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Title	**Promoting hybridity: The politics of the new Macau identity**
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Citation	**China Quarterly, 2010 n. 203, p. 656-674**
Issued Date	**2010**
URL	**http://hdl.handle.net/10722/81435**
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Promoting Hybridity: The Politics of the New Macau Identity

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ABSTRACT   This article traces the unique process of reconstructing the identity of the Macau Special Administrative Region and its people after the political resumption to China in 1999, and the political and economic significance of the reconstruction. As in other postcolonial contexts, identity is an arena of political contest where various discourses that embody re-appropriation of political traditions and legacies criss-cross. In Macau, the post-handover identity comprises the local, the national and the international components, with Macau characterized as a historical, colonial/cultural hybrid and economic object. In fact, the Macau identity after 1999 represents a re-appropriation of the image of colonial Macau propagated by the Portuguese administration since the 1980s. Also, identity making has been a process of incorporating instead of repressing or eliminating the identities of "the other," and building a stand-alone national identity is not the prime task in the reconstruction of an identity. Rather, multiple identity components are deliberately incorporated and promoted. The success of the process has fabricated Macau's relatively smooth reintegration with China and enhanced the legitimacy of its new government.

This article traces the unique process of reconstructing the identity of the Macau Special Administrative Region (Macau) and its people[1] after the political resumption to China in 1999, and the political and economic significance of the reconstruction. As in other postcolonial contexts across the globe, identity is an arena of political contest where various discourses that embody re-appropriation of political traditions and legacies criss-cross.[2] The success in reconstructing a

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1 The article focuses on the identity construction of the Chinese population in Macau and the place as a whole. It does not attempt to deal with the Macanese and Portuguese in Macau. Macanese refers to the descendants of Portuguese and Asians who are born in Macau.
2 Examples include India, Algeria, Kenya and many other colonies in Asia and Africa. See, for example, Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books, 1986) and *The Nations and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (trans. H. Chevalier) (New York: Grove Press, 1965); Jan Germen Janmaat, "The ethnic 'other' in Ukrainian history textbooks: the case of Russia and the Russians," *Compare*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2007), pp. 307–24; Joseph

postcolonial identity in Macau, in stark contrast to Hong Kong, another special administrative region (SAR) of China, has fabricated its relatively smooth reintegration with China and enhanced the legitimacy of the new Macau government. What makes the case of Macau particularly interesting is that a sense of national identification was not the prime task in the reconstruction of a new Macau identity. Rather, there was a process of incorporating the identities of "the other" through which multiple identity components that push the hybridity, coloniality and historicity of Macau to the forefront are deliberately promoted. In consequence, the growth of nationalism, or more specifically, economic nationalism, was boosted.[3] The advancement of national assimilation in Macau has met little resistance.

Unlike other postcolonial regimes which are independent sovereign states, Macau is a SAR whose primary goal after reunification should be national reintegration. Hence, the cultivation of a national identity may not be the prime task if the existing local identities do not threaten national reintegration as in Macau (but not in Hong Kong).[4] However, what is intriguing is that the new Macau government consciously strengthens the coloniality inherent in the original identity, and encourages people to take pride in their colonial past. The colonial legacy in the old identity has not been repressed as in other postcolonial regimes and Hong Kong but rather is boosted in the name of the internationalization of Macau. In addition, the new government not only endorses the existing local identity, but has also actively remoulded an originally weak local identity to make it a strong one.

This article attempts an in-depth analysis of the official discourse of Macau's identity after political resumption, explaining the various historical, communal and economic factors that inevitably limited the government's options in identity reconstruction, as well as the political and economic significance of such a reconstruction.

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footnote continued

    Zajda, "The new history school textbooks in the Russian Federation: 1992–2004," *Compare*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2007), pp. 291–306.

3 Economic nationalism is generally defined as the sentiments and attempts to protect and advance national economic interests and to establish a strong nation by economic means. Eric Helleiner, "Economic nationalism as a challenge to economic liberalism? Lessons from the 19th century," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 46 (2002), pp. 307–29; C.X. George Wei, "Economic nationalism versus capitalist economic liberalism: the negotiation of the Sino-American commercial treaty," in C.X. George Wei and Xiaoyuan Liu (eds.), *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective: Historical and Recent Cases* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 149.

4 A comparative study of the process of building nationalism in Hong Kong and Macau, China's two SARs, will be interesting. Both governments are keen to promote nationalism and in particular economic nationalism among the locals. However, the Hong Kong government is keen to reform the local identity and cultivates state nationalism whereas the Macau government pools its effort in promoting a local and international identity. The nation building process has been met with great resistance in Hong Kong while in Macau it is just the opposite.

The Politics of Identity Reconstruction

This article adopts a poststructuralist view of the concept of identity.[5] Identity is conceptualized as the "sameness" of the features of individuals by which they are recognized as members of a community. While the process of finding our identity is a process of defining "the self" and finding our "sameness" with other people, this cannot be achieved without also defining who we are not, who "the other" is and what others differ from us ("differences").[6]

Theoretically, reconstruction of a national identity is one of the leading tasks of a newly established postcolonial regime. Such a reconstruction indicates a process of nation building targeted at consolidating a sense of we-ness about common history, memories, symbols and cultures, and the belief in the importance of practices beneficial to governance. It aims at cultivating political allegiance to the state and feelings of identification with the territory and fellow citizens. Through this process, a new regime secures the willing respect and obedience of its citizens, as well as its legitimacy.[7]

Many have argued that the construction of a national identity is a process of defining who we are, which, however, cannot succeed without simultaneously contrasting ourselves with others. In the process, certain features of the community of "we" are constructed, emphasized or exalted by the regime while others are denied, relegated to secondary importance or eliminated.[8] The process of selection of features is strategic, and constrained by the cultural repertoires of the original communal identity and the regime's pragmatic governance considerations.

