

# **The Evolution of Macao's Identity: Toward Ethno-cultural and Civic-based Development\***

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## **Abstract**

It has been taken for granted that a very unique Macao identity has been evolving after more than 450 years of Portuguese rule and cultural influence. Quantitative research, however, shows that in fact the majority of the Macao people are identifying themselves as Chinese. This paper analyzes the evolution of Macao's identity along the lines of the ethno-cultural versus civic identity theoretical framework. A pilot study among some Macao students provides preliminary insights into the question of what constitutes Macao's cultural identity. The structural difficulties of the development of the Macao identity and the possibility of an emerging civic identity are examined.

**Keywords:** Macao's identity; cultural identity; civic identity; cultural icons; participation.

## **Introduction**

In the 1990s Taiwan's democratization and the transition of sovereignty in both Hong Kong and Macao raised the scholarly awareness of these smaller entities of the so-called Greater China region. Of particular interest were the unique indigenous

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identities that had developed in this region and which were fundamentally different from the Mainland Chinese identity propagated by the People's Republic of China (PRC). In 1999 Macao became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the PRC. A key question raised in many publications was concerned about the survival of the unique melange of centuries of Portuguese and Chinese interactions after the sovereignty transfer. The territory's particular identity has been described as a cultural identity focusing on its Portuguese chromosome (Flores, 2003), cultural syncretism (Ngai, 1999; Cheng, 2002), and the anthropology of the Macanese — people of mixed Portuguese-Chinese and Portuguese-Malayan ancestry (de Pina Cabral & Lourenço, 1993; Amaro, 1994; Zhou & Li, 2007). A decade after the sovereignty and administrative transfer of Macao, it is perhaps the ripe time to study the question of what constitutes the Macao identity and how it has developed since 1999. Can other elements apart from cultural ones be found in Macao's identity? Does this unique identity pose a similar question to the Taiwanese?

This paper studies the identity of the Macao people along the lines of an ethno-cultural versus a civic identification. Research on the cultural identity of Macao and its political culture and participation will be analysed. My central argument is that the peoples' identification with Macao is primarily ethno-culturally defined. Basic elements of a civic identity exist in the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) and there are signs that this part of identity is slowly developing. For the time being the Macao identity is considerably weaker than that of Hong Kong and Taiwan. Cultural identification with Mainland China is high, but the core reason lies in its relatively weak civic identity. The future development of Macao's civic identity will depend on the political participation of citizens and on the levels of immigration and integration with the Mainland. The theoretical framework of this paper is provided by a set of theories on national identity construction. A thorough examination of the ethno-cultural and civic realm in Macao identifies population structure, material culture, language, education, politico-legal structure and participation patterns as the core elements of identity. These factors, however, simultaneously are limiting the development of Macao's identity. These findings will be illustrated with the results of quantitative studies on citizens' identification after 1999. My pilot study on identity among 59 students at the University of Macao in mid-October 2009 raises important questions on the cultural and political identifications with Macao and China.

## Theoretical Perspectives on Identity and National Identity

The term identity is used in social science, psychology and cultural studies with a variety of meanings and therefore definitions are abundant. Stuart Hall is representative of the constructivist perspective and has gained widespread acceptance in the study of personal identity. He argues that one's self "assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent 'self'. Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continually being shifted about." (Hall, 1992, p. 277). Furthermore, he analyses that an ingredient critical to the construction of identity is the "relation to the Other, the relation to what is not, to precisely what is not, to what has been called its *constitutive outside*." (Hall, 1996, pp. 3-4) Expanding the concept of personal identity to that of groups, communities and even nations, the constructivist approach sees the nation as an "imagined political community." (Anderson, 1983, p. 6). It stresses the invention and construction of a nation, refusing "ethnic perennialism" and the possibility of the rediscovery of a nation (Anderson, 1983, p. 6). National identities hence develop not from something pre-existing in communities, but are based on "invented traditions" and symbols created by the elites of a society. "Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, ...of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past." (Hobsbawn, 1983, p. 1). Yet, only those traditions are successful which are "broadcast on a wavelength to which the public was already to tune in." (Hobsbawn, 1983, p. 263).

The debate over the origin of nations, nationalism and national identity shifts between the two poles of essentialist and constructivist approaches. The essential or primordial view on national identity on the other hand assumes that certain group identities and attachments are given, based on blood, race, language, and territory. Clifford Geertz believes that primordial identities are natural and possess an "ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves" (Geertz, 1973, p. 259), as essentially these identities deal with sentiments or affection (Llobera, 2004, p. 185). Yet, Geertz and other modern primordial theorists agree with the relativistic notion that the primordial bonds are assumed, but powerful because they are *perceived* to be real (Schubert, 2004, pp. 57-58).

On the basis of these ideas, Anthony D. Smith sees national identity either as

Western/political/civic identity or as Eastern/ethnic/cultural identity. The Western or civic model entails a historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, articulated in a set of rights and duties, as well as a common civic culture and ideology. On the other hand, the emphasis of the non-Western concept is a community of birth and native culture (Smith, 1991, p. 11). According to Smith, “[T]he nation is seen as a fictive ‘super-family’....Genealogy and presumed descent ties, popular mobilization, vernacular languages, customs and traditions: these are the elements of an alternative, ethnic conception of the nation....” (Smith, 1991, p. 12). However, he also acknowledges that most state and nations contain both “civic and ethnic elements in varying degrees and different forms” (Smith, 1991, p. 13). Smith also believes that the civic/ethnic division “remains valid and useful” (Smith, 1991, p. 81). His dichotomy is promising in the context of this paper, which will examine the validity of the argument for a unique civic and cultural identity of the Macao people vis-à-vis a Mainland Chinese identity.

### **Macao’s Historical Development**

The first Portuguese landed in Macao in 1533 and established a trading post in 1535. At the beginning Macao was virtually uninhabited,<sup>1</sup> largely due to various court edicts which banned coastal settlements in order to control piracy (Edmonds, 1992, p. 4). In 1553 the Chinese local officials granted the Portuguese a permission to stay and both sides signed a land-lease on Macao in 1573. Following the Qing Empire’s defeat in the First Opium War of 1849, the Portuguese administration worked to making Macao a full colony. The Sino-Portuguese Treaty of Friendship and Trade (Lisbon Protocol) finally confirmed Macao’s legal status as under Portuguese “perpetual occupation” in 1887 (Porter, 1999, p. 12).

A crucial event in Macao’s recent history was the riots of December 3, 1966 (or the 12-3 incident, *yiersan shijian*). As a spill-over from the Cultural Revolution, the

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1 The original Chinese who resided in the area were mostly fishermen from Fujian Province. When Portuguese trade prospered between 1570 and 1650, Chinese labour was brought in from the neighbouring Guangdong Province, many of them became traders and businessmen themselves and the Cantonese became the main part of the population (Zepp, 1991, pp. 154-155).

conflict over the illegal construction of a pro-Communist school on Taipa Island led to anti-colonial demonstrations and riots (Edmonds, 1992, p. 7). Local police and army forces struggled to suppress the uprisings. The Chinese population suffered casualties and the colonial government lost credibility among the Chinese population and the effective rule over the city. The government was forced to issue an official apology to the PRC government, pay compensations and agree on a secret deal promising local cooperation with Beijing in exchange for continued Portuguese rule (Chan, 2003, p. 498). Moreover, all organizations close to the Chinese Nationalist Party were banned. The pro-Communist or so-called patriotic social groups took over many services from the government, establishing wide control over the population. The colonial administration's retreat from the daily life culminated in 1976, when the Portuguese government offered to return Macao to the PRC. It was turned down and instead the status of the city was changed into being a Chinese territory under Portuguese administration. Democratization began in the mid-1970s with the establishment of the direct elections of the Legislative Assembly (Yee, 1999, p. 29). After Mainland China secured Hong Kong's handover, the PRC entered into Sino-Portuguese negotiations over the return of Macao's administrative right to Beijing in 1986. The Joint Declaration on the question of Macao in 1987 states that the territory would become a SAR in December 1999. A Basic Law promulgated by the PRC in 1993 is expected to protect the political, economic and legal system and life-style of Macau until 2049 under the formula "One County-Two Systems."

