

**STATE, MARKET FORCE AND
BUILDING NATIONAL IDENTITY
IN CHINA'S HONG KONG AND MACAO**

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Executive Summary

1. The lack of a strong sense of Chinese identity among Hong Kong people, a factor deemed unfavourable to national integration, can be traced to the colonial education introduced to curb Chinese nationalism and play down Chinese Communist and Nationalist activities in the Cold War era.
2. Colonial education was aimed at turning people into economic animals with little concern for politics. English education was much sought after for its usefulness in further studies and career advancement. English education, together with Cantonese culture embraced by the majority of Chinese, created a local identity which sat uncomfortably with the Chinese identity.
3. The mass media have singled out another dimension of local identity centered on Hong Kong's economic success, people's ability in making money, and the superiority of Hong Kong to other Chinese communities, China included. With the majority of population Hong Kong-born, the strong sense of local identity makes it uneasy for Hong Kong people to take up a new identity after the handover of sovereignty in 1997.
4. Macao's education in the colonial era was also apolitical in nature. Diverse education systems co-existed. Schools had high autonomy in curriculum design with no dominant ideologies in schools.
5. Portuguese language is never popularized. Most schools adopt Chinese (Cantonese) as their instruction medium. English education, which is of limited use to the casino-based economy focusing on Chinese gamblers until recently, is not strongly promoted. Unlike their Hong Kong counterparts, Macao people's identity does not have an obvious international dimension.
6. Macao does not have a vibrant mass media. The casino-based economy and Macao's historical role in facilitating the exchange between China and the

West did not instil a sense of pride in the Macao people. The weak sense of local identity, together with a higher proportion of Mainland-born population than Macao-born, enables the people to embrace Chinese national identity with ease.

7. Like Hong Kong, the national identity of the Macao people is conditional and situational. The Chinese identity in the two cities is linked to the economic and political rise of China.
8. Measures to build national identity have been stepped up in the two Special Administrative Regions after the handover of sovereignty. With the economic and political rise of China, the Hong Kongers jump on the bandwagon of China's economic boom, learn Mandarin, and are identified with China.
9. Though Hong Kong becomes more integrated with China economically and socially, it remains uneasy to translate integration into political identification with China. Strong nationalistic sentiments had been triggered by individual events, such as Olympic torch relay and Sichuan Earthquake in 2008 though.
10. In Macao, the government tries to diversify its casino-based economy with the promotion of cultural tourism centered on the city's rich heritages. With a better understanding of their heritages, Macao people become more conscious of their relations with their heritages; a local dimension of identity centered on these heritages has emerged.

STATE, MARKET FORCE AND BUILDING NATIONAL IDENTITY IN CHINA'S HONG KONG AND MACAO

CHOU Kwok Ping^{*}

Depoliticized Colonial Education

- 1.1 National identity is a sense of common history and culture shared by communities within the boundary of a nation. The content of national identity is shaped by the education system and mass media, through which the authorities influence what people know, believe and treasure. During the colonial era, the education system and mass media of Hong Kong and Macao played negative roles in inculcating a sense of belonging to China.¹
- 1.2 In the 1950s, pro-Beijing schools perpetuated nationalistic sentiments which were deemed subversive to the colonial government. Out of the Cold War mentality and fear of Communism, the colonial government closed down some of these schools and promoted market-driven ideology. The government adapted the British system to the local education system. English teaching was promoted for its practical use in further studies and career advancement. Driven by parents' choice, English schools increased in number while the number of Chinese schools declined.

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¹ For the literature on national identity in Hong Kong, see Gordon Mathews, Eric Kit-wai Ma, and Tai-lok Lui, *Hong Kong: Learning to Belong to a Nation*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2008); Sai-wing Leung and Wing-on Lee, "National Identity at a Crossroads: the Struggle between Culture, Language and Politics in Hong Kong", in Geof Alred, Mike Byram and Mike Fleming (eds), *Education for Intercultural Citizenship: Concepts and Comparisons*, (Clevedon; Buffalo, New York: Multilingual Matters, 2006), pp. 11-22; Edward Vickers and Flora Kan, "The Re-Education of Hong Kong: Identity, Politics, and History Education in Colonial and Postcolonial Hong Kong", in Edward Vickers and Alisa Jones (eds), *History Education and National Identity in East Asia*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 171-202. For the literature on national identity in Macao, see Gary M.C. Ngai, "Macao's Cultural Identity: Its Preservation and Development Before and After 1999", in Rufino Ramos *et al.* (eds), *Macao and Its Neighbours in Transition: Proceedings of the International Conference Held at the University of Macau*, (Macao: Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Macau, 1997), pp. 125-136.