One would expect that in making a postcolonial national identity, the colonial attributes in the existing identity are often repressed or eliminated, and local identities are relegated to secondary importance or incorporated. In Anna Triandafyllidou's study of Greek nationalism, rival nations (external significant others), and ethnic minority or immigrant communities (internal significant others) perceived as a threat were defined as different from "the self" and excluded as part of the nation.[9] Indeed, history shows that resistance to colonialism constituted nationalism, as in Latin America and postcolonial Africa,[10] and it is important to incorporate people's existing cultural and ethnic identities in

5 "Identity" can be variously understood in different academic traditions. Broadly speaking, there are two possible understandings, constructionist and essentialist. See e.g. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London & New York: Verso, 1991); and Anthony Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History, Polity* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2001).

6 Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (trans. A. Bass) (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981); Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 75.

7 John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983) and *Encounters with Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

8 Derrida, *Positions*; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Anna Triandafyllidou, "National identity and the 'other'," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (1998), pp. 593–612.

9 Triandafyllidou, "National identity"; Elaine Chan, "Defining fellow compatriots as 'others' – national identity in Hong Kong," *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (2000), pp. 499–519.

10 Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought*, p. 23.

order to build a national identity successfully, such as in bridging Basque and Catalonia nationalism in Spain.[11] Post-handover Hong Kong is a good case where official efforts to rebuild a national identity have been thwarted because of the government's failure to recognize the tenacity of the local identity.

The case of Macau is unique in showing that the making of a national identity may not be the prime goal of a new regime, and that the regime may not be antagonistic to the features of "the other" – colonial attributes and local identities – that it has inherited. Rather, the new government has cultivated a hybrid identity, including local, national and international identities, believing that these can advance not only nation building but also the economic goals beneficial to governance. Contrary to common wisdom, the process of identity making is not a clear process of differentiating "the other" from "the self" and repressing "the other" but is instead a process of incorporating the identities of "the other."

Furthermore, predominant in the process is the government's economic concerns which, however, do not preclude its success in fostering its political legitimacy and the people's sense of national unity. As in many semi-democracies in East Asia and China, it is assumed that cultivation of consensus on the importance of economic development can help enhance a regime's political legitimacy and its people's political unity. The following analysis illustrates the special features of the process of identity making in post-handover Macau, including the political economy aspects.

If identity is a social construction, then it is revealing that in Macau the predominant emphasis in the process of identity construction is on economic and constitutive strategies. Roger Smith[12] argues that identity construction is a politicized process embedded with competing narratives of a political, economic and constitutive nature. Political narratives foster trust in the worth of an identity by promising the people enhancement of their political power through institutions and policies as well as protection from all external enemies. Economic stories promote accounts of interests, arguing that a particular identity advances each member's economic well being. Constitutive stories endow members of the community with shared identities, as defined by their common religion, race, ethnicity, language, culture, history and so on.

The study of Spain by Alfred Stepan and Juan Linz[13] reiterates Smith's theory and demonstrates that the democratic right to elections can help legitimate claims to obedience, and can reconstruct national feelings on firmer ground. However, the remote possibility of full democratization in Macau as a SAR of China has made the new government highly cautious of the use of measures of political empowerment like these. Rather, depoliticized stories that stigmatize politics as potentially divisive and harmful to stability and prosperity are frequently told.

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11 Alfred Stepan, *Arguing Comparative Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 197.
12 Roger M. Smith, "Citizenship and the politics of people-building," *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2001), pp. 79–80.
13 Alfred Stepan and Juan J. Linz, "Political identities and electoral sequences: Spain, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia," in Stepan, *Arguing Comparative Politics*, p. 210.

Relatively speaking, both economic and constitutive stories of the new Macau identity have been prominent in the official discourse. Around the world, an emphasis on economic stories as a government strategy of identity making is not rare.[14] In post-handover Macau, the economic stories focus on the economic benefits of its reintegration with China, thus revealing the intertwinement of political and economic dynamics of identity making by which political legitimacy and unity are achieved by economic narratives. With regard to the role of constitutive stories, scholars such as Cathryn Clayton,[15] Benedict Anderson,[16] Anthony Smith[17] and Arthur Neal[18] similarly argue that in the process of identity construction, the past is selectively remembered or forgotten, and the hopes and fears of the people are inherited by the newly (re)constructed identity. In Macau, the constitutive stories put forward a re-reading of the city's past as peaceful and devoid of conflicts, its place as an international city, and the people's cultural identity as a hybrid of eastern and western cultures. During the process, we see significant reconstruction of Macau's collective memory and the past.

The Original Communal Identity and Economic Factors

Macau was leased out to Portugal in the 1550s by the Ming Dynasty of China as an entrepôt for foreign trade. Scholars have observed that, during most of its rule, the colonial government was remote from the Chinese population in Macau. In fact, a secret pre-agreement was signed in 1979, in which Portugal and China agreed that Macau was Chinese territory under Portuguese administration. Portugal was basically waiting to return Macau to China before 1999.[19] In 1987, China and Portugal signed an agreement on the handover of Macau. In 1999, following Hong Kong, Macau was reverted back to China as a SAR ruled under the principle of "one country, two systems."

Theoretically speaking, in colonial Macau (as in colonial Hong Kong), a local ethnic Macau identity should be a more important defining feature of the "self" in the understanding of the Macau people relative to other components, such as the national self. However, this is not quite true, as seen from the data below showing the ambivalence in the people's local identification. In a survey

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14 For example, "Depoliticization in Morocco," in Larry Diamond, Marc. F. Plattner, and Daniel Brumberg (eds.), *Islam and Democracy in the Middle East* (Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003), p. 67.

15 Cathryn Clayton, "Valuing the past in the Museum of Macao," in *History and Memory: Present Reflections on the Past to Build Our Future*, Macao Ricci Institute Series 5 (Macao: Macao Ricci Institute, 2007), pp. 349–72.

16 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 204.

17 Smith, *Myths and Memories*, pp. 253–58.

18 Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Extraordinary Events in the American Experience* (2nd ed.) (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), pp. xi, 3–19.