Macao was an immigrant society throughout its history. The fluidity of the population was a crucial factor that averted the emergence of a Macao identity. The situation did not change after Macao became a quasi-colony under Portugal's administration, with most Chinese residents of the city identifying primarily with their Chinese homeland ethno-culturally. At the same time the Portuguese administration did stifle the political participation of the Chinese population. Citizen participation, if encouraged and stimulated by the Portuguese rulers, could have led to the manifestation of a civic Macao identity. The 1966 riots, although instigated by pro-CCP forces, not only reflected the strong demand for political participation on the part of the local Macao Chinese but also showed a clash of the Portuguese identity with the Chinese identity with the PRC as a point of reference. The result of the 12-3 incident was that a notion of politico-cultural Chinese identity in line with the Beijing regime would gradually develop and perhaps become dominant for the following

decades.

### **The Emergence of a Macao Identity**

Discussing and defining a distinctive Macao identity was for a long time a taboo in the territory. This resulted in a weak sense of belonging among the population, which was further aggravated by the massive influx of immigrants since the opening up of Mainland China in 1978 (Ngai, 1999, p. 112). This immigration wave, however, together with the rapid increase in standards of living in the 1980s, weakened the neighbourhood communities and created a new middle class with a generalized Macao identity (de Pina-Cabral, 2002, p. 44). In the 1990s, a clear demarcation line emerged between the “Macao people” or “Macao Chinese” (*Aomen ren*), who would also describe themselves with the term “local person” (*bendiren*), and other Chinese groups like new immigrants and overseas Chinese (*huaren*) (Berlie, 1999, p. 21). The length of residence in Macao is an important marker of distinction (Yee, 2002, p. 38) as well as the adaptation to a certain way of life and customs. The “local person” category is inclusive and incorporates the ethnically mixed Macanese. Its defining feature is not so much whether one was born in the city, but having undergone basic schooling in Macao. The identity contains a strong economic notion and is closely related to being a member of the middle class. In cultural terms these “local persons” are accustomed to the freedom of religion and expression and a level of cosmopolitanism. But the main marker is the ability to speak Cantonese in the way that it is spoken by the middle class of the city. Many “Macao people” have foreign passports and are Portuguese citizens from birth, but still consider themselves as Chinese and feel close to China in a historic sense (de Pina-Cabral, 2002, p. 44). Therefore they often opt for the identity category of “Macao people” despite their Portuguese passport.

#### **Macao’s Culture**

Macao is a dominantly Chinese city,<sup>2</sup> with most residents born in Mainland China

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2 Recent estimates put the number of inhabitants at 549,000 with 96 per cent Chinese, about 10,000 Filipinos, around 8,000 Macanese — Eurasians of mixed blood, and 1,800 Portuguese (Statistics

(47.1 per cent) and a majority resided in the city of Macao for less than five years (27.3 per cent) (Statistics and Census Service, 2007). The Portuguese presence in the territory decreased visibly after the handover. Many Portuguese residents were government officials or employed in the administration on a few years' contractual bases and left after 1999 (Edmonds & Yee, 1999, p. 805). A number of Portuguese have, however, taken residence in the city for decades or longer, and those who married Chinese and Macanese persons have been integrated into the Macanese community (de Pina-Cabral, 2002, p. 37). A key feature of Macao's culture is the emergence of a distinctive ethnic group of Eurasians or Macanese<sup>3</sup> of European descent or with close connections to the Portuguese-based communities in Macao (Amaro, 1988, pp. 4-7; 1994, p. 218). Some Macanese are part of long established families in the territory who are descendents of inter-racial marriages between Portuguese and indigenous women from other former Portuguese colonies or trade posts in Africa, South and Southeast Asia and Japan. Others originate from more recent pairings of Portuguese and Chinese individuals (Cheng, 1999, p. 8; Watts, 1998, p. 287). Identification<sup>4</sup> as a Macanese largely depends on the individual's relationship with Portuguese heritage in forms like the Portuguese language, Catholicism and some type of Eurasian phenotypic appearance. Yet there is a certain element of personal option, as some individuals chose to identify as Chinese despite their Macanese family background, or as a result of Portuguese schooling opt for the Macanese identity (de Pina-Cabral, 2002, p. 39). Due to their language abilities (they are usually fluent in both Portuguese and Cantonese), the Macanese often acted as intermediaries between the local population and the Portuguese administration. A majority worked for the government in mid-ranking positions in the civil service or other professions that required Portuguese language proficiency such as law or architecture, and enjoyed a higher social status than local Chinese residents (Yee, 2001, p. 132).

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and Census Service, 2008).

3 The Portuguese term "Macaense" describes the Portuguese-based community of Macao and is the origin for the English term "Macanese." The local born decedents of mixed marriages are called "Filhos da terra" (sons of the earth) and in Chinese, *turen* (local person), and more recently, *tushengren* (local-born person) or *tushengzai* (local-born boy) (Berlie, 1999, p. 23).

4 For alternative definitions of the term Macanese, see also Teixeira (1965) and de Pina-Cabral & Lourenço (1993).

The distinctive composition of Macao's population has a direct impact on the territory's unique culture. The Chinese cultural realm is identified with characteristics of south China and the two coastal provinces of Guangdong and Fujian. The various Chinese groups<sup>5</sup> have often retained their traditional local customs, but at the same time also mixed with other Chinese cultures. Therefore in Macau the worship of the goddess Ah-Mah, protector of seafarers, which originates in Fujian exists together with Cantonese folklore and customs. Connections of Macao residents to foreign countries add the overseas Chinese cultural element (Ngai, 1999, p. 116). Although Macao is a city shaped by Chinese culture, the Latin cultural elements make it different (Ngai, 1998, p. 308). The impact of these Portuguese aspects on Macao's society can be observed in the territory's material culture. The city's urban space was designed like a Portuguese town (Flores, 2003, p. 40) and the architectural heritage of centuries of Latin influence creates a distinctive cultural identity for Macao. In 2005, the UNESCO awarded Macao's old city centre the title of a world heritage site, acknowledging its uniqueness as a value for the coming generations. There are a wide range of hybrid Luso-Asian architecture, landmarks and urban spaces in Macao (Chung, 2009, p. 137). This syncretism and amalgamation, which can be observed not only in furniture design (Duan, 1997, p. 156) and architecture but also in some aspects of religious practices, highlighting the fact that the Catholic Church officially concedes to include the Chinese "theistic cult" of ancestor worship (Cheng, 1999, p. 7). Religious tolerance and harmony are the key features of Macao's cultural identity (Ngai, 1999, p. 119), with Catholic and Buddhist dignitaries both present at important events pointing towards a balance of power relations and a subtle religious compromise (Ngai, 1999, p. 119; Cheng, 2002, p. 211).