- 1.3 With high English proficiency and the consequential close connection with global economies and communities through trade and migration, the Hong Kong people have developed an international dimension to their local identity which sits uncomfortably with the Chinese identity.² The predominance of Cantonese culture made it uneasy for the people to identify with the mainland Chinese identity centered on Mandarin.
- 1.4 Market-oriented mentality was also fostered by de-politicizing the curricula. The modified British education system was intended to develop a productive labour force rather than to promote the understanding and appreciation of British or English culture. Few students took subjects like English literature and British history. Since the colonial government did not attempt to inculcate a British identity or remove students' Chineseness, Hong Kong's English education did not trigger a backlash from local Chinese nationalists.³
- 1.5 Meanwhile, schools were prohibited from displaying the national flags of other countries. Slogans and costumes advocating particular political ideologies or platform were banned. Discussions on political affairs with the students and cultivation of an interest in politics on the part of students were discouraged until the countdown to the retrocession to China.⁴
- 1.6 Education in colonial Macao was also apolitical but for different reasons. Unlike Hong Kong's colonial government which tightly controlled the school curriculum, a *laissez-faire* approach was characteristic of Macao's education policies. Without imposing a state-defined ideology, Macao schools tended to design their curriculum on the basis of market needs as most schools were private schools.

² Edward Vickers, *In Search of an Identity: The Politics of History as a School Subject in Hong Kong, 1960s – 2002*, (New York & London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 199-226.

³ Vickers and Kan, "The Re-education of Hong Kong", p.186.

⁴ Wing-On Lee, "Citizenship Education in Hong Kong: Development and Challenges", in Wing On Lee, David L. Grossman, Kerry J. Kennedy, and Gregory P. Fairbrother (eds.), *Citizenship Education in Asia and the Pacific: Concepts and Issues*, (Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong; Kluwer Academic, 2004), p. 61.

- 1.7 Schools had high autonomy in the design of their history curriculum and discussions about political and ideological issues, depending on the schools' tradition, the school teachers' personal choice, and the orientation of the universities enrolling their graduates. Before the establishment of the University of East Asia (Macao's first modern university and the predecessor to the University of Macau) in 1981, the most popular destinations for the students to pursue higher education were China, Taiwan, Portugal and the territories adopting British education system (that is, UK and Hong Kong). Macao schools adopted the education systems and curriculum of these territories.⁵ The political ideologies behind the diverse curriculum, if any, cancelled out each other.
- 1.8 After the 1966 riot (an overspill of Cultural Revolution), the Portuguese authorities surrendered to the pro-Beijing social organizations. Pro-Beijing social organizations extended their influence among Chinese communities through the provision of various social services, including fundamental education. The patriotic education and selective presentation of historical narratives by pro-Beijing schools led to the convergence of students' identity with the Chinese identity.⁶
- 1.9 The Portuguese language was never popularized. Most schools adopted Chinese (Cantonese) as instruction medium. English education, which is of limited use to the casino-based economy focusing on Chinese gamblers until recently, is not strongly promoted. Unlike their Hong Kong counterparts, Macao people's identity does not have an obvious international dimension.

⁵ John K. Tan, "Secondary School History Curricula", in Mark Bray and Ramsey Koo (eds), *Education and Society in Hong Kong and Macau: Comparative Perspectives on Continuity and Change*, (Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong, 1999), pp. 171-194. Kwok-chun Tang and Mark Bray, 'Colonial Models and the Evolution of Education Systems: Centralization and Decentralization in Hong Kong and Macau', *Journal of Education Administration*, 38 (5) (2000), pp. 468-485.

⁶ Kwok-ping Chou, "Hong Kong and Macau under One Country, Two Systems", in Gungwu Wang and John Wong (eds.), *Interpreting China's Development*, (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2007), pp. 67-71; Bill K.P. Chou, "Interest Group Politics in Macao after Handover", *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14, (43), 2005, pp. 191-206.

- 1.10 Owing to the small textbook markets, no publishers compiled textbooks tailor-made for Macao schools. Macao schools had to use either Hong Kong or China textbooks. The context portrayed in the textbooks was irrelevant to Macao; the textbooks neither conveyed clear messages about what constituted Macao nor built up a cohesive sense of local identity.

Mass Media in Action

- 2.1 The mass media are another factor shaping the Hong Kong and Macao identities. Hong Kong is the centre of Cantonese pop culture. From the early 1970s to the early 1990s, it had overwhelmed overseas Chinese communities until Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese pop culture posed challenges to the dominance of Hong Kong pop culture. The popularity of the Cantonese pop culture strengthened Hong Kong's cultural identity.
- 2.2 Hong Kong prided itself for its distinct film traditions; the identity of Hong Kong people is connected with the cinematic impression of the Hong Kong people as being efficient, smart and successful investors. The negative discourse of mainland Chinese people in films and other forms of mass media enhanced their sense of superiority over their Mainland compatriots.⁷ The impact of Hong Kong mass media extends beyond Hong Kong to Macao. The negative narrative of the Mainland has been fading owing to the increasing reliance of Hong Kong economy on the Mainland. However, removing the negative image may take a long time.
- 2.3 But the impact of the mass media was different in the two cities. The mass media contributed to the rise of a Hong Kong identity but not a Macao identity. Macao films, including those produced by Macao film-makers or set in Macao, are few in number and are narrowly restrictive within the small art scene. Macao people watch Hong Kong television programmes very often, if not more often than local TV programmes. The collective image presented by the media is primarily Hong Kong images and Hong Kong media's way of

⁷ Eric Kit-Wai Ma, "Re-nationalization and Me: Hong Kong Story after 1997", *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 1 (1) 2000, p. 174.

interpreting the world. Because of their limited influence, the local traditional media failed to create an imagined community of Macao and articulated values commonly shared by the Macao people.

The Role of the Economy

- 3.1 The emergence of a Hong Kong identity was partially attributed to rapid economic growth between the early 1970s and the turn of the 20th century. The success of the casino-based economy in Macao, however, fails to bring a sense of pride or cultivate a local identity for the Macao people. The lack of pride in the economic success is due to the limited spillover effect of the gambling industry. Economic growth has benefited only a small segment of the society and bred corruption in the public sector, especially in the sectors related to infra-structure and real estate development. On the contrary, the majority of the population had to bear the cost of economic growth, such as rocketing property prices, competition from migrant and illegal workers for jobs, more crowded roads, and worsening pollution.⁸
- 3.2 Macao once played an important bridging role between the East and West. Through Macao, Christianity was spread to East Asia. China was linked by sea route to southwestern India (Goa), Malay Peninsula (Malacca), the Philippines (Manila), and Japan (Nagasaki). Western technology and astronomy were imported to China. Nevertheless, history is not used by schools and mass media for instilling a sense of pride in the Macao people.
- 3.3 Without a powerful sense of local identity, Macao people are more ready to accept the state-defined Chinese national identity than their Hong Kong counterpart. Nevertheless, ethnic-based national identity is not common among Macao-born Chinese. Macao people are inclined to link their patriotic feeling with China's economic success. They prefer Portuguese to Macao passports as Portuguese passports provide them with more convenience for overseas travel and work in European Union member countries. Like their

⁸ Chou Kwok Ping, "Macao's Lopsided Development", *EAI Background Brief* No. 341, (Singapore: East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore, 2007).

Hong Kong counterparts, their sense of patriotism is lined with a utilitarian dimension which links “patriotic feeling” (or good relations with Chinese authorities and good understanding of China) to expanding their business opportunities and life chances in China.⁹

Building National Identities in the Post-Colonial Era

- 4.1 Before and immediately after the handover, Beijing was worried about losing control of Hong Kong because of Hong Kong people’s support of the 1989 student movement. The fear was accentuated by the triumph of the democracy camp and defeat of pro-Beijing force in the elections of the Legislative Council, municipal councils, and district councils (or district boards before the handover), and the wave of emigration to escape the communist rule before 1997. Building a national identity defined by the Chinese authorities was deemed urgent. Soon after the handover of sovereignty, then Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa repeatedly called for more emphasis on national education to cultivate a sense of belonging and pride to Chinese history and culture. Schools were instructed to deepen students’ understanding of contemporary China, China’s achievements in particular. Students were taught the national anthem and flag-raising was used to cultivate allegiance to China in the students. Government subsidies were offered to schools and non-governmental organizations to organize student exchange tours with mainland schools. Independent civic education subject was introduced to step up the teaching of Chinese history and culture.
- 4.2 The curricula of history-related subjects were revised to increase the components on contemporary China studies and China-Hong Kong relationship. China issues are portrayed as related to students’ lives to strengthen students’ conception that Hong Kong is subordinate to China. The new junior syllabus of local history highlighted themes such as China’s contribution to Hong Kong’s development and Hong Kong’s transition to

⁹ Mathews, Ma, and Lui, *Hong Kong: Learning to Belong to a Nation*, pp. 95-114.

become a part of China.¹⁰ Hong Kong's success was attributed to the benevolence of China, like supplies of cheap food and fresh water, capital and entrepreneurship after 1949. In contrast, Hong Kong's contribution to China's modernization was not mentioned. With little emphasis on developing students' political efficacy and improving their competence and enthusiasm in political participation, the national education in post-handover Hong Kong is similar to the education in the colonial era: they seek to turn people into obedient subjects.

- 4.3 In Macao, the government has held or subsidized celebrations for National Day and Macao SAR Establishment Day, or activities condemning "secessionist movement" in Tibet and Taiwan. Education and Youth Bureau commissioned People Education Press, a Beijing-based publisher to compile textbooks for the subject "moral and citizen education".¹¹ A publisher with Chinese official background will ensure that the content of the textbooks is in line with Beijing's ideology and official interpretation of patriotism.
- 4.4 Education and Youth Bureau has also launched a website and established an education resource centre to advise school teachers on patriotic education, such as flag-raising procedures and playing of national anthem. The Bureau subsidizes Macao schools in the organization of China study tours for school students. In these tours, students may be scheduled to pay a visit to China's "patriotic bases" – historic sites and venues which show imperialist invasion of China in the mid-19th century, display exhibits boasting China's cultural superiority and scientific advancement, and/ or are related to the achievements of the Communist Party of China. To inculcate a sense of belonging to China, the Bureau also fully subsidizes school students for training camps in

¹⁰ Vickers and Kan, "The re-education of Hong Kong", pp. 189-191.

¹¹ "Chen Limi: Duoyuan huodong tui aiguo jiaoyu" (Chen Limin: Promoting Patriotic Education through Diverse Activities), *Aomen ribao (Macao Daily)*, 30 January 2009, p. B6.

Whampoa Military Academy where a positive image of People's Liberation Army (PLA), a symbol of Chinese authorities, is presented.¹²

- 4.5 The Macao government conveys the state-defined Chineseness through its influence on the mass media. Since 2004, the Macao government has been sponsoring managers and senior journalists of the mass media for training courses in Beijing every year. According to official explanation, the courses are aimed at introducing Macao journalists to the politico-economic development of China and China's foreign policies. The 2009 training course covered Tibetan issues, financial tsunami, cross-strait relations, and China-US relations. The guest speakers of the course included senior officials from the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Commerce, National Bureau of Statistics, State Administration of Religious Affairs, General Administration of Press and Publication, and Associations for Relations across Taiwan Strait, as well as Peking University's economists and strategists.¹³ By introducing hot issues from the Beijing perspective, the central government is able to influence the thinking of Macao's opinion leaders and public opinions as well.
- 4.6 At the same time, the Portuguese culture and influence which do not fit the government's framework of economic development are ignored. To diversify its casino-based economy, the government has been promoting cultural tourism in recent years. One of the promotion strategies is to highlight Macao's European and Portuguese elements, such as heritage and cuisine in order to attract non-gambling tourists and to entice tourists to stay longer in Macao (and spend more money). The Macao government had applied and successfully convinced UNESCO to designate the splendid Portuguese and Chinese architecture as World Heritage Sites in 2005. Since then, these UNESCO designated sites came under the limelight of the government's promotion campaign. Heritages enshrining Portuguese influence and

¹² Whampoa Military Academy is a legendary military academy which graduated many military commanders for Communist Party of China and Nationalist Party of China in Republican era. Also see "Chen Limin".

¹³ "Xinwen jie guoqing yanxiuban jin kaike" (Training Course of Understanding China for Journalists Begin Today), *Aomen ribao (Macao Daily)*, 23 March 2009.

contribution to the modernization of Macao and China are seldom mentioned. With the downplaying of Portuguese accomplishment, the state-defined national identity is more easily inculcated.

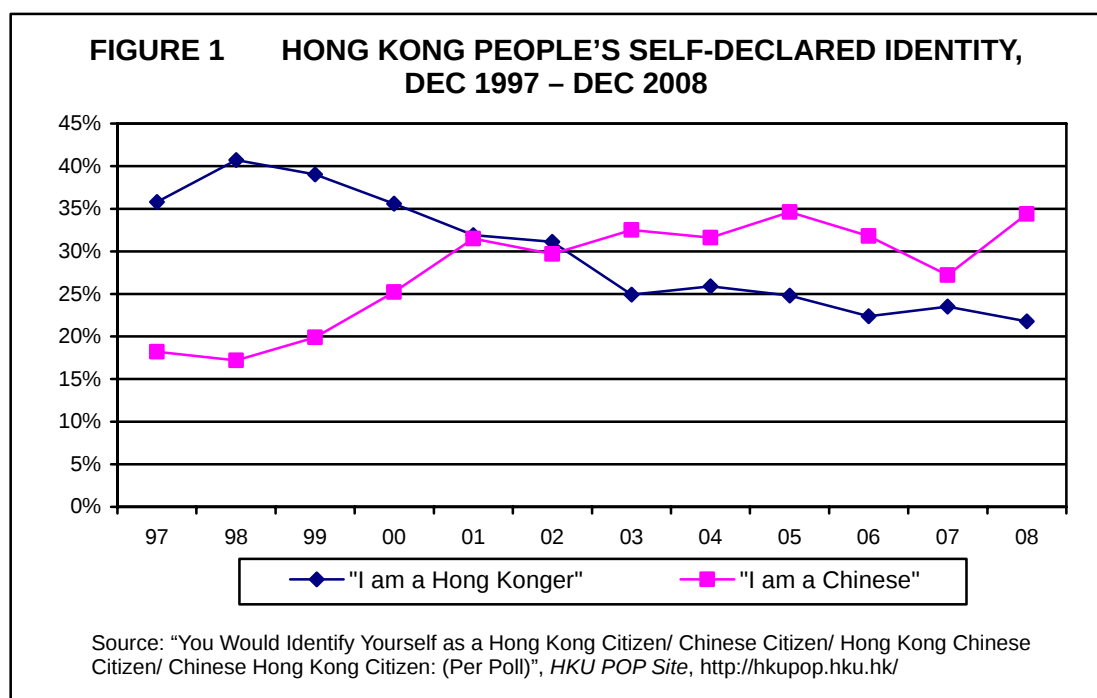
- 4.7 The Sichuan earthquake and Olympic torch relay in May 2008 witnessed the outpouring of patriotic sentiments in Hong Kong and Macao. The Sichuan earthquake, measured at magnitude 8.0, killed over 68,000 people. Triggered by the tragedy, Hong Kong donated over HK\$2.1 billion (or S\$400 million) for disaster relief within six weeks. Self-initiated efforts of disaster relief were numerous. Aibai Youth Centre – an NGO set up by Hong Kong people and based in Chengdu (the provincial capital Sichuan) – established “12 May Centre” in conjunction with over 20 local and international NGOs. The mission of the Centre was to coordinate the recruitment of rescue volunteers, deploy required resources for relief work, and collect news and information concerning the earthquake. A group of engineers established an NGO called “Engineers without Borders (Hong Kong)” to provide professional expertise for the re-construction of earthquake-stricken regions.¹⁴
- 4.8 Hong Kong and Macao people warmly welcomed the Olympic torch in 2008 when the torch was relayed in the two cities. It was reported that over 100,000 people in Hong Kong lined up along the road sides to cheer the relay. In Macao, the relay even attracted a crowd of 250,000 people, or half of the population in the city.¹⁵

¹⁴ Zhu Yixin, “Dixia NGO zheng hou jian tianyu” (Underground NGO Works in Open after the Earthquake), *Yazhou zhoukan* (Asia Week), vol. 22, no. 21 (1 June 2008), http://www.yzzk.com/cfm/Content_Archive.cfm?Channel=ae&Path=2447120872/21ae6.cfm; “Xianggang guojie xiang Sichuan dizhen zaiqu juankuan yue 21 yi gangyuan” (Hong Kong Has Donated over 2.1 Billion Yuan to the Earthquake-Stricken Sichuan), *Xinhua Net*, 25 June 2008, <http://news.aweb.com.cn/2008/6/25/117200806251339640.html>; “About Us”, *Engineers without Borders (Hong Kong)*, <http://www.ewb.hk/en/mission.php>

¹⁵ The figure is disputable, however. Many of the people lining up along the route of Olympic torch relay were mainlanders. It was rumored that some of them were mobilized by the Chinese authorities to create an impression that Hong Kong and Macao people have become very patriotic. Also see “Aoyun huojue Aomen chuansong jieshu, di Sanya” (Olympic Torch Relay in Macao Was Over and Arrived in Sanya), *BBC News*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/trad/hi/newsid_7380000/newsid_7381600/7381692.stm

Market Force in Action

5.1 Market forces have contributed to the fostering of a China identity in the Hong Kong people. With the political and economic rise of China, the Hong Kong people jump on the bandwagon of China's economic boom, learn Mandarin, and are more identified with China. The Public Opinion Programme at the University of Hong Kong found that more Hong Kong people are identifying themselves with mainland Chinese, reaching 34.4% in 2008 from 18.6% of the respondents in 1997. Those identifying themselves as "Hong Kongers" dropped from 34.9% to 21.8% in the same period (See Figure 1). Another survey indicated that more Hong Kong primary and high school students identified themselves as Chinese, as opposed to Hong Kongers. The survey, conducted by the Hong Kong National Education Centre, showed that 96 percent of the respondents considered themselves Chinese and 94.2 percent identified themselves as Hong Kongers.¹⁶



¹⁶ Quoted from Dai Ping and Kang Juan, "Hong Kong Vows to Revitalize Economy on Handover Anniversary".

- 5.2 What attributes to the identity change is unclear. It is still uncertain whether the identity change is due to the effective national building measures, the increasing presence of Mainland-born Chinese who are more identified with Mainland than Hong Kong, or the role of market forces in affecting the perceived image of China.
- 5.3 Certain local newspapers and one TV broadcast channel were taken over by businesspeople with investment in China. For example, Chinese Malaysian Robert Kuok acquired *South China Morning Post* – the highest circulated and oldest English newspaper – from Murdoch’s News Corporation in 1993. Kuok’s businesses in China include bottle companies for Coca Cola, 50% ownership of Beijing World Trade Centre, oil refining and commercial properties. Before the handover, he was invited to be a Beijing’s adviser on Hong Kong affairs.¹⁷ In 2003, Charles Ho – a Standing Committee member of the National Congress of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and CEO of British American Tobacco Hong Kong – acquired the Sing Dao News Corporation which owned a Chinese newspaper *Sing Dao Daily* and an English newspaper *Hong Kong Standard Daily*. News reports frowned upon by the authorities of China and deemed undesirable to the owners’ businesses in China may be censored. Since the transfer of ownership of these media to pro-Beijing businesspeople, the editors and senior journalists have been told to tone down their criticism of the Chinese government. Journalists from Mainland have been appointed to senior positions of these media while those critical of Beijing were sacked or forced to resign; self-censorship in Hong Kong media was pervasive.¹⁸ More positive reports on China affairs and positive images of China are believed to be conducive to identifying with China.
- 5.4 While Hong Kong becomes more dependent on China economically and integrated with China socially, political identification with the Chinese regime

¹⁷ “Secretive Billionaire Forsakes Retirement”, *The Standard*, 14 September 1993.

¹⁸ Carol P. Lai, *Media in Hong Kong: Press Freedom and Political Change, 1967 – 2005*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

remains uneasy.¹⁹ Every year, the mass protest in the anniversaries of Hong Kong's retrocession to China since 2003 drew tens of thousands people, a proxy of the desire to defend "two systems" and Hong Kong's way of life. The unexpected large number of participants (over 100,000) in the candlelight vigil of commemorating the anniversary of the June Fourth incident in 2009 underscores Hong Kong people's wish to maintain a distance with the Chinese regime.

