

ARTICLE

## Reproducing “Patriotism” On the Rim of Portugal: Lusophone Public Spheres in Modern British Hong Kong

Catherine S. Chan 

Lingnan University, Hong Kong, China  
Email: [cathchan@ln.edu.hk](mailto:cathchan@ln.edu.hk)

### Abstract

The first diaspora of Portuguese subjects originating from Macau (the Macanese) to various port cities in East Asia began in the 1840s with the British colonisation of Hong Kong. By the early twentieth century, their presence in Macau and resettlement in the Shanghai International Settlement, British Hong Kong, and Kobe led to complex diversification of the “Portuguese” identity. This study examines Macanese experiences in their navigation through notions of cosmopolitanism and patriotism in East Asian territories that were neither fatherland nor homeland. The debates show not only the vulnerability of Portuguese solidarity amongst the Macanese but also unprecedented ideas of being “Portuguese” in a relatively liberal British port city. Through the analysis of two national celebrations organised in British Hong Kong that caused tension, I explore how the shaping of cosmopolitan-minded Macanese in colonial port cities complicated notions of Portuguese patriotism, which oscillated between a love for the *pátria* (fatherland) and a sense of responsibility to fight for a progressive and just Macanese future. Their initiatives show that, away from the political centres of Portuguese power, the Macanese negotiated their relationship to the Portuguese Empire and competed for the authority to define “Portugueseness” across the East Asian littoral.

**Keywords:** Macanese; transimperial diaspora; Portuguese empire; Portuguese patriotism; borderland subjects

In 1898, “Portuguese” communities across the world celebrated the fourth centenary of Vasco da Gama’s arrival in India. Lisbon witnessed the establishment of the Vasco da Gama Aquarium and celebrations organised by the Lisbon Geographic Society that highlighted the nation’s great past through showcasing a plethora of Portuguese navigators.<sup>1</sup> In Rio de Janeiro, sixty-two Brazilians and Portuguese descendants formed the Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama, initially for rowing and later for football, as homage to the navigator. In Asia, the Portuguese Macau government published a journal to celebrate, in addition to Vasco da Gama’s historic voyage, the city’s Luso-Chinese characteristics and local “heroes” Ferreira do Amaral and Nicolau de Mesquita for “emancipating” and defending Macau from the “celeste imperio” (celestial empire) of China.<sup>2</sup> Luso-Asian communities

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion of the celebration, see João Maria Isabel, *Sínteses afetivas: Teófilo Braga e os centenários* (Açores: Presidência do Governo Regional dos Açores, Direcção Regional da Cultura, Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo Regional de Ponta Delgada, 2011), 71–89.

<sup>2</sup> *Jornal Único: celebração do 4. centenário do descobrimento do Caminho Marítimo para a Índia por Vasco da Gama* (Macau: N. T. Fernandes & Filhos, 1898), 15.

with Macau roots (hereafter, the Macanese) scattered in non-Portuguese territories across East Asia echoed the national initiative but in highly localised ways that reflected the diversity of Portuguese patriotic sentiments in the modern era. For Macau, this meant remaining loyal to the monarchy regardless of circumstances. For Shanghai's Macanese, this was conveyed by remaining close to the Macau colonial government. In a dissimilar development, the Macanese in British Hong Kong showed a stronger alignment with Portuguese republican pursuits for justice and progress that were amplifying in the metropole. Considering Hong Kong as a "borderland" of Portugal in East Asia and the Macanese as borderland subjects, this study explores how the shaping of cosmopolitan-minded Macanese men in colonial Hong Kong complicated notions of Portuguese patriotism, which oscillated between a love for the *pátria* (fatherland), a sense of responsibility to fight for a progressive future, and personal ambitions for power.<sup>3</sup> Their initiatives show that, away from the political centres of Portuguese control, the Macanese negotiated their relationship to the Portuguese Empire and competed, for diverse reasons, to redefine "Portugueseness" across the East Asian littoral.

The sprawl of imperialism resulted in the birth of "borderlands," otherwise physical or imaginative spaces that cultivated new forms of authority away from imperial centres. These ranged from non-colonial sovereign powers that attracted colonial intervention to outlaws that challenged colonial state authority in ambiguous borderlands situated between two empires, to mixed-race borderland populations who successfully negotiated favourable terms of trade with competing colonial regimes.<sup>4</sup> In foreign-administered territories, an alternative "borderland" emerged wherein diasporic subjects found the power and freedom to selectively interact with their homeland from the margins, resulting in their integration into the national imagination and national initiatives.<sup>5</sup> The German community in interwar Shanghai, for instance, found space to reassert their national identity each time they were called upon to express their support to the Reich.<sup>6</sup> For diasporic communities, hostlands emerged as peripheral spaces to simultaneously forge transnational connections and pursue ambitions by establishing multiple collaborations or sometimes through resisting directives from or challenging the metropole. This was seen in the way Asian diasporas in the United States created, in Hu-Dehart's description, "overlapping spaces between, over, and above two political national boundaries or borders," and how native Mexicans in the Greater Southwest established their own imperial pursuits while technically serving as collaborators of the Spanish Crown.<sup>7</sup> Living on the margins of both the Portuguese and British Empires, the Macanese subjects in this study carved

<sup>3</sup> This study focuses largely on Macanese men due to the absence of female voices in the Macanese public sphere. Some of the letters studied may have been written by women but there is no evidence to substantiate this.

<sup>4</sup> Eric Lewis Beverley, "Securing Empire's Borderlands: Reflections from South Asia," *Journal of Modern European History* 16:3 (2018), 353; Michael Eilenberg, "Evading Colonial Authority: Rebels and Outlaws in the Borderlands of Dutch West Borneo 1850s–1920s," *Journal of Borderland Studies* 29:1 (2014), 11–25; Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *American Historical Review* 104:3 (1999), 817.

<sup>5</sup> Nayanika Mathur, "Naturalizing the Himalaya-as-Border in Uttarakhand," in David N. Gellner, *Borderland Lives in Northern South Asia* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2013), 72–93; Jaeun Kim, "The Colonial State, Migration, and Diasporic Nationhood in Korea," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56:1 (2013), 34–66.

<sup>6</sup> Françoise Kreissler, "In Search of Identity: The German Community in Shanghai, 1933–1945," in *New Frontiers: Imperialism's New Communities in East Asia, 1842–1953*, ed. Robert Bickers and Christian Henriot (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 211–30.

<sup>7</sup> Evelyn Hu-DeHart, "Chinatowns and Borderlands: Inter-Asian Encounters in the Diaspora," in *Sites of Asian Interaction: Ideas, Networks and Mobility*, ed. Tim Harper and Sunil Amrith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 191–215; Travis Jeffres, *The Forgotten Diaspora: Mesoamerican Migrations and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2023).

space for the reproduction of state initiatives and made responses to Portuguese colonial policies, but not solely to display their loyalty to the imperial centre or benefit from Portuguese connections. Rather, Hong Kong's Macanese cosmopolites took advantage of the relatively liberal atmosphere of the British colony to reinterpret Portuguese patriotism as a deep concern for Portugal's woes and an impetus to call for a revolution against national backwardness and colonial injustices.

Notwithstanding, the display of patriotic sentiments provided a platform for diasporic communities to imagine, generate, and use their connections to imperial or national centres for local pursuits. Overseas Chinese communities, for instance, provided donations, resources, and skills to China's modernisation before and after the fall of the Qing dynasty to gain recognition from the homeland.<sup>8</sup> At the India-Pakistan borderland of Kargil, Baltis people reiterated their devotion to the Indian state as a "claim-making device" to amass political and developmental support from the central government.<sup>9</sup> As these examples show, the germination of patriotic sentiments far from one's homeland usually served local and personal purposes, usually for the benefit of borderland subjects. This would be made more complicated in Asia's colonial port cities where diasporic urbanites experienced not only new cultural and political affiliations but also cosmopolitanism, underscored by the sheer size and diversity of empires, and marked by a world consciousness beyond the confines of a particular community or nation-state that came with a commitment to social change.<sup>10</sup> For straddling two or more worlds, Macanese diasporic subjects deployed shared imaginings of striving for a better and more equal world as both imperial citizens and members of an ancestral homeland, resulting in the blending of new cosmopolitan pursuits with pre-existing problems in the *pátria*.<sup>11</sup> Instead of suggesting as I had in my previous writings that the Macanese used Portuguese national initiatives to enter middle-class British worlds, this study will explore how the cosmopolitan aspiration for progress and justice amongst a cluster of Hong Kong's Macanese community bridged local interests with emerging national developments and gave way for unprecedented interpretations of Portuguese loyalty.<sup>12</sup> If viewed from the outer rims of the Portuguese Empire, the concept of "Portugueseness" was as vulnerable, pragmatic, and contested as it was in the metropole during a period of political experimentation prior to the dawn of the First Republic.

