

ASIAN HISTORY



Catherine S. Chan

The Macanese Diaspora in British Hong Kong

A Century of Transimperial Drifting

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The Macanese Diaspora in British Hong Kong



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Acknowledgments

My grandfather moved to Manila in his early twenties. He survived the Pacific War and later applied to become a Filipino citizen, only to be told that he was already a citizen by *jus sanguinis*. Despite his broken Tagalog, he happily assimilated into Filipino society. Reuniting with her parents, my mother made her way from Hong Kong to Manila in 1970. She disliked her time there but now looks back with delight and nostalgia. My father left Hong Kong in the mid-1970s for Samar to meet his stepbrother and then headed to Manila to explore business opportunities. I grew up in Manila and was raised with the understanding that Hong Kong was 'home.' Yet when I settled in Hong Kong as a teenager, I became lost in the city's unfamiliar pace, language and culture. It took me years of reading and thinking, and some more moving, to learn that 'home' is wherever I can walk barefoot and identity is not a destination. This meant that while the fabrics of migration wove through my family's narrative, the ways we laughed, cried, strove, changed and belonged greatly differed. The historical accounts in this book were thus put together with the idea that every individual has a unique narrative that should not be painted with the same brush.

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I dedicate this book to my grandparents and parents. Their courageous journeys to lands unknown have taught me to fearlessly embrace the world.

Catherine S. Chan



Prologue: Between Empires

Abstract

The colonial histories of mixed-race diasporic communities have often been linked to narratives of policy discrimination, strategic collaboration and collective resistance. Deviating from these themes, the experience of the Macanese diaspora in British Hong Kong offers us an opportunity to observe the constructions of race, class and culture as more nuanced than the colonizer–colonized polarity usually allows. Through the lenses of transimperial migration, identity contestation and cosmopolitanism and transnationalism, the collective biographies of middle-class Macanese individuals in this book combine to demonstrate the resilience of mixed-race diasporic communities in the face of normative reality and uncover the liberties they exercised on foreign soil in the search for wider opportunities, a better life, social status and power.

Keywords: transimperial migration, cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, collective biographies, Luso-Asians, diaspora

This is a book about mixed-race people that aims to look beyond skin color in understanding the construction of human lives and the evolution of diasporic communities within unequal, racialized and biased systems.¹ It is a collection of narratives and snapshots of the Macanese, spread over a century, that speak of the power of individual aspirations, social networks, global developments and identity shifts in countering the challenges of settling in a British colony.² As Luso-Asians born out of the Portuguese empire, the Macanese took root and propagated in sixteenth-century Macau. Their status as a mixed-race diaspora granted them resilience, allowing them to

1 Throughout this book, scare quotes will not be used in referring to race, mixed race and class or other relevant terms to recognize these as active and influential social constructs that have been institutionalized in our everyday experiences.

2 In Portuguese, *Macaense*. I use the English equivalent throughout this book except where alternative spellings are provided in quotations.

shift between various cultural identities that transcended a single political unit, all while remaining as a marginal 'Portuguese' community in Hong Kong's official records and public description.³ In a metaphorical sense, the Macanese continuously drifted, their movement driven by the currents of historical development and the tides of chance. This led to the flowering of various Macanese communities across East Asia by the early twentieth century, with settlements emerging in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Kobe; in Southeast Asia, the Philippines became a destination. While each experience marked a new set of practical challenges and institutional inequalities, the move from Portuguese Macau to British Hong Kong was particularly transformational. By the 1930s, Hong Kong sheltered the second-largest Macanese community, with more than a quarter naturalized as British subjects. The city also paved the way for the proliferation of unprecedented class and identity differences that ripped through the community, creating a division that lingers today. In this book, we problematize the idea of the Macanese as a heterogeneous and contested entity with the aim of challenging existing narratives that view colonialism as a prime factor in the shaping of the lives of colonial residents. Linked to a Portuguese colony yet living outside the control of the empire, the Macanese lived on the margins of more than one world and pledged allegiance to both the Portuguese and British administrations. Existing beyond one imperial space, they drew on the colorful imaginations of the Portuguese and British empires in responding to a spectrum of changes encompassing Macau's woes, Hong Kong's injustice, Portugal's political transitions, global developments in print culture and the rise of new nationalisms during the interwar period.

Diaspora transformed the urban terrain of colonial societies, creating polyglot worlds out of neighborhoods, workplaces, recreational clubs and public spheres. It was within these spaces that communities reimaged themselves and reshaped their public identities *vis-à-vis* the ruling whites' emerging racialized perceptions of them. While the domiciled mixed-race children of European men and native women instigated colonial anxieties by blurring exclusionary lines, multiracial migrant individuals escaped racial restrictions through various forms of change.⁴ A change in political

3 For the idea of mixed-race communities and transnationalism, see John Francis Burke, *Mestizo Democracy: The Politics of Crossing Borders* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002); Rebecca C. King-O'Riain, et. al. (eds.), *Global Mixed Race* (London: New York University Press, 2014).

4 For studies that highlight how colonial governments tried to manipulate mixed-race subjects through the lines of race, class, gender, marital status and/or age, see Ann Stoler, 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial

regime, for instance, often led to new chances of re-establishing oneself. When Portuguese rule over Malacca collapsed in 1641, the empire-abandoned Portuguese Eurasians convinced the succeeding Dutch administration to recruit them as intermediaries and trustworthy trade envoys. They simultaneously amplified their European cultural practices and knowledge of Malay culture and language.⁵ Change also came with moving from one colonial space to another. Upon reaching a new port, migrants harnessed old networks and new opportunities to climb previously inaccessible social ladders. Within the Portuguese empire's prioritization of metropolitan Portuguese (*reinois*) over Asian-born pure Portuguese (*castiços*) and half-bred *mestiços*, so-called bastard sons of colonial officials and non-European women achieved social ascent after leaving for faraway destinations.⁶ The key, though, was to use their fathers' nobility and colonial networks. Once shunned as the illegitimate son of a *fidalgo* colonial administrator and a *mulatto* woman from Pernambuco, António de Albuquerque Coelho used his father's noble position and married a Macanese wife associated with the enclave's oligarchy before becoming Macau's Governor in 1718.⁷ Political regimes inevitably experienced fluctuations, yet mixed-race subjects pragmatically drifted between borders in search of change and social mobility.

Through time, diasporic experiences diversified ethnic communities. Across the vast Portuguese empire, the movement of people generated various versions of Portugueseness. 'Portuguese' could refer to children born on Portuguese territory, a subject claiming allegiance to the monarchy, someone with Portuguese descendants, or simply a person living

Southeast Asia,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, no. 3 (1992), 520, 522–524; Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and The Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

5 Ronald Daus, *Portuguese Eurasian Communities in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1989), 6–8; Dennis De Witt, 'Enemies, Friends and Relations: Portuguese Eurasians during Malacca's Dutch Era and Beyond,' in *Portuguese and Luso-Asian Legacies in Southeast Asia, 1511–2011, Vol. 2: Culture and Identity in the Luso-Asian World, Tenacities & Plasticities*, ed. Laura Jarnagin (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012), 261–262.

6 For the Portuguese empire's racialized institutional framework and the prioritization of metropolitan Portuguese, see Miguel Vale de Almeida, 'From Miscegenation to Creole Identity: Portuguese Colonialism, Brazil, Cape Verde,' in *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*, ed. Charles Stewart (London: Routledge, 2016), 110; Celsa Pinto, *Trade and Finance in Portuguese India: A Study of the Portuguese Country Trade 1770–1840* (New Delhi: Ashok Kumar Mittal, 1994), 51–52.

7 *Fidalgo* refers to a Portuguese nobleman. For Coelho, see Charles R. Boxer, 'A Fidalgo In The Far East, 1708–1726: Antonio de Albuquerque Coelho in Macao,' *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1946), 388; Charles R. Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East 1550–1770* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1968), 203.



on Portuguese soil who had adopted certain Portuguese cultural characteristics.⁸ In contrast to movement within a singular imperial sphere, transimperial migration offered a whole new level of change as it allowed migrants to acquire new status and adopt foreign cultures. As Laura Jarnagin has pointed out, the biggest transformation for Luso-descendant communities came with their dispersal to British colonial cities in the nineteenth century. From Calcutta to Zanzibar, Portuguese *descendentes* flocked to British cities for advancement where some eventually became Anglicized, causing cracks in the community to emerge through identity and class differences.⁹ In Hong Kong, the Macanese stood at the fringes of the colonial government's racial policies, which were directed mostly at the predominantly Chinese population and Anglo-British Eurasians, in order to safeguard European privileges.¹⁰ With the freedom to explore, a portion of the Macanese formed an alternative Anglicized community that eventually collided with Macau-born and/or more Portuguese-oriented Macanese residents. Apart from their British or Portuguese orientations, these two strands were different in a number of ways. For one, Macau's Macanese embraced their associations with Chineseness, either by culture or descent, while Hong Kong's Macanese kept their distance, perhaps due to the devalued status of being Chinese in early Hong Kong.¹¹ The Hong Kong Macanese identified closely with Britishness. Leo d'Almada e Castro, the third generation of a Macanese family in colonial Hong Kong, emphasized his connection to the British when he said, 'I have been a British subject since birth, likewise my father, who was born in Hongkong in 1876 [...] My upbringing, education and lifestyle were British.'¹² This poses a striking contrast with how Macanese poet Leonel Alves, born and raised in

8 António Manuel Hespanha, *Filhos da Terra* (Sons of the Land) (Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2019).

9 Laura Jarnagin, 'Introduction: Towards Clarity through Complexity,' in *Portuguese and Luso-Asian Legacies in Southeast Asia, 1511–2011, Vol. 1: The Making of the Luso-Asian World, Intricacies & Engagement*, ed. Laura Jarnagin (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011), 11.

10 For the Hong Kong government's policies on the Chinese, see Peter Wesley-Smith, 'Anti-Chinese Legislation in Hong Kong,' in *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong between China and Britain 1842–1992*, ed. Ming K. Chan (London: Routledge, 1994), 93–98. For policies on Anglo-Chinese Eurasians, see David M. Pomfret, *Youth and Empire: Trans-colonial Childhoods in British and French Asia* (California: Stanford University Press, 2016), 243–276.

11 For studies that tackle Macanese intermarriage with Chinese women in Macau, see Charles R. Boxer, 'Macau as Religious and Commercial Entrepôt in the 16th and 17th Centuries,' *Acta Asiatica, Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture* 26 (1974), 66; Manuel Teixeira, 'The Origin of the Macanese,' *Review of Culture* no. 20 (1994).

12 Leo d'Almada e Castro, 'My Re-application for British Citizenship under Section 4 (5) of the British Nationality Act 1981,' 15 October 1990, Ruy Barretto Family Papers, Hong Kong.



Portuguese Macau, encapsulated his identity in the following verse: ‘My father was Transmontano, My mother a Chinese Taoist, I am, therefore, a Eurasian / One-hundred percent *Macaísta*. My blood has the bravery / Of Portugal’s bulls, Temper mixed with the softness / Of South China.’¹³ In the contemporary world, the heterogeneity of the Macanese continues to be reflected in deep-rooted presumptions about the ‘difference’ between the Hong Kong and Macau Macanese. I vividly remember a Hong Kong-raised Macanese recalling corporate soccer matches played in the 1970s, where the ‘Hong Kong boys’ swore to beat the ‘Macau boys.’

Being ‘British’ not only entailed a certain extent of status and wealth: it also paved the path for some Hong Kong Macanese to continue their journey to England. There, they often raised their children as Catholics, but with a strong British profile and little trace of their Macanese roots. Set more than one hundred years and four generations apart, the public narratives of Manuel Pereira and Cecil Pereira demonstrate the striking influences of migration and interracial union on the shaping of ethnic identities.¹⁴ Born in Carvalhais, Portugal, Manuel Pereira built a fortune after moving to Macau and joining the enclave’s Macanese oligarchy. Manuel’s grandson, as will be further discussed in the next chapter, moved to British Hong Kong and there cultivated bourgeois networks that eventually led to his marriage in England with a member of the Stonor family and eased his entry into the lower ranks of British nobility. Manuel’s great-grandson, Cecil Pereira, was born and raised in Britain. Cecil attended the Birmingham Oratory School and later served Britain in an expedition to Uganda and the South African Boer War of 1899 to 1902.¹⁵ For his service in the British army, he held several honors including the Insignia of the Order of the Brilliant Star of the Third Class, Companion (CMG) in the Chivalrous Order of Saint Michael and Saint George and Knight Commander of the Order of Bath (KCB).¹⁶ After

13 Transmontano refers to the northernmost region of Portugal. The original reads, ‘Meu pai era transmontano, Minha mãe china taoista, Eu cá sou, pois, euraseano / Cem por cento macaísta. Meu sangue tem a bravura / Dos touros de Portugal, Temperada co’a brandura / Do chinês meridional.’ Leonel Alves, ‘Sabem que sou?’ (Do You Know who I Am?) in Leonel Alves, *Por Caminhos Solitários* (By Lonely Ways) (Macau: Edição de autor, 1983), 29.

14 For an extensive study of the Pereira family’s migration, see Catherine S. Chan, ‘From Macanese Opium Traders to British Aristocrats: The Trans-imperial Migration of the Pereiras,’ *Journal of Migration History* 6, no. 2 (2020), 236–261.

15 John Henry Newman, *A Portrait in Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 575; ‘Foreign distinctions,’ *The Standard*, 24 June 1899, 5.

16 For Cecil Pereira’s military career, see Frank Davies and Graham Maddocks, *Blood Red Tabs: General Officer Casualties of the Great War, 1914–1918* (South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2014), 1953.



multiple migrations, the fourth generation of Pereiras had lost all traces of their Macanese past. While Manuel Pereira is remembered in history as a wealthy 'Macanese' businessman, Sir Cecil Pereira has been widely acknowledged as 'British.' So far, only Jorge Forjaz has documented Cecil as Macanese in his extensive genealogy of Macanese families.¹⁷ Transimperial diaspora thus presented Luso-Asians with the chance to undergo the most radical reconstruction in ethnic and public identities.

The case of Evelina Marques d'Oliveira, who was born in Macau to a Macanese father and a Chinese mother, affirms a similar pattern of constant identity negotiation and the gradual loss of Macanese roots in the process. After her father died in Fuzhou in 1939, Evelina D'Oliveira moved to Hong Kong during the late 1930s. There she would meet and marry Thomas Herbert Edgar from Hampshire. Thomas Edgar trained to become a baker around the country before he was offered a position as manager of Lane Crawford's bakery in Hong Kong. It was during wartime that D'Oliveira and Edgar's paths would cross and the couple married at St. Joseph's Church on 29 June 1942 (Fig. 1). Five months after their eldest child, Brian Edgar, was born in October 1950, the family left Hong Kong for England. The Edgar children were brought up as Catholics and Brian was taught the Bible and theology from a young age. He remembers his mother as a devout Catholic who always attended masses, prayed every day and often undertook voluntary devotional practices. Her enthusiasm must have been infectious, as young Brian became quite a devoted Catholic, volunteering to attend religious lessons on Saturday mornings at a local convent.¹⁸

Brian Edgar was raised with the knowledge that his grandmother was Chinese and his mother Portuguese. Although she never taught him the Portuguese language, being Catholic made Brian feel 'marginal' when he started Grammar School in 1962. He recalled, 'At Grammar School we Catholics had our own assembly while the rest of the school [being Protestants] had theirs. This religious thing was the main way in which I felt different to the others.' His sense of marginality also came with being born in Hong Kong and having a Portuguese mother. Of fond childhood memories that show his mother's Macanese background, Brian recalls that his mother 'had no trouble with the images of Buddha and [the bodhisattva of compassion] Guan Yin (觀音),' adding, 'In fact, she gave me a red amber Buddha, which

17 Jorge Forjaz, *Familias Macaenses, Vol. III*, 1st ed. (Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1996), 989–990.

18 Brian Edgar, 'Identity,' email, 26 January 2021.



Figure 1 Evelina Marques d'Oliveira and Thomas Herbert Edgar

On the left: Evelina's passport photo with her signature. On the right: the couple's wedding ceremony at St. Joseph's Church, Hong Kong taken in 1942 (courtesy of Brian Edgar).

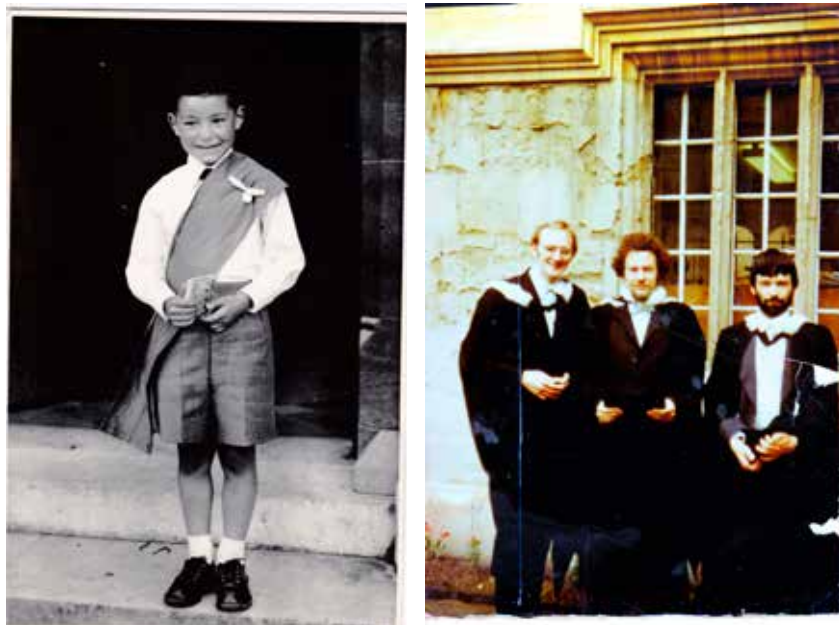
is my favourite Buddha.' Growing up in England, nevertheless, led Brian to identify strongly with Englishness. He chose to study English literature in Oxford. During his first year, he gave up his Catholic faith and become an agnostic. When asked if his Eurasian ethnicity affected his self-perception, he replied:

Strangely it didn't. I never thought consciously about my ethnicity when I was young—I just assumed I was 'white' like almost everyone else I knew. Even when I was given a racist nickname at secondary school I didn't feel I was really different to the other boys—everyone got mean nicknames so I didn't think it meant anything.

From attending his first Catholic communion as an enthusiastic seven-year-old Catholic boy to graduating from Oxford an agnostic Englishman (Fig. 2), Brian Edgar's experience similarly shows that identity can be a choice that is constantly being reshaped by the tides of time and circumstance.¹⁹

When speaking of mixed-race communities in colonial societies, we often conceive of the strategic manipulation of subjects along racial, gender, age and class lines. A strand of literature has shown how governments viewed the emergence of mixed-race subjects as a menace to colonial

19 Brian Edgar, 'Identity,' 2 February 2021.

Figure 2 Brian Edgar, 1950s and 1970s

The photograph on the left shows young Brian Edgar attending his first Catholic communion at St. Edward's Church, Windsor in 1957. On the right is Edgar (third from left) with his university mates during their graduation ceremony at Oxford around 1975/1976 (courtesy of Brian Edgar).

stability, prompting the formation of discriminative policies to manage this population and safeguard white privileges.²⁰ In Indochina, the French found ways to neutralize imagined threats to white authority from abandoned Eurasian children.²¹ In India, the British colonial administration controlled the lives of Anglo-Indian men by providing them certain privileges but simultaneously restricting their career advancement.²² This framework prompts us to acknowledge the significant role of colonial inequalities in the shaping of Eurasian communities and vice versa. While this book does not in any way deny the cruelty of colonialism and the experiences of oppression that colonized subjects endured, it aims

20 See, for instance, Durba Gosh, *Sex and The Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

21 Christina Firpo, 'Crises of Whiteness and Empire in Colonial Indochina: The Removal of Abandoned Eurasian Children from the Vietnamese Milieu, 1890–1956,' *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 3 (2010), 587–613. See also Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*.

22 Christopher J. Hawes, *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India, 1773–1833* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

to return the voices and freedoms mixed-race diasporic communities possessed in building their lives on colonial soil. The Macanese grew beyond the colonizer–colonized dichotomy so often mentioned in colonial histories, harnessing what British Hong Kong could offer in terms of employment, network, political affiliation and the liberty to dream and to achieve. Rather than perceiving colonialism as a paramount factor that dictated the lives of people, I invite us to rethink colonies as burgeoning Asian port-cities from the inner worlds of voluntary migrants and their descendants. Certainly, Asia's port-cities strove beyond their status as colonies and residents lived in a wider world of interconnected spaces.²³ The dynamism of the port-city offered migrants the chance to rewrite their life stories as much as migrants helped invigorate colonial cities into multicultural worlds.

Three major themes stitch this book together: transimperial migration, contesting identity and the colony as a cosmopolitan and transnational arena. On foreign land, mixed-race diasporic communities took on more than one identity and pledged allegiance to more than one empire. Their resilience allowed them to gain better tools for survival, especially in pursuing privileges that came with belonging to various cultural worlds. In British Hong Kong, the Macanese not only diversified in identity and class, but also existed in a web of networks that transcended the colony, the nation and the empire.²⁴ Middle-class Macanese, in particular, took the freedom to reposition themselves in the Portuguese and British worlds depending on which affiliation yielded the most benefit. Those who were dissatisfied but could afford an exit had the option of returning to their homelands or continuing their sojourn in other cities. Their actions were more than mere responses to unjust colonial practices; the Macanese explored choices and made decisions in the face of normative reality. Ultimately, their struggles, pursuits and experiences in Hong Kong interwove the British and Portuguese imperial spheres through collective imagination and intercultural explorations.

23 For studies that have sought to challenge the colonizer–colonized dichotomy, see the concept of 'cosmopolitanism' in Su Lin Lewis, *Cities in Motion: Urban Life and Cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Bart Luttikhuis, 'Beyond Race: Constructions of "Europeanness" in Late-Colonial Legal Practice in the Dutch East Indies,' *European Review of History* 20, no. 4 (2013), 539–558.

24 In this book, the term 'transnationalism' refers to the flow of people, ideas, capital, culture and goods across national borders, with an emphasis on contact zones and networks beyond the nation. Katherine Pence and Andrew Zimmerman, 'Transnationalism,' *German Studies Review* 35, no. 3 (2012), 495.



Drifting empires

The histories of empire and diaspora have been knotted in several aspects. The movement of people from all around the world to colonial establishments created unprecedented encounters between European and Asian institutions, marked by exchange, stimulation, resistance and compromise.²⁵ While living in foreign colonies, migrants explored affiliations linked to broader forms of hegemony and privilege. In the Portuguese imperial sphere, individuals capitalized on becoming 'Portuguese' by showing allegiance to the monarch, emphasizing Portuguese roots or constructing commercial ties.²⁶ Non-Britons in British colonies found ways to enter the social worlds of Britons through sociability, interracial marriage and culture.²⁷ For Britons, the British empire led to the construction of alternative forms of Britishness, which were then exported back to the metropole.²⁸ From colonizers to migrants to sojourners, there was always more than one way of belonging to an empire as it became embedded in emerging individual and collective identity discourses. Having cultivated a sense of attachment to two or more empires, diasporic communities not only deployed fragments of their past and present in the course of forming public images, but they also transformed in line with changes in the hostland, the homeland and the fatherland. For the Hong Kong Macanese, this meant juggling attachments to the Portuguese empire and to the British empire through developments in Macau, Hong Kong and a distant Portugal.

The Portuguese empire, which at its peak skirted the South American, African and Asian continents, carved an arena for intercontinental trade

25 Andrew Porter, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. III: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine (eds.), *Migration and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Susan Bayly, 'The Evolution of Colonial Cultures: Nineteenth-Century Asia,' in Porter, *The Oxford History*, 447–469.

26 Hesperia, *Filhos da Terra*.

27 Lynn Hollen Lees, 'Being British in Malaya, 1890–1940,' *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 1 (2009), 77; Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, 'British Discourses and Malay Identity in Colonial Singapore,' *Indonesia and the Malay World* 37, no. 107 (2009), 1–21; Valerie Anderson, *Race and Power in British India: Anglo-Indians, Class and Identity in the Nineteenth-Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015); Vivian Kong, 'Multicultural Britons: Britishness, Diasporas and Cosmopolitanism in Interwar Hong Kong,' PhD diss., University of Bristol, 2019.

28 Robert Bickers, 'Shanghaianders: The Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai 1843–1937,' *Past & Present* 159 (1998), 161–211; Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich (eds.), *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 5; Kent Fedorowich and Andrew S. Thompson (eds.), *Empire, Migration and Identity in the British World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Marie-Paule Ha, *French Women and the Empire: The Case of Indochina* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

that contributed not only to substantial economic growth in the metropole, but also to the movement of aspiring Portuguese subjects along the empire's networks.²⁹ Despite the emergence of new paths to wealth in Portugal, the monarchy continued to prioritize aristocrats, noblemen and an elite oligarchy, barring men of humble origins from higher political positions and nobility.³⁰ The empire's rigid hierarchies prompted the ambitious to seek elsewhere: in the seventeenth century, individual traders and free agents who gained the Portuguese crown's royal permission found an outlet in Portugal's vast maritime network.³¹ After setting off, aspiring merchants took on ambiguous identities. Some, for instance, distanced themselves from Portugal when tension unfolded between Portugal and the Dutch East India Company (VOC).³² In Macau, some *solteiro* (bachelor) merchants successfully integrated into the bourgeois Macanese community, usually through marriage and/or business networks, and subsequently gained prominence and status that could have otherwise been unattainable in Portugal. As the Portuguese monarchy had been reduced to a feeble state by the seventeenth century, they controlled the Portuguese enclave through the local *câmaras* (councils). Left to their own devices, Macau's merchant elites built a local *imperium in imperio*, concentrating power, status and wealth within a small oligarchy. Those outside the circle, needless to say, drifted where prospects looked more promising.

The formal establishment of British Hong Kong in 1842 opened the doors to the first Macanese diaspora. Up until the Second World War, Hong Kong

29 Leonor Freire Costa, Nuno Palma and Jaime Reis, 'The Great Escape? The Contribution of the Empire to Portugal's Economic Growth, 1500–1800,' *European Review of Economic History* 19, no. 1 (2014), 1–22.

30 For social mobility in Portugal, see Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro, 'Elites locais e mobilidade social em Portugal nos finais do Antigo Regime' (Local elites and social mobility in Portugal at the end of the old social regime), *Análise Social* 32, no. 4 (1997), 335–368; Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro and Pedro Cardim, 'La diplomacia Portuguesa durante el Antiguo Régimen: perfil sociológico y trayectorias' (Portuguese diplomacy during the old regime: sociological profile and trajectories), *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* 30 (2005), 7–40; Tiago C.P. dos Reis Miranda and Bruno Feitler, 'Apresentação—hierarquias e mobilidade social no Antigo Regime: os grupos intermédios no mundo Português' (Presentation—hierarchies and social mobility in the old regime: intermediate groups in the Portuguese world), *Revista de História* (São Paulo) 175 (2016).

31 Leonor Freire Costa, *Império e grupos mercantis: entre o Oriente e o Atlântico (século xvii)* (Empire and mercantile groups: between the Orient and the Atlantic (seventeenth century)) (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2002); Cátia Atunes, 'Free Agents and Formal Institutions in the Portuguese Empire: Towards a Framework of Analysis,' *Portuguese Studies* 28, no. 2 (2012), 173–185.

32 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political History* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 255–275.

served as a home for thousands of Macanese migrants and their descendants.³³ Some used the colony as a stepping-stone for better opportunities in Shanghai, Manila or Japan. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, fifteen percent of Shanghai's emerging Macanese cluster consisted of recent migrants from Hong Kong.³⁴ Others navigated the British imperial sphere, ultimately settling down in Britain. Those who stayed behind multiplied and diversified. The Second World War triggered a new round of movement, sending more than one thousand Macanese to demand renunciation of their British status so they could take refuge in Macau as Portuguese nationals. This would be followed by the unfolding of the second Macanese diaspora in the post-war period as families dispersed to different parts of the world. They set off to the United States, Portugal, Britain, Canada, Australia and the Philippines, eventually setting up thirteen *Casas de Macau* (Houses of Macau), each with their own unique insignia, activities and committee. In light of the global dispersal of the Macanese, Barnabas Koo has raised the question of whether Macau should, in fact, be considered as an 'adopted home' of the Macanese.³⁵ Since 1993, *Casa* members have been returning to Macau to attend the *Encontro*, a triennial 'homecoming' that celebrates being Macanese through heritage visits, Macanese food and music. This sense of belonging, nonetheless, is a post-war development linked to the second diaspora and what were then looming uncertainties concerning the handovers of Hong Kong and Macau to the People's Republic of China in 1997 and 1999, respectively.³⁶ The Macanese diaspora to Hong Kong demonstrates one of the earliest diversifications of the Macanese identity under the forces of colonial, imperial and global developments. In less than a century, history witnessed the birth of an Anglicized Macanese community and the rise of a group of British-educated, middle-class Luso-*descendentes* who helped cultivate early civil society in British Hong Kong.

Middle-class communities have a unique place in colonial history. Their footprints flood modern Southeast Asian history, particularly with regards

33 For a study of the Macanese diaspora in Chinese cities, see Alfredo Gomes Dias, *Diáspora Macaense: Macau, Hong Kong, Xangai (1850–1952)* (The Macanese Diaspora: Macao, Hong Kong, Shanghai (1850–1952)) (Lisbon: Centro Científico de Cultura de Macau, 2014).

34 Alfredo Gomes Dias, 'The Origins of Macao's Community in Shanghai, Hong Kong's Emigration (1850–1909),' *Bulletin of Portuguese–Japanese Studies* 17 (2008), 199.

35 Barnabas Koo, 'The Survival of an Endangered Species: The Macanese in Contemporary Macau,' PhD diss., University of Western Sydney, 2004, 49.

36 Mariana Pinto Leitão Pereira, 'The Macanese *Encontros*: Remembrance in Diaspora 'Homecomings', in *Memory, Migration and Travel*, ed. Sabine Marschall (New York: Routledge, 2018), 172.

to narratives of new nationalisms and anti-colonial struggles against institutional inequalities.³⁷ From Siamese elites and Thai nationalism to Colombo elites and Ceylonese nationalism in British Sri Lanka, middle-class urbanites spearheaded discourses of anti-colonialism through a widening inter-port print culture and regional public sphere.³⁸ In late nineteenth-century Philippines, elite Chinese *mestizos* helped propagate the Filipino identity in a collective stand against the Spaniards during the Philippine Revolution.³⁹ These experiences reveal the influence of the colonial framework on the revolutionizing of communal identities and the making of modern Asian nations. Yet such narratives suggest that modern Asia was largely built through the responses of middle-class urbanites to the colonizer–colonized polarity and, quoting Richard Reid, ‘colonial imagining[s]’ of ‘race.’⁴⁰ This impedes a fuller understanding of the nature of identity construction as a continuous process of reinvention and re-articulation of pre-colonial, colonial, regional and global developments.⁴¹ Possessing physical, political, legal, commercial and cultural connections with more than one place, diasporic communities provide us with new points of access for understanding how individuals and communities ceaselessly sought survival tools beyond singular colonial and/or imperial spaces in coping with external changes. As an example, the Sikh diaspora moved from one British outpost to another and finally settled in Britain, eventually ‘destabilizing’ accepted notions of Sikh authority in

37 Christof Dejung, David Motadel, and Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Global Bourgeoisie: The Rise of the Middle Class in the Age of Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019); Edgar Wickberg, ‘The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History,’ *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 5, no. 1 (1964), 62–100; Stoler, ‘Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers,’ 520, 522–524; Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in A Bourgeois World* (London: University of California Press, 1997).

38 Matthew Copeland, ‘Contested Nationalism and the 1932 Overthrow of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam,’ PhD diss., Australian National University, 1993; Thanapol Limapichart, ‘The Emergence of the Siamese Public Sphere: Colonial Modernity, Print Culture and the Practice of Criticism (1860s–1910s),’ *South East Asian Research* 17, no. 3 (2009), 361–399; Mark Ravinder Frost, ‘Cosmopolitan Fragments from a Splintered Isle: ‘Ceylonese’ Nationalism in Late-Colonial Sri Lanka,’ in *Ethnicities, Diasporas and ‘Grounded’ Cosmopolitanism in Asia*, ed. Joel S. Kahn (Singapore: Asia Research Institute, 2004), 59–69.

39 Antonio S. Tan, ‘The Chinese Mestizos and the Formation of the Filipino Nationality,’ *Archipel* 32, no. 1 (1986), 141–162.

40 Richard Reid, ‘Past and Presentism: the “Precolonial” and the Foreshortening of African History,’ *The Journal of African History* 52, no. 2 (2011), 147; See also Daus, *Portuguese Eurasian Communities*.

41 Stuart Hall, ‘Who Needs Identity?’ in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), 6.



Punjab and overseas in exchange of new life opportunities.⁴² The Burghers in Sri Lanka were descendants of the Portuguese, Dutch and British that successively ruled Ceylon across a span of four centuries. The middle-class 'Dutch Burghers' strove to sustain their political and economic interests away from the poorer and more numerous 'Portuguese Mechanics.'⁴³ As will be discussed throughout this book, middle-class Macanese invested in becoming British while hanging onto their Portuguese links to gain the best of both worlds. The human experience in colonial societies, hence, unfolded in the face of everyday challenges and dynamic interactions between colonial, communal and individual imaginations of ethnicity, culture and belonging.

For three centuries, Luso-descendants drifted between empires before settling down in Macau and thereafter Hong Kong. Identifying this community as a homogenous 'Portuguese' entity, as the majority of historians have, obscures the fact that the Macanese had long been physically and politically detached from their *pátria* (fatherland) of Portugal. The Macanese population mushroomed in Macau following generations of interracial marriage between the Portuguese or Portuguese Eurasians with Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Malay and Eurasian people in the Portuguese territories of Goa, Malacca and Timor. In fact, a considerable portion of Macanese subjects had never stepped foot in Portugal prior to their arrival in Hong Kong, their link to Portugal surviving only through Macau. This means that throughout the time period that this book covers, splintered developments in Portugal and Macau worked hand in glove with Hong Kong's circumstances in the shaping of the Macanese. In addition, Portugal's presence in Hong Kong was not pervasive, manifesting mostly in cultural events. It was only due to the ripples of nationalism in the interwar period and António de Oliveira Salazar's vision of unifying Portugal with its overseas dominions that a pro-Portuguese organization would be set up to counter the Anglicization of the Macanese.

At the height of their identity construction during the interwar period, at least six different types of Macanese communities were active across four Asian cities—Macau, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Kobe. In Hong Kong alone, we can count three communities. These included the first-generation migrants, who had a stronger sense of attachment to Macau; Hong Kong-born

42 Tony Ballantyne, *Between Colonialism and Diaspora: Sikh Cultural Formations in an Imperial World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 66.

43 Dennis B. McGilvray, 'Dutch Burghers and Portuguese Mechanics: Eurasian Ethnicity in Sri Lanka,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, no. 2 (1982), 235–263.



Anglicized Macanese, who had naturalized as British subjects while claiming to be leaders of the colony's Portuguese community; and Macau-born and -raised Macanese, who arrived as young adults to answer the Lisbon government's calls to revive the glories of the Portuguese empire. The construction of these Macanese communities in colonial Hong Kong embodied a transimperial process entangled with the effects of diaspora and the liberty diasporic communities possessed in imagining their affiliations to various political and cultural spaces.

Contesting the 'Macanese' identity

'Macanese' is an umbrella term that over-simplifies the ambiguity of Southern China's Luso-Asian community. The term is used interchangeably with 'Portuguese,' 'filhos da terra' (sons of the land, translated in Chinese text to *dadi zhizi* 大地之子; also used in Guinea, São Tomé, Angola, Mozambique and Malacca) and, usually appearing in Chinese texts, 'tusheng Puren' (native-born Portuguese; 土生葡人).⁴⁴ 'Macaísta' appeared in nineteenth-century publications but by the turn of the century, the term was considered 'depreciative' and offensive after Constâncio José da Silva, an editor of several Portuguese-language newspapers, pointed out that it was meant for objects.⁴⁵ This book uses 'Macanese' loosely in referring to Luso-descendentes with Macau roots. The Macanese were devout Catholics and spoke different degrees of English, Cantonese and *patuá*, a creole Macanese language derived from Malay, Sinhalese, Cantonese and Portuguese.⁴⁶ In general, they incorporated Portuguese, Chinese and other Asian cultural

44 Although the two terms are used interchangeably, *tusheng* suggests someone born in Macau whereas *Macanese* could simply mean culturally hybrid people who identify themselves as Portuguese but speak the creole Patuá language, have the habit of eating Macanese cuisine and are accepted by the Macanese community as one of their own. The ambiguity between *tusheng* and *Macaense* is discussed in Deng Siping 鄧思平, *Aomen tusheng Puren* 澳門土生葡人 (Macaenses) (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian youxian gongsi, 2009), 9. For the wide usage of *filhos da terra* in other Portuguese territories, see Hespánha, *Filhos da Terra*, 11.

45 Teixeira, 'The Origin of the Macanese.'

46 By the early twentieth century, Macau's Macanese perceived *patuá* as a marker of the lower classes while those in Hong Kong generally saw those who spoke the creole language were 'socially pretentious.' António M. Jorge da Silva, *Macaenses: The Portuguese in China* (Macau: Instituto Internacional Macau, 2015), 117; Jason Wordie, 'The Hong Kong Portuguese Community and Its Connections with Hong Kong University, 1941–1941,' in *An Impossible Dream: Hong Kong University from Foundation to Re-establishment, 1910–1950*, ed. Chan Lau Kit-ching and Peter Cunich (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 166.



practices into their lifestyles. A quick glance at a Macanese-written poem from the 1800s reveals usage of the term *nhonha* (an equivalent of *nyonya*, seen in the Straits Settlements) in referring to young girls, the habit of serving *cha* (Chinese tea) to house guests, the consumption of *arroz* (rice) as a food staple and the female habit of wearing *qimão* (kimono).⁴⁷ Dr. Melchior Yvan, a French physician who visited Macau in the 1840s, further affirmed the ‘Portuguese Macaists’ ate rice as a principal dietary component, complemented by condiments like the *balichan* (sambal belacan), a Malay dish made out of pounded small fish and prawns preserved in spice.⁴⁸ Women wore the South Asian *saraça*, a piece of cloth worn as a skirt by women from Madagascar, Ceylon, Malaysia, Oceania, Indochina and the Philippines.

Anthropologists and historians have long debated on the racial composition of the Macanese, associating them with the Mongolian, European, Malay, Chinese, Japanese and Indian ethnic groups.⁴⁹ The late Luis Andrade de Sá and Alfredo Gomes Dias have raised questions regarding the complexities of defining the Macanese from historical and sociological approaches. De Sá provided one of the standing narratives regarding the segregation between Anglophile Macanese and pro-Portuguese Macanese, which he saw as a question of nationality.⁵⁰ Dias approached the question from the perspectives of nationality, culture and hybridity.⁵¹ Jorge Forjaz, who has compiled a monumental genealogy of Macanese families, included settlers who arrived in Macau and started families in the Portuguese enclave in his definition of ‘Macanese.’ He pointed out that all Macanese had an early link

47 Patois, also *patuá*, is a Portuguese-based creole language that borrows from Malay, Cantonese and Sinhalese spoken by the Macanese. For the poem, see J.F. Marques Pereira, ed., *Ta-ssi-yang-kuo: Archivos e annaes do extreme-oriente Portuquez, Vol. 1* (Ta-ssi-yang-kuo: Archives and Annals of the Portuguese Far East, Vol. 1) (Lisbon: Antiga Casa Bertrand–José Bastos, 1899), 57–59.

48 Melchior Yvan, *Six Months Among the Malays; And a Year in China* (London: James, Blackwood, Paternoster Row, 1855), 288.

49 In 1897, for instance, Portuguese military man and later, governor of Portuguese Timor (1882–1883), Bento da França Pinto de Oliveira described Macau’s inhabitants as having Mongolian features, with European and/or Malayan physical appearances. In 1965, Jesuit Priest Manuel Teixeira identified the Macanese as a product of intermarriage between Portuguese men and Chinese women. Ana Maria Amaro has written a detailed account of the various interpretations on the Macanese. See Ana Maria Amaro 安娜·瑪里亞·阿馬羅, *Dadi Zhizi: Aomen Tusheng Puren Yanjiu* 大地之子——澳門土生葡人研究 (Filhos da Terra; Sons of the Land), trans. Jin Guoping 金國平 (Aomen: Aomen wenhua sishu, 1993).

50 Luís Andrade de Sá, *The Boys from Macau* (Macau: Fundação Oriente; Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1999), 47–54.

51 Dias, *Diáspora Macaense*, 102–116.



to Portugal, Mozambique or India.⁵² Like Barnabas Koo's exploration of how the Macanese survived the tides of time as an identity and community, Stuart Braga's extensive study of his family also highlighted the shifting nature of Macanese identity through time and space.⁵³ While these works have raised initial questions that problematize the identity of the Macanese, a good chunk of literature on the Hong Kong Macanese is focused on their early settlement and social activities in the colony, providing a sturdy pool of information for further study.⁵⁴ This book explores the ways in which the Macanese actively participated in the negotiation of their identities in British Hong Kong, eventually leading to the birth of multiple interpretations of what it is to be Macanese, Portuguese and British. Although it is true that most Macanese braved the move to Hong Kong to achieve social mobility, we often forget that becoming more British or publicly Portuguese was a personal choice for many middle-class Macanese individuals.

Throughout this book, race carries two specific meanings. First, race is an 'imagined community' constructed through a form of kinship bound by a shared culture and by acknowledging the presence of other races.⁵⁵ Second, it is a continuous construction that merges past experiences, present challenges and expectations regarding the future.⁵⁶ Race in colonial societies has largely been defined as colonial constructs that were invented to legitimize power and safeguard colonial administrations.⁵⁷ As whiteness often translated to

52 Diana do Mar, 'Famílias Macaenses: O retrato de uma comunidade no tempo' (Macanese Families: The Portrait of a Community in Time), *Revista Macau* 25 August 2017, <https://www.revistamacau.com/rm2020/2017/08/25/familias-macaenses-o-retrato-de-uma-comunidade-no-tempo/> (accessed 15 June 2020).

53 Koo, 'The Survival of an Endangered Species'; Stuart Braga, 'Making Impressions: The Adaptation of a Portuguese Family to Hong Kong, 1700–1950', PhD diss., Australian National University, 2012.

54 See, for instance, José Pedro Braga, *The Portuguese in Hong Kong and China: Their Beginning, Settlement and Progress to 1949, Vol. 1* (Macau: Instituto Internacional Macau and University of Macau, 2013); Ye Nong 葉農, *Duhai chongsheng: shijiu shiji Aomen Putaoya ren yiju Xianggang yanjiu* 渡海重生: 19世纪澳門葡萄牙人移居香港研究 (A Study of Portuguese Emigrants from Macau to Hong Kong in the Nineteenth Century) (Aomen: Aomen tebie xingzheng chu zhengfu wenhua ju, 2014); Jorge da Silva and António M. Pacheco, *The Portuguese Community in Hong Kong: A Pictorial History, Vol. I* (Macau: Macau Instituto Internacional de Macau, 2007).

55 Robert Miles, *Racism after 'Race Relations'* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

56 Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora,' in *Identity, Community, Cultural Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 222–237.

57 Olindo de Napoli, 'Race and Empire: The Legitimation of Italian Colonialism in Juridical Thought,' *The Journal of Modern History* 85, no. 4 (2013), 801–832; Patricia M.E. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999). Ann L. Stoler, 'Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century

authority, studies have pointed to how middle-class mixed race subjects adopted different degrees of whiteness or Europeaness to showcase their social status. This was seen in the construction of Batavia's Indo-Dutch local elites and the Hispanic-European cultural practices of wealthy Chinese *mestizos* in Spanish Philippines.⁵⁸ Post-colonial critiques have broadly condemned this process as colonial 'mimicry' and post-colonial thinkers have highlighted the problematic entanglement of race with colonialism even after the collapse of colonial regimes.⁵⁹ I argue that the entwining of race with colonialism has flattened the pragmatism of human communities and confined our understanding of people who lived in colonies to simply 'the colonized.' Although their works also focus on anti-colonial communities, proponents of subaltern studies have cautioned that too much emphasis on colonialism distorts narratives with the hegemonic vocabulary of the colonizer.⁶⁰ In reality, colonial residents actively sought to reshape and reform notions of 'difference' in order to elude the restrictions of colonial practices, sometimes resulting in discourses of resistance.⁶¹

The Macanese diaspora offers us an opportunity to further deviate from the colonial framework in exploring the construction and reinvention of a diasporic Luso-Asian community under the shadings of a British colony. In the vein of race as a colonial construct, several narratives have presented middle-class Macanese elites as victims of the Hong Kong government's racialized practices. In this book, we unravel the stitches of colonialism to

Colonial Cultures,' *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989), 634–660; Catherine Hall, *White Male and Middle-Class Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

58 Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: Europeans and Eurasians in Colonial Indonesia* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); Tan, 'The Chinese Mestizos and the Formation of the Filipino Nationality,' 150.

59 Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,' *October* 28 (1984), 125–133; D.P.S. Goh, 'Eyes Turned towards China: Postcolonial Mimicry, Transcultural Elitism and Singapore Chineseness,' in *Race and Multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore*, ed. D.P.S. Goh, M. Gabrielillai, P. Holden and G.C. Khoo (London: Routledge, 2009), 53–54; P. de Silva, *Colonial Self-Fashioning in British India, c. 1785–1845: Visualising Identity and Difference* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 77–80. For post-colonial thinkers, see Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (London: Macmillan, 1978); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Phil (New York: Grove Press, 2008); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978).

60 'Subaltern' here is based on the postcolonial argument of men and women outside of the power hierarchy of colonial governments. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988).

61 Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 75.



rethink the Macanese as ordinary men and women looking for a place in the sun. They lived within colonial walls, but as a diasporic community, Hong Kong was certainly not all they had. They had the option of harnessing survival tools and imagining political connections beyond Hong Kong, all while making good use of the colony's available physical and cultural spaces. Furthermore, the Macanese rarely experienced tension with the British government, peacefully co-existing with the city's native and foreign communities. As against common colonial narratives of collaboration and/or resistance, this book reveals intra-communal conflict caused by class jealousies and a race to claim authority over Portuguese affairs and Macanese identity discourses in British Hong Kong. Notably, the Macanese acknowledgment of colonial Hong Kong as a home served as the largest factor in the diversification of the Macanese during the early twentieth century.

Cosmopolitan and transnational arenas

Colonial cities facilitated the movement of people and the dissemination of cultures, paving the way for spaces that acted as conduits of new ideas.⁶² Within the colony, plural societies bloomed as individuals coming from different cultural backgrounds but sharing common interests met through the markets, the workplace and recreational institutions.⁶³ Asian colonies, like their inhabitants, strove beyond their status as cities under the administration of colonial regimes. They were cosmopolitan maritime zones that collectively formed a vibrant network with other colonial port-cities. Stretching from Calcutta to Bombay to Singapore and then to Hong Kong, the British imperial sphere generated a comprehensive terrain rooted in Anglophone bureaucracy, the provision of English education and the emergence of non-British Anglophile elite societies.⁶⁴ International civic organizations such as the YWCA and Rotary emerged across Asia's port-cities, constructing regional and global bridges that integrated Asian cities

62 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

63 Furnivall, for instance, discussed the situation in the market place within Dutch and British colonies in Asia. For this, see J.S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 304.

64 Bayly, 'The Evolution of Colonial Cultures,' 447–469. See also, Sugata Bose's argument that the British Empire did not destroy older patterns of maritime connection in the Indian Ocean but instead, created new transoceanic linkages. Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 122–192.

into broader global trends and a growing civic associational culture in the continent.⁶⁵ Despite its rocky beginnings as a barren island, British Hong Kong gradually became a buzzing cosmopolitan place. Natives and foreigners clustered with their own kind but had to learn to mingle with each other in public spaces.⁶⁶ The various pursuits of its multiracial population also linked Hong Kong to global commercial routes, turning Hong Kong into an international port.⁶⁷

By engaging in the spread of collective universal values and the building of multiethnic associational institutions and inter-port print culture, diasporic communities partook in the creation of cosmopolitanism in Asia. Migrants accelerated the establishment of exchange between cities and a globalized urban culture in the local scene as they constructed communal identity discourses. This resulted in the shaping of the ‘Nanyang’ (南洋; South sea) into a ‘home’ for diasporic Chinese communities.⁶⁸ Domiciled communities such as Malaya-born and -raised Straits Chinese formed the Malay identity, manifested in shared educational experiences and new possibilities of dialogue and imagination through print media.⁶⁹ The status of Kuala Lumpur by 1919 as a center for Chinese anarchist networks that spread from China to Japan and through the Philippines and Malaya to Paris showed the comprehensive landscape of the Malayan world.⁷⁰ Furthermore, cosmopolitanism pulled politically segregated colonial spaces closer to each other by providing wider domains where Asian literati could

65 Lewis, *Cities in Motion*; Kong, ‘Exclusivity and Cosmopolitanism.’

66 Elizabeth Sinn and Christopher Munn, *Meeting Place: Encounters across Cultures in Hong Kong, 1841–1984* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017); Ding Xinbao 丁新豹 and Lu Shuying 盧淑櫻, *Feiwo zuyi: zhanqian Xianggang de waiji zuqun 非我族裔: 戰前香港的外籍族群* (Not of My Kind: Foreign Communities in Pre-war Hong Kong) (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 2014); Cindy Yik-yi Chu, ed., *Foreign Communities in Hong Kong, 1840s–1950s* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

67 See, for instance, Elizabeth Sinn, *Pacific Crossing: California Gold, Chinese Migration, and the Making of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2012).

