserted a unique cultural identity under British rule. As publishers and journalists, many from humble origins, their stories provide examples of how they navigated spaces between prevailing ideologies.

KEYWORDS: Macao; Hong Kong; Printers; Macanese; Portuguese; Nineteenth-century journalism; Macanese diaspora

* Roy Eric Xavier holds a Ph.D. in Sociology (Communications and Ethnic Studies) from the University of California, Berkeley. He is currently a visiting research scholar at the Asian American Research Center and the Director of Portuguese and Macanese Studies Project at UC Berkeley.

Roy Eric Xavier é doutorado em Sociologia (no âmbito das tecnologias digitais e comunidades étnicas), pela Universidade da Califórnia, Berkeley. É actualmente investigador convidado do Asian American Research Centre e Director do projecto Estudos Portugueses e Macaenses da mesma Universidade.



LANE, ORAWFORD
SAYLE & CO
KELLY & WALL
ED. OHASTEL &

Advertisements and notices from various businesses and individuals, including Lane, Crawford, Sayle & Co, Kelly & Wall, and Ed. Ohastel & Co.



The Hong Kong Telegraph, 1908. Author: Arnold Wright. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tcitp_d359_the_hong_kong_telegraph.jpg

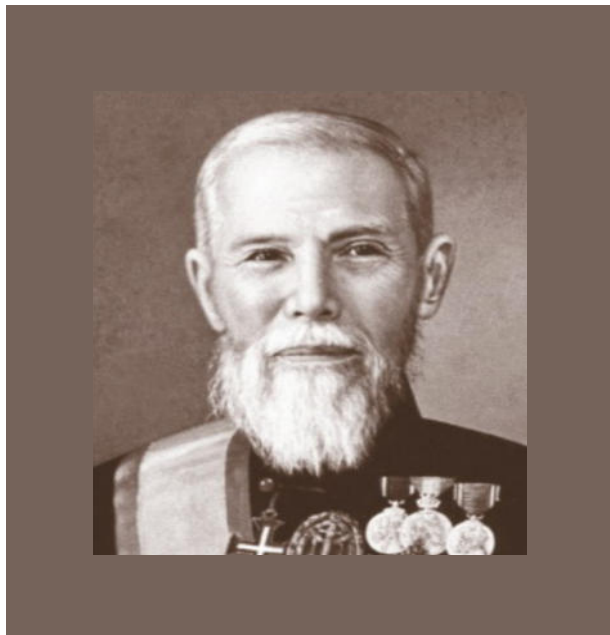
INTRODUCTION

In August 1895, a young compositor in Hong Kong named José Pedro Braga noticed an obscure paragraph in the minutes of the Legislative Council, the colony's assembly. The note was part of the Postmaster General's annual report of 1894, just published in the *Government Gazette* by Braga's grandfather Delfino Noronha, a well-known printer.¹ It announced that 50 registered letters, some containing cash and currency script, had been 'lost or misappropriated' and traced back to a Portuguese clerk in the post office. The note also stated that restitution had been made by the clerk's father, and a decision had been made not to prosecute in exchange for the son's immediate resignation.

Since no further action was taken, the incident seemed to be resolved. Nine days later, however, a series of inflammatory editorials and

responses from local readers appeared in *The Hongkong Telegraph* and *The China Mail*, and began a debate over the alleged 'corruption' of Portuguese government clerks. Subsequent letters soon questioned their right to work in government at all, and in other sectors of the colonial economy.

José Pedro Braga, a law student who returned from India a few years before, was working in his grandfather's printing business and beginning to branch out as a journalist. He quickly wrote a response to the most virulent criticisms, focusing on an editorial by the *Telegraph* which supported a purge of Portuguese staff from government to be replaced by 'true-born British subjects'. Despite pointing out that civil service appointments were granted through competitive examinations, and that anyone born in Hong Kong, regardless of national origin, was considered a British subject, Braga noticed that

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Portrait of Sir Robert Ho-Tung, unknown date. University of Hong Kong. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sir_Robert_Ho_Tung.jpg

the debate was turning hostile and racially charged against the small Portuguese community.²

Having decided that a stronger response was necessary, Braga obtained permission from Hong Kong's three major newspapers, *The Hongkong Telegraph*, *The China Mail*, and the *Daily Press*, to reprint correspondence, articles, and editorials regarding the debate, to be part of a rejoinder in the form of a 123-page pamphlet entitled *The Rights of Aliens in Hongkong*.³ In addition, Braga was able to secure distribution of the pamphlet through two Portuguese language dailies, *O Extremo Oriente* and *Echo Macaense*, each widely read in Macao and other Portuguese enclaves along China's southern coast. To these partners, the young Braga added newspapers in Malaysia, Siam, and India to carry the article, with all printing produced in Noronha's plants located at the centre of nineteenth-century Asian commerce: British Hong Kong.