<sup>8</sup> Yong Ching-Fatt, 'Nanyang Chinese Patriotism Towards China Knows No Political Boundaries': The Case of Tan Kah Kee (1874–1961)," *Archipel* 32 (1986), 163–81; Sunil S. Amrith, "Empires, Diasporas and Cultural Circulation," in *Writing Imperial Histories*, ed. Andrew S. Thompson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 227–8; Christian Jones, *The Straits Chinese Between Empires: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Colonial Malaya, c. 1890–1920* (Geneva: Graduate Institute Publications, 2022), chapter 4.

<sup>9</sup> Radhika Gupta, "Poetics and Politics of Borderland Dwelling: Baltis in Kargil," *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 10 (2014), <http://journals.openedition.org/samaj/3805> (accessed 26 June 2024).

<sup>10</sup> For cosmopolitanism and empire, see Anthony Pagden, *Peoples and Empires: A Short History of European Migration, Exploration, and Conquest, from Greece to the Present* (New York: Modern Library, 2001), xxiii. For this definition of cosmopolitanism, see Su Lin Lewis, *Cities in Motion: Urban Life and Cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 11. For works on cosmopolitanism in colonial Asia, see Su Lin Lewis, "Rotary International's 'Acid Test': Multi-Ethnic Associational Life in 1930s Southeast Asia," *Journal of Global History* 7:2 (2012), 302–24; Vivian Kong, "Exclusivity and Cosmopolitanism: Multi-Ethnic Civil Society in Interwar Hong Kong," *Historical Journal* 63:5 (2020), 1281–302.

<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, Neil Khor Jin Keong, "Imperial Cosmopolitan Malaya: A Study of Realist Fiction in the 'Straits Chinese Magazine,'" *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 81:1 (2008), 27–47; Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010); Christian Jones, *The Straits Chinese between Empires: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Colonial Malaya, c. 1890–1920* (Geneva: Graduate Institute, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Catherine S. Chan, *The Macanese Diaspora in British Hong Kong, A Century of Transimperial Drifting* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), chapters 3–5.

Even before the modern era, Portuguese identities have for centuries creolised, diversified, and transformed along with imperial expansion and diasporic activities.<sup>13</sup> The construction of Anglicised “Portugueseness” by Luso-Asian diasporas to British-administered territories in Asia and Africa during the nineteenth century deepened the diversification, dividing diasporic “Portuguese” communities by identity, class, and generation.<sup>14</sup> In Bombay, this was materialised through a bilingual newspaper (*O Patriota*), which was founded to defend the privileges of the Bombay Portuguese against Goan migrants in view of British preference over the latter for white-collar positions. In turn, the Goan community established their own *O Anglo-Lusitano*, which served to integrate Portuguese citizenship into the landscape of the British Empire.<sup>15</sup> British Hong Kong hosted the first Macanese diaspora, absorbing by 1896 1,309 out of 2,371 sojourning Macanese looking for better career opportunities and a more liberal society away from the stagnant economic circumstances and rigid press censorship of Portuguese Macau.<sup>16</sup> As a slender volume of literature including my own has shown, it was under the availability of press freedom, English education, and career opportunities in the British world that elite Anglophile Macanese urbanites born and raised in Hong Kong emerged, eventually driving a wedge between the Macanese in the inter-war years.<sup>17</sup> Pre-dating the disputes between pro-Portuguese and Anglicised Macanese, this study looks into the expansion and debate of Lusophone culture in British territory by earlier settlers who were born and raised in Macau. Under the tutelage of the British flag, Hong Kong permitted Macanese cosmopolites to interact with the Portuguese metropole in ways which deviated from their conventional counterparts in Macau and Shanghai. The colony permitted Portuguese subjects to openly support republican initiatives and speak out against injustice without fear and trepidation of being punished by the Macau colonial government. Notably, these pursuits were prompted yet also cushioned by their marginalisation under Portugal’s long inertia.

To demonstrate the construction and use of localised Portuguese patriotism on British soil, three events will be scrutinised: the Camões festival in 1880, the celebration of the fourth centenary of Vasco da Gama’s discovery of India in 1898, and the Portuguese

<sup>13</sup> António Manuel Hespanha, *Filhos da Terra* (Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2019). For works on the diasporic experiences of Luso-descendants, see, for instance, Paulo Varela Gomes, “Bombay Portuguese: ser ou não ser português em Bombaim no século XIX,” *iRevista de Historia das Ideias* 28 (2007), 567–608; Stefan Halikowski Smith, *Creolization and Dispora in the Portuguese Indies: The Social World of Ayutthaya, 1640–1720* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> Sandra Ataíde Lobo, “The *O Anglo-Lusitano*: In Search of an Identity,” *Hispanic Horizon: Journal of the Centre of Spanish, Portuguese, Italian & Latin American Studies* 32 (2016), 45–64.

<sup>16</sup> John Byrne, “The Luso-Asians and Other Eurasians: Their Domestic and Diasporic Identities,” in *The Making of the Luso-Asian World, Intricacies of Engagement*, ed. Laura Jarnagin (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2011), 140; “Government Notification No. 68,” *Hongkong Government Gazette*, 6 May 1871, 196. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Macau’s printing press was restricted by press censorship (from 1842 to 1844 and after the founding of the republic) and suspension by the government’s order, prompting newspaper editors to set up Macanese public spheres in Hong Kong. See Márcia Rosa dos Reis Ferreira, “Cultural e sociabilidades em Macau nos finais de oitocentos o *Eco Macaense*,” master’s thesis, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 2006, 27–8. The problems of Portuguese Macau that prompted Macanese diasporic movement to Hong Kong can be found in Chan, *The Macanese Diaspora*, chapter 1.

<sup>17</sup> For works on tension between the two factions, see Luís Andrade de Sá, *The Boys from Macau* (Macau: Fundação Oriente; Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1999), 47–54; Catherine S. Chan, “Macau Martyr or Portuguese Traitor? The Macanese Communities of Macau, Hong Kong and Shanghai and the Portuguese Nation,” *Historical Research* 93:262 (2020), 754–68. For Anglicised Macanese, see Catherine S. Chan, “Cosmopolitan Visions and Intellectual Passions: Macanese Publics in British Hong Kong,” *Modern Asian Studies* 56:1 (2022), 350–77; Chan, *The Macanese Diaspora*, chapter 4.

king's birthday in 1902. In the first, Hong Kong's Macanese elites proposed, in the spirit of Portuguese republicanism, drawing Portugal out of religious and political backwardness. The second and third festivals, which make up the second section of this study, will reveal calls against injustice caused by a mix of local autocracy, personal disputes, and the tightening of imperial control. As will be discussed in both sections, the new interpretations of love for Portugal from the margins were versatile, leading to competition and dissension between Macanese subjects. While differing points of contention unfolded in each, these events shared one common theme: they were, as responses to broader developments in the Portuguese imperial sphere, charged by a unique form of cosmopolitan patriotism that sought for a more progressive and more just Portugal, and nested within a British colony.

### For Portuguese Progress, the 1880 Camões Festival

The 1880 Camões commemoration inaugurated an era of national revival across the Portuguese territories that required the construction of Portuguese heroes. Born around 1524/5, Luís de Camões lived a passionate yet tumultuous life. Failing to climb up the social ladder through serving the Portuguese Empire, he would lose an eye in a naval battle, spend much of his time in exile, and die a penniless man a few years after his poem *Os Lusíadas* documenting Portugal's voyages of discovery (first printed in 1572) failed to gain him fame or income. For more than two and a half centuries, Camões disappeared from the landscape of Portuguese history until the Romantic era provided an opening for the resurrection of the poet and his poem. This resulted in the printing of a French edition of his poem in 1817 and the erection of a Camões monument in 1867 in the posh Portuguese neighbourhood of Chiado, followed by a dramatic surge in literary and cultural interest towards Camões and *Os Lusíadas* in different parts of Europe and the United States.<sup>18</sup> In line with these developments, the 1880 tercentenary of Camões's death was mobilised by various intellectual and political parties across the Portuguese Empire.<sup>19</sup> It marked a crucial opportunity to reconstruct national memory and revive Portugal's past glory according to the visions of monarchists and republicans, especially in the face of a shrinking Portuguese Empire and a long period of political instability that saw the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1834 and, subsequently, the rise of the reformist party in 1870 and the progressives and republicans in 1876.<sup>20</sup> Monarchists viewed Camões as an embodiment of nationalism through the poet's glorification of Portuguese tradition, language, and history. The republicans, represented by Teófilo Braga, labelled him as "the poet of modern Europe, of mercantile and cosmopolitan Europe, peaceful and scientific" and branded the commemoration a national revival.<sup>21</sup> The race to use the tercentenary of

<sup>18</sup> Nelleke Moser, "Camões as a Romantic Hero: 'Os Lusíadas' as an Example of Patriotism in the Netherlands Between 1766 and 1880," *Portuguese Studies* 12 (1996), 55–67; Theophilo Braga, *História das Republicanas em Portugal* (Lisboa: Nova Livraria Internacional, 1983), 163–4.

<sup>19</sup> Giselle Martins Venâncio, "Commemorate Camões and Rethink the Nation: Joaquim Nabuco's Speech during the Celebration of the Tercentenary of the Death of Camões in Rio de Janeiro (1880)," *Revista Brasileira de História* 3365 (2013), 278; Alan Freeland, "The People and the Poet: Portuguese National Identity and the Camões Tercentenary (1880)," in *Nationalism and the National in the Iberian Peninsula: Competing and Conflicting Identities*, ed. Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith (Oxford: Berg, 1996), 65. See also, Alexandre Cabral, *Notas Oitocentistas—I* (1880 Notes) (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1980), 63.

Maria Isabel João, "Public Memory and Power in Portugal (1880–1960)," trans. Landeg White, *Portuguese Studies* 18 (2002), 114–5.

<sup>20</sup> Paulo Jorge Fernandes, Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, and Manuel Baiôa, "The Political History of the Nineteenth Century," *e-Journal of Portuguese History* 1:1 (2003), 4–8.

<sup>21</sup> Maria Isabel de Conceição João, "Memória e império comemorações em Portugal (1880–1960)," PhD diss., Universidade Aberta Lisboa, 1999, 60, 62.

Camões's death as a momentum for change also reached overseas Lusophone territories. In Rio de Janeiro, organisers sought to bring Portugal and Brazil closer together during an era of growing anti-Lusitanism.<sup>22</sup> In the Açores, the celebration echoed Teófilo Braga's call to awaken to Portugal's state of decay and revive the nation through its past glories.<sup>23</sup>

The biggest reproduction of the tercentenary celebration in Asia took place on British territory. For unknown reasons, the Macau colonial administration eschewed involvement, leaving local newspaper writers to commemorate the poet through a three-column article recounting his life.<sup>24</sup> The Macau governor was also not present in the Hong Kong celebration, possibly due to its subtle display of support towards republicanism. In Shanghai, the small Macanese community of 285 did not organise an event of considerable scale.<sup>25</sup> Club Lusitano, the longest-standing Portuguese gentlemen's club in Hong Kong, undertook the responsibility of reproducing the festival.<sup>26</sup> Led by Lourenço Pereira Marques and Policarpo António da Costa, two cosmopolitan-minded Freemasons and republican supporters, the celebration stressed the need to inculcate in the minds of Macanese youth love and appreciation of their Portuguese roots.<sup>27</sup> While the event was partly to express Macanese loyalty to the British colonial administration through inviting prominent officials and playing the British national anthem, it also became an aperture for the Macanese not only to reiterate the need to protect and defend Portuguese language and culture on foreign soil in light of Portugal's lack of support to its imperial subjects but also to demand changes to push Portugal towards advancement.<sup>28</sup>

Both Macau born and raised, Marques and Da Costa were in Hong Kong for different reasons. Marques came from a wealthy family and was partly educated in Hong Kong before attaining his medical license in Dublin. He served at the Hong Kong Government Civil Hospital and was a Fellow at the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland and the Royal Geographical Society of Lisbon, and a member of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.<sup>29</sup> Fifteen years his senior, Da Costa arrived in Hong Kong in search of career opportunities. He worked for several shipping companies in the 1850s and would later die in his position as secretary of the Hongkong, Canton, and Macao Steamboat Co. aboard the *Yotsai*, which exploded fifteen miles from Hong Kong in 1884. He was laid to rest by Masonic ritual because the Catholic clergy refused to perform rites on a Freemason.<sup>30</sup> Like Marques, Da Costa was involved in cultural projects. He was awarded the Order of Our

<sup>22</sup> Cited in Venâncio, "Commemorate Camões and Rethink the Nation," 284.

<sup>23</sup> Maria Isabel João, "A festa cívica, o tricentenário de Camões nos Açores (10 de Junho de 1880)," *Revista de História Económica e Social* 20 (1987), 101.

<sup>24</sup> "10 Junho de 1880," *O Independente*, 22 June 1880, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Wang Zhicheng, *Portuguese in Shanghai* (Macau: Fundação Macau, 2004), 8.

<sup>26</sup> These were José Luíz de Selavisa Alves (civil servant), João Miguel Sebastião (civil servant), Marcos Antonio de Carvalho (owner of Craigengower, private residence on Caine Road), José Philippe da Costa (owner, Hong Kong Soda Water Company), Luciano Fortunato de Carvalho (civil servant), Policarpo Antonio da Costa (secretary, Hong Kong, Canton, and Macao Steamboat Co.), Carlos Danenberg (assistant to foreign architect), José Antonio dos Remedios (clerk, HSBC), Jeronimo Miguel dos Remedios (clerk, JJ dos Remedios), Marcos Calixto do Rozario (businessman and co-owner of Delmar). Club Lusitano, *Memoria dos festejos celebrados em Hongkong por ocasião do tricentenário do príncipe dos poetas Portuguezes Luiz de Camões* (Hong Kong: Na Typographia de De Souza e Ca., 1880), 1.

<sup>27</sup> 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), 62.

<sup>28</sup> I have written about the festivals as a platform for the Macanese to mingle with the colony's middle-class Britons and elites in Chan, *The Macanese Diaspora*, chapter 3.

<sup>29</sup> Arnold Wright, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Hongkong, Shanghai and Other Treaty Ports of China* (London: Lloyd's Greater Britain Pub. Co., 1908), 807.

<sup>30</sup> "The 'Yotsai' Disaster," *Hong Kong Daily Press*, 27 February 1884, 2.

Lady of the Conception of Villa Viçosa and was made a member of the Geographical and Anthropological Society of Stockholm for his devotion to advancing education.<sup>31</sup> Marques's time abroad opened his eyes to atheism, republicanism, and Freemasonry, whereas Da Costa's Masonic association and sympathy for the republican cause made him a critic of dogmatism. Together, they set the tone for the 1880 tercentenary commemoration at Club Lusitano: to call for the revival of Portuguese-ness amongst Hong Kong's Macanese and to encourage the spread of patriotic sentiments amongst the youth in spite of Portugal's abandonment.

