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An Asymmetrical Relationship in Macao from 1966 and 1999

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Abstract

In 1966, the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” happened in Macao and since then and until the last tenuous Portuguese Administration in 1999, Portugal had essentially to acquiesce to *Nam Kwong* Trading Company and directly to the Communist Party of China. This is called an asymmetrical rapport between Mainland China and Portugal over Macao.

Keywords: Mainland China, *Nam Kwong*, Macao, Portugal, Asymmetrical relationship

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Resumo

Em 1966 ocorreu a “Grande Revolução Cultural Proletária” em Macau, e desde então e até à última ténue Administração Portuguesa, em 1999, Portugal essencialmente anuiu à Sociedade Comercial *Nam Kwong* e diretamente ao Partido Comunista da China. A isto chama-se uma relação assimétrica entre a China continental e Portugal sobre Macau.

Palavras-chave: China continental, *Nam Kwong*, Macau, Portugal, Relação assimétrica.

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Introduction

The “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” (GPCR) started in Mainland China in 1966, and within a five-months period it had already spread to Macao, thus changing from the highly precarious Portuguese Administration to being controlled by the *Nam Kwong* Trading Company (南光有限公司), the powerful State-owned Mainland Chinese enterprise, and, directly, the Communist Party of China (中国共产党, *Zhongguo Gongchandang*). The tiny territory which had at the time 15 square kilometres, was occupied by the Portuguese Administration since the 16th century, although the Portuguese paid an annual “ground rent” for more 300 years until the mid-19th century.

It all started with the Taipa Island incidents, on 15th of November, and on the 3rd and 4th of December of 1966 it had spread to Macao. By the 3th of December it was against the Portuguese Administration, and by the 4th of December it was against the Chinese Nationalist Party (*Guomindang*). In the disorder, eight Chinese died. On the 29th of January 1967, Macao’s Portuguese Governor, Brigadier Nobre de Carvalho, had to sign two humiliating accords, one with the Guangdong’s Foreign Affairs Bureau and another one with the Macao Communists.

Why did it happen? The Board Directors of *Nam Kwong* Trading Company, O Cheng-peng¹ was appointed by the Guangdong’s Province Foreign Affairs Bureau to be the chief bargain amongst the Chinese side

¹ Younger brother of “Dr.” O Lon [柯麟, Ke Lin]. O Cheng-peng [柯正平, Ke Zhengping] has moved in 1943 from Hong Kong to Macao due to Japanese occupation of the British Colony. On the 28th August 1949 (Nam Kwong 1989, 6) he became the chairman of the *Nam Kwong* Trading Company. Since his older brother left for Guangzhou in 1951, he has replaced him as chairman of the Macao’s Branch of Communist Party of China until his death. He held also, chairmen of the *Nam Tong* (*Bank of China*) *Currency Exchange Bureau*, and *China Travel Service (Macao), Ltd.*

and the Portuguese part on 10 December 1966.² A few months before, more precisely on 4th of July 1966, Guangzhou's Radio, reported that his older brother O Lon, had been purged by the Communist Party of China and State apparatus for its "counter-revolutionary" activities in Guangzhou city and Guangdong Province. However, O Cheng-peng had been since 1961 the first secretary of the Macao Branch of the Communist Party of China and one of the largest employees of Mainland China. The "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" was chaired over by someone who is not from the "proletariat", like, for example, Leong Pui,³ who is the Chairman of the Macao's Labour General Association, but by O Cheng-peng. From then on, the Macao's Portuguese Administration and the Lisbon's Central Government had hoped that everything was finally closed, but they were fatally wrong. From then on and until 1999, the formidable Chinese State-owned *Nam Kwong* Trading Company had a powerful hand in all the political, economic, financial, and social wellbeing over Macao and the shaky Portuguese Administration.

² His older brother, "Dr." O Lon had been a barefoot doctor working as pharmacy of the Kiang Wu Hospital and counsellor group of Western Medicine, responsible for the work of the Nursing School, between 1940 and 1941 (Special Issue 1986, 7). He reached a Medical Superintendent of the Kiang Wu Hospital in Macao by 22 March 1946 (*Ibidem*, 48). The Chinese Civil War, between the Communists and Nationalist regimes, from 1946 to 1949, had the former taking over Mainland China. For these, the Portuguese Administration gave the title "Dr." when the Communist Party of China finally won. He had gone to the become Dean of the Guangzhou Medical School at the Zhongshan University (中山大学, Zhongshan Daxue) in the capital city of Guangdong, in 1951, after attending a Medical Conference in Beijing. On 4 July 1966, he and others from the School were all purged from the Communist Party of China and all State apparatuses under the accusation "of being hostile elements to the Party and Socialism". This created an enormous uproar among the Macao's Communist Party of China. Hence, they informed the key decision makers of the Portuguese Administration and also their intelligence services that they were highly worried about the situation back on Mainland China, due to the fact they were extremely moderated in Mainland China, among them Liu Shaoqi (刘少奇), the Chinese President, Deng Xiaoping (邓小平), the Secretary-General of Communist Party of China, and even O Cheng-peng (柯正平, Ke Zhengping) in Macao. According to the Special Issue of the 115th Kiang Wu Hospital they had nothing had happened to "Dr." O Lon (Special Issue 1986, 58) but from 1966 until 1976 he was imprisoned by the radicals of Mao Zedong. Only after this, "Dr." O Lon was he able to resume Medical Superintendent in 1977, but in December 1983, due to his senile dementia he had resigned. In spite of this, "Dr." O Lon was appointed the Honorary Chairman of the Kiang Wu Hospital on 20 December 1984 (*Ibidem*, 58, 103). Died in September 1991 (Brazil 2025, 206-213).