19 Richard Louis Edmonds, "Macau and Greater China," *The China Quarterly*, No. 136 (1993), pp. 878–80; Herbert S. Yee, *Macao in Transition: From Colony to Autonomous Region* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 4–5; Frans-Paul van der Putten, "Representative government and the investment development path: Macao's colonial legacy," *Portuguese Journal of Social Science* Vol. 3, No. 3 (2004), p. 184.

conducted in 1999, 62 per cent of respondents reported that they had a good overall impression of Macau,[20] and around 54 per cent believed that most people in Macau were sincere, reliable and trustworthy.[21] In addition, around 72 per cent were concerned about Macau's future.[22] Nevertheless, the survey also indicated that only 38.8 per cent felt proud to be a citizen of Macau and 45.9 per cent felt no pride at all. Only about a quarter of respondents were proud of Macau's cultural diversity, while about 40 per cent claimed that there was nothing to be proud of.[23] Overall, the data suggested that the people generally liked the place, notably its small-town culture, and were emotionally tied to it, but found little satisfaction in their political and legal status as Macau citizens. This ambivalence in relating to the place came from the different levels or aspects of satisfaction, or no satisfaction, that they could derive from being a Macau person. All these ideas and sentiments later became the new government's problems to tackle when cultivating a new identity.

Relative to the local identity, Macau people's Chinese identity was predominant even before the handover. A survey conducted in 1999 found that 74.1 per cent of respondents felt proud of being Chinese,[24] and most of them identified with Chinese history, culture and ethics.[25] There may be several reasons for this. Demographically speaking, although the population contains a mix of people of different origins, ethnicity and social classes,[26] in 1999, 95 per cent of the population of Macau were ethnic Chinese.[27] Furthermore, Beijing had been able to maintain its influence in Macau even before 1999 owing to its collegial relationship with Portugal and the fact that pro-Beijing Chinese groups in Macau had served as effective intermediaries between the government and the general public, who were by and large excluded from the colonial polity, since the 12.3 riots in 1966.[28] In fact, these groups were so successful that politics in Macau after 1966 has been commonly characterized as "consensus politics" or "interest group politics," and Macau has been widely regarded as a nationalistic society relative

20 Yee, *Macao in Transition*, table 4.12, p. 72.
21 *Ibid.* table 5.7, p. 97.
22 *Ibid.* table 4.14, p. 74.
23 *Ibid.* table 4.11, p. 71. Nevertheless, a survey conducted in 1991 indicated that a higher proportion of respondents, 53.6%, were proud to be Macau citizens. See Herbert S. Yee, Liu Bo-long and Ngo Tak-wing, *Aomen huaren zhengzhi wenhua* (*The Political Culture of the Macau Chinese*) (Macau: Macau Foundation, 1993), p. 42.
24 Yee, *Macao in Transition*, table 4.11, p. 71.
25 Herbert S. Yee (ed.), *Aomen huigui qianhou de wenti yu duice* (*Problems and Solutions for Macau before and after Reunification*) (Hong Kong: Mingliu, 1999), p. 9.
26 Jonathan Porter, "The transformation of Macau," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (1993), pp. 7–11.
27 CIA, *The World Factbook 1999*, at www.umsl.edu/services/govdocs/wofact99/197.htm#people, accessed 17 December 2007.
28 The 12.3 riots in Macau were triggered by some pro-Beijing Chinese groups and led to a series of concessions from the colonial government, importantly including the elimination of pro-Taiwan factions' political influence in Macau. This directly helped consolidate Beijing's influence there. See, for example, Ming K. Chan, "Different roads to home: the retrocession of Hong Kong and Macao to Chinese sovereignty," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 12, No. 36 (2003), pp. 514–16; Shiu-hing Lo, *Political Development in Macao* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1995), pp. 58–59.

to Hong Kong.[29] Obviously, before the handover, a Chinese identity was a defining feature of the "self" understanding of most of the Macau people *vis-à-vis* the colonial ruler and people of other races in Macau. Its predominance also helps explain why the making of a national identity is not the prime goal of the new government as Macau has been in the strong grip of Beijing.

Despite Macau's long colonial history and its Mediterranean-European architecture, the current assumptions of the international character of the city's culture and the people's westernized orientations are probably overstatements. By the time the Portuguese left, only about 2 per cent of Macau's 450,000 people spoke Portuguese, with the other 98 per cent speaking Cantonese and other languages.[30] The colonial government was remote from the Chinese population, and the Chinese and Portuguese communities in Macau were relatively distant from each other. Before the handover, a colonial identity was seen as "the other" in the "self" understanding of most of the Macau people.

This said, it should be noted that the Portuguese administration had for years "exoticized" Macau (not its people) by putting forward the idea of Macau as a point of encounter between the Portuguese-speaking world and China. Particularly since the 1980s, the colonial administration spent a huge amount on historical preservation. In addition, some cultural agents were formed which signified the colonial administration's intention to leave a Portuguese presence in Macau.[31] Notable examples include the museum industry, the Macau Foundation,[32] the Centre for Macau Studies[33] and its publication *Macau Studies*, and the *Review of Culture*[34] published by the Cultural Affairs Bureau (formerly the Macau Cultural Institute).[35] As will be analysed below, the Macau promoted by the colonial administration was a cultural hybrid, which has been further elaborated by the new government. Interestingly, while in colonial Hong Kong Britain had sought to continue its influence by consolidating the popular beliefs of the legitimacy of free trade, the rule of law, freedom and democracy, in colonial Macau Portugal aimed to achieve the same objective by propagating the narrative of Macau's identity as constituted by both Portuguese and Chinese culture.

Economic factors have also limited the options available to the new government in reconstructing an identity besides the original communal identity and the colonial legacy outlined above. Macau's economy has heavily depended on gambling and tourism. In the last decade, revenues from gambling alone

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29 Bill K.P. Chou, "Interest group politics in Macao after handover," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 14, No. 43 (2005), pp. 191–206; Yee, *Macao in Transition*, pp. 33, 159.