On 10 June 1880, Club Lusitano hosted over 250 men and 50 women including the Hong Kong governor, prominent officials, businessmen, elites, journalists, and professionals. A copy of *Os Lusíadas* was placed by the entrance and a bust of Camões, gifted by Marques's family, was unveiled under Portugal's coat of arms and the flags of Portugal and Brazil.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the evening, Portuguese culture was celebrated through music, speeches, and literary appreciation. It was hoped that the thorough display of Portuguese arts and culture would encourage Hong Kong's Macanese to rekindle their love for Portugal, as accentuated by the speeches delivered. The club's president, J. A. dos Remedios, highlighted the objective of the festival: to honour the greatest Portuguese poet and to impress on the colony's Macanese love for their country. Remedios hoped that the commemoration of Camões would induce the Macanese youth to cultivate their Portuguese spirit by studying the many chivalrous acts of their ancestors.<sup>33</sup> Policarpo da Costa presented some foreign writings about Camões to stress the importance of learning the Portuguese language. He took the opportunity to criticise the Portuguese government for neglecting the needs of the Macanese and for failing to financially support the building of a Portuguese college in the British colony. Da Costa maintained that the Macanese ought to urgently "remedy the evil" and "nationalise the education of the youth" in order to pass on to future generations the "national spirit" and "patriotic pride" of the evening. Echoing da Costa, Lourenço Pereira Marques reflected on the tragic life of Camões as an exile to condemn the Portuguese government for indolence, corruption, and demoralisation. He suggested that Camões's poems, as records of Portugal's glorious past, could save the Portuguese language from oblivion, as well as the nation from annihilation.<sup>34</sup>

Notably, for Da Costa and Marques, their love for the *pátria* was built on a shared hope that the Portuguese government would rectify its shortcomings over its local and overseas administration to propel the nation towards progress. This mirrored the republican use of Camões as a symbol of the fight against national decline and the desire to revive Portugal's glorious past as documented in *Os Lusíadas*.<sup>35</sup> During the celebration, da Costa affirmed the republican call to embrace the dawn of a new era of enlightenment and patriotic fervour, particularly for the Macanese youth.<sup>36</sup> Marques's staunch support for republicanism came after the festival in the form of writings. Club Lusitano was accused by Catholics in Manila and Macau for supporting Darwin's theory of evolution, which Portuguese republican party members showed a strong interest in and debated about, and for fulfilling the "materialistic tendencies of the epoch and stupefied objection

<sup>31</sup> "The Fatal Explosion of the 'Yotsai,'" *Hong Kong Daily Press*, 26 February 1884, 2.

<sup>32</sup> Marques's father was also an admirer of the Portuguese poet, having erected the first Camões monument in the world at the cave where Camões was believed to have resided (the Camões grotto) in Macau with a Chinese inscription. The grotto was meant to preserve Camões's memory for future generations.

<sup>33</sup> "The Tricentenary of Camoens," *China Mail*, 11 June 1880, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Club Lusitano, *Memoria*, 26, 28, 37.

<sup>35</sup> Venâncio, "Commemorate Camões," 280–1.

<sup>36</sup> Club Lusitano, *Memoria dos festejos celebrados em Hongkong por ocasião do tricentenario do principe dos poetas Portuguezes Luiz de Camões* (Hong Kong: Na Typographia de De Souza e Ca., 1880), 52, 14, 16–7, 20.

of strayed intellectuals.”<sup>37</sup> Marques pointed out that the club was against the materialist currents of the time and that it repudiated the insults against Darwin and the theory of evolution.<sup>38</sup> The Camões celebration was, for its Macanese organisers, a promotion and defence of the cause of science against conservative forces that obstructed Portugal’s path to advancement.<sup>39</sup> This mirrored the republican accusation of the Catholic Church and the monarchy as the ills of the country and the demand for a “revolution” inspired by the French Revolution of 1789.<sup>40</sup>

That Portuguese patriotism in Hong Kong echoed the republican fight for Portugal’s progress through embracing science and rebuking dogmatism becomes more evident if we look at Macau’s take on the Camões festival. There, a general dismissal of the organising committee at Club Lusitano, Darwinism and science, and the materialistic exhibition of the festival were lambasted by Macanese public figures. A lawyer and journalist, António Joaquim Bastos questioned how the popping of champagne bottles, the clinking of glasses, and playing “God Save the Queen” could be considered as symbols of Portuguese patriotism. He further asked what right the organising committee had to speak for the Macanese people, accusing them of indulging in middle-class privileges instead of providing charitable assistance to Macau.<sup>41</sup> Another criticism was heard during a sermon delivered in Macau by Canon António Vasconcellos on the first Sunday of Lent, where he renounced Darwinism.<sup>42</sup> Da Costa responded to these by proposing a reconciliation between religion and science as a step towards political order.<sup>43</sup> Marques wrote two pieces to retaliate his critics—*Defeza do Darwinismo* (Defense of Darwinism) and *A validade do Darwinismo* (The Validity of Darwinism)—asking for the Macanese to embrace science for the sake of their advancement as a community. He used English biologist St. George Mivart’s attempt to reconcile Darwin’s theory with Catholicism and Chinese philosopher Zhu Xi’s (朱熹) idea that all forms of existence originated from an invisible energy (*qi* 氣) to demonstrate that religion and science were not contradictory. Embodying the metropole’s republican spirit, he stressed that the Macanese community would not see progress unless they stepped out of their conservative shells and accepted science.<sup>44</sup>

Da Costa and Marques’s (re)definition of Portuguese patriotism as an act of addressing Portugal’s weaknesses solidified, in line with growing attempts in the metropole to use

<sup>37</sup> The criticism was sent in the form of a letter by the rector of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila. It was inserted into Club Lusitano, *Memoria*, 83–4. For debates about Darwinism in Portugal amongst positivist republicans, see Ana Leonor Pereira, “The Reception of Darwin in Portugal (1865–1914),” *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 66:3 (2010), 651–2. For the general debate regarding Darwinism in Portugal, see Maria do Carmo Serén, “Rodrigues de Freitas e o darwinismo social,” in *Rodrigues de Freitas: a obra e os contextos*, ed. A. Almodovar and M. P. Garcia (Porto: FLUP, 1997), 138–40.

<sup>38</sup> Club Lusitano, *Memoria*, 94.

<sup>39</sup> The Compiler of the Memoir of the Tercentenary of Camoens, “To the Editor of the ‘China Mail,’” *China Mail*, 13 September 1880, 3.

<sup>40</sup> Douglas L. Wheeler, “The Portuguese Revolution of 1910,” *Journal of Modern History* 44:2 (1972), 175.

<sup>41</sup> António Joaquim Bastos Jr., *A inépcia em acção ou uma página para a história dos festejos promovidos em Hongkong pela Comissão do Tricentenário de Camões* (Macau: Typographia Mercantil, 1880), 12, 15–16, 39–41.

<sup>42</sup> António Maria Augusto de Vasconcellos, *Sermão pregado na Sé Catedral de Macau na primeira domingo de Quaresma em 6 de Março de 1881, no qual se refutam alguns pontos do sistema darwiniano com referência ao homem e à religião católica* (Macau: Typographia Mercantil, 1881).

<sup>43</sup> Policarpo da Costa, *Análise do Sermão pregado pelo Reverendíssimo Senhor António Maria Augusto de Vasconcelos, bacharel formado em Teologia pela Universidade de Coimbra, na Sé Catedral de Macau em 6 de Março de 1881* (Hong Kong: Noronha & Co., 1881); Lourenço Pereira Marques, *Defeza do Darwinismo: refutação d’um artigo do Jornal “Catholic Register”* (Hong Kong: Noronha & Co., 1882), 5.

<sup>44</sup> Both works were completed in the year 1880 but printed later on. Lourenço Pereira Marques, *Defeza do Darwinismo: refutação d’um artigo do Jornal “Catholic Register”* (Hong Kong: Typographia de Noronha, 1889), 3, 57–8; Lourenço Pereira Marques, *A validade do Darwinismo* (Hong Kong: International Printing Press, 1882), 22–6, 27, 31–3.

centenary commemorations related Portugal's past of discovery and imperialism to call for revitalising the nation, the unfolding of a Lusophone sphere for the promotion and discussion of Portuguese patriotism on the fringes of both the British and Portuguese empires.<sup>45</sup> Prior to this, Hong Kong's Lusophone sphere chiefly served the purpose of providing a space to criticise the Macau administration away from the strict press censorship of the Portuguese enclave.<sup>46</sup> In 1880, however, young Macanese cosmopolites began to echo the metropole in re-creating a strand of patriotism rooted in the call for and pursuit of scientific progress as a viable path to strengthening Portugal. The initiative was not without a local purpose, as seen in how Club Lusitano members appealed for the building of a Portuguese college to instill in the Macanese youth sentiments of love and loyalty to the Portuguese *pátria* whilst attacking Portugal for its lack of support towards overseas subjects. Such cosmopolitan constructions of "Portugueseness" resulted in tension with conservative Macanese subjects in Macau. Notably, British Hong Kong permitted the Macanese the freedom and authority to reinterpret Portuguese patriotism and to speak for "Portuguese" subjects away from the grasps of conservative forces in neighbouring Macau. By the late nineteenth century, Hong Kong as a "borderland" of Portuguese affairs would balloon with the emergence of multifaceted local disputes and fierce competition for the power to represent Portugal between Macanese migrants on British territory.