The impact of José Pedro Braga's first major article was both subtle and far reaching. His repudiation of racist criticisms against alien workers

was soon widely acknowledged as unprecedented and long overdue. Indeed, his well-researched argument, along with a shrewd acknowledgment of the power relations that cross-cut class and race in Hong Kong, and by extension in Macao and other European colonies, may have reset British relations with the Portuguese community from that point forward. As will be discussed later, Braga's rise as a journalist, publisher, and politician in Hong Kong up to World War II, as well as a Macanese historian whose work informs twenty-first-century research, can arguably be traced back to the appearance of this groundbreaking article in 1895.

Braga's pamphlet also suggested a cultural consciousness that had been articulated by other nineteenth-century journalists in Macao. Recent scholarship reveals that first-generation immigrants, who included Delfino Noronha, and Braga's father, Vicente Emílio Braga, an accountant, were generally considered 'foreigners' from Macao, despite playing important roles in Hong Kong's early years. José Pedro Braga, by contrast, was born in Hong Kong and could claim British citizenship. It was significant then that Braga, and other second-generation Macanese, when being attacked in the press, felt compelled to emphasise their strong ties to Hong Kong claiming the same rights as all British subjects, even if perceived by some as 'alien workers'. Thus, the appearance of *The Rights of Aliens* was not only a public statement defending their right to work, but an opportunity to express elements of Macanese identity, and a response to social and economic boundaries that had been erected against immigrants since their arrival in 1842.

CULTURAL NAVIGATION IN MACAO AND HONG KONG DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The focus of this paper will be an analysis of how José Pedro Braga, and other writers of his generation, navigated those boundaries and the

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ideologies that supported them, as they moved towards forming a conscious identity as *Macaense* (Macanese) in Macao and Hong Kong. As we shall see, such ‘mestizo’ identities met resistance from the Roman Catholic Church and the Macanese bourgeoisie, and the methods of cultural renewal among immigrants differed widely. Most, like Delfino Noronha, were less affluent, and belonged to a caste that was neither Portuguese nor Chinese, but racially mixed with a unique culture that developed in Macao for almost 300 years.⁴ Some were trained as printers and compositors at St. Joseph’s College in Macao, then migrated to Hong Kong and other trading ports in China.

The exodus of English and American printers from Canton and Macao through 1830, who employed many Macanese as compositors, led to an increase in jobs and Macanese-owned printing shops and periodicals in the region. By 1840, local Portuguese from Macao made up the largest group of print workers. In the 1880s, Macanese printers were among the largest employers in the ‘Treaty Ports’ after the government, merchant houses, and banking.⁵ A Harvard University review of China coast newspapers from 1822 to 1911 counted 185 dailies and weeklies, and numerous supplemental pamphlets printed by Macanese press operators throughout Southeast Asia. Some journals were duplicated in multiple languages.⁶

Following the launch of Macao’s first newspaper, *A Abelha da China*, and upon a review of personal histories among Macanese publishers and writers, some incorporated the tensions between liberal and conservative ideas in Lisbon and Macao into their articles, while others conducted business under ‘free trade’ policies that dominated politics and commerce in Hong Kong. As journalists, some from humble origins, their stories provide examples of how mestizo writers navigated prevailing ideologies, and helped shape the development of Macanese communities. As a



José Pedro Braga, OBE, JP (1871–1944), Portuguese Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong (1929–1937). Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JP_Braga.jpg

lesser-known part of this history, the content of their writings suggests how some interpreted and, in many respects, ‘imagined’ their own identities and communities in print against religious and commercial ideologies in Macao and Hong Kong throughout the nineteenth century.

1. IMAGINED FUTURES

Similar transitions have been studied by Benedict Anderson, notably in the convergence of capitalism and print technology in the colonies of ‘New Spain’ in South America, and in the former British colonies along the eastern coast of the United States.⁷ In each instance, creole journalists (those of European descent born in the colonies) first articulated a common understanding and meaning of collective struggles to counteract religious teachings and monarchical persecutions.

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Frontpage of *The China Mail*, 1 February 1866. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_China_Mail_1-2-1866.png

By creating newspapers, both as the vehicles and the language for ‘imagined communities’, journalists wrote from their shared experiences, setting the stage for the transition to modern nation states.

Anderson also points to the influence of Enlightenment ideas among early creole writers, adding that their rise around the world inevitably led to the appearance of mixed-race journalists, including Eurasians and Euro-Africans, who developed a new style of thinking that soon moved beyond the teachings of Rousseau, Voltaire, Kepler, Descartes, and others. The roots of this further separation, Anderson argues, can be found in the limitations of Enlightenment thought, which ironically ‘crystallised’ mestizo and indigenous groups through social distinctions based on race and class.⁸

2. CREOLE JOURNALISM IN THE AGE OF RELIGIOUS ABSOLUTISM

Competition among nation states prepared the ground by undercutting old colonial structures. Portugal’s loss of colonial possessions due to competition with the Dutch over Malacca (1641) and the independence of Brazil (1822), for instance, led to its political and economic decline in Europe throughout the nineteenth century. The simultaneous rise of England, Germany, and France contributed to their ability to exploit Imperial China through the Treaty of Nanking (1841), and imposed sanctions allowing them to extract wealth from Southeast Asia. In Macao, the inability of the Catholic Church to prevent the Loyal Senate’s partnership with the British East India Company in the eighteenth century led to a decline among powerful creole families by the nineteenth century. Many old Macanese families had built their fortunes on landownership, strong ties to the Church, and merchant trade with Portuguese territories. Family members often were large benefactors of Church construction and local charities, and held seats in the Senate. Many also cultivated ‘transactional’ relationships with the Qing officials in charge of the Canton Hongs to develop interests in the opium and coolie trades.⁹