Cultural hybridization is most evident in the two cultural areas of language and cuisine related to the Macanese ethnic group: the Portuguese creole dialect *Patois* and Macanese food. *Patois* is a mixture of Chinese syntax with Portuguese and Malay vocabularies and was once widely used among some parts of the Macanese population. It disappeared with the teaching of Portuguese and Chinese languages in schools since

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5 The Cantonese population largely comes from the areas in close proximity to the SAR, like Zhongshan and Shunde, less from Taishan and Guangzhou. A large group of Chinese speaks different Min-dialects from their home province Fujian. There are also factions of Shanghainese, Chaozhou and Hakka people in the territory (Berlie, 2002, p. 69-70).

the mid-nineteenth century (Cheng, 2002, p. 205). Macanese food, however, has become very popular in the region and there are a variety of Macanese restaurants in Macao. Rufino Ramos describes the Macanese cuisine as an adaptation of traditional Portuguese cuisine to the Asian context.<sup>6</sup> The amalgamation of Portuguese, Goan, Malay, African and Chinese practices developed into an “indigenous” culinary culture (Cheng, 1999, p. 9). The reproduced cultural practice and values in turn provide the Macanese community with a means of self-definition, adding their restaurants as an assertion of a unique identity (Cheng, 2002, p. 204; Augustin-Jean, 1999, p. 117). In daily life these cases of hybridization and syncretism in Macao’s culture are however rare and in general the Portuguese and Chinese cultures have retained their own identity and specificities within the space of the territory (Cheng, 2002, p. 217). The coexistence, interaction and partly blending of cultures based on mutual respect and tolerance, harmony instead of conflict, and stability in plurality are the key components of the “Macao model” (Ngai, 1999, p. 120). Political scientist Herbert Yee argues that for the common Chinese residents of Macao, the relevance of this identity remains low.<sup>7</sup> Journalist José Carlos Matias calls it the “projected Macao identity” created by the Macanese community.<sup>8</sup> Yee sees the Macao identity more as a sense of belonging to the own neighbourhood, to the “small town feeling,” with a slower pace and local restaurants that is still alive in the older parts of the city<sup>9</sup>. The idea of true multi-culturalism has not gained ground largely due to inadequate teaching of the city’s multi-cultural tradition (Rocha, 2002, p. 110).

### **Portuguese Influence and Education**

The Portuguese influence on the city’s collective identity in general is largely restricted to the material culture and its architectural heritage. The reasons can be traced back to the attitude of the Portuguese colonizers. They did neither engage in a cultural project with Macao residents, like the KMT regime with its “Sinicization” of

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6 Interview with Rufino Ramos on October 6, 2009, Macao.

7 Interview with Herbert Yee on October 6, 2009, Macao.

8 Interview with José Carlos Matias dos Santos on October 6, 2009, Macao.

9 Interview with Herbert Yee on October 6, 2009, Macao.

Taiwan after 1949. Nor did it promoted certain “higher values” similar to the British in Hong Kong since the 1970s, with efficiency, clean government and the rule of law. Control over the education sector is used by governments to shape citizens identity. Yet the Macao colonial government’s role in social affairs and education was very limited and its primarily concern is with the education of the Portuguese children, neglecting the Chinese inhabitants (Tse, 2005, 181).

To a large extent the “laissez faire” attitude can be attributed to the ownership structure of the schools. The majority of the schools in Macao are privately run by religious groups, trading and cultural associations, individuals, societies and cooperatives. Only a few schools are administered by the government directly (Adamson & Li, 2005, p. 41). The diverse ownership of schools had thwarted attempts to develop an integrated curriculum during colonial times, because the administration and the Chinese middle class controlling the private schools had different social-political perspectives and did not share the same cultural referents. As a result, the teaching of Macao history in the private schools,<sup>10</sup> which account for 90 per cent of all pupils, began only in the 1990s (de Pina-Cabral, 2002, p. 32). The general lack of localized teaching material (Lo, 2005, p. 171) forces the private schools to adopt the textbooks mostly from Hong Kong and Mainland China, hence using apolitical Hong Kong or ideological correct PRC material (Lo, 2005, p. 169). Civic education was basically invisible until the 1990s. Without a formal programme by the Macao government, the Macao Christian Schools Association (MCSA) created a textbook on the subject in 1991, aimed at strengthening the sense of belonging to Macao and China as well as ideas like open-mindedness and civic competence. The Macau Chinese Education Association (CEA) followed in 1995 with focus on education for patriotism. At the end of the 1990s, the Macao government launched citizenship education in their Luso-Chinese schools which should be a guide for the private schools; yet the subject was not made compulsory. The syllabus was oriented towards moral and life skill education and was generally conservative in outlook. Its emphasis was on national identity and the local society, while retaining Portuguese influence in Macao by highlighting the Portuguese culture (Tse, 2001, p. 309). The

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10 About 50 per cent of the pupils study at Catholic schools of the Macao Christian Schools Association (MCSA) (Hook & Neves, 2002, p. 117). The other dominant organization on the local education market is the pro-PRC Macau Chinese Education Association (CEA) (Lo, 2005, p. 169).

post-handover curriculum followed suit, “characterised by a shallow and confused presentation of multicultural education,” Confucian traditional virtues and patriotism (Tse, 2005, pp. 190-192). The lack of a unified school curriculum, the focus of civic education on moral ideas and the absences of unified history textbooks focusing exclusively on Macao’s history have all severely limited the formation of a local identity.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, some teachers and schools have made considerable individual efforts to create a textbook<sup>12</sup> on Macao’s history underlining the interest and importance of the subject.<sup>13</sup> The failures of the Macao governments to install liberal values, multi-culturalism and strong identification with the city and its Portuguese heritage have created “mono-cultural citizens” (Rocha, 2002, p. 110).

This contrasts with the official government position valuating Portuguese heritage and language as a part of the territory’s distinct identity, utilized in promoting connections with the Portuguese-speaking world (Bray & Koo, 2005, p. 157). Furthermore the status of Portuguese as an official language is guaranteed for 50 years by the Basic Law and the government’s language policy after the handover aims at trilingualism (i.e. written Chinese, Portuguese and English) and quadrilingual (i.e. spoken Cantonese, Putonghua, Portuguese and English) (Bray & Koo, 2005, p. 152). However in daily practice the Chinese and Portuguese linguistic universes are strictly divided with their own media (press, television and radio) and Portuguese and Chinese medium schools (de Pinal-Cabral, 2002, p. 32). The large majority of the population speaks Chinese (95.6 per cent), and only 0.6 per cent speaks Portuguese (Statistics and Census Service, 2007). Until 1993 Portuguese was the only official language and the exclusive idiom in the legal system and administration. Yet very few Chinese intellectuals speak Portuguese and the Macao people were never forced to adopt the language of the colonizers like it was the case in other Portuguese overseas possessions or practised by other colonizing powers (Berlie, 2002, p. 73). Although the colonial government aimed at expanding the role of Portuguese language in schools during the early 1990s, these efforts were rebuffed by the private operators of the schools (Bray & Koo, 2005, p. 152). Ratna Ghosh’s study on the identity of

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11 Interview with Herbert Yee on October 6, 2009, Macao; and interview with Rufino Ramos on October 6, 2009, Macao.

12 A good example is the textbook created by the Pui Ching School.

13 Interview with Rufino Ramos on October 6, 2009, Macao.

Macao's youth reveals that the direct influence of Portuguese language and culture is limited to schools and related social activities. The respondents express less positive characteristics like laziness, and being playful to the Portuguese. Speaking the Portuguese language means to be identified as Portuguese and thus it would have a negative influence on their identity (Ghosh, 2002, p. 149). Together with the relative lower practical commercial value and significance as an international communication medium of Portuguese vis-à-vis Chinese or English (Lo, 2008, p. 9), the language of the colonizer has never become part of the people's unique Macao identity and a means to differentiate from the Mainland Chinese. The small impact of the Portuguese on the identity of the Chinese Macao residents does also have economic reasons. Macao was always heavily dependent on the Chinese Mainland and especially Hong Kong. The neighbouring former British colony is an important reference point for the Macao people, who readily consume Hong Kong's (popular) culture products (Ghosh, 2002, p. 154). The cultural influence of the territory reaches a level at which many Macao people would rather identify themselves as Hong Kong persons than Portuguese (Zhou, 2003, pp. 126-127).

### **Macao's Identity Politics in Comparison**

The limited control of the administration over the education sector, and in particular over the curricula, does severely circumscribe the governments ability to shape the identity of Macao citizens. The cases of Taiwan and Hong Kong show that curriculum reform is at the heart of governments' identity politics. In Taiwan, the KMT had for decades promoted a pan-Chinese nationalism in all areas of society, before the government embarked on a path of Taiwanization, strengthening the Taiwan identity since the early 1990s. President Lee Teng-hui introduced political changes that began democratization and Taiwanization in the political and cultural area. An important step in Taiwanization was taken in 1997, with the new junior high school curriculum which focused on the distinctive nature of Taiwan history, geography and society and gave "an impulse to the notion of pluralistic national identity and national identification" (Corcuff, 2002, p. 160). In 2000, DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian won the presidential elections, campaigning on the strength of his ethnic background as a Taiwanese. The rapid and forceful Taiwanization under Chen Shui-bian could be

described as a process of De-Sinicization, as cultural and symbolic ties to China and Chinese nationalism of the authoritarian era were cut and replaced by Taiwan centrism (Chang, 2004, p. 44). The Hong Kong government launched immediately after the handover several programmes, initiated policies and introduced changes which were all aimed at an active change in the creation of a unified Chinese identity. The measures in the educational realm included, for example, changes in the school curriculum. The PRC began to be portrayed in much more favourable light, focusing on economic achievements and rising international status, and excluding events like the Tiananmen massacre (Vickers & Kan, 2003). The most controversial measure, however, was the introduction of mother-tongue teaching at secondary schools.<sup>14</sup> English is seen as a form of cultural and symbolic capital that distinguishes Hong Kong from the Mainland and thus the policy was taken as an attempt to alter the collective identity (Chan, 2002, 283). The government further strengthened the subject civic education in schools (Vickers & Kan 2003) and the national song and national flag featured prominently at educational institutions.

The Macao government is much less directly involved in initiatives promoting Chinese identity and identity politics compared to the governments in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The various “patriotic” organizations in the territory have been creating a pro-CCP atmosphere for decades and the schools under their control cultivate patriotism to the Beijing regime’s liking. Nevertheless, the administration fosters identification with the PRC and as Chinese citizens through festivals and activities on national holidays.<sup>15</sup>

### **Civic Identity**

The emergence of a distinctive identity based on the civic realm of national identity is connected to unique political and legal structures, a fixed distinct territory and political culture. Although Macao’s territory in exact terms was never agreed upon by the Portuguese and Chinese governments, the introduction of border controls in 1951 severely limited the close interactions between the city and its Chinese hinterland

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14 In autumn 1997, the government announced that most secondary schools were advised to use Chinese (spoken Cantonese and written traditional Chinese characters) as a medium of instruction.

15 Author’s personal observation of decoration and activities celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the PRC on Largo do Senado in Macao on October 8, 2009.

(Breitung, 2004, pp. 10-11). With the opening up of China in the late 1970s, the rate of border crossing rose dramatically and the city witnessed a massive influx of immigrants (Breitung, 2009, pp. 108-109). Increasing cross-border interaction and personal contacts does contribute to growing integration with the Mainland and identification with Mainland China. Yet many Macao people insist on a difference between Mainland Chinese and Macao Chinese, often harbouring rather negative views of Mainland visitors to the city. The border is viewed as necessary to safeguard the special identity of Macao. Therefore increased contacts might also lead to a stronger perception of differences (Breitung, 2009, pp. 121-124).

In legal terms, Macao was during colonial times treated as an overseas province of Portugal. Therefore its citizens enjoyed full Portuguese nationality including the right of abode in the entire European Union (EU) and consular protection from Portugal and other EU partners. The Nationality Law in force until 1981 granted Portuguese nationality to everyone born in the territory and there were no restrictions on immigration from China until 1979 (Berlie, 2002, p. 69). In 1999, 25 per cent of the population in Macao, about 107,000 people, with most of them ethnic Chinese, held Portuguese passports, and up to 200,000 could be eligible for Portuguese nationality (Hook & Neves, 2002, pp. 118-119). Having a Portuguese passport and nationality, however, does not translate into allegiance towards the Portuguese state or identification as a Portuguese citizen. Instead these people would identify themselves as “Macao people” or, in larger ethnic concepts, as “Chinese.” This “ethnic approach” explains that in the 2006 Macao Population By-Census, 93.9 per cent of the resident population was identified as of Chinese nationality, 2 per cent of Filipino nationality and only 1.7 per cent of Portuguese nationality (Statistics and Census Service, 2007).

The Macao legal system is based on the principles of the European Continental Law system originated in Roman law and influenced by French and German law traditions. It is therefore distinct from both Hong Kong and Mainland systems. Yet unlike in Hong Kong where the legal system and the rule of law are the cornerstones of a distinct civic local identity vis-à-vis the PRC, the legal system in Macao has in fact only a low level of social support and legitimacy (Hook & Neves, 2002, p. 132). One key reason is the language barrier. The Macao law is copied from the Portuguese law and it was translated into Chinese language only very late in the transition phase. The Portuguese language is crucial to the understanding of the law and since the quality of translation was not properly controlled, the spirit of the law was not

captured accurately.<sup>16</sup> The Macao population knows little about the laws that govern their life and the colonial government had not created information campaigns to make it accessible for the ordinary people (Cabral & Nataf, 1999, p. 21). The shortage in local Chinese legal experts and trained professionals adds to the fragile state of the legal system. Many of them lack experience or were trained in China and hence are not familiar with the practices in Macao (Hook & Neves, 2002: 132).

### **Elite and mass participation**

In transforming societies, lawyers and other trained professionals do often act as the vanguard of democratisation or play the role of defenders of civic rights and freedoms. Yet unlike the neighbouring Hong Kong, the legal community of Macao has not emerged as a strong critic of the government, monitoring the administrations actions. José Carlos Matias argues that many lawyers come from the rather conservative Portuguese elite and are not well connected to the Chinese community. The conservatism of the elites in general can be attributed to their close attachment to the government and to the pro-PRC businesses to which the private law firms are connected as well. The Macao government is the key player in all aspects of social and economic life of the territory due to the absence of large international companies and organizations. This makes it also difficult for Macanese and Chinese lawyers to openly advocate too daring democratic changes.<sup>17</sup> Although the Macanese community is split in a pro-government faction and one that is more critical towards the administration (Lo, 1999, p. 64), Carlos Matias argues that its status as a ethnic minority make it naturally dependent on the MSAR government for protection of its unique heritage and cultural projects.<sup>18</sup>

The Chinese community is still dominated by neighbourhood groups like the *kaifong* associations which traditionally have played a critical role in Macao politics as intermediaries between the colonial government and the ordinary citizens. They evolved into welfare organizations and provide a wide array of services and are supported by Macau businessmen and the MSAR government. Since the 1966 riots,

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16 Interview with José Carlos Matias dos Santos on October 6, 2009, Macao.

17 Interview with José Carlos Matias dos Santos on October 6, 2009, Macao.

18 Interview with José Carlos Matias dos Santos on October 6, 2009, Macao.

all neighbourhood groups have been strictly pro-Beijing; with the blessing of the PRC regime, they are also involved in political affairs like nominations for Legislative Assembly direct and indirect elections. Their absolute loyalty to the CCP is evident in their rhetoric of PRC patriotism and politically conservative outlook (Lo, 1999, p. 63). With the growing middle class in the 1980s, new pro-democracy groups have gained popularity among the young and educated population of Macao. Members of these groups were born and bred locally in the 1950s and had a strong sense of belonging to Macao (Lin, 2006, p. 174). Yet the power of the traditional groups has so far been little challenged due to the weakness of the new liberals who lack financial resources, personal networks and organizational mechanisms for political mobilization (Lo, 1999, 66-67). The conservatism of the old elites and the weakness of the new social forces are a massive difficulty for the development of a unique Macao identity based on civic or political ideas. There are very few champions of democracy that can function as icons for the public. The well-respected community leaders align with the power centres in Macao or Beijing and democrats are locally marginalized and intentionally ignored. The media plays a crucial role in assisting the government in this aspect. Conservative networks control the Chinese language media and the main Chinese language paper, the *Macao Daily*, is strongly pro-MSAR and Beijing government (So & Mok, 1999, 40). Subjects like critique of the government and democratization are avoided and their pro-China stance is also very evident in their attitude towards the issue of Macao identity. Unlike Hong Kong where the press gives considerable voice to a variety of viewpoints and intellectuals frequently debate questions like a Hong Kong identity, a unique Macao identity is very rarely mentioned. Macao identity is described either in intangible cultural terms (Ji, 2009) or as an issue of personal memory (Shui, 2009). The emphasis is put on the national identity as PRC citizens (Hu, 2009), and even with regard to the UNESCO world heritage sites the Chinese heritage is seen as more important (Wu, 2005).

The progress of democratization in Macao has remained slow since 1976 elections for Macao's Legislative Assembly were held.<sup>19</sup> Until the 1984 elections the electoral

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19 The total number of legislators increased from 17 in the 1980s to 23 during the 1990s, and to 27 in the early and 29 in the late 2000s. At the same time the number of directly elected members was increased from 6 to 12 in 2005 and 2009. The current composition of the Macao Legislative Assembly includes 12 directly elected members via territory wide lists, 10 members are indirectly

law stipulated that Chinese citizens had to reside in the territory for more than five years in order to become eligible to vote. The Portuguese were exempt from this regulation, and since most Chinese were recent immigrants, the Macanese elites and masses dominated politics in these early years (Lo, 1990, p. 148). After the opening of elections to all Chinese in 1984, the number of registered voters and the voter turnout have continuously risen to well over 50 per cent since the 1990s (Yu, 2007, 428). The surge in electoral participation can be attributed to electoral mobilization by the government and the public anticipation of the concept of “Macao people ruling Macao” after the 1999 handover. However, Legislative Assembly elections are traditionally subject to heavy political mobilization<sup>20</sup> behind the scenes which has to be studied more carefully (Lo, 2008, p. 49). Political scientist Eilo Yu acknowledges that it is difficult to determine the actual extent of the impact of political mobilization and vote-buying efforts on the voter turnout. Nevertheless, the increasing voter turnout over the past elections with many young voters getting involved suggests a genuine wish for political participation.<sup>21</sup> The electoral results of the 2009 Legislative Assembly elections seem to support these observations, with the democratic camp winning one more seat to gain a total of four seats (Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region, 2009b). Carlos Matias argues that in a closed and conservative society like Macao, many citizens refrain from openly voicing their opinions or opposition towards the government in fear of negative consequences. Elections are their only means of expression and the increasing support for pro-democratic groups indicate their wish for change. This has been acknowledged by the political groups standing for election in 2009, when 8 out of the 16 party platforms mentioned their wish for more democracy in some form.<sup>22</sup>

Lo Shiu-hing argues the 1966 riots triggered the gradual emergence of a Macao civil society through the creation of social groups and associations. Yet due to its domination by pro-Beijing forces it was only partial and limited to a section of the Chinese population (Lo, 1999, p. 66). For the decades prior to the handover, the

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elected through functional constituencies and 7 are appointed by the Chief Executive (Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region, 2009a)

20 Personal observation during the 2009 Macao Legislative Assembly elections on September 20, 2009.

21 Interview with Eilo Yu Wing-yat on September 20, 2009, Macao.

22 Interview with José Carlos Matias dos Santos on October 6, 2009, Macao.

territory rarely witnessed large protests and demonstrations like the mass demonstration in 1989 when 100,000 people, a quarter of the total population, protested against the Beijing government and its brutal crackdown on the students and workers on the Tiananmen Square. In Hong Kong the annual candlelight vigil in memory of the victims of the June 4th Incident is regularly attended by tens of thousands of citizens and has become an event for the reaffirmation of a Hong Kong identity (Beja, 2007, pp. 7-8). In Macao, only few residents participate in similar events and refrain from publicly expressing their feelings.<sup>23</sup> However, since 1999 the number of major protest and demonstrations in the city has gone up dramatically, especially after the opening up of the local casino market in 2002 and the following rapid economic development. Most of these activities are indeed related to livelihood issues and better employment opportunities for local workers.<sup>24</sup> Labour protests began on a larger scale on May 1, 2000 and have become an annual event including frequent clashes with police forces. In the year 2007, protests are of special significance because the protesters denounced the Macao government's close relationship with the capitalist elites and suspected corruption (Lo, 2009, pp. 29-31). On December 20, 2007, the eighth anniversary of the handover, about 2,000 protestors took part in street rallies calling for democratization and social justice. Moreover this protest was for the first time joined by hundreds of young people calling for freedom of speech and the direct election of the Chief Executive (Liu, 2008, p. 124).

An important protest with different means is the objection against developments near the world heritage site of the Guia Lighthouse that began in 2006. Heritage activists protested against the government's plan of allowing the construction of high-rise buildings in proximity to the lighthouse which would block the view of one of Macao's most iconic sites. Heritage activists used Internet websites to rally support and send a letter to the UNESCO headquarter (Guia Lighthouse Protection Concern Group, 2007). The protest was successful and the government promised to reduce the high of the buildings to be constructed (Chung, 2009, pp. 149-153). This action is of high relevance although the number of participants was rather small; it is directly

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23 On the twentieth anniversary of the Tiananmen Incident in 2009, 150,000 people attended the event in Hong Kong (Leung & Wu, 2009), while in Macao only about 50 to 300 were present (Interview, 2009b; Interview, 2009d).

24 Interview with Rufino Ramos on October 6, 2009, Macao.

linked to Macao's identity and the majority of members were Chinese from Macao.<sup>25</sup>

### **Political values**

Despite the fact that the level of participation in elections, voting and protests has considerably risen since the handover, the public understanding of democracy remains limited. A survey from the year 2006 by Herbert Yee suggests that Macao people retain a traditional Chinese concept of democracy. 58 per cent of the respondents saw a democratic government as one that listens to the views of the citizens and take care of their interests. Only 10 per cent identify with the Western idea of democracy with a government elected by citizens and entailing checks and balances (Yu & Lü, 2007, p. 308). The latest government-sponsored surveys in 2008 confirmed these findings, with 30 per cent of the respondents stating that a democratic government should consult the people's views, acts like a parent (10 per cent) and should lead the people (21 per cent), and only 26 per cent saw it as government chosen through elections (Research Centre for Sustainable Development Strategies, 2009). Furthermore the Macao people are compared with their neighbouring citizens in Hong Kong and they are considerably less tolerant of dissenting political opinions like those of Falun Gong practitioners (Yu, 2003c, pp. 166-167). The traditional Chinese conception of democracy of the Macao people results in the likelihood of a gradual and limited democratization process (Lo, 2009, p. 35). Research on Macao's political culture nevertheless also highlights the linkage between education and the understanding of Western democratic values. Respondents who have received only primary education have a more output-oriented or traditional Chinese view of democracy. Since 1991, the education level of Macao people has significantly increased and with it the acceptance of Western democratic values and the duty and right to vote in elections (Yee, 2002, pp. 37-39). Today the vast majority of people already views democracy as the ideal form of government and believe that Macao is ready for full democracy (Yu, 2003b, p. 82). Young people are especially critical of government policies and are interested in political participation (Yu, 2003a, 29). Therefore there are signs for a slow rise of a civic identity based on political participation. The deeper understanding of democracy coupled with critique of the MSAR government and demands for

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25 Interview with José Carlos Matias dos Santos on October 6, 2009, Macao.

political reform would mean that this identity would be in opposition to the traditional PRC Chinese understanding of national identity as a unity of nation, state and CCP.<sup>26</sup> At the same time this development however could be circumscribed by the rapid integration with the Chinese Mainland, which has already led some scholars to identify a “Mainlandization” of Macao (Yee, 2009).

### **Measuring the Macao Identity**

The analysis has shown so far that there are indeed strong indicators for a Macao identity, but at the same time there are severe structural limitations for its development. A review of several surveys on Macao identity, a comparison with the development in Taiwan and Hong Kong as well as my pilot study among Macao students could provide further insight. Compared with Taiwan and Hong Kong, quantitative studies in Macao identity are rare. Political scientist Herbert Yee’s surveys conducted every few years provide the only longitude study since 1991. The Public Opinion Programme (POP) at The University of Hong Kong (HKU) has been conducting studies in Macao since 1992, yet these focus on mainly election and other opinion polls.