### Petty Quarrels or Fights for Justice?

Hong Kong's Macanese community continued to diversify after 1880: in 1897, the "Portuguese" population totalled 2,265 with 1,241 born on British territory, 931 from Macau, and the rest originating from other parts of Asia or Europe.<sup>47</sup> Old settlers and new migrants huddled together, but solidarity was far from reach as some newcomers found the pre-existing "Portuguese" authority, particularly members of Club Lusitano, too uptight and autocratic. In 1898, this evolved into a public disagreement between two Macau-born men—Lisbello Jesus Xavier, a newspaper founder and editor, and Agostinho Guilherme Romano, Portuguese consul-general of Hong Kong—over the fourth centenary celebration of Vasco da Gama's voyage to India. As mentioned in the beginning of this study, the festival was well celebrated as a symbol of national unanimity in other Lusophone spheres. In Portugal, the Society of Geography of Lisbon organised an event showcasing Portuguese pride that was attended by the royal family and foreign diplomatic representatives.<sup>48</sup> The Shanghai community held, chiefly in the Portuguese tongue, an evening of literary and musical performances. The display of Venetian masts, flags, and thousands of lanterns on the Bund made a mark as a local newspaper recorded the presence of "great [Portuguese] loyalty and patriotic spirit throughout."<sup>49</sup> In Macau, the opportunity to, quoting a local newspaper, "express their feelings of patriotism and national solidarity" (*manifestar os seus sentimentos de patriotismo e de solidariedade nacional*)

<sup>45</sup> The trend surged in Portugal during the Camões festival and stayed over the next few political regimes. For examples, see João, "Public Memory and Power in Portugal"; Maria Isabel João, "The Invention of the *Dia de Portugal*," *Portuguese Studies* 31:1 (2015), 64–83; David Corkill and José Carlos Pina Almeida, "Commemoration and Propaganda in Salazar's Portugal: The *Mundo Português* Exposition of 1940," *Journal of Contemporary History* 44:3 (2009), 381–99; Paulo S. Polanh, "'The Zenith of our National History!' National Identity, Colonial Empire, and the Promotion of the Portuguese Discoveries: Portugal 1930s," *e-Journal of Portuguese History* 9:1 (2010), 40–64.

<sup>46</sup> Catherine S. Chan, "An Alternative Macanese Public Sphere: Discussing Portuguese Macau's Problems in British Hong Kong," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 51:2 (2023), 244–64.

<sup>47</sup> "Report on the Census of the Colony for 1897, Laid before the Legislative Council by Command of His Excellency the Governor," 20 June 1897, 468.

<sup>48</sup> "Geographical Notes by the Acting Editor," *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 7 (1898), 367.

<sup>49</sup> "The Vasco da Gama Celebration," *North-China Daily News*, 21 May 1898, 3.

had to be diminished into a modest yet effective demonstration of patriotism due to an episode of bubonic plague.<sup>50</sup>

As against the air of Portuguese unanimity expressed elsewhere, Hong Kong's Macanese started a public contention over who had the right to organise the Vasco da Gama festival. Included in the debate were accusations that the Portuguese consul-general, Agostinho Guilherme Romano, was autocratic. Born in Macau in 1831, Romano began his service to Hong Kong's Portuguese consulate as an appointed chancellor in 1861. He quickly established himself as a prominent leader and was known by Hong Kong's Macanese as a liberal and patriotic figurehead. This was seen in 1877 when Romano was suddenly removed by the Portuguese authorities from the position of acting consul-general. According to *The China Mail*, the incident was one of Jesuitical interference and should not have been tolerated in a British colony.<sup>51</sup> The move prompted almost every Macanese resident, save for those serving Portugal, to sign a petition to have him reinstated.<sup>52</sup> In 1880, he would accept the provisional position of consul-general of Brazil in Hong Kong and was by then awarded with multiple Portuguese honours including becoming an honorary member of the King's Household. In 1887, he was officially appointed as consul-general of Portugal. The Macanese community went to Romano's residency to present him with the offer, supported by two hundred local signatures, to resume his duties as a proof of his patriotism. The message that arrived with the visit carried a description of Romano as a leader who "always upheld the national dignity, identified [...] with the whole of the Portuguese Community, [and] protected Portuguese subjects in distress."<sup>53</sup> For his long service to Hong Kong's Macanese community, he would be elected as president of Club Lusitano during the late 1890s.

While admired by many old residents, well-established first-generation Macanese settlers like Romano were perceived by succeeding Macanese migrants to Hong Kong as a blemish to Portuguese patriotism. For them, the existing Macanese leaders had too much authority, were too middle class and too acquainted with the British colonial administration, and could no longer represent the diversifying Macanese community of Hong Kong. This was the basis of Xavier's dissatisfaction with Romano. Similar to Romano yet thirty-one years his junior, Lisbello Jesus Xavier entered Hong Kong as a Macau-born and -educated Macanese. He first worked for the *Foochow Herald* before joining Kelly and Walsh, Ltd. In 1888, Xavier left the company to set up the Hongkong Printing Press.<sup>54</sup> He would subsequently become active in Hong Kong's Lusophone world. In the 1890s, he founded *O Porvir* (The Future), a newspaper that claimed to strictly promote the welfare of the Portuguese in the Far East without class distinction. In addition to this, Xavier would serve as secretary and later, president, of Club Vasco da Gama, an alternative "Portuguese" organisation that offered, for the first time in decades, an option for those unwilling or unable to join Club Lusitano.<sup>55</sup> An opportunity to challenge the

<sup>50</sup> "O Centenario da India 1498 ... 1898," *Echo Macaense*, 22 May 1898, 1.

<sup>51</sup> "The China Mail, Hongkong, Friday, August 24, 1877," *China Mail*, 24 August 1877, 2.

<sup>52</sup> "Presentation of an Address to Mr. Romano," *Hong Kong Daily Press*, 24 August 1877, 2.

<sup>53</sup> "Presentation of an Address to Mr. Romano, Acting Portuguese Consul," *Hong Kong Daily Press*, 26 May 1884, 2.

<sup>54</sup> "Death of Prominent Portuguese," *South China Morning Post*, 21 May 1909, 7.

<sup>55</sup> It is unknown when Club Vasco da Gama was set up, but it was interchanged with "Club de Recreio" in *O Porvir* and, thus, could have existed as an earlier version of Club de Recreio, a recreational organisation for the Macanese that would be formally established in 1906 with Xavier as its first president. Before Club Vasco da Gama, a lesser known "Portuguese" organisation named Clube Portuguez existed between the 1850s and late 1870s or early 1880s. It competed with Club Lusitano for a while until its members agreed to dissolve the club and join Club Lusitano.

authority of the elite Club Lusitano came in 1897 when Portugal and its overseas colonies prepared to celebrate the fourth centenary celebration of Vasco da Gama's voyage to India.

The debacle began after Romano called for a public meeting to discuss the celebration of the fourth centenary. He ended up presenting a list with thirty-two gentlemen from Club Lusitano to serve in the grand commission, which immediately led to the dissatisfaction of those excluded. To counter Romano's control, Xavier proposed organising another celebration under Club Vasco da Gama. The two camps sparred over the pages of two of Hong Kong's Portuguese-language newspapers, *O Porvir* and *O Extremo Oriente* (The Far East).<sup>56</sup> The editor of a Macau-based newspaper observed that although reconciliation seemed improbable, the two sides should abstain from hostility so as not to disgrace the Macanese community. They suggested that the Hong Kong Macanese overcome their difference as an expression of patriotism and unite as one under the homeland and the nation.<sup>57</sup> Eventually, the planned festivities were abandoned in a similar manner to Macau due to the bubonic plague, replaced only by the hoisting of a flag and an informal and sparsely attended meeting at Club Lusitano. Romano sent two telegrams to Portugal, one to the Lisbon commission as president of the club and another to the king of Portugal from the consul-general himself.<sup>58</sup> A contributor to a local newspaper criticised the Hong Kong Macanese community for failing to join the celebrations and further questioned why Romano had not mentioned the club's members or the rest of the community in his telegrams. He or she compared Consul Romano to the despotic Louis XIV and called for the Macanese to see what damage Romano, an insensible and unpopular leader, was causing to the "Portuguese" community of Hong Kong. This contributor emphasised that the community should work to promote its interests and maintain its prestige "instead of being thrown in the shade by the Portuguese community of Shanghai."<sup>59</sup>