Following the First Opium War (1839–1841), China was forced to close the Hongs, which had insured family wealth in Macao. The opening of Hong Kong and other ‘treaty ports’, including Shanghai, Ningbo, Fuzhou and Xiamen, further undercut their influence and the role of the Roman Catholic Church, while encouraging other European merchants to rise under British protection. The Macao Government’s continued dysfunction, especially after republican reforms were allowed in Portuguese territories after the liberal revolt of 1820, effectively conceded printing to subaltern groups willing to work in new jobs created by the increased economic activity across Southeast Asia.¹⁰

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The demise of Macao's first 'newspaper' may provide an illustration of these tensions.¹¹ The Loyal Senate initially aided the Church by importing a printing press from Lisbon around 1822 for the Dominican prior Fr. António de S. Gonzaga Amarante.¹² The resulting journal, *A Abelha da China* remained in operation until September 1823 when it was caught up in the turmoil over the revolt of 1820 after the news reached Macao. *A Abelha* was eventually closed in 1823 due to Fr. Amarante's 'aggressive' editorials that criticised 'constitutionalists' favoured by the Church. Issues of the *Abelha* were burnt in the streets and the prior was exiled to Canton.

In printing a new journal, *Gazeta de Macau*, however, Church and State remained partners. Early scholarship revealed that while the nominal editor of the *Gazeta* was a government employee named António José da Rocha, the paper was published by Friar José da Conceição, prior of the Augustinian monastery sympathetic to the conservative cause, which also housed the press and *Gazeta*'s editorial offices.¹³ When reader interest and financial support declined, the *Gazeta de Macau* ceased operations in 1825, and the Senate donated the press to the College of St. Joseph's Seminary. The school was run by Jesuits, apparently unaffected by the legislative turmoil, who taught boys from working families the 'mechanical arts', such as printing, accounting, and stenography, anticipating new opportunities then on the horizon. Unable to find employment in Macao, many graduates left for other port cities in later years. A local mercantile newspaper, *The China Register*, did not appear in Macao until 1827, after the press was moved from Canton by traders James Matheson and Thomas Jardine.¹⁴

The transition from Church control after 1840 created more opportunities for publishers and journalists reporting on merchant trade around the Pearl River Delta region, especially in Hong Kong. Soon publishers added early forms

of advertising. The growing number of trained workers and readers outside Macao also led to other services, such as government postage, tax stamps, and currency script, as well as news articles from correspondents in other port cities. It was during this critical juncture that the relationship of journalism to cultural awareness in Macao, Hong Kong, and other European territories, appears to be more prominent.

Some liberals in Macao began adopting the values of science, Darwinism, and Freemasonry to advocate for ethnic groups who could not benefit from landownership or merchant wealth. A few Macanese writers and social activists from wealthy families even attempted to counteract conservatives and navigate around government malaise as they sought to reshape Macao's social and physical landscape.

3. NINETEENTH-CENTURY MACAO VS. SCIENCE, DARWINISM AND FREEMASONRY

Writing about this little known period, Isabel Morais employs Anderson's analysis to highlight the appearance of 'a Euro-creole bourgeoisie from Macao with solid kinship, ethnic, commercial and social connections in Hong Kong' and ports in Asia, who employed print media to promote new forms of national and cultural consciousness.¹⁵ At the forefront of the movement, which sought to teach 'Enlightenment ideas based on rational scientific knowledge', were Policarpo António da Costa (1837–1884), an engineer and registered Freemason, and Lourenço Pereira Marques (1852–1911) a physician and a translator. Both were scions of prominent Macanese families that could trace their lineage back to Portugal and Goa, the centre of the overseas empire colonised in 1510.¹⁶

Unlike many of their generation, Lourenço Pereira Marques and Policarpo António da Costa were among the first group of professionals, some educated in Europe, who criticised Catholic

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Gathering of liberals celebrating the commemoration of Luis de Camões. Source: http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/freemasons_china.html

dogmatism, and the Macao Government's neglect of working communities. During the period between 1870 and 1890 when they were most active, a member of the group promoted a plan with Chinese partners to modernise the city through public projects.¹⁷ Another worked with other wealthy patrons to organise a 'free school' to expand enrolment to underprivileged students after foreign teachers were exiled from Portuguese territories.¹⁸ Perhaps most egregious to Church authorities, Lourenço Pereira Marques, Policarpo da Costa, and others embraced Darwinism and the values of Freemasonry in their writings, each antithetical to the Church's authority over education in Macao. Such activities also clashed with traditions separating the wealthy from commerce, manual labour, and indigenous contact.

In Morais's reading, Marques's and Costa's advocacy included an affirmation of cultural bonds among dispersed Macanese communities, as well as ethnic intellectuals. Other research indicates that Marques's projects included the recognition of cultural icons. One involved a commemoration of Luís de Camões, a sixteenth-century Portuguese poet, in an event on his family's property in Macao, and an essay on the poet's life in 1880.¹⁹ Traditional accounts, since debunked, suggested a verdant grotto on the Marques estate was visited by

Camões in the sixteenth century, and was reputed to have inspired his epic poem, *Os Lusíadas*. Along with Policarpo da Costa, who died unexpectedly in 1884, Marques also co-authored numerous articles and pamphlets, including a study arguing the validity of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, and included commentary on sermons critical of Darwin delivered by the Bishop of Macao. Although written principally in Portuguese, their explications of Darwin's theory also formed the basis of friendships with Sun Yat-sen, while he studied in Macao, and with the Philippine nationalist José Rizal in Hong Kong.

Employing newspapers, journals, essays, pamphlets and books on many subjects, printed in English, Portuguese, Chinese and other languages, and facilitated by access to Macanese-owned print shops, as well as steamships and an efficient postal system, Marques and Costa hoped to educate readers through a recognition of their shared ancestry in Macao. They also suggested the future was open to those who embraced the values of science and technology. Even while realising that their audience was relatively small, and apparently uncritical of colonial conditions elsewhere, each used the advantages of wealth and education to reach out to a far-flung network of Macanese communities throughout Asia.²⁰

There were other limitations to the 'liberalisation' of Macao's nineteenth-century press. An earlier study suggests that while many of Macao's editors were outspoken, 'their short life reflects both government reaction to extreme criticism and uncertain financial support'.²¹ To make matters worse, some publishers were fixated on personal rivalries and their own commercial interests. Shortly after publishing several articles by noted liberals, for example, José da Silva founded another newspaper called *O Independente* to campaign against the government's decision to end the coolie trade in Macao, to which his family had

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a vested interest. The rhetoric and ensuing debate with a rival editor, Francisco da Sousa of the *Gazeta de Macau e Timor*, forced the suspension of José da Silva's newspaper three times from 1867 to 1898.²²

Criticism of Macao Government also resulted in the suspension of several other journals, including *Macaísta Imparcial* and *Registo Mercantil* in 1838, *O Solitário na China* and *O Procurador* in 1845, *O Oriente* in 1870 and 1872, and *Vida Nova* in 1910.²³ These uncertainties, and the possibility of heavy fines and exile, did not prevent some from using cultural references to boost readership. Among the 35 Portuguese-language newspapers operating between 1822 and 1911, at least 11 included the cultural markers 'Macaense' or 'Macaísta' on their mastheads, the latter referring to the multi-lingual creole language still spoken among the less educated. Many publishers eventually became tired of the criticism and sought the relative calm of Hong Kong, where the allure of 'free trade', and implied freedom, called to would-be entrepreneurs.

4. EARLY JOURNALISM IN HONG KONG AND THE RHETORIC OF 'FREE TRADE'

Many Macanese were already immigrating to Hong Kong, as Marques had done in 1891 to teach at the Hong Kong College of Medicine, or moved on to Shanghai and other treaty ports in later years.²⁴ Deteriorating conditions in Macao since the opening of the British Hong Kong in 1841, along with devastating typhoons in 1874 and viral epidemics through the 1890s, likely motivated Macanese of all classes to seek opportunities in Hong Kong. Among those who arrived in 1844 was 20-year-old Delfino Joaquim Noronha, a printer and a graduate of St. Joseph's College.

Like his predecessors, Noronha was trained on the *Gazeta de Macau* press once operated by the Macao Government.²⁵ He began his career in Hong Kong by using a small 'rudimentary' press



Lourenço Pereira Marques, in *Twentieth-Century Impressions of Hongkong, Shanghai, and other Treaty Ports of China* (London, 1908). Unknown multiple authors.

obtained through his brother-in-law, and founded the city's first printing company. As the operator of the only press available to the government, Noronha was soon recruited by Willam Tarrant, the Clerk of the Government Registry Office, to produce the first *Hongkong Almanac* in 1847. Beginning as a 14-page listing of government offices, the *Almanac* later included a monthly calendar, a complete roster of British, American, and European merchant houses, and the first alphabetised directory of all non-Chinese residents in Hong Kong, Canton, and Shanghai.²⁶

Before Tarrant was forced out of office for accusing other officials of corruption, he awarded Noronha with a contract to print the *Almanac* for several more years.²⁷ By 1858, Noronha won a competition to print the 1859 *Hongkong Government Gazette* and annual issues thereafter. The new contract included virtually all government printing, as well as the right to sell advertisements.²⁸ In 1867, the firm was renamed Noronha & Sons, reflecting a partnership with his oldest children, and then changed again in 1874 to

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Noronha & Co., as other relatives and staff joined several Macanese and Chinese workers. Noronha expanded his printing interests to Shanghai as well. In 1878, he purchased the 'Celestial Empire Publishing Co.' from António de Carvalho. Noronha's eldest son, Henrique Lourenço, set up an affiliated business in Singapore in charge of the government press. Other relatives and partners also set up printing firms in Canton and Manila.²⁹

A feature of Noronha's success was a reluctance to be involved in political debates. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Noronha observed from working with Tarrant that expressing personal views often led to prison and expulsion from the city. Another obstacle was Hong Kong's class hierarchy, which segregated the British, Portuguese, and Chinese communities through the enforcement of 'social distance' in the workplace, religious practice, and in social clubs.³⁰ Despite stated policies of 'free trade' and 'fair play' for all who settled in Hong Kong, several of Noronha's friends suffered discrimination based on their

ethnicity in promotions to government positions.³¹ Given Noronha's own position as 'government printer', an argument can be made that his aloofness from politics originated from his own 'foreign' birth and an unwillingness to jeopardise his lucrative contract. But a biographer suggests that Noronha's motivation may have been to use his wealth surreptitiously to benefit others. Several of his friends had already done so by providing low-cost rentals to workers, mentoring, and by donating to local charities.³² Noronha himself prevented the foreclosure of a Chinese temple by purchasing its mortgage in 1865, and funded the first Hong Kong–Kowloon ferry in the 1870s. He also donated money and founded one of the first Macanese social clubs in 1880, Club Lusitano. Noronha's land investments in Kowloon with Macanese partners through the 1890s provided family housing for many clerks and accountants in Hong Kong.³³

The root of Noronha's generosity may have been class differences that separated him from other printers who migrated. Most members of his generation in Hong Kong had not come from wealthy families and experienced hardships in their early years. In contrast, affluent publishers seemed to have a propensity for jealousy and competitiveness. One of them was José da Silva, who was mentioned previously. Unlike Noronha, José da Silva was a member of an old family in the coolie trade. Between 1863 and 1878, José da Silva was involved in at least six libel cases filed against him in Macao and Hong Kong by rival publishers while the editor of the Portuguese–Chinese newspaper *Ta-Ssi-Yang-Kuo* and a Portuguese paper, *O Independente*, respectively. To avoid prison, José da Silva fled to Shanghai away from the jurisdiction of British courts.³⁴ Another publisher was Pedro Loureiro, a member of a merchant family in Macao who partnered with the English firm Dent & Company in Hong Kong.



The Hong Kong Government Gazette, 10 November 1883. Source: <https://digitalrepository.lib.hku.hk/catalog/n8715p87x#c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-757%2C194%2C2982%2C1313>

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In 1866, he was convicted of embezzlement by the company, jailed for six months, but was later pardoned by a local court. Loureiro also fled to Shanghai in 1873.³⁵

Unlike José da Silva and Pedro Loureiro, Macanese printers in Hong Kong often acted as 'stand-ins' for wealthy publishers who languished in prison. Some took over businesses after their employers absconded with profits and left China. A historian also remarked on their 'lack of initiative' and a tendency of many who 'drifted into the subordinate role of an unenterprising underclass'.³⁶ Noronha's success by design lay in what I would call 'apolitical conformity', which allowed him to bend to colonial rules but not break them to achieve his goals. Had he followed José da Silva and Pedro Loureiro, Noronha could have damaged his business and reputation in the Macanese community, and jeopardised his philanthropy. Perhaps his approach, in hindsight, reflected the dilemma facing many Macanese.³⁷

This meant that while Noronha was celebrated by Hong Kong officials as the sole government printer, members of his social class were restricted from living among British elites in segregated areas, including one known as 'The Peak'. Neither could they be members of English social clubs, nor be paid the same wages as British-born clerks, nor ultimately be treated as 'true-born British subjects'.³⁸ But Noronha also encouraged and supported an emerging group of apprentices, who later founded 'printing families' in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Some managed to attain professional autonomy as print shop owners, and became founders, like Noronha, of Macanese clubs and associations, while managing to operate within the confines of colonial journalism.³⁹ As elites in their own community, but second-class citizens under British rule, Noronha and most Macanese printers realised full well the parameters within which future generations would live in Hong Kong society for 156 years.



Inner cover of *Ta-Ssi-Yang Kuo*, Series I — Vols. I and II. Source: Archives of Macao (MO/AH/ICON/MTL/MO/016).

5. CHANGE ON THE HORIZON: THE SECOND GENERATION OF HONG KONG JOURNALISTS

Delfino Noronha's influence as both a businessman and a cultural leader was most apparent in career of his grandson, José Pedro Braga. Here our narrative comes full circle. Noronha's oldest daughter, Carolina Maria, married Vicente Emílio Braga in 1862. The young family lived in Noronha's household through the birth of eight children, the youngest of whom was José Pedro. Several months before José Pedro Braga's birth in 1871, however, Vicente accepted a position with the Japanese Imperial Mint in Osaka

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Frontpage of *O Independente*, no. 433, 24 January 1888. Source: Archives of Macao (MO/AH/ICON/MTL/10-0096).

as 'Head Accountant' under Thomas William Kinder, a British army major who was formerly Master of the Hongkong Mint.⁴⁰ The decision was not well received by Carolina, nor her father, and resulted in a serious rift with Vicente Braga, who left for Japan without his family. A recent account indicates that Delfino Noronha cut all ties to him, and the older Braga never returned to Hong Kong.

Delfino Noronha immediately took on a parental role in José Pedro Braga's life. While in Hong Kong, the youngster was exposed to Noronha's wide group of friends, which included Leonardo Almada e Castro, Chief Clerk of the Colonial Secretary, and Januário de Carvalho,

Chief Cashier of the Treasury, as well liberal exiles Lourenço Pereira Marques from Macao, the Chinese republican, Sun Yat-sen, and José Rizal, the Philippine nationalist from Manila. In guiding Braga's education, Noronha enrolled him first in a Portuguese boy's school nearby, then under French Lasallian Brothers in a renamed St. Joseph's College, which conducted classes in English and introduced the young student to mathematics, literature, history, and world geography. Following successful terms, Noronha sent his grandson to study law in 1887 at St. Xavier's College in Calcutta, modelled after English public schools. Then in 1888, apparently to prepare for university entrance, José Pedro was enrolled in Roberts College, a non-sectarian institution.

José Pedro Braga's legal training abruptly ended, however, after being summoned back to Hong Kong in 1889 to work in the family business following the death of two brothers from smallpox.⁴¹ While disheartening to the young student, under Delfino Noronha's tutelage the young Braga grew into an experienced printer, and finally a journalist at the age of 24 through the 1895 publication, *The Rights of Aliens in Hong Kong*.

As mentioned, José Pedro Braga's first article was a strong repudiation of racist criticisms against Macanese workers, and a subtle expression of cultural consciousness. The latter was likely influenced by Delfino Noronha and other liberals who visited the printer's household. But Braga's approach to race and cultural issues was unique as a second-generation Macanese who was born a British subject in Hong Kong. In contrast to Noronha's apolitical strategy, and Macao liberals who insisted that cultural renewal was realised through science and rational knowledge, Braga shrewdly focused on the ideological foundations of British rule. The crux of his argument was that proposals to 'purge' Macanese from employment rolls in Hong Kong were not only racially motivated, but contradicted

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the ideals of Britain's 'free trade' policies based on 'fair play', justice, and equality, which had not been fully realised among ethnic workers.

As Braga wrote, raising the issue of 'alien rights' was:

*[...] calculated to affect the prestige of the Briton — his enviable reputation for fair dealing and fair play — as much as it may affect the existence of aliens — is alone ample justification for what would be justly regarded [...] as [an] offensive and unwarranted intrusion and a galling reversion to a vexing question which should have been satisfactorily settled long, long ago.*⁴²


Braga also argued that 'The impact of bitter race prejudice with public matters, [...] is distinctly opposed to the letter and spirit of British law and a proper sense of British justice.'⁴³ Invoking a passage from Luke 10:7, Braga concluded that if 'the labourer is worthy of his hire', the traditionally reliable Macanese should at least be granted equitable treatment in the workplace, and by extension throughout society.

Braga was under no illusions that true 'equality' and 'justice' were likely in Hong Kong, for even wealthy Macanese understood that their traditional 'place' in society remained subservient to British rule. Yet by exposing the rhetoric of 'free trade' as merely code for unregulated commerce, rather than a signification of 'justice for all', Braga may have reset relations between the British and other ethnic communities as Hong Kong entered the twentieth century. The first sign occurred in 1902 when Braga was offered the management and editorship of *The Hongkong Telegraph*, his previous nemesis whose editors argued for British-only employment. The newspaper had gone bankrupt and was acquired by a consortium of Chinese investors. This alerted government elites that ethnic entrepreneurs were collaborating to offer an alternative, or 're-imagined',

view of colonial life, following Anderson's phrasing. The group was led by Braga's good friend Robert Ho Tung, a wealthy comprador previously employed by Jardine Matheson & Co. in the 1880s, who encouraged him to take the position.

José Pedro Braga's career rose quickly from there. The new *Hongkong Telegraph* from 1902 to 1910 became the city's leading English-language newspaper. He eventually blended journalism, commerce, landownership, and finally politics when he was appointed the first Macanese member of Hong Kong's Legislative Council in 1929.⁴⁴ Following honours from both Portugal and Great Britain, José Pedro Braga remained an important public figure, who was able to navigate, and at times mediate, among different classes and ethnic groups throughout the period leading to World War II.

CONCLUSION

The traditions of liberal-Enlightenment discourse among Macanese journalists and writers, as evident from this study, were wide-ranging throughout much of the nineteenth century. The obstacles they faced in the ideology of the Roman Catholic Church and Portuguese leaders in Asia, against familial interests that evolved over 300 years in Macao, and then under the commercial policies of British Hong Kong, were formidable barriers confronted by Luso-Asian immigrants throughout the period. This history may well provide lessons we often miss in the twenty-first century. The fact that lithographic printers, one group among a variety of professions, could survive, then flourish and become pivotal in Hong Kong, just as a nascent global economy grew dependent on new technologies and information, is a story that may sound strangely familiar. In an age dominated by social media and 'content', we can find solace that ideas may take tangible form, often as cultural touchstones preserved in scholarship, and as we have seen, ethnic journalism. Each reminds us, and future generations, of values that remain timeless. 

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NOTES

- 1 Delfino Noronha was the first printer in Hong Kong. He became a government printer in 1849 and continued until his death in British Hong Kong in 1900. Stuart Braga, *Making Impressions: A Portuguese Family in Macau and Hong Kong, 1700–1945* (Macao: International Institute of Macao, 2015), 227–260.
- 2 The 1891 census of Hong Kong determined that there were 2,089 ‘Portuguese’ in the city. The majority, however, were from racially mixed families that migrated from Macao (therefore Macanese) since 1841. They were the largest group of foreign nationals, ahead of the British by 641, among 4,195 foreigners. The total population of Hong Kong in 1891 was 221,441. *Hongkong Government Gazette*, 22 August 1891, 748–752.
- 3 J. P. Braga, *The Rights of Aliens in Hongkong: Being a Record of the Discussion Carried on through the Medium of the Public Press as the Employment of Aliens in the Colony* (Hong Kong: Noronha & Co., 1895).
- 4 For further information, see my article “Luso-Asians and the Origins of Macau’s Cultural Development,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 57 (2017): 187–205, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/90013956>.
- 5 Hoi-to Wong, “Interport Printing Enterprise: Macanese Printing Networks in Chinese Treaty Ports,” in *Treaty Ports in Modern China: Law, Land and Power*, eds. Robert Bickers and Isabella Jackson (London: Routledge, 2016), 142.
- 6 Frank H. H. King, ed., and Prescott Clark, *A Research Guide to China-Coast Newspapers, 1822–1911* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965). Most newspapers were published in English, but at least 20 were printed in Portuguese and duplicated in Chinese, French, German, Russian and Japanese.
- 7 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2016).
- 8 Anderson, “Creole Pioneers,” chap. 4 in *Imagined Communities*. The study’s wider focus is on the origins of nationalism.
- 9 For a summary of these relations, see Regina Campinho, “Modernising Macao, the Old-Fashioned Way: Macanese and Chinese Entrepreneurship in the Colonial City, 1877–1884,” *Architectural Histories* 8, no. 1 (2020): 18. For an explanation of the Canton Hongs, see Paul A. Van Dyke, “The Canton Trade, 1700–1842,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, ed. David Ludden, published online May 24, 2017 (Oxford University Press, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.127>.
- 10 See José Luís Cardoso, “The Liberal Revolution of 1820: Script of an Unfinished Revolution,” *Almanack*, no. 30 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1590/2236-463330ed00422en>.
- 11 Agnes Lam writes that while the *A Abelha da China* was the first to use a newspaper format, an earlier publication in Portuguese, the *Início do Diário Noticioso* first appeared in Macao in 1807. Agnes Lok Fong Lam, *Zhongguo jingdai baoye de qidian: Aomen xinwen chubanshi* (1557–1840) (Macao: Instituto Cultural; Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press (China), 2015), 106.
- 12 J. M. Braga, “The Beginnings of Printing at Macau,” *STVDIA*, no. 12 Separata (July 1963): 77.
- 13 J. M. Braga, “The Beginnings of Printing,” 80.
- 14 J. M. Braga, “The Beginnings of Printing,” 60–61.
- 15 Isabel Morais, “Darwinism, Freemasonry and Print Culture: The Construction of Identity of the Macanese Colonial Elites in the Late Nineteenth Century,” in *Macao — The Formation of a Global City*, ed. C. X. George Wei (London: Routledge, 2013), 53.
- 16 Policarpo António da Costa is listed under the England, United Grand Lodge of England Freemason Membership Registers, 1751–1921. Most information on both writers is scattered and obscure. Genealogical data on each can be found in Jorge P. Forjaz, *Famílias Macaenses*, 6 vols., 2nd ed. (Macao: International Institute of Macao, 2017). A sample description of Marques’s accomplishments can be found in “Marques, Lourenço Pereira (1880–1896),” *Biographical Dictionary of Medical Practitioners in Hong Kong: 1841–1941*, accessed October 17, 2022, <http://hkmd1841-1941.blogspot.com/2013/09/marques-lourenco-pereira-1880-1896.html>.
- 17 Among the partners were members of local entrepreneur families from Fujian and Guangdong, which had grown wealthy in the 1840s. Campinho, “Modernising Macao.”
- 18 The Association for the Promotion of the Instruction of Macanese (*Associação para a Promoção da Instrução dos Macaenses*) was founded on 17 September 1871, by a group of 19 wealthy and influential citizens assembled in the house of Maximiano António dos Remédios. The principal organiser was Pedro Nolasco da Silva. His career incorporated many skills, including as an educator at St. Joseph’s College, and translator, sinologist, and diplomat for the Macao Government.
- 19 António Aresta, “Lourenço Pereira Marques,” *Jornal Tribuna de Macau*, July 24, 2019, <https://jtm.com.mo/opiniao/lourenco-pereira-marques/>.
- 20 During the same event honouring Camões at the Marques’s estate in 1880 was the presentation of a silver bust of Portuguese Prince Pedro I, commemorating his ascension as ‘Emperor of Brazil’ in 1822.
- 21 King and Clark, *A Research Guide*, 33.
- 22 King and Clark, *A Research Guide*, 149–150.
- 23 King and Clark, *A Research Guide*, 33–41.
- 24 Aresta, “Lourenço Pereira Marques.”
- 25 Biographical information for this section is principally derived from Braga, chap. 6 “Delfino Noronha and the Portuguese Community, 1844–1900,” in *Making Impressions*.
- 26 S. Braga, *Making Impressions*, 237.