30 James Brooke, "China sees advantages in Macao's Portuguese past," *New York Times*, 21 October 2004, p. 4.

31 Edmonds, "Macau and Greater China," pp. 904–06; Herbert S. Yee and Sonny S.H. Lo, "Macau in transition: the politics of decolonization," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 10 (1991), p. 911.

32 www.fmac.org.mo/.

33 www.umac.mo/cms/index.html.

34 The journal (www.icm.gov.mo/DeipPub/rcMagC.asp) aims to promote discussion on Macau history and culture as well as anything pertaining to "Macau studies," and to unravel the unique identity of Macau.

35 www.icm.gov.mo/ICM/fcinf.asp#deip.

persistently constituted over 30 per cent of Macau's total income.[36] Also, between 1996 and 1999, Macau suffered from economic recession.

Indeed, Macau's economic dependence on gambling and tourism has made it necessary for the new government to maintain the city's tourist attractions, such as its small-town, colonial (perhaps exotic) and Mediterranean-European character. Furthermore, the pre-handover economic recession had pushed the government to adopt immediate and pragmatic measures to alleviate economic hardship. In order to do this, it benefits governance if the government can motivate the people to identify with the regime and its goals. This explains why cultivating a strong sense of local belonging in the people has become an essential government task. Since building up closer economic ties with China would certainly quicken economy recovery in Macau, there is also little surprise that integration with China is encouraged by the government and nationalism is promoted. Hence, the government's attempt to make a new identity is partly embedded with economic considerations.

The Official Discourse on the New Macau Identity

Despite the impact of the original communal identity, colonial legacy and economic factors, the new Macau identity in the official discourse is not a replica of the old one. As analysed, in government narratives local and national identification are depicted as deeply connected with one another as Macau has become part of China. The narratives on nationalism are both political and economic in character. In addition, international, national and local identities are often linked up, as using Macau's colonial past and hybrid character and going international have all been justified as good means of serving both China and Macau economically and politically. The processes of reconstructing the three components of the new identity are indeed intertwined. The following sections analyse the features of the official discourse.

The local component

During the first few years after its establishment, the new government embarked on practical measures to deal with imminent social problems such as issues of public order, and these measures have successfully enhanced its legitimacy. Together with this, its initial strategies in building a sense of belonging among the people were also sufficiently pragmatic and down-to-earth (in its own words, *min-ben* or people-oriented) by focusing on the livelihood issues of ordinary people. Indeed, the importance and urgency of consolidating a local identity was envisaged by the new government from the very outset.[37] As stated above, a new regime may eliminate or repress the existing ethnic identity, that is "otherize"

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36 *Macau SAR Government Fact Sheet*, at www.gov.mo/egi/Portal/rkw/public/view/showcomp.jsp?id=InfoShowTemp&docid=c373e9fefc5902018f6f6c0503aa0266, accessed 20 January 2008.

37 For example, Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture, *Policy Aims* (Macau: Macau SAR Government), 2001, p. 3; 2003, part 1, p. 37, para 5.2.1, and part 2, p. 80, para. 5.1.1.

it, because such an identity is potentially subversive to national reintegration. Nevertheless, in Macau the new government consolidated the local identification in the "self" understanding of the people. This indicates that the existing ethnic Macau identity is perceived as politically unthreatening and would not be able to do any harm if reconstituted in pragmatic and depoliticized narratives.

The local community, in the initial narratives, was one with problems that needed an immediate cure. And the Macau government, with its *min-ben* approach operating gracefully within the "one country, two systems" framework, was constructed as the right cure for the problems. For example, chief executive Edmund Ho (He Houhua 何厚鏵) of the government stated that: "We should continue to emphasize the principle of 'putting the people's interests first,' and further implement this in both long-term and short-term policies."[38] A pragmatic common vision of society was set for the people. Most of the initial social goals proclaimed by the government were very down-to-earth. They included achieving certain minimal standards of governance, such as maintaining social order and political stability, establishing the legitimacy of the government, building people's trust in the government, improving people's livelihood, and enhancing social cohesion.[39]

As time progressed, the narratives expanded and changed focus. Emphasis was then put on the desirable conflict-free character of the Macau community, including its small-town culture and intimacy, which had constituted many local people's common memory. In doing so, this part of Macau's past was selected and remembered to promote a sense of local identification and construct new possibilities for society. Two related descriptions of the city are notable.

Macau is first depicted as a caring community where the spirit of mutual help and harmony prevail, and humanitarianism is part of its tradition. The citizens are for and will help one another.[40] And such features have made Macau unique. For example, it claims: "Kind-heartedness, a high degree of diversification, strong acceptance and mutual integration are among our most valuable human traditions. They are also the central attractions of our society. These qualities have enabled Macau to retain a reputation in China and elsewhere in Asia for its uniquely warm and caring atmosphere."[41]

Indeed, few people would question the relative lack of social conflicts in Macau's recent history. But to say that Macau has always been peaceful and harmonious is obviously an exaggeration. The 12.3 riots are blatant exceptions to the official discourse on the character of Macau, as are the demonstrations held by lower-class workers in recent years. Despite that, the government's depoliticized version fits in well with its scarce attention to democratization in this policy address. Democratization as a political goal is rarely mentioned. When it is

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38 Edmund Hau-wah Ho, *Policy Address* (Macau: Macau SAR Government, 2002), part 3, para. 10.
39 For example, *Macau Daily News*, 20 December 2002, p. B01; *Jornal San Wa Ou*, 21 November 2001, p. 01; Ho, *Policy Address*, 2001.
40 For example, Ho, *Policy Address*, 2001, part 2, para. 3; 2004, part 4.
41 Ho, *Policy Address*, 2004, part 2, para. 4. Also see Ho, *Policy Address*, 2007, p. 24.

spoken of, it is not concerned with institutional development but is rather associated with improving the advisory and consultation structure, transparency and accountability under an executive-led government.[42]

Secondly, Macau is conceived as a city of dual character: a dynamic and modern tourist city on the one hand, and a historical and cultural city on the other. While the former trait signifies its new and commercialized aspect, the latter represents its historic and spiritual side. Instead of contradicting each other, the two concepts of Macau identity sit in harmony.[43]

One might wonder what purpose a dual Macau character serves. Also, why are these two traits emphasized but not others? The purpose of the emphasis on the first is understandable. Gambling and tourism have long been the main industries in Macau, as discussed above. With regard to the second – Macau's historical (and colonial) aspect – the government has not only attempted to preserve and revive it but also to manufacture it. And this is exactly where the local component of the new identity joined with other components (the international, historical and colonial ones) in the official discourse on the new identity. To quote from an interview with Harald Bruning, director of the *Macau Post Daily*, in the *New York Times*: "Far from shrinking from Macau's colonial past, the preservation of colonial and historical landmarks in Macau has been much revived. They have gone from heritage preservation to heritage cultivation."[44]

Here the economic and political value of the identity project seems obvious. On the one hand, strengthening Macau's historical identity serves to cultivate cultural tourism. For instance, the success of the city's application for the "Historic Centre of Macau" to be on the World Heritage List further reinforces its importance in integrating Chinese and Western cultures.[45] Moreover, as found by Clayton in her study of the Museum of Macau, the museum was simply "a step towards diversifying our product," its function to attract more tourists and revenue.[46] Hence, the museum, like many others in Macau, constituted part of the cultural tourism project that the Macau government has promoted and which, if successful, could help alleviate the overdependence of Macau's economy on the gambling industry. On the other hand, the political value of this endeavour lies in offering the people an identity which ties the historicity of Macau to a newly constructed Macau identity. It reminds the people that they are part of a legacy which does not only help define who they are, but is also something that they should take pride in and work towards preserving and further advancing. And in general, the residents of Macau feel comfortable with the historical dimension of their new identity.

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42 For example, *Apple Daily*, 20 December 2004, p. 23; Ho, *Policy Address*, 2006, p. 23; 2007, pp. 15, 25–26.
43 Ho, *Policy Address*, 2004, part 2, para. 4.
44 Brooke, "China sees advantages," p. 4.
45 For example, *Macau Daily News*, 14 October 2001, p. B03; Ho, *Policy Address*, 2006, p. 4.
46 Clayton, "Valuing the past," p. 355.

Hence, from the depiction of a community of problems to a historical community of potentials, we see the expansion of the language of identity construction used by the Macau government. This also indicates an increased base from which members of society can find their commonness. It is worthy of note that the local component of the new Macau identity is composed of an interesting mix of elements including caring, harmonious, historical, colonial and international characters[47] which engender a range of future potential for Macau.

The rise of local identification of the people of Macau after political resumption is obvious. For instance, a survey found that 78 per cent of respondents believed that there had been significant changes in Macau since political resumption,[48] and another 78 per cent said they trusted their new government.[49] Another recent study revealed that 65.8 per cent of respondents felt proud of being people of Macau.[50]

So, as a result of economic and political considerations, selected ideas about Macau and its people in the original communal identity are incorporated into the official discourse on the new identity, which serve to strengthen local identification. As stated, this local component must not threaten national reintegration. And in fact it cannot, because it is basically depoliticized and well integrated with the national identity, as will be analysed below.

The national component

As argued, a national identity has always been a defining element of the "self" understanding of most of the Macau people before the handover. This helps explain why, since 1999, government propaganda on nationalism has been relatively indirect and less aggressive compared with that on local identification, although the importance of nationalism is reiterated in the official discourse. It should be noted, however, that the theme of increasing national sentiment often appears alongside the idea of reinforcing Macau residents' sense of belonging.[51] The love for country and the love for Macau are presumed to be one concept or simply two sides of the same coin in the official discourse. But nationalism is certainly not downgraded in the official discourse. It is only repackaged as economic nationalism.

There has been a lot of discussion about the nature of Chinese nationalism. Broadly speaking, Chinese nationalism refers to a flexible combination of the elements of ethnic Han identity, cultural pride, and cultural, political,

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47 Ho, *Policy Address*, 2007, p. 3.
48 *Hong Kong-Macao Comparative Study: Macao People Support Their Government More* (press release on 4 February 2004, p. 4), at http://hkupop.hku.hk/english/Macao/motp4/morelease.html, accessed 27 March 2007.
49 *Ibid.* p. 2.
50 Herbert Yee and Lui Kwok-man, "Public political culture," in Wong Siu-lun *et al.* (eds.), *Records of Macau Society: Indicators Study and Quality of Life* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia Pacific Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2007), table 13.5, p. 306.
51 Ho, *Policy Address*, 2000, part 3, para. 14.

international, popular, state and economic nationalism.[52] Although economic nationalism as a component of Chinese nationalism has received relatively little scholarly attention,[53] this brand of nationalism has become prominent among the Chinese since the 1980s when China adopted an economic open-door policy. Issues that do not assist in the economic development of China, including political issues and reforms, are put aside as secondary.

Unlike the national identity prevalent in Macau before 1999, which was probably cultural or factional in nature, the national identity emerging after reunification has strong economic intent besides cultural and ethnic ingredients. Local and national identity have been well negotiated by tying economic interests to economic development in mainland China. On many occasions, the Macau government has advocated broad and efficient economic integration with China, as well as economic collaboration with neighbourhood provinces such as Zhu Hai. In addition, the international advantages of Macau, engendered by its colonial and historical past, are seen as serving both national and local interests. Along with the Macau government, China has also picked up a pragmatic and economic reading of Macau's colonial past. The three elements of the new Macau identity are indeed intertwined in their making. As stated in Ho's 2006 policy address:

With the committed support of the motherland, we have already made considerable progress in building a trading and service platform with Portuguese-speaking countries and regions. Riding on this success, we will continue to exploit our unique advantages, in terms of language skills, networks of contacts, and historical heritage, in order to foster business co-operation between the Mainland, Macau, Portuguese-speaking countries and the worldwide Chinese business community.[54]

At least five minor discourses on the economic nationalism promoted by the Macau government can be seen from the above example. First, China is perceived as a land of economic opportunity and Macau will always enjoy strong support from the central government.[55] Second, in the economic nationalism promoted in Macau, the success of the model of "one country, two systems" lies in the integration of the territory and the country, in particular, in economic development.[56] In fact, the implementation of the Closer Economic Partnership

52 For example, Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Yingjie Guo, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China: The Search for National Identity under Reform* (London, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004); George T. Crane, "'Special things in special ways': national identity and China's special economic zones," in Jonathan Unger (ed.), *Chinese Nationalism* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), pp. 148–68; Wei, "Economic nationalism"; Guoqi Xu, "Nationalism, internationalism, and national identity: China from 1895 to 1919," in Wei and Liu, *Chinese Nationalism in Perspective*, pp. 101–20.
53 Wei, "Economic nationalism," p. 149; Helleiner, "Economic nationalism."
54 Ho, *Policy Address*, 2006, p. 14. Also see China's official views stated by Bai Zhijian, director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macau SAR in *Jornal San Wa Ou*, 23 December 2006, p. 02; Wang Hai, "Rebuilding Macao as an international economic and cultural exchange platform," *People's Daily* (overseas edition), 20 December 2006.
55 For example, Secretariat for Economy and Finance, *Policy Aims* (Macau: Macau SAR Government), 2006, pp. 20–22, para. 9.2–9.4; Ho, *Policy Address*, 2006, part 2.
56 Ho, *Policy Address*, 2002, part 3.

Arrangement has elevated the close economic and trading partnerships between Macau and the Mainland to new heights. As perceived by the government, these have become strong pillars that support its policy of diversifying local industries. The partnership arrangement has also created favourable conditions for strengthening co-operation with other countries in the region.[57]

Third, Macau benefits and will continue to benefit from its special position in the "one country, two systems" experiment. This is the advantage of being part of the experiment. So, instead of perceiving the model as a limitation to development, as some people in Hong Kong believe, this is seen as an opportunity for Macau. Fourth, making good use of the economic opportunities available and flourishing economically is being nationalistic, because it demonstrates to others the success of the "one country, two systems" model and the advantages of reunification with China. And lastly, it is believed that Macau has a unique role to play in the trade development between China and the Portuguese-speaking world because its colonial heritage has endowed it with the required international edge.

Like local identification, nationalism has surged since 1999. According to a survey conducted by Hong Kong University Public Opinion Poll in Macau in 2003, the strength of identity of the respondents as "Chinese citizens" on a scale of 0–10 was 8.12, whereas in 2002 the figure was 7.79.[58] Some 64 per cent said they were proud of becoming a national citizen of China.[59] The confidence level of Macau people about China's future was 86 per cent. Regarding the reintegration of Macau with China in the political experiment of "one country, two systems," Macau people showed great confidence, standing at 80 per cent.[60]

The international component

Like the local component, the colonial legacy – as "the other" in the original communal identity – is not eliminated or repressed by the government but rather is boosted in the name of the internationalization of Macau. It is believed that this can cultivate social cohesion, advance economic goals and benefit nation building.

Although Macau was portrayed as a community of problems at the beginning of the regime, descriptions of the city's merits and qualities gradually multiply in the government narrative, and emphasize the international aspect of Macau engendered by its colonial history. Macau is portrayed, as it was during the colonial administration, as a famous historical and cultural city with plentiful experience of European culture, and as a meeting point of Eastern and Western cultures. It has a diverse and harmonious culture, and is tolerant of differences.

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57 Secretariat for Economy and Finance, *Policy Aims*, 2002; Ho, *Policy Address*, 2006, p. 14.
58 *Hong Kong-Macau Comparative Study*, p. 2.
59 *Ibid*. p. 4.
60 *Ibid*. p. 2.

To quote the policy aims of the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture in 2002: "Having experienced the peaceful coexistence of multiple cultures for more than 400 years, Macau has become a melting pot where the Chinese culture and other cultures are mutually accommodating, and the ethics of tolerance, openness, and diligence flourish."[61]

But to say that the new government accepts outright the coloniality of Macau is not completely true. In fact, its reading of Macau in this respect is not entirely the same as that of the colonial administration. Hence, it is interesting to explore the concept of "a historical and colonial Macau" as understood by the colonial and new governments. The quarterly journal *Review of Culture*,[62] a well-known cultural tool started by the colonial administration in 1987 which has lasted to the present, provides good illustrations.

In the first issue of the journal, it was written that cultural pluralism[63] or cultural hybridity[64] was the staple of Macau, as it was "a culture rooted in Western, European and Portuguese civilization and a culture with an Eastern, Asiatic and Chinese matrix."[65] Although a meeting point of different cultures, Macau was tranquil because of the peaceful relationship between China and Portugal.[66] In addition, pragmatically speaking, Macau's hybrid cultural identity should be continued as neither China nor Portugal would derive any benefits from its disposal.[67] Obviously, as observed, Portugal aimed to maintain its presence in post-handover Macau by endorsing the narrative that Macau's identity was a hybridity constituted by both Portuguese and Chinese culture. It was part of both Portugal and China.

After 1999, the new government of Macau continued this narrative but slightly twisted it. An examination of the themes of articles in the *Review of Culture* published after political resumption[68] suggests several observations on the new government's concerns in building up a new cultural identity (see Table 1).

First, most articles are on Macau, which reflects the journal's primary interest. Second, most are on history, art and religion rather than politics, political culture or social issues. This testifies to the idea that the Macau identity promoted by the new government is basically cultural and non-political. Third, the period covered by the articles is largely the 1800s or late Qing. Again, this reflects the new government's emphasis on the historicity of the Macau identity and, importantly, on Macau's being part of China. Thus it is understood that the promotion of the new identity can be more effective if people recognize that Macau had an identity and a part to play in the world, and that what it gained from its colonial past will continue to help it flourish in the future. But significantly, this understanding has to

61 Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture, *Policy Aims*, 2002, para. 5.4.
62 See n. 34.
63 "Opening," *Review of Culture*, No. 1 (1987), p. 3.
64 "Reason for being," *Review of Culture*, No. 1 (1987), p. 6.
65 "Connecting link," *Review of Culture*, No. 1 (1987), p. 4.
66 "Opening," p. 3; "Connecting link," p. 4; "Reason for being," p. 6.
67 "Reason for being," pp. 5–6; and Bernardo de Santa Maria, "The scope and dimension of the Portuguese consciousness in the Far East," *Review of Culture*, No. 1 (1987), pp. 26–28.
68 The analysis covered the articles in Vols. 38 (1999) to 64 (2007).

Table 1: **An Analysis of the Contents of *Review of Culture* (volumes 38–64)**

Themes of Articles	No. of Articles	%
1. History of Macau and Macau as part of China	81	18.9
2. China	78	18.2
3. Historic celebrities	64	15.0
4. Macau architecture	31	7.2
5. Macau culture and arts	30	7.0
6. Macau religion	24	5.6
7. China and Portugal	18	4.2
8. Macau literature and literary studies	16	3.7
9. Macau society and people's livelihood	15	3.5
10. Portugal	13	3.0
11. Speeches by the political leaders of Macau or China	11	2.6
12. General topics on Macau	10	2.3
13. Macau and Portugal	7	1.6
14. Others	30	7.0
Total	428	100.0

be rooted in a nationalistic recognition that Macau has never been separated from its motherland.

Just as under the colonial administration, the Macau promoted by the journal after political resumption is one that is historical, cultural and non-political. Nevertheless, in maintaining the belief in the historicity of Macau, the journal editors have also been cautious to emphasize its status as a window of China to the European-Mediterranean world, and its Chineseness as greater than coloniality. As illustrated by the editorial of a 1998 issue, published one year before political resumption:

The study of Macau history must free itself entirely from the old framework of "colonial history," and stop being blinded by the view that the historical progress of Macau in the last four centuries is the continuation of Portuguese expansion. Just as the sovereignty of Macau belonged to China, Macau has been employed as an open port, "a place that civilizes the foreigners" from as early as the Ming Dynasty (author's translation).[69]

It is by this twist in emphasis on the historicity of Macau that the new government continues to promote the international or culturally hybrid character of Macau. The international component, that should be an "other" in the "self" understanding of the people after handover, is linked with the national and local components in the project of identity making. It is also used to form other constructions of the community's long-term vision. First, the government openly calls for the people's dedication to nourishing an international component of their identity, such as by "integrating with the world" and getting in touch "with the best culture all over the world."[70] "As an international city as well as a free port, Macau openly embraces the trend of globalization."[71] It is

69 *Review of Culture* (Chinese version), 1998, editorial, p. 1.
70 *Ibid*., Introduction.
71 Ho, *Policy Address*, 2007, p. 24.

hoped that all these endeavours will improve Macau in the end, turning it into a quality community of educated citizens with an international perspective.

Second, like the promotion of the local and national components, there is an economic intent embedded in the government's emphasis on the international theme. It is commonly believed that the international positioning of Macau is economically strategic, which facilitates its role in bridging China and the Portuguese-speaking world and its entrance into trade relations with that part of the world. To cite Ho's 2007 policy address:

> One emphasis of the government's work will be fostering partnerships between Macau enterprises and their counterparts in the Mainland and neighbouring regions, while enhancing multilateral economic and trade co-operation with Portuguese-speaking countries. I would like to stress again the necessity … to strengthen the concept of motherland, broaden international horizons, and pursue openness and co-operation, to promote the harmonious development and common prosperity of Macau and the entire region.[72]

Indeed, the international and national aspects of the new Macau identity are often found to merge in the official discourse, in which the coloniality and hybridity of Macau are usually exaggerated. Both, however, are regarded as beneficial to the economic development of Macau and China. For instance, since 2003 the Macau government has reiterated the importance of "reaching out and inviting in" as the basic strategy for promoting Macau as a platform for economic co-operation and trading services between China and Portuguese-speaking nations. From time to time, Macau is said to enjoy the comparative advantages of being such an economic platform, with the links of its local ethnic communities, returned overseas Chinese and residents of Portuguese origin.[73] Importantly, this policy of the Macau government has had full support from China.[74]

Also since 2003, Macau has been active in facilitating actual exchanges between China and Portuguese-speaking nations. For example, in 2004 and 2006, Macau hosted respectively the first and second Ministerial Meeting of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries,[75] and in 2004 and 2007, the first and second China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries Airports Conference.[76] In 2005, the Macau government extended its international relations through official visits to Portugal.

In short, the new Macau identity in the official depiction is composed of local, national and international components. Macau is small but global, both commercialized and cultural, and new and historical. The charm of its identity appears to lie in its diverse and paradoxical character, but even more so in offering the people a romanticized memory of the colonial past, and its economic reading

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72 *Ibid.* p. 10.
73 For example, Ho, *Policy Address*, 2003, p. 12; 2004, s. 3; 2005, p. 14.
74 For example, *Jornal San Wa Ou*, 23 December 2006, p. 02; Ho, *Policy Address*, 2006, p. 14.
75 *People's Daily Online*, 25 September 2006, at http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200510/15/eng20051015_214433.html, accessed 8 February 2008.
76 *Macau SAR Government Fact Sheet*, at www.gcs.gov.mo/files/factsheet/geography.php?PageLang=SC, accessed 12 January 2008.

of the benefits of a particular way of remembering the past and reintegration with the motherland. This process of identity making is unique in showing that, from economic and political considerations, the prime goal of the new government is not to build a stand-alone national identity. Rather, it has integrated its nationalistic reading of Macau and the people with selected ideas of the original communal identity – the local and international identities – which should be expected to be features of "the other" and be excluded from the "self" understanding of a postcolonial Macau identity.

How successful is the government's project in identity making? Since 2000, occasional protests have been organized by mainly lower-class workers to express their dissatisfaction with the problems induced by rapid social and economic development. Also politically, the departure from its formal status as a colony plus the promise of gradual democratization laid down in the Basic Law[77] have flared up expectations of an opening up of the power structure. However, considering the sporadic nature and small scale of the protests and almost complete lack of public resistance to the Macau government's legislation on article 23[78] of the Basic Law recently, the people of Macau are generally satisfied with their government and the status quo. This reflects the success of the government's identity project.

The Implication of the New Macau Identity for China

In contrast to Hong Kong, both the new Macau government and Beijing feel politically safe in preserving the city's colonial landmarks and heritage, and using a hybrid identity in governance. As analysed above, politically speaking, Macau has been in the strong grip of Beijing because of Beijing's collegial relationship with Portugal, the people's nationalistic attitudes and the general support of civil associations. Such a move would not cause any fear to the governments regarding national unity.

In addition, China has picked up a pragmatic and economic reading of Macau's colonial past and its newly constructed identity. The Macau government's promotion of Macau as an economic platform for China's increasing commercial interests since 2003 in the Portuguese-speaking and Latin world, as well as the African countries once under Portugal's colonial rule such as Angola and Mozambique, is no accident. Although no details of the talks on this subject between the governments of Macau and China can be found, the recent development of the role of Macau in China's overall economic strategy obviously fits with the country's policy of special economic zones and SARs. Special economic zones were created as an effort to form an economic identity

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77 The Basic Law is the mini-constitution of both Macau and Hong Kong.
78 Article 23 stipulates that the SARs of Macau and Hong Kong shall enact laws on their own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the central government or theft of state secrets; to prohibit foreign political organizations from conducting political activities in the cities; and to prohibit political organizations of the SARs from establishing ties with foreign political organizations.

out of its political-socialist identity in the 1980s when China desperately needed reforms to save its economy.[79] And in 1996, China's former president Jiang Zemin had already openly stated the importance of strengthening trade with the African states.

Macau has played an important role in China's plans for further trade with this part of the world. Economic nationalism in Macau has been officially propagated as advancement of individual economic interests, in parallel with national economic strength in the international order. The conferences and conventions hosted by Macau, mentioned above, facilitated significant changes in China's relations with the Portuguese-speaking nations. With regard to civic exchanges, in 2005, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions expressed readiness to expand co-operation with African trade unions in a Sino-Portuguese African trade union seminar.[80] By the end of 2005, about 600 officials and technicians from Portuguese-speaking countries had also flown to China for training.[81]

Regarding trade, in 2002 China's bilateral trade with Angola had reached US $1.5 billion, and with Mozambique US$48,500,000. In 2003, trade agreements were signed in Macau between China and Portugal along with six of its former colonies in Latin America and Africa including Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and East Timor. In fact, trade with these countries has been increasing: for instance, China has become Brazil's second-largest trading partner, and its bilateral trade with Brazil has increased almost four-fold since 1999.[82] In 2007, trade between China and Portuguese-speaking countries totalled US$41.5 billion between January and November, or 32.1 per cent more than in the same period of 2006. China's main Portuguese-speaking partner is Brazil, which in the first 11 months of 2007 saw trade rise by 45.7 per cent to a total of US$27 billion, followed by Angola, with a rise of 9.7 per cent to US$11.1 billion. Portugal is China's third largest Portuguese-speaking trading partner with total bilateral trade of US$2.12 billion and year-on-year growth of 29 per cent. And Mozambique witnessed its trade with China rise by 37.2 per cent in the period to US$250 million.[83] So, for China, "Portugal has gone from a colonial hangover to a business opportunity,"[84] while Macau can serve as a bridge between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries.

Not surprisingly, China's strategic diplomacy in establishing connections with the various Portuguese-language countries has attracted international attention. It is said that, based on Macau, China has not only connected with the countries

79 Crane, "Special things," pp. 149–53.
80 *People's Daily Online*, 15 October 2005, at http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200510/15/eng20051015_214433.html, accessed 9 February 2008.
81 Chinese Ministry of Commerce, *China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Trade and Economic Cooperation Made Active Achievements*, 26 September 2006, at http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/subject/chinaportuguese/lanmua/200609/20060903269418.html, accessed 10 February 2008.
82 Brooke, "China sees advantages," pp. 2–3.
83 MacauHub, *China: Trade with Portuguese-speaking Countries Rises*, 29 January 2008, at www.macauhub.com.mo/en/news.php?ID=4775, accessed 8 February 2008.
84 Brooke, "China sees advantages," p. 4.

on a bilateral basis but also as a group. This will help alleviate China's dependence on the Middle East as key energy supplier, and also help its need for natural resources and export markets, and its desire to restrict Taiwan's international space.[85]

Conclusion

This article examines the reconstruction of the new Macau identity and its significance to governance in post-handover Macau. The new identity comprises the local, the national and the international components, with Macau characterized as a historical, colonial/cultural hybrid and economic object. In fact, the Macau identity after 1999 represents a re-appropriation of the image of colonial Macau propagated by the Portuguese administration since the 1980s. And it is intriguing to find that in Macau, identity making has been a process of incorporating instead of repressing or eliminating the identities of "the other." Through the process, multiple identity components are deliberately incorporated and promoted for political and economic reasons.

Lastly, the above analysis points to important areas for future research, including a comparison of the politics of identity reconstruction in Macau and Hong Kong, the nature and development of Macau's civil society, the reception of the hybrid identity by the people of Macau, and what the SARs reveal about China's strategies of nation building.

85 Loro Horta and Ian Storey, "China grooms a strategic relationship with the community of Portuguese language countries," *Yale Global Online*, 22 June 2006, at http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=7634, accessed 8 February 2008.