In contrast to Club Lusitano's decision to withdraw their plan, Club Vasco da Gama held a pompous celebration that was supported by a considerable portion of the Hong Kong Macanese community and approved by the governor of Macau. Romano was invited to the event for his position as the consul-general of Portugal. He refused to attend because, according to Xavier, he could not accept the idea of another Portuguese club organising the national event. Romano travelled to Macau to dissuade the governor from supporting the celebration, with the reason that members of Club Vasco da Gama were not "Portuguese" as they were not registered with the Consulate. The competition between Romano and Xavier to represent Portugal in Hong Kong continued over the next two years. In late 1899, Xavier revealed to readers of *O Porvir* that Romano had repeatedly rejected his application for registration as a Portuguese subject even with a baptismal certificate to prove his Portuguese heritage. To counter Xavier, Romano explained in a letter that his refusal was owing to Xavier's discrediting the Portuguese consular authority and the good name of the Portuguese nation. In turn, Xavier accused Romano for abusing his power. He further penned a letter to the governor of Macau asking for justice to be restored.<sup>60</sup> In 1900, Xavier attacked Romano once more for being autocratic. When the latter tried to turn a charity event for the St. Vincent de Paul at Club Lusitano into a members-only event, an article appeared in *O Porvir* to sympathise with Club Lusitano for having a stubborn leader who instigated conflict amongst his countrymen and

<sup>56</sup> De Sá, *The Boys from Macau*, 76.

<sup>57</sup> "Aos Nossos Compatriots Em Hongkong," *Echo Macaense*, 13 March 1898, 1.

<sup>58</sup> "The Vasco da Gama Celebrations," *Hongkong Weekly Press*, 28 May 1898, 429.

<sup>59</sup> Nonentity, "The Vasco da Gama Celebrations," *Hongkong Weekly Press*, 28 May 1898, 428–9.

<sup>60</sup> Lisbello Xavier, "Letter to the Governor of Macau," *O Porvir*, 25 November 1899.

“drag[ged] with him the dignity of the nation he represent[ed]” (*arrasta consigo a dignidade da nação que aqui representa*).<sup>61</sup> Significantly, the contestation between Romano and Xavier was marked by a race to represent the Portuguese community in the name of patriotism. It exemplified one of multiple ways as to how Macanese subjects living on the margins of the Portuguese Empire appropriated Portuguese patriotism to address local issues and fulfill personal ambitions.

This would be further complicated in the early 1900s by surfacing tensions between the Hong Kong Macanese and the Portuguese authorities of Macau. As aforementioned, Hong Kong had been a space for the discussion of the Macau administration’s incompetence since the 1840s yet, in the context of growing debates concerning the future of Portugal, the British city harboured the further sprouting of a liberal and vibrant Lusophone arena that laid bare questions of morality and injustice surrounding the Macau colonial government. This coincided with a time when the surge of republican newspapers invigorated the public sphere in Portugal with attempts to electrify the public spirit and create a new civic consciousness that either opposed the decaying monarchy or upheld the republican promises of democracy and progress.<sup>62</sup> While Macau similarly witnessed lively exchanges between newspaper writers, the atmosphere was less liberal as heavy criticism of government officials often ended in the suspension of newspapers by the order of governors.<sup>63</sup> Hong Kong’s Lusophone press, thus, emerged as champions of justice. In 1899, for instance, *O Porvir* helped expose the Macau governor’s sanctioning of the trafficking of Chinese workers to the United States.<sup>64</sup> The newspaper subsequently became a platform to unite the Macanese in Canton, Bangkok, Shanghai, and Hong Kong to fight for press freedom in neighbouring Macau when the Portuguese colonial government charged a journalist for reporting the scandal.<sup>65</sup> One hundred and thirty-seven Macanese from Hong Kong, nine from Canton, five from Amoy, four from Fuzhou, six from Haiphong, four from Bangkok, two from Manila, four from Kobe, ten from Yokohama, one from Honolulu, fifty-nine from Shanghai, and three from Macau contributed to a subscription initiated by *O Porvir* to present the journalist with a golden pen. As according to a speech prepared for the presentation, the editor pointed out that it was the cosmopolitan environment of Hong Kong which allowed the Macanese to express their patriotism and amplify their shock at witnessing corruption and the annihilation of press liberty in Macau.<sup>66</sup>

Hong Kong’s role as a borderland of modern cosmopolitan Macanese pursuits would swell in 1902 following a physical altercation between a Portuguese and a Macanese. Major Bragança, a Portuguese commander of the police corps, physically attacked Da Silva Telles, a Macanese chief of the municipal police. During the altercation, Bragança directed insults at Telles and called the Macanese people “lowly” (*reles*) and “rascals” (*pulhas*).<sup>67</sup> Bragança was left unscathed, sheltered by Acting Governor of Macau Alfredo Pinto Telles’s refusal to address the incident. The incident, together with the Macau governor’s inertia, caused an uproar amongst Hong Kong’s Macanese: a well-attended meeting was held at Club Lusitano where members of the Macanese community gathered to express

<sup>61</sup> “O sr. consul Romano em evidencia. Que enguiço!...” *O Porvir*, 27 January 1900, 1.

<sup>62</sup> José Miguel Sardica, “Rethinking History Through Communication: The ‘Public Sphere’ as a Civic ‘Imagined Community’ in the Late 19th Century Portugal,” *Academia Letters* 384 (2021), 3.

<sup>63</sup> Márcia Rosa dos Reis Ferreira, “Cultura e sociabilidades em Macau nos finais de oitocentos *O Eco Macaense* (1893–1899),” PhD diss., Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 2006, 33, 36–7.

<sup>64</sup> “A administração do sr. governador Galhardo,” *O Porvir*, 25 November 1899, 1–2.

<sup>65</sup> “Subscrição paara a offerta de uma penna d’ouro ao esclarecido jornalista Macaense sr. commendador Antonio Joaquim Basto,” *O Porvir*, 25 November 1899, 3.

<sup>66</sup> “Homenagem Basto,” *O Porvir*, 24 February 1900, 3–4.

<sup>67</sup> Henrique Lourenço Noronha, “Letter to the Governor of Macau,” *O Patriota*, 5 July 1902, 2.

their “horror, disgust and indignation.”<sup>68</sup> The club sent a telegram to the Portuguese minister at Lisbon, but to no avail.<sup>69</sup> Two Hong Kong Portuguese-language newspapers, *O Porvir* and *O Patriota* (The Patriot), collectively demanded justice for the Macanese. The editors of *O Patriota* repeatedly asked for Bragança’s abuse of power to be reviewed and maintained that only justice could elevate the nation and make its people happy.<sup>70</sup> In addition to investigating the case, *O Porvir*’s writers printed letters of protest from Macanese subjects in Hong Kong, including one signed by a committee of sixteen Macanese men. They campaigned for the Macau government to tackle Bragança’s “crime” and his provocation of the Macanese people. According to the letter, the request was not one of malice, but rather the Macanese were motivated by patriotism, love, and solidarity.<sup>71</sup> Other contributors observed the Macau governor’s intention to protect Bragança and the existence of an oligarchy amongst top government officials in the Portuguese colony.<sup>72</sup> In a tone that echoed the republican criticism of the Portuguese monarchy, an article in *O Patriota* condemned the Macau government for its state of moral decay and Portugal for “taking hasty steps towards discredit and ruin” (*caminha a passos apresados para o descredito e para a [sic] ruina*).<sup>73</sup> In a letter to the *Hongkong Telegraph*, a contributor feared that the Portuguese newspapers in the British territory would need to use more vigorous language, not against the actions of the Macau authorities, but against their inaction.<sup>74</sup>

The merging of Macanese justice with Portuguese patriotism would continue to expand on British territory with the tightening of press censorship across Portugal’s territories in the early twentieth century. In view of the proliferation of nationalistic journalism that supported varying political parties, the Portuguese Overseas and Navy Ministry attempted to suppress freedom of expression through legislation. The 2<sup>a</sup> *lei das rolhas* (second gag law) of 1890 and the 1896 *lei dos anarquistas* (law of anarchists) were increasingly exercised to punish individuals who published content perceived as “subversive.”<sup>75</sup> In line with this and in view of the emerging attacks against the Macau government on British territory, the government of Macau banned the circulation of Portuguese-, Chinese-, and English-language newspapers from Hong Kong.<sup>76</sup> The office of *O Patriota* attempted to evade the ban by delivering their newspapers as letters into Macau, but the government there ordered the post office to open and inspect the newspapers, leading to four-hour delays in delivery.<sup>77</sup> In September 1902, the Macau government published in its official mouthpiece, *Boletim Oficial*, a new law to prosecute any “Portuguese” who dared to write against the royal members of the Portuguese monarchy, Portuguese diplomats, the Macau government, and its officials in any language and by any means of publication in a foreign country under the Penal Code.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Documented in H., “Correspondence, The Portuguese Press and the Macao Government,” *Hongkong Telegraph*, 11 September 1902, 5.