³ Leong Pui had been a carpenter of the Portuguese Public Security Police during the II World War. After leaving the Police force he became the chairman of the Carpenters' Trade Union while the Chinese Civil War was going on. Soon afterwards, the Civil War was on by the Communist Party of China in October 1949, he became chairman of the Macao's Labour General Association at a meeting held at the *Kiang Wu* Chinese Hospital, which was fully supported by the Communist Dr. O Lon, on 20th of January 1950.

Therefore, first we will look at what the literature does not say about the Macao affair, because it is definitely too small to be considered a case test. Then we will turn to the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” and its overall impact in Macao, which was quite different from Hong Kong, where the British stood against the Communists and own. Then in 1971 Mainland China managed to get in the United Nations, and in the following year they acquired Macao and Hong Kong back from what they called the “unequal treaties”. Shortly after there was Portugal’s regime change, but Macao continued as before. Then we will look at the Tiananmen Square upheavals, the illegal Chinese refugees from Guangdong into Macao in 1989 and 1990, the divisive last Portuguese statue of Ferreira do Amaral, and then the conclusion.

What does the literature say?

The academic works says absolutely nothing on Macao due to the fact that it lost all its *status quo* in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966 and 1967 and afterwards. However, two major efforts have been made by two academics: Brantley Womack and Frank Pfetsch.

When we are reading the asymmetrical politics between China and Vietnam one apparent thing comes to mind – the Macao affair – especially during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and its aftermath. In the case of China and Vietnam they had three millennia of asymmetrical relationship with good and bad rapport, in the case of Macao we have nearly a half-millennium of interaction between China and Macao that went “ground rent” of 500 taels, from the Ming and Qing dynasties from the 16th to the 19th centuries.⁴

On the other hand, Frank Pfetsch has been dealing with European powers that are constructing the European Union and it has named Portugal as

⁴ For example, the “sinicus plates” is a major collection of records of the Ming and Qing dynasties involving Macao, it contains more than 3,600 documents, and it is owned by the Portuguese National Archives (ANTT). From October 2019 to February 2020 it was held at an exhibition at the Portuguese National Archives, but it was co-organized by the Cultural Institute of Macao Archives in which was written “[t]he Ming and Qing Dynasties, China exercised full territorial and jurisdictional sovereignty over Macao through the appointment of Chinese officials to administer the territory, the quartering of Chinese soldiers in Macao, the implementation of Chinese orders and instructions and the collection of ‘ground rent’, taxes and duties” (Lau 2019, 105). If the top echelons of the Portuguese National Archives had read or took a glimpse of Maria Teresa Lopes da Silva book (Silva 2002) they would get a different perspective.

a small state, with very minor political inputs and outputs (Pfetsch 2007, 100). When it comes to “environmental laggards” he names Portugal and a few others as small states (*Ibidem*, 118). On Macao he says absolutely nothing, but we can conclude that Portugal was a small power versus greater Mainland China from 1949 to 1999.

The “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” was the end of Portuguese shaky status quo over Macao

After the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” had begun in Mainland China in May 1966, it was very soon followed on the 15th of November by the Taipa Island incident between Communist elements and the Chairman of the Portuguese Municipal Council of the Islands, the Macanese Rui de Andrade. He admonished the Communists that they should stop immediately. However, contrary to Rui de Andrade, the Communist contributing factor continued to build *Fong Chong* Primary School. This time, Rui de Andrade called the Police’s Deputy Commissioner, Major Vaz Antunes, who was on Taipa Island to take care of the Social Recovery Centre, a drug addiction rehabilitation foundation whose administrative and disciplinary control was under the Police Command and under the technical, medical-prophylactic control of the Health Services, and he requested to put it down. The Portuguese Public Security Police made several arrests, including the mouthpiece of Beijing propaganda warfare the *Ou Mun Iat Pou*. For this minor clash, they had to await for the mouthpieces from Beijing and Guangzhou. On the 30th of November, the *People’s Daily* and *Guangzhou’s Daily* starts putting its mouthpieces among the Communists in Macao, but also with the Hong Kong Branch of *Xinhua She* Press Agency.

On the 3rd of December 1966, the local Macao’s Communist leadership decide to bring down the weak Portuguese administration, soon after the failure attempt by the Portuguese’s Public Security Police to bring about the Chinese protesters through water cannons, which had never worked in Macao. The next day, the Communists attacked the nationalists, and they won the Communist Party of China. On the 10th of December the Guangdong’s Foreign Affairs Bureau, appoints O Cheng-peng, of the powerful Chinese State-owned *Nam Kwong* Trading Company, to negotiate two “unequal accords” with the feeble Portuguese Administration. After nearly two months with the Portuguese and Macanese ups and downs, Macao’s Governor signed two “unequal accