

**WHY IS NATIONAL EDUCATION
OPPOSED IN HONG KONG BUT
ACCEPTED IN MACAO?**

CHOU Kwok Ping

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Executive Summary

1. The mass protest on 29 July 2012 drew an approximate 90,000 Hong Kongers to the streets to oppose the implementation of the national education curriculum scheduled in September 2012. National education in Macao schools is accepted without any controversy, however.
2. Both Hong Kong and Macao have similar developmental background: Their education during the colonial era was by and large depoliticized in nature. The Chinese government has exerted its influence over the domestic affairs of the two special administrative regions.
3. The economic and social integrative measures have spilled over and affected the lives of people-on-the-street. But Hong Kong and Macao responded in significantly different ways on the issue of national education and the intervention of the Chinese government.
4. The different responses may be explained by the relative strength of national identity of China as against local identities of Hong Kong and Macao, as well as the relative strength of political opposition.
5. The relative strength of national and local identities in Hong Kong and Macao is determined by several factors: the strength of pro-Beijing social and political forces since the colonial era, the economic achievements of the two cities, and the level of media development
6. Political opposition in Macao is weak. Many government policies, including unpopular ones, may be made and adopted easily. The weakness is a result of the low degree of citizen efficacy and the high emphasis on personal relations in an administrative environment which is lacking in adequate institutions.