<sup>69</sup> Mentioned in “Despotism at Macao,” *Hongkong Telegraph*, 17 September 1902, 4.

<sup>70</sup> “Macau e seus melhoramentos,” *O Patriota*, 30 July 1902, 6; “Mais destinado do commandante da policia de Macau,” *O Patriota*, 6 August 1902, 10.

<sup>71</sup> Noronha, “Letter to the Governor.”

<sup>72</sup> J. C., “De mal para peor!” *O Porvir*, 19 July 1902, 1.

<sup>73</sup> “Assombroso!” *O Patriota*, 3 September 1902, 27.

<sup>74</sup> Documented in H., “Correspondence, The Portuguese Press and the Macao Government,” *Hongkong Telegraph*, 11 September 1902, 5.

<sup>75</sup> Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, Maria Manuel Pinto Barbosa and Álvaro Costa de Matos, *A rolha Bordalo: política e imprensa na obra humorística de Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro* (Lisbon: Hemeroteca Municipal de Lisboa, 2005), 9–10, 14.

<sup>76</sup> “O caso Bragança-Telles,” *O Porvir*, 5 July 1902, 1; “Mais outra?!...” *O Patriota*, 27 August 1902, 23.

<sup>77</sup> “Correspondence, Macao and the Portuguese Press,” *Hongkong Telegraph*, 20 September 1902, 3.

<sup>78</sup> “Ministerio dos negocios da marinha e ultamar, direcção geral do ultramar,” *Boletim Oficial* No. 37, 13 September 1902, 309;

It was becoming clear that to safeguard the rights of the Macanese, the autocracy of the colonial government had to be openly questioned. Protesting against the developments, the editor of *O Patriota* interrogated whether the opening of letters by the Macau post office was legal under the Universal Posts Convention.<sup>79</sup> *O Porvir*'s pointed out that only publications within the borders of Macau could be subject to libel.<sup>80</sup> Hong Kong's English-language newspapers animated in the development: the *Daily Press* pointed out the Macau government "[could] not bear close criticism," the *China Mail* claimed the Macau administration must be hiding something, and the *Telegraph* asked the Macau officials to revoke the law, which should belong only to the medieval ages.<sup>81</sup> A lively debate broke out, with Hong Kong's Portuguese-language newspapers responding to articles posted in the colony's English press.<sup>82</sup> The press aside, Macanese cosmopolites in Hong Kong decided to make use once more of Hong Kong's liberal spaces to express their dissatisfaction towards the developments in Macau as a symbol of their love for the nation. This time, the festival that was closest to the debate happened to be the Portuguese king's birthday celebration, which was celebrated annually in Hong Kong, usually by illuminating the façade of Club Lusitano and placing a portrait of the king over the doorway of the club.<sup>83</sup>

The outcry in Hong Kong was rooted in a proposition from Macau by António Joaquim Basto, then president of the Leal Senado (Municipal Council). At a meeting, he suggested that the Macanese withhold from the rejoicing. He disclaimed any disloyalty, expressing instead his sorrow towards the new press law, which he pointed out "not even the king himself was empowered by the *Carta Constitucional* to force upon his people." The resolution was not widely supported at the Senado, and the Macau governor held a reception at the Government House in Basto's absence.<sup>84</sup> Nonetheless, the festivities fell flat without, in the description of a Hong Kong newspaper, the "large majority of the Macanese element" and the usual displays of patriotism.<sup>85</sup> In Hong Kong, another round of tension emerged amongst the Macanese. Some members of the Hong Kong Macanese community, in unison with Basto, announced their refusal to take part in any official celebration as a sign of protest against the press law.<sup>86</sup> At Club Lusitano, members joined the protest and refused to illuminate the façade of the club's building as per tradition. The decision upset Consul Romano, then still president of the club. He proceeded to hold an "at home."<sup>87</sup> For him, skipping the national celebration was disrespectful to the Portuguese nation, yet for the colony's other Macanese cosmopolites, the war against press censorship had to be fought for the future of Macau and for the advancement of Portugal.

Following the fiasco, Romano would subsequently resign from his position as president of Club Lusitano. He warned the Macanese that they would suffer from disrespecting the Portuguese monarchy.<sup>88</sup> The "suffering" came after Romano informed government officials in Macau and the Portuguese special envoy and minister plenipotentiary to China,

<sup>79</sup> Redacção do "Patriota," *Hong Kong Daily Press*, 20 September 1902, 3.

<sup>80</sup> "Cui bono?" *O Porvir*, 20 September 1902, 1–2, 4.

<sup>81</sup> "The Daily Press," *Hong Kong Daily Press*, 17 September 1902, 1; "A Retrograde Government," *China Mail*, 17 September 1902, 4; "Despotism at Macao," *Hongkong Telegraph*, 17 September 1902, 4.

<sup>82</sup> See, for instance, "The Press Censorship at Macao," *Hong Kong Daily Press*, 22 September 1902, 3 and "Uma defesa da actual administração superior de Macau," *O Porvir*, 27 September 1902, 1.

<sup>83</sup> See, for instance, "Local and General," *China Mail*, 30 October 1879, 2.

<sup>84</sup> "Macao's Indignation, the Birthday of Its King," *Hongkong Telegraph*, 29 September 1902, 5.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> "Despotism at Macao."

<sup>87</sup> "Club Lusitano," *Hongkong Telegraph*, 23 September 1902, 4; "Local and General," *Hongkong Telegraph*, 29 September 1902, 4.

<sup>88</sup> "Conflictio lamentavel," *O Porvir*, 8 November 1902, 1.

José d’Azevedo Castello-Branco, of Club Lusitano’s actions. In late October 1902, Castello-Branco accepted an invitation to a welcome reception at Club Lusitano but decided, upon arrival, that it was impossible for him to attend because the club had eschewed celebrating the Portuguese king’s birthday.<sup>89</sup> He went instead to another lunch at the King Edward Hotel and had dinner with Romano.<sup>90</sup> The new president of Club Lusitano, José Luis de Selavisa Alves, responded by explaining the club’s refusal to join the celebration was merely an act of protest against Romano’s autocratic ways. In a letter, he emphasised Macanese love for the Portuguese homeland. He wrote that “[their] hearts vibrate[d] with joy” to the news of the successful Portuguese mission to Beijing and that the reception prepared for Castello-Branco was an utmost demonstration of Club Lusitano’s patriotism. Alves maintained that the refusal to illuminate the façade of the club on the evening of the king’s birthday should not make its members anti-Portuguese or anti-national because the act was not an obligation guarded by any existing law or principle. He concluded that Castello-Branco had been fed “false information” which may have originated from Romano, then still bitter from his disagreement with the club’s board of directors.<sup>91</sup> Like the other two national celebrations tackled in this study, this very incident was built upon conflicting visions of patriotism that brewed on British soil, only this time a group of liberal-minded Macanese in Hong Kong and Macau used the Portuguese king’s birthday to protest against a policy they perceived as an obstacle to progress.