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- 27 William Tarrant, while working in the Registry office from 1844 to 1859, was accused and tried several times for libel, and periodically spent months in prison, before being released and exiled to Canton. Tarrant was also a publisher of *The Friend of China*, in Canton from 1860 to 1861. King and Clark, *A Research Guide*, 155–156.
- 28 S. Braga, *Making Impressions*, 245.
- 29 S. Braga, *Making Impressions*, 246–248.
- 30 Roy Eric Xavier, “Hong Kong and the Introduction of ‘Social Distance’,” (Working Paper, Institute for the Study of Societal Issues, UC Berkeley, 2019), https://www.academia.edu/37735740/Hong_Kong_and_the_Introduction_of_Social_Distance_.
- 31 Alexandre Grand Pré, an officer in the Hong Kong Police Force, culminated a long career with an appointment to Superintendent of Police in 1855. That nomination was rescinded by the Police Commission because of criticism from senior British officers who objected to Grand Pré’s ‘alien’ ancestry (French and Portuguese). In 1856, Leonardo Almada e Castro was denied the position of Colonial Secretary by Governor John Bowring because of his foreign birth in Macao. Januário de Carvalho also was denied an appointment in 1878 as Acting Colonial Treasurer because he was labelled an ‘alien’ born in Macao. In the same year, João José Hyndman, in the Diplomatic Department, was denied advancement because he retained the Portuguese citizenship from his mother. J. P. Braga, *The Portuguese in Hong Kong and China: Their Beginning, Settlement and Progress to 1949*, vol. 1, ed. Barnabas H. M. Koo (Macao: International Institute of Macao, 2013), 127, 129–130.
- 32 Leonardo Almada e Castro, for example, deeded land and a building on Hong Kong Island to the Italian Canossian sisters for an orphanage and a school. Januário de Carvalho supported both members of his family and mentored José Pedro Braga and others in education, government and commercial houses. Information on Almada e Castro is contained in Jorge P. Forjaz Collection (OCH.JPF), boxes 2,4,5,14,15,16,22,26 and 27, Special Collections & Archives, California State University Library, Northridge. Information on Januário de Carvalho is from S. Braga, *Making Impressions*, 266.
- 33 S. Braga, *Making Impressions*, 249–251.
- 34 King and Clark, *A Research Guide*, 149–150. Interestingly, José da Silva was later appointed Portuguese consul in Shanghai.
- 35 King and Clark, *A Research Guide*, 134.
- 36 S. Braga, *Making Impressions*, 241.
- 37 Even when praised for his work, a Hong Kong governor (Sir Richard MacDonnell) implied that as long as Noronha’s company performed satisfactorily, his contract would be retained *in perpetuum*. S. Braga, *Making Impressions*, 245.
- 38 A review of public officer salaries between 1856 and 1889 revealed that a typical Portuguese clerk’s annual pay was 60% less than that of a similar mid-level English employee. “Salaries of Public Officers,” *Report of the Commission Appointed by Governor Sir G. William Des Vœux*, December 13, 1889, Appendix I, 321–323. Legislative Council minutes in 1906 also indicated that during a recent budgetary shortfall caused by higher exchange rates, Portuguese workers were preferred because they could be paid less and were more reliable than English workers who were similarly trained. “The Estimates,” *Hong Kong Legislative Council Minutes*, September 13, 1906, 39.
- 39 Noronha’s apprentice, Lisbello J. Xavier, who worked for the printer from 1880 to 1886, founded the Hongkong Printing Press (HKPP) that year. Lisbello J. Xavier later founded the Clube Recreio, a recreation and sports club in Kowloon in 1903. The HKPP remained in operation until 1976. Roy Eric Xavier, “The Hongkong Printing Press, Part 1,” Far East Currents: The Portuguese and Macanese Studies Project — UC Berkeley, accessed October 24, 2022, <https://macstudies.net/a-study-of-the-hongkong-printing-press-part-1/>. See also Roy Eric Xavier, chap. 9 “Macanese Printing — The Hongkong Printing Press,” in *The Macanese Chronicles: A History of Luso-Asians in a Global Economy* (Illinois: Far East Currents Publishing, 2021).
- 40 S. Braga, *Making Impressions*, 213–214. Vicente Braga later became an important figure in Japan during the Meiji period.
- 41 S. Braga, *Making Impressions*, 262–271.
- 42 J. P. Braga, *The Rights of Aliens in Hongkong*, x.
- 43 J. P. Braga, *The Rights of Aliens in Hongkong*, xviii.
- 44 Despite the honour, both José Pedro Braga and Dr. S. W. Tao, a Chinese representative, were each granted ‘non-voting’ status. *The China Mail*, 19 January 1929.

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