68 Mark Ravinder Frost, ‘Emporium in Imperio: Nanyang Networks and the Straits Chinese in Singapore, 1819–1914,’ *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 1 (2005), 29–66. See also Claudine Salmon, ‘On the Track of the Straits Baba Diaspora: Liec Qingui and His “Summary Account of a Trip to the East” (1889),’ *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* 5 (2011–2012), 116–145.

69 Chua Ai Lin, ‘The Domiciled Identity in Colonial Singapore: Understanding the Straits Chinese Beyond “Race,” “Nation” and “Empire,”’ in *Peranakan Chinese in a Globalizing Southeast Asia*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: Chinese Heritage Centre, Nanyang Technological University and Baba House, National University of Singapore, 2010), 145–154.

70 Tim Harper, ‘Afterword: The Malay World, Besides Empire and Nation,’ *Indonesia and the Malay World* 31, no. 120 (2013), 285.

address region-wide issues using English as a lingua franca.⁷¹ As a result, territorial demarcations shrunk and ethnic lines of separation began to blur, setting the stage for an unprecedented level of interconnectedness that transcended colonial, imperial and/or national ties. In Hong Kong, some Macanese maintained Freemason networks and others joined multiracial charitable or recreational associations.⁷² By the early twentieth century, middle-class Macanese urbanites were seen participating in public debates regarding universal ideas and local pursuits that mirrored global calls for world peace and equality.

While cosmopolitanism prompted individuals to discover new sociability and explore unparalleled forms of identities on foreign land, diasporic communities retained varying ties to their homelands. The colonial city, hence, was also a transnational arena where one could build new political loyalties and civic affiliations while embracing pre-existing cultural, legal and/or political affiliations. This was demonstrated by how the Chinese of Rangoon reaffirmed their ethnic pride *vis-à-vis* new feelings of attachment to a Burmese identity.⁷³ The co-existence of various Chinese communities in Asia's colonial societies that ranged from *Peranakan* (or *Baba*) Chinese to *mestizo* Chinese also reveals the complexities of diasporic identity. While the *Peranakan* Chinese in Indonesia pioneered an Indonesian proto-nationalism, the *Peranakans* of the Straits Settlement used their dual allegiance to the Chinese nation and the British empire to construct a strand of Malayan nationalism.⁷⁴ In the Philippines, many foreign-educated *mestizo* Chinese worked with upper-class natives in the revolution against the Spaniards. Although they were later legally classified as Filipinos under the American regime, they neither rejected their Chinese roots nor identified with China.⁷⁵

71 Mark Ravinder Frost, 'Asia's Maritime Networks and the Colonial Public Sphere, 1840–1920,' *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 6, no. 2 (2004), 63–94.

72 Isabel Morais, 'Darwinism, Freemasonry and Print Culture: The Construction of Identity of the Macanese Colonial Elites in the Late Nineteenth Century,' in *Macao—The Formation of a Global City*, ed. C.X. George Wei (New York Routledge, 2014), 53–71.

73 Chua Ai Lin, 'Nation, Race and Language: Discussing Transnational Identities in Colonial Singapore, circa 1930,' *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 2 (2012), 283–302; Penny Edwards, 'Relocating the Interlocutor: Taw Sein Ko (1864–1930) and the Itinerancy of Knowledge in British Burma,' *South East Asia Research* 12, no. 3 (2004), 277–335.

74 Leo Suryadinata, 'Pre-war Indonesian Nationalism and the Peranakan Chinese,' *Indonesia* no. 11 (1971), 83–94; Bernard Z. Keo, 'The *Peranakan* Chinese of the Straits Settlements, 1890–1948,' in *Colonialism, China and the Chinese*, ed. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick and Peter Monteath (New York: Routledge, 2020), 99–117.

75 Richard T. Chiu, 'The "Chinese" and the "Mestizos" of the Philippines: Towards a New Interpretation,' *Philippine Studies* 50, no. 3 (2002), 346–348.



The fact that these categories of Chineseness carried differing affections towards China allows us to rethink the construction of multilayered diasporic identities on par with local, national, imperial and/or global networks.

In a similar vein, the construction of the Macanese identity in Hong Kong illuminates the processes of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism on colonial soil. Existing on various trajectories, the Hong Kong Macanese were transnational actors in the sense that they responded in their own ways to changes in Portugal, all while publicly displaying loyalty to both the British colonial government and the Macau administration. The Macanese openly celebrated the Portuguese King's birthday and simultaneously hailed Her Majesty the Queen in their events, adopting both Portuguese and British cultural markers to form one single social experience.⁷⁶

Significantly, their lived Anglicized identities in Hong Kong did not conflict with old allegiances to Macau and the *pátria*, creating instead intra-communal tension through time.⁷⁷ In 1930s Hong Kong, Anglicized Macanese men helped establish an early civil society while serving as leaders of Portuguese institutions while pro-Portuguese Macanese busied themselves by working for Hong Kong's enterprises while writing to Portuguese President Salazar for the opportunity to fight in the honor of the nation.

A kaleidoscope of Macanese experiences

This book adopts the concept of 'collective biography' and builds on the idea that while every ordinary human being has an extraordinary story to tell, a collective study of individual biographies linked by common background characteristics contributes to our understanding of long-term transformations. Through the use of materials such as birth and death certificates, wills, census returns, letters, diaries and personal documents, the approach of collective biography has made it possible to identify a coherent narrative out of otherwise fragmented individual experiences lurking in archives and private family collections.⁷⁸ Liz Stanley has creatively suggested that we think of biography as a kaleidoscope: each time we take a peek at the

76 For the relationship between transnationalism and the creation of broad social experiences, see Linda Green Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc (eds.), *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (London: Routledge, 2005), 5.

77 Pence and Zimmerman, 'Transnationalism,' 498.

78 Krista Cowman, 'Collective Biography,' in *Research Methods for History*, 2nd ed., ed. Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 85–103, 89.



same set of materials, new patterns emerge from different perspectives and combinations.⁷⁹ Stanley's description is especially meaningful when placed in the context of diasporic communities like the Macanese. As a marginal foreign community in Hong Kong, the Macanese have not been particularly well-documented in the archives, yet when we put together sources regarding two or more businessmen, civil servants, clerks, club members, urbanites, politicians or nationalists who lived through a particular era, dynamic narratives emerge from their connections to the fringes of several cultural worlds.

Owing to the availability of sources on middle-class Macanese men, this book largely centers on the experiences, ambitions and pursuits of bourgeois Macanese men. While the number of females was not far off the number of males, Macanese women are noticeably absent in known surviving accounts. Documenting the European working class in the nineteenth century, Henry Lethbridge mentioned Maria Roza, a 'young Portuguese widow from Macau' who was formerly kept by a policeman. Roza became a full-time prostitute and was convicted in 1874 for running a clandestine brothel with an American woman.⁸⁰ Fragmented sources have confirmed that Macanese women did not stand equal to Macanese men, their roles often reduced to subordination. The colony's Portuguese clubs, as will be seen in Chapter Three, did not accept female members. Newspaper advertisements from the early twentieth century showed Macanese women thrown in certain pigeonholes along with Eurasian women. They were seen as ideal clerks, bookkeepers, housekeepers and governesses for European employers.⁸¹ In the early twentieth century, female public figures began to emerge yet their lives and contributions were still inseparable from their male counterparts. When Catholic charity supporter Guilhermina Francisca dos Remedios Romano passed away in 1932, local newspapers remembered her as the widow of the late Augustinho Romano, who previously served as the Consul General for Portugal and Brazil in Hong Kong. The *South China Morning Post* printed the following: 'As the wife of the Portuguese Consul General, Mrs. Romano, while the embodiment of modesty, played the part of an ideal hostess in their

79 Liz Stanley, *The Auto/Biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/Biography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 6.