In an era that was preoccupied with national revival, what was a simple gesture of protest against the press law became an issue of disloyalty to the Portuguese monarchy. In light of local developments in Macau and the availability of spaces in Hong Kong where the Macanese could elude Portuguese control, Portuguese patriotism emerged as a complex push and pull between Macanese concerns for the colonial homeland and love for the distant fatherland. This was further complicated by the competition amongst Macanese individuals for the authority to shape Portuguese discourse on British territory. As seen in the case of Castello-Branco’s visit, what appeared to cosmopolites as a patriotic protest calling for the betterment of Macau and the empire came to be interpreted by those in the centre of political power and conservative Macanese subjects as an act of betrayal to Portugal. That British Hong Kong was a “borderland” that housed active debates regarding Portugal’s issues was affirmed in the early twentieth century by Luíz Gonzaga Nolasco da Silva, vice-president of the Leal Senado, in a letter of protest to the Navy and Overseas Ministry regarding the curbing of press freedom. In it, he asked the Portuguese authorities to open their eyes to see the flourishing of patriotism in Hong Kong’s liberal space where the Macanese were free to reinforce their love for the nation. In contrast, Nolasco da Silva criticised Macau’s repressive atmosphere for drawing its Macanese citizens towards “denationalisation.”<sup>92</sup>

British Hong Kong, in this sense, helped to diversify notions of Portuguese patriotism by providing an opportunity for the Macanese to explore their footing between being “Portuguese” and “Macanese,” a trajectory that would continue to blossom during the inter-war years. Using the tools, protection, and autonomy provided by the British colony, the Macanese found space and freedom away from Macau’s oppressive atmosphere, to explore the differences and sometimes-conflicting notions between the two identities.

<sup>89</sup> Prior to this, Castello-Branco attended a celebration at Club de Recreio in Shanghai. For his explanation, which was written in a letter to the new president of Club Lusitano, see “Conflictio Lamentavel,” 2.

<sup>90</sup> “The Portuguese Special Envoy to China, in Hongkong,” *Hongkong Telegraph*, 28 October 1902, 4.

<sup>91</sup> The letter was reprinted in “Conflictio Lamentavel,” 2–3.

<sup>92</sup> Luíz Nolasco da Silva, “Carta aberta ao sr. Ministro da Marinha e Ultramar” (Open Letter to Mr. Minister of the Navy and Overseas), *O Patriota*, 17 December 1902, 94.

More importantly, Hong Kong's Macanese cosmopolites began to consider Portuguese patriotism as more than a sense of blind devotion to the Portuguese Empire; rather, they established a new centre on the fringes of both the Portuguese and British Empires to reinterpret love for one's nation as an active battle for the advancement of Portugal and its peoples. It was, thus, in Hong Kong that new ideas of Portuguese patriotism in southern China were born, underscored by unprecedented opportunities for Macanese migrants to participate in the construction of Portugueseness beyond the bounds of Portuguese political centres. In a nutshell, British Hong Kong became the space to respond to Portuguese colonial and national troubles at a time when subjects living in Portuguese-administered territories came to be silenced.

## Conclusion

The function of Hong Kong as a "borderland" of Portugal would not stop with the disintegration of the monarchy and the establishment of the First Republic in 1910. Rather, with the increasing global preoccupation with nationalism, Macanese disputes over what it meant to be "Portuguese" ceaselessly unfolded throughout the inter-war period.<sup>93</sup> Admiring the fatherland from afar yet neglected by the Portuguese government, discussions swung between one's love for Portugal and concerns over the future of Macau under Lisbon's long inertia. This was marked by differing, oftentimes, conflicting interpretations, fought over a broadening Macanese area in the public spheres of Hong Kong, Macau, and Shanghai. In the 1920s, for instance, a Hong Kong-born Macanese experimented with the idea of removing Macau from the tutelage of Portugal for the sake of progress. It produced a huge outcry in Macau where the Macanese condemned him as a traitor of the nation. Others living in Shanghai and Hong Kong had mixed views, with some sympathising with his good intentions for Macau. By the late 1920s, this would escalate into criticism of Hong Kong-born, naturalised British Macanese as "Anglicised" and not qualified to represent the Macanese community of Hong Kong.<sup>94</sup> Although set four decades apart, these inter-port debates were similarly triggered by the rise of Macanese cosmopolites in Hong Kong who not only competed for a voice to define Portuguese patriotism but also challenged pre-existing authorities to carve space for a more progressive and just world.

Exploring the contention behind the 1880 tercentenary celebration, the 1898 Vasco da Gama festival, and the 1902 incident helps us to understand the versatile, multilayered discourses of Portuguese patriotism in port cities across the East Asian littoral. Throughout the modern era, the Macanese placed much emphasis on discussing and interpreting Portuguese patriotism in printed conversations. As against the strict press censorship in Macau, British Hong Kong provided a relatively liberal space for Macanese people to rethink and redefine the concept of Portuguese patriotism. The three events have demonstrated that Hong Kong's Macanese urban sphere was global, dynamic, and unreserved; it encouraged the formation of new ideas and subsequently, cradled intra-communal conflict whilst maintaining cohesion between diasporic Macanese individuals. Under this haven, migrant cosmopolites, and thereafter their

<sup>93</sup> While Shanghai saw less contention amongst Macanese subjects, the lack of unity was brought up in view of the waning of the Portuguese tongue, economic depression, and Japanese aggression. For examples, see C. J. Machado, "Portuguese Language," *North-China Daily News*, 24 August 1923, 5; Shanghai-born Portuguese, "Portuguese Language," *North-China Daily News*, 30 August 1923, 5; Picturesque, "Portuguese Language," *North-China Daily News*, 27 August 1923, 4; "Unemployment Problem, Portuguese Needs," *North-China Daily News*, 15 November 1933, 7; C. J. Machado, "Foreign Unemployed: Portuguese Distress," *North-China Daily News*, 13 January 1934, 2.

<sup>94</sup> For Macanese disputes on being "Portuguese" during the inter-war period, see Chan, "Macau Martyr."

colonial-born descendants, contested “patriotism” with their competing self-interests, shifting worldviews, and a sense of duty to fight for what they saw was just and right for the advancement of their community and the *pátria*. Their discussions illuminate the tension experienced by a scattered diasporic community caught between a nearby homeland and a distant fatherland, particularly at a time when unquestioned love for the homeland equated to supporting a conservative political authority. Portuguese patriotism in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century East Asia was more than a sentiment yet less than a solid ideology. For those willing to venture and to wrestle, it was an instrument that could be deployed in foreign-administered territory to open new paths to negotiate status and power.

The frameworks of nation and empire have flattened the relationship between the Macanese communities into those of compatriots and migrants. Deviating from these, this study has looked beyond to acknowledge the Macanese as cosmopolites on the margins of two empires. This has offered us the opportunity to explore not only the intimate crossings of Macanese people and Portuguese ideas into non-Portuguese territory, but also the open-ended flow, grounding, and reshaping of the Portuguese Empire, physically and conceptually, beyond Portugal’s geopolitical borders. Using the tools of print media and relative press freedom in a British port city, Macanese cosmopolites strove to experiment with republican ideals from the metropole and cultivate their Portuguese cultural roots while advocating a progressive vision for the future of their people. In the face of Macau’s strict press regulation, British Hong Kong emerged as a “borderland” of the Portuguese Empire where varying nuclei of the scattered Macanese diaspora collided, mingled, and bickered, resulting in ambiguous collaboration and fleeting conflict. It was a central meeting point away from the political hearts of Goa and Lisbon for Luso-Asian subjects to foster new alliances that slipped the official radar and to redefine “Portugueseness” according to local circumstances and conflicting interests. Far from and nearly forgotten by the fatherland, it was in non-Portuguese port cities—particularly in gentlemen’s clubs and on the pages of newspapers—that the lines separating state and non-state actors, as well as national, communal, and self-interests came to be blurred. As seen from the activities of the Macanese cosmopolites, anyone had the right to judge and to speak in the name of “Portuguese patriotism” from the margins, but we can never be too certain whether they were speaking from a place of love for the country, the colony, the community, or the ego.

**Funding Information.** The research and writing of this paper was supported by a Faculty Research Grant (101928) from Lingnan University.

**Catherine S. Chan** is Research Assistant Professor of History at Lingnan University. She is a social and urban historian of diaspora, heritage preservation issues, and human-animal relations in modern and postwar Hong Kong, Macau, and Philippines. Chan is the author of *The Macanese Diaspora in British Hong Kong: A Century of Transimperial Drifting* and has published on the Macanese diaspora and trans-imperial connections. Her latest project concerns the more-than-human history of twentieth-century Hong Kong.

---

**Cite this article:** Chan CS (2025). Reproducing “Patriotism” On the Rim of Portugal: Lusophone Public Spheres in Modern British Hong Kong. *Itinerario* 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0165115325000063>