The general trend shows that Macao residents continue to identify with China rather than with Macao, reflecting the high rate of new immigrants from China among the population (Li, 2005, p. 25). In the studies by Yee, Macao *and* the Chinese identity are not perceived as mutually exclusive categories and thus respondents are asked to state if they are proud of their Chinese and Macao identity. In 1991, 66.9 per cent of the respondents were proud of being Chinese and in 2006 the number rose to 79.6 per cent. At the same time the number of citizens who feel proud to be Macao people was significantly lower at 53.6 per cent in 1991 and 65.8 in 2006 (Yee, 2001, p. 71; Yu & Lü, 2007, p. 306). From 2003 to 2006 POP, together with the Union for Construction of Macao and the Macao Association of New Generation, conducted surveys following similar presumptions and asked the respondents to rate their strength of identity on a scale from 1 to 10 with figures above 5 indicating positive answers. In December 2003, respondents rated their Chinese identity with the figure 8.12 and

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26 For an analysis of Chinese nationalism and the understanding of national identity see Chang, 2001.

their Macao identity with 7.83, in 2006 both figures went up to 8.2 and 7.9 respectively (POP, 2007a). The increase in identification and pride in being Chinese and a Macao person is explained with the improving socio-economic situation in Macao, the idea of “Macao people ruling Macao” after the handover and the rise of China to an important economic and political power (Yu & Lü, 2007, p. 305). The choice of the Macao people to feel greater pride in being Chinese and identify with China more than with Macao underlines the high level of patriotism in the territory. This could also be observed in their reaction to the handover, in a POP survey days before the handover in 1999: 63.2 per cent stated they were proud to become Chinese nationals, 27.4 per cent were not. One year later 66.4 per cent were proud to be Chinese nationals while 28.3 per cent were not. In comparison, in 1997 in Hong Kong, only 46.6 per cent of citizens were proud to become Chinese nationals and 45.7 were not, but one year later the number of those who were proud of being Chinese citizens dropped dramatically to 31.6 per cent and not proud were 65.7 per cent (Zhong, 2003, p. 12). The different post-handover socio-economic situations explain probably some of the changes.

In a comparative study with Taiwan, Hong Kong and Okinawa conducted by POP between 2005 and 2007, Macao respondents were asked if they identify as Macao people, Chinese people or Macao/Chinese people, 37.7 per cent of respondents consider themselves as Chinese, 13.0 per cent as “Macao people” and 47.8 per cent as a combined identity of “Chinese/Macao people.” Two years later the Chinese identity category (31.0 per cent) remains dominant over the Macao identity (12.8 per cent), yet the largest group of respondents chooses the mixed category Chinese/Macao identity (55.8 per cent) (POP, 2007b).

A 2008 survey among university students offers only two options with 60 per cent of students stating that they are Chinese and 58.3 per cent that they are Macao people. Emotional attachment to Macao is however clearly stronger than with China, with 82.3 per cent stating they love Macao and 68.8 per cent loving China. The study concludes that their pride in Macao (61.7 per cent) is lower than in China (65.4 per cent), and that the findings reflected the youngsters’ higher demands and hopes for the city (Macao Youth Research Association, 2008). The data on Macao identity shows that although identification with Macao has increased, the local identity remains significantly weaker than the Chinese identity. The differences in survey methods and lack of data in the Macao case compared to Taiwan and Hong Kong limit the value of

the comparison to some extent, yet the findings highlight some significant differences and similarities and point towards a general trend.

The quantitative research on Hong Kong identity began in the mid-1980s with studies by Lau Siu-kai and Kuan Hsin-chi using the dichotomy of “Hongkongese” and “Chinese.” Their research found that “an astonishingly large proportion of respondents (59.5 per cent) identified themselves as ‘Hongkongese’” (Lau & Kuan, 1988, p. 2). Since then several institutions analyse changes in Hong Kong identity using longitude studies. The HKU POP data on Hong Kong identity for example shows that Hong Kong people continuously rate their strength of identity as “Hong Kong citizen” several points higher than that as “Chinese citizen.” Nevertheless since the handover, the difference between the two identity categories has become smaller. In 1997 the strength of the Hong Kong identity was at 7.99, significantly stronger than that of the Chinese identity at 7.28. In 2009 the strength of Hong Kong identity was higher at 8.14, but at the same time the Chinese identity had also risen to 7.79 (POP, 2009).

The trend towards a strengthening of the Chinese identity over the past decade can also be observed when respondents are asked to choose among four ethnic identities: “Hong Kong citizen,” “Chinese Hong Kong citizen,” “Chinese citizen” and “Hong Kong Chinese citizen.”<sup>27</sup> In 1997, 34.9 per cent of respondents chose the category “Hong Kong citizen” indicating a strong local identity. Only 18.6 per cent stated they were “Chinese citizens.” In 2009, 37.6 per cent chose the “Hong Kong citizen” category while the percentage of those identifying as “Chinese citizen” went up to 24.2 per cent (POP, 2009).

Research on Taiwan identity is very sophisticated with a number of organizations following the developments since the early 1990s. Usually respondents are asked to choose between “Taiwanese,” “Chinese” and a combined “Taiwanese/Chinese

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27 The mixed categories provide a choice for the respondents who view Chinese and Hong Kong identities as inclusive categories (Lee & Chan, 2005, p. 4). The respondents choosing “Chinese Hong Kong citizen” view themselves primarily as Hong Kong citizens and as Chinese citizens only later, while “Hong Kong Chinese citizen” feel they are first Chinese citizens and second Hong Kong citizens. These categories of mixed identities were chosen by 24.8 per cent and 20.1 per cent respectively of the respondents in 1997. In 2009, 37.6 per cent chose the “Hong Kong citizen” category while the percentage of those identifying as “Chinese citizen” went up to 24.2 per cent; 23.9 per cent chose “Chinese Hong Kong citizen” and 13.1 per cent “Hong Kong Chinese citizen.”

identity.” According to the data from the Election Study Center of Taiwan’s National Cheng-Chi University, the number of people identifying themselves as Taiwanese has risen from 17.3% in 1992 to 52.1% in 2009. While in 1992, 26.2% of Taiwan’s people considered themselves Chinese, it was a mere 4.3% in 2009. The second most frequent identity category is the combined Taiwanese/Chinese identity, chosen by 39.2% in 2008 (45.4% in 1992) (Election Studies Center, National Cheng-Chi University, Taiwan, 2009).

The data shows the considerable strength of the indigenous identity in all three places. The development in Taiwan is in so far unique, as the Taiwan identity is rising in the past decade, while the identification as purely Chinese is not relevant anymore. Nevertheless a combined or mixed identity of Chinese and indigenous identity is the most popular choice in Taiwan, and as well as in Macao, and plays an important part in Hong Kong with about one third of the respondents choosing this category. Identification as Chinese continues to dominate like in the Macao case or becomes a more important identity choice like in Hong Kong. The development of identity choices highlights the impact of identity politics in Taiwan and Hong Kong. At the same time it shows the resilience of a civic Hong Kong identity and some cultural identification with China in Taiwan, which is evident in the combined Taiwan and Chinese identity category. The data suggests that Macao is inline with the overall trend of a strong indigenous identity while at the same time a large group of people adopts a dual or combined Chinese-indigenous identity.

### **Macao Students’ Views on Identity**

A pilot study among 59 students<sup>28</sup> of the University of Macau in 2009<sup>29</sup> analyses the identification with Macau and China in more detail. Following the example of Ma and Fung in the Hong Kong case (Ma & Fung, 2007), students were asked a series of questions related to the identification with symbols representing Macao and China,

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28 The age of the respondents was 18-20 years and the female-male ratio 53 to 47 per cent.

29 The pilot study was conducted at the University of Macao on October 12-15, 2009 with the help of political scientists Dr. Eilo Yu and Dr. Bryan Ho. The sample of 59 students included 28 males and 31 females.

their pride in the achievements of the MSAR and the PRC and their attitude towards political participation. The results confirm the notion that the Macao identity is mainly understood in cultural terms and that China is central to identification for the Macao people. Although the timing of the survey was chosen to avoid an impact of the Legislative Assembly elections as well as the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the PRC on the students sentiments, the small sample size and the fact that the students were chosen only from two classes (Economics; and Government and Public Administration) limited the generalization of the findings. Still, we can treat the survey as a pilot study pointing to the identity development of some Macao university students.

Most students surveyed were born in Macao (67.8 per cent), 25.4 per cent were born in Guangdong Province and 8.4 per cent in Fujian Province or other areas in Mainland China. The students were asked to choose one identity category that they felt was most appropriate. The majority of students (44 per cent) chose a mixed identity of “Chinese Macao person” (*Aomen de Zhongguoren*) (13.5 per cent) or “Macao Chinese person” (*Zhongguo de Aomenren*) (30.5 per cent), and 30.5 per cent of students identify themselves as solely “Chinese persons” (*Zhongguoren*) while 25.5 per cent as only “Macao persons” (*Aomenren*) (Table 1). The birthplace is directly linked to the choice of identity, with the “Macao person” identity only preferred by students born in the city; while the “Chinese person” category is dominated by students born on the Mainland (60 per cent of those who chose that identity). Interestingly, when opting for a mixed identity category, the Mainland-born students dominantly chose the category that in Chinese language connotes an emphasis on the Macao part of the identity. This study shows that in fact there are more commonalities in terms of identification with the city and attitudes towards democracy between the “Macao Chinese person” and the “Macao person” categories than among the other groups. Therefore combining these two categories into a perceived “pan-Macao identity” is viable and the combined strength of this category was 56 per cent.

Insert Table 1 here

The students were also asked for their thoughts on what icons represent Macao by choosing three items and rank them (Table 2). The 19 symbols cover the Portuguese and Chinese (architectural) heritage, modern landmarks, food and beverages and

gambling culture. The results were the classic choices of Macao heritage, the ruins of the St. Paul's Cathedral (93.2 per cent, with 72.8 per cent of respondents declaring it as their first choice) and the Ah-Mah Temple (39 per cent with 23.7 per cent of respondents as their top two choices). The Hotel Lisboa was chosen by 37.8 per cent as their second or third choice and the icon of modern Macao, the Macau Tower, by 30 per cent mostly as a second choice. Icons of the gambling industry like the new international casinos, Wynn, Sands and Venetian Macao, represented for 18.6 per cent and the gambling tycoon, Stanley Ho, for 16.9 per cent (only Macao-born students chose him as a symbol of their city). The Portuguese heritage site of the St. Paul's Cathedral is by far the most iconic image of Macao and symbolizes the city for the vast majority of students. Icons which relate to the casino culture of the territory are the choice of 73 per cent of the respondents, highlighting the impact of the industry on the self-image of its residents.

Insert Table 2 here

Half of the students felt proud or very proud to be a Macao citizen, with the other half feeling neutral, while 54.3 per cent of students had a strong or very strong sense of belonging to Macao, and 40.7 per cent felt neutral or weak (5 per cent) about belonging to the city. Birthplace and identity make significant differences; those born in Macao had a pan-Macao identity feeling considerably stronger about the city. Identification with Macao and China is analysed with two sets of questions. Students were asked about their level of pride in the cultural symbols of Macao and China (the St. Paul's Cathedral and the Great Wall of China), symbols of the state (the Macao SAR flag and the national flag of the PRC) and icons of modern China and Macao (the Olympic Stadium in Beijing and the Macao-Taipa Bridge) (Table 3). Following were questions on pride in the achievements of Macao and the PRC (economic development, history and culture, situation of freedom and democracy, art and literature and international place) (Table 4). The overall results show that the students had more pride in symbols and achievements related to China than to Macao. Birthplace and identity choice have an impact on their level of pride for China, with Mainland-born students considerably more proud. Respondents with a Chinese identity choice were less critical of the situation of freedom and democracy in the PRC and Macao.

Insert Table 3 here

In total, 93.2 per cent of my respondents were proud or very proud of the Great Wall. Only 44 per cent had pride in the ruins of the St. Paul's Cathedral, most of them were either born in Macao or with a pan-Macao identity, and 54.2 per cent felt indifferent towards the symbol of Macao culture. Students felt less strong about symbols of the state; with 74 per cent proud or very proud of the PRC flag, 26 per cent felt neutral and most of them claimed a pan-Macao identity. Only 44 per cent were proud or very proud of the Macao SAR flag, while the majority of students were not concerned with the flag. A majority of 84.7 per cent was proud of the Olympic stadium in Beijing symbolizing modern China and the small fraction that remained neutral consisted of students with a "Macao person" identity. Only 28.8 per cent of students were proud of the Macao-Taipa Bridge, 62.7 felt neutral and 8.5 felt not proud. A reason for the low level of pride could however be the choice of the bridge as a symbol of modern Macao. If a different icon, like the Macao Tower, which seems to be more in tune with the young generation, would have been chosen, the students might have responded differently. Overall students identified with symbols of China more than with Macao, especially with the cultural symbol of the Great Wall. Identification with the modern Chinese state was high, but students with a Macao identity seemed to be less willing to commit to PRC symbols. These patterns can also be observed in the students' responses towards the achievements of Macao and the PRC (Table 4). The students were mainly proud of Macao's history and culture (73 per cent), economic development (55.9 per cent) and the MSAR's place in the world (37.2 per cent); they felt neutral or less proud of the city's art and literature (77.8 per cent) and the responses to Macao's democracy and freedom situation was mixed with 25.5 per cent proud, 25.5 not proud (most of pan-Macau identity) and 49 per cent neutral. Most students were proud of China's history and culture (84.7 per cent), art and literature (81.3 per cent), economy (72.8 per cent) and international place (71.2 per cent). Mainland-born students were in general more proud of China than Macao-born students. With regard to the situation of freedom and democracy in China, the students felt neutral (45.1 per cent), or were not proud or proud at all (44 per cent), only 10.9 per cent were proud. The Mainland-born and Chinese identity students dominated the neutral category, while those with a Macao identity were of the least

pride. The majority of students felt that Macao's status as a UNESCO heritage site makes it special in the Greater China region (69 per cent) and were confident that the Mainland government would continue protecting its position as a casino city (67 per cent).

Insert Table 4 here

Most of the Macao students state that they were interested in public affairs (74.4 per cent) and follow the news regularly (49.1 per cent). Students with a Chinese identity but were born in Macau were more interested in politics and followed the news more regularly; this however did not translate into different patterns of political participation. All students believe that voting and participating in demonstrations are the most meaningful ways of participation (64.4 per cent and 50.8 per cent respectively). Protest letters and signature campaigns are not viewed as effective, with 71.2 per cent chose neutral or not meaningful (Table 5).

Insert Table 5 here

My pilot study shows that, in terms of interest in public affairs and political participation, there are positive signs for a developing civic identity among students. The fact that the majority of students chose the more active ways of political participation (voting and demonstrations) over signing protests letters or joining signature campaigns shows that they are willing to get involved in Macao's public affairs. The high percentage rate of students who believed that protests are meaningful, and the fact that a third of the respondents had reservations over the effectiveness of voting in elections, can be interpreted as follows: students have high demands on the Macao government and they are ready to use unconventional means of participation to pressure the administration in case the voices are not heard. Voting, however, remains the top choice of participation and many youngsters participated in the 2009 elections. In combination with the comparatively high rate of dissatisfaction in the current situation of freedom and democracy in Macao and the high identification with the city, the relatively high level of student political participation indicates the rise of a civic Macao identity. This Macao identity, however, does not stand in opposition to any politico-cultural identification with the Chinese Mainland. The fact that Macao

identity is not understood in opposition to Chinese identity makes it very different from Taiwan and Hong Kong identity. Most students remain identifying themselves as culturally Chinese and they accept the governance of the Mainland Chinese regime. Nevertheless, their political identification with the PRC does not go so far to accept Beijing's disappointing record with regard to the protection of freedom and democracy.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has shown that Macao has developed a unique cultural identity and local consciousness, but at the same time its citizen identification with China is very strong and a majority of Macao people see themselves as Chinese citizens rather than Macao citizens. The Chinese Macao people feel close to the Portuguese architectural icons and consume Macanese food, but a commonly accepted hybrid Macao culture has not yet developed. Instead the Chinese culture dominates in the city and exists in a parallel universe with the Portuguese tradition. Yet one has to remember that the idea of a monolithic unified Chinese culture is a political construct and that in fact the customs and traditions of the Chinese groups living in the city do fundamentally differ from each other. The reality that all these diverse Chinese cultures coexist in peaceful harmony with a hybrid Macanese culture and the Western Portuguese culture can be seen as the core feature of an overall abstract Macao cultural identity.

A key difficulty for the development of a Macao identity in both the cultural and civic realms is the high rate of recent immigrants, who continue to identify very strongly with their Chinese homeland and the PRC political values. The survey conducted for this paper confirms that for students born in Mainland China, the level of identification as Chinese and with the PRC is relatively higher, but they are also less critical of the democratic and political conditions in both the PRC and Macau. The development of a civic identity like that in Hong Kong or Taiwan on the basis of political participation and democratic values is hampered in Macao and it is complicated by two major factors. In the corporatist state structure of the MSAR, the government has managed to co-opt the local elites and groups of Chinese and Macanese. Using economic and political measures, opposition groups are institutionally sidelined and individual critics are constantly put under hidden pressure. At the grassroots level the population is controlled for decades by the powerful

neighbourhood associations which nurture political conservatism and pro-PRC patriotism. Under these constrained political circumstances, the development of the civic identity in Macao is necessary limited.

The socio-economic development since the 1970s was followed by an expansion of the middle class whose members see themselves primarily as “Macao people.” Its elites have given way to pro-democracy groups, but they still remain relatively weak vis-à-vis the government and pro-Beijing forces. The media remains strongly pro-government and pro-PRC with little dissenting voices. However the economic changes and liberalization after the opening of the casino market have given rise to more political participation. Initially mainly concerned about livelihood issues and competition from the Mainland, many protests now are calling for government reforms and a faster pace and wider scope of democratic reform. Interestingly the grievances of Macao’s citizens, government corruption and lack of transparency and democracy have not been linked to the policies of the central government like in Hong Kong. In the Hong Kong SAR the controversy over the national security law was perceived as limiting citizens rights and freedoms and therefore an attack on Hong Kong’s civic identity. As a result the debate strengthened the local identity (Hong Kong Transition Project, 2002). The civic identity of Macao citizens has not reached Hong Kong’s maturity, yet the education standard of the population is rising and more concerns emerge about the casino capitalism’s impact on the daily life of residents and Macao’s cultural heritage. The Macao middle class, although smaller and less powerful than those in Hong Kong, does realize that Hong Kong and Macao are the two places in China that still have a high degree of freedom. The wish to safeguard at least the existing freedom and civil liberties and a distain for government-business collusion and the resulting wish for more democracy have already had an impact on the 2009 elections. Together with the internationalization of the city by foreign professionals, this could create a breeding ground for further political participation and hence a stronger civic identity of the Macao people in the years to come.

Simultaneously, however, the economic development could lead youngsters to join the casino industry instead of studying (Lo, 2009, p. 34), and closer integration with the Mainland might result in Mainlandization. Increasingly the usage of Putonghua<sup>30</sup> and the acceptance of Mainland political values<sup>31</sup> could perhaps curb

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30 The usage of Mandarin and simplified Chinese characters is encouraged by education institutes

the development of a Macao identity in cultural and civic realms. In comparison with Hong Kong and Taiwan, the identity is already weak. The reason lies in the different patterns of development and especially in the importance of the exercise of some form of democratization and democratic practice. It is the civic core of Hong Kong's identity that has been proven to be resilient against a Chinese PRC identity. The civic identity of the Hong Kong SAR is based on liberal core values guarded and promoted by a strong civil society and morally respected pro-democratic elite. With the democratic reforms under the last British Governor Chris Patten in the mid-1990s, Hong Kong people experienced democratic customs. These educated the citizens about some of the benefits of democracy, thus linking the Hong Kong identity close to demands for democratization. For Taiwan the democratization is a source of pride and a key element of its people's unique identity. The strong Taiwan identity can be understood as a civic identity based on the experience of state and nationhood under the roof of the Republic of China. While Taiwan clearly possesses with its national identity the strongest unique identity of all the three cases, Hong Kong's democratic struggle and experience gives it also a clear advantage over Macao. Therefore the study suggests that the Macao identity remains weak as its civic part has not yet emerged fully. In short, the development of a stronger Macao identity appears to be necessarily constrained by the political structures and the rapid process of Macao's closer socio-economic integration with its motherland the PRC.

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Table 1 Self-proclaimed identity of interviewees (in percentages)

*Question:* Please choose one term of which you think it would most accurately describe your identity.  
*(Respondents were asked to choose one of the answers)*

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Chinese person	30.5
Macao person	25.5
Chinese Macao person	13.5
Macao Chinese person	30.5

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Total (N)	100.0 (59)
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N = No. of respondents

Table 2 Most Popular Choices of Icons representing Macao (in percentages)

*Question:* Which of these best symbolizes Macao for you? Please rank the top three by putting a number besides the item (1, 2, 3).  
*(Respondents could choose more than one answers)*

**Answers:**

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Ruins of St Paul's Cathedral	93.2
Ah-Ma Temple	39.0
Hotel Lisboa	37.8
Macau Tower	30.0
Venetian Macau/Sands Macau/Wynn Macau	18.6
Casino Magnate Stanley Ho	16.9

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Table 3 Pride in Symbols of Macao and China (in percentages)

*Question:* How do you feel about the following icons?  
*(Respondents were asked to choose more than one answers)*

	Great pride/Pride	Neutral	No pride/No pride at all
Great Wall	93.2	5.0	1.8
Ruins of St Paul's Cathedral	44.0	54.2	1.8
Flag of the Macao SAR	44.0	52.6	3.4
Flag of the PRC	74.6	22.0	3.4
Macao-Taipa Bridge	28.8	62.7	8.5
Olympic Stadium in Beijing	84.7	15.3	—

Table 4 Pride in Achievements of Macao and the PRC (in percentages)

*Question:* How proud are you of Macao's/Mainland China's achievements listed below?  
*(Respondents were asked to choose more than one answer in both, the Macao and Mainland China section of the question)*

	Great pride/Pride	Neutral	No pride/No pride at all
<b><i>Macao</i></b>			
Economic development	55.9	40.6	3.5
History and culture	73.0	25.2	1.8
Present situation of freedom and democracy	25.5	49.0	25.5
Literature and art	22.0	67.8	10.2
International place	37.2	50.8	12.0
<b><i>PRC</i></b>			
Economic development	72.8	25.4	1.8
History and culture	84.7	15.3	—
Present situation of freedom and democracy	10.9	45.1	44.0
Literature and art	81.3	16.9	1.8
International place	71.2	28.8	—

Table 5 Interest in Public Affairs and participation (in percentages)

*Questions:* Do you have interest in public affairs? Do you follow the news frequently (newspapers, TV, radio, online)? How meaningful do you think signing petition letters and signature letters/participation in protests and demonstrations/voting in elections is?

*(Respondents were asked to choose more than one answer)*

	Great interest/Interest	Neutral	No interest/No interest at all
Interest in public affairs	74.6	22.0	3.4
Reading the news	49.1	37.3	13.6
	Very meaningful/Meaningful	Neutral	Not meaningful/Not meaningful at all
Protest letters/signature campaign	28.8	64.4	6.8
Protests and demonstrations	50.8	42.4	6.8
Voting in elections	64.4	23.7	11.9