80 H.J. Lethbridge, 'Condition of the European Working Class in Nineteenth Century Hong Kong,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 15 (1975), 97.

81 'Wanted—Young Portuguese or Eurasian Girl to Act as Nurse to a Young Baby in Swatow,' *South China Morning Post*, 20 October 1911; 'Wanted Portuguese or Eurasia clerk,' *South China Morning Post*, 14 August 1905; 'Wanted Young Portuguese or Eurasian Girl,' *South China Morning Post*, 16 December 1907.



unique residence.⁸² It would only be in 1965 that Inez da Rosa, secretary to the deputy Colonial Secretary, became the first Macanese woman to receive an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire). For her work in discovering native orchid species and for two decades of service to the colonial government, Gloria Barretto would become the second, in 1970.⁸³

To cope with the challenge of not having archives that specifically house historical materials on the Macanese community, this book compiles English-, Chinese- and Portuguese-language sources scattered in the archives of London, Canberra, Lisbon, Boston, Hong Kong and Macau. Through the help of Club Lusitano members, I was fortunate enough to locate Ruy Barretto, who is a descendant of one of the first Macanese men to have been employed in the Hong Kong government as a chief clerk. The kindness of Ruy and Karen Barretto brought me to the Ruy Barretto family papers at Girassol, Tai Po, and allowed me to incorporate into this book personal letters and documents that have traveled the world but had been kept private in their home for almost a century. The approach I have taken in this book will hopefully inspire other historians working on fragmented sources, marginal communities and individual or family histories to look into private collections, photo albums or diaries that may be sitting somewhere in attics, waiting to be unearthed from forgotten trunks and cobweb-covered suitcases.

Snapshots of Macanese life in Macau and Hong Kong complete the five chapters of this book, which are organized chronologically. Chapter One traces the beginnings of the history of colonial Hong Kong through professional relationships, Catholic missions and unfulfilled ambitions that took shape in pre-1842 Macau. In contrast with common perceptions that the founding of colonial Hong Kong led to the downfall of Macau, we consider the cross-border transfer of old affiliations and their impacts on the establishment of early British Hong Kong. The first chapter further sets the stage for understanding the push factors behind the first Macanese diaspora and situates the British colony within a world of fluid transcolonial and transimperial interactions. The second chapter focuses on the experiences of Macanese individuals in the workplace and highlights their roles as weak ‘collaborators,’ relative to other multiracial subjects who had access to the native Chinese communities. It emphasizes that while Hong Kong’s colonial structure safeguarded the domination of British superiors in public and private enterprises, the Macanese were, in reality, not as distinguished as

82 ‘Obituary: Portuguese Lady of Well-Known Family,’ *South China Morning Post*, 14 September 1932, 10.

83 ‘Second Portuguese Woman to Get MBE,’ *South China Morning Post*, 9 January 1970, 6.



their European counterparts in terms of qualification, work performance and strategic value. Chapter Two also offers a reprisal of the roles of negotiation, collaboration and resistance as the lifelines of colonized subjects and colonial governments. We turn our attention, instead, to lower- and middle-ranking workers, who quietly served as the administrative backbone of the colony in order to sustain lives outside of the colonial workplace.

Chapter Three explores associational life in Hong Kong from the 1860s to the 1880s and reveals the role of the community's racial plasticity in the shaping of a respectable bourgeois Macanese community. This was achieved through the founding of Club Lusitano, the largest Portuguese gentlemen's club in the colony. Modeled after British club culture, Club Lusitano embodied the transimperial characteristics of Hong Kong's urban spaces, seen in the Macanese construction of Portuguese identities and their public displays of allegiance to the Portuguese monarchy without possessing actual political affiliations to the *pátria*. To trace the path to becoming 'Portuguese,' we delve into Club Lusitano's involvement in the tercentenary celebration of Portuguese poet Camões's death, a Republican-instigated event that took place in Portugal, Brazil and Hong Kong, but not in Macau. Moving away from the idea that colonies imposed rigid racial lines and class hierarchies, Chapter Three reveals how middle-class Macanese men who worked as clerks in the daytime and strove to be leaders of Hong Kong's Portuguese at night segregated the Macanese community by magnifying class differences in the course of building new bridges to access the social worlds of British officials and prominent businessmen. In the process of constructing their standing as leaders of the Portuguese in Hong Kong, the members of Club Lusitano freely deployed selective aspects of Portuguese culture to gain the recognition of the British administration, the Macau government and the colony's English-language press.

The next chapter sheds light on Hong Kong-born Anglophile Macanese individuals from the late 1800s to the 1930s, and is intended to complicate what we know about the community, its identity and the colonial city in the modern era. We will start seeing the term *Hong Kong Macanese*, which I use to distinguish this group not only from first-generation migrants and newcomers who were born and raised in Macau, but also Hong Kong-born Macanese who were more active in the Portuguese sphere. This chapter analyzes four Macanese figures from two generations and tackles the use of print culture and political participation to document first the activities of a pro-Portuguese Macanese and then the rise of a new interracial civic identity that associated colonial Hong Kong with ideas of 'home' for diasporic communities. I start with Montalto de Jesus, who in 1926 published the scandalous *Historic Macao* and sparked a public dispute on whether he was

a Portuguese traitor or Macanese martyr. The chapter then moves on to the lives and pursuits of José Pedro Braga, Leo d'Almada e Castro and Clotilde Barretto, and considers the cosmopolitan worldviews they put forward in improving Hong Kong as a city and a home. Ultimately, Chapter Four argues that these Anglophile Macanese epitomized an emerging sense of attachment to the colony, participating in the formation of an interracial civil society shared with other second-generation settlers of a similar upbringing.

The final chapter explores intra-communal tensions and sheds light on competing discourses of Portuguese diasporic nationalism in interwar Hong Kong. Critiquing an overall generalization of the Macanese as a single unit shaped by the colonial government's unequal policies, we consider the Macanese voices that competed for the authority to interpret what it meant to be 'Portuguese.' In the late 1920s, a Portuguese nationalistic movement that subsequently supported the Salazar regime unfolded in Hong Kong and spread to the Macanese communities in China and Japan. Notably, this development mirrored the global wave of emerging anti-colonial nationalisms, but was complicated by political instability in the metropole and a growing dissent against the Anglicization of Macanese youngsters in Hong Kong. Unlike the anti-colonial movements that burgeoned in other Asian port-cities, the Macanese nationalistic consciousness was never anti-colonial, nor was it linked to notions of nation building. This chapter reconsiders the Macanese community from the framework of Benedict Anderson's 'imagined community,' but suggests an alternative type of imagined community that was not shaped by anti-colonial resistance. It emphasizes that the Portuguese identity in East Asia was built through piecemeal narratives that transcended colonial space and encompassed developments taking place between two empires and a distant fatherland.

By exploring a century of Macanese activities in colonial Hong Kong, this book seeks to address overarching questions on the nature of human society, the fluidity of identity and the influences of global connectivity. Documenting the gradual creation of various versions of the Macanese that range from the Hong Kong Macanese to pro-Portuguese Macanese patriots provides us with an opportunity to rethink racial construction and diasporic identities as continuous and creative processes that emerge in the face of normative realities. These processes are evolutionary, yet they are not necessarily revolutionary or entirely modern products of hegemonic institutions. Instead, they spiraled out of human instincts and pursuits for advancement, wealth, power or simply a more comfortable life. The struggle for survival, while different for every individual, is inextricably woven into the fabrics of human history. We need to acknowledge this in order to understand race, identity and nationalism as a set of responses individuals and communities



make in the face of changing situations, often fused with feelings of anxiety, uncertainty and fear. To cope, some people, particularly those with influence, began to build walls and institutionalize imagined differences between people. Through time, this imagination came to be embodied in everyday practices, human subconsciousness and institutional systems; it accumulated, spread and eventually ballooned into misinformed ‘truths’ ingrained in hate, resistance and racialized thinking. By deconstructing race as a contested and ever-changing social invention, we can hopefully begin to see one another as unique individuals shaped by an external world of challenges and an internal universe of ambitions and desires.

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