- 5.5 In Macao, market forces result in the emergence of a local dimension of identity. The endeavour of both the public and private sectors to diversify its casino-based economy has unintentionally cultivated a local identity revolving heritages. The government promotes the city's heritages to attract tourists other than gamblers and sex tourists. The "Historic City of Macau" represented by the rich historical European and Chinese architectures was inscribed in the World Heritage Site in 2005. The promotion campaigns aroused people's consciousness and cultivated a sense of belonging.
- 5.6 The collective action to conserve Guia Lighthouse was another case in point. Guia Lighthouse, constructed in 1864 by Portuguese, was one of the earliest lighthouses along China's coasts. It was built with a fortress for maritime defense and was an integral part of a grouping of architecture with a fortress, a chapel, and air-raid shelters. Below the lighthouse is a park with a running track which is regarded as one of the greenest place in the concrete forest of Macau Peninsula where 85% of the population of 540,000 is residing in. In August 2006, the government announced approval of the construction projects beside the hill topped by the lighthouse. The projects included several high-rise buildings measured over 100 metres, including the new headquarters of Central Liaisons Office – Beijing's representative office in Macao.
- 5.7 Upon completion, the view of the lighthouse would be entirely blocked, making the lighthouse invisible from a distance. The construction plan triggered public outcry. Demonstrations, signature campaigns and seminars

¹⁹ Sonny Shiu-hing Lo, *The Dynamics of Beijing-Hong Kong Relations: A Model for Taiwan?* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), pp. 39-81.

were organized to oppose the construction projects. Complaint letters were sent to UNESCO leading to an UNESCO investigation and subsequent correspondence with the Beijing government on the threat to the lighthouse. Thereafter, the Macao government announced lowering the height of the projects to below 90 metres. The Central Liaison Office followed suit and lowered the new headquarters to 88 metres, three floors less than its planned project.²⁰

- 5.8 The mass campaign over Guia Lighthouse was unusual in Macao. Macao people seldom took to the streets or openly confronted the authorities because of the small size of the city and the consequential vast control of the authorities over political resources, business opportunities, and even personal pursuits. Open protests in the past usually revolved around issues of livelihood, for instance, the competition for jobs from migrant workers and the right of abode of children born in Mainland and to Macao residents. The campaigns for conserving Guia Lighthouse are different; they are related to preserving a collective memory over a historical heritage – something intangible but cherished by many Macao people.
- 5.9 The preservation of Guia Lighthouse is not the only case of collective actions against the threat to historical heritages. In 2006, the Social Welfare Bureau was planning to redevelop its headquarters ‘Little Blue House’ – a Portuguese-style mansion – into a 14-storey new headquarters. ‘Little Blue House’ has a history of less than 80 years. It is not included in the World Heritage List and is far less important than Guia Lighthouse historically. However, it is an integral part of St. Lazarus Parish – a region with clusters of Portuguese-style architectures. The news of demolishing the ‘Little Blue House’ provoked another outcry and collective action against the proposal. An expert commission found that around 47% of the 10,000 respondents wanted to preserve the whole ‘Little Blue House’ and 38% said that they wanted to preserve the facades of ‘Little Blue House’. Only 15% agreed with

²⁰ “Baohu denta jingguan shengwei chenggong, aomen shimin rengxu nuli” (Lighthouse Has Not Been Protected Successfully. Macao Citizens Must Still Be Vigilant), *Songshan Denta* (Guia Lighthouse), <http://guialighthouse.blogspot.com>, accessed on 3 March 2009.

redeveloping the “Little Blue House”.²¹ In the end, the government gave up the plan of redeveloping the ‘Little Blue House’ and looked for another construction site to house the new headquarters.

- 5.10 These two examples illustrate that many Macao people value their heritages and have a strong urge to protect them from encroachment. The survey undertaken in response to the controversy over redeveloping ‘Little Blue House’ demonstrates that the better-educated people tend to be more supportive of conserving architectures with historical value. With the expansion of tertiary education and higher level of education attainment of the population, more local people are likely to identify with the rich historical and cultural heritages.

²¹ “Shegongju lanwuzai ni chaijian re guanzhu” (The Plan of Demolishing Social Welfare Institute’s Blue House Arouses Attention), *Aomen ribao (Macao Daily)*, 1 June 2006; “Lanwuzai mindiao, zhuanjia he duoshu shoufangzhe ren you baoliu” (Experts and the Majority of the Respondents in a Survey Believed that Blue House Should Be Preserved), *Huaqiao bao (Jornal Va Kio)*, 20 January 2007, <http://www.jornalvakio.com/index.php?tn=viewer&ncid=1&dt=&nid=16249>, accessed on 20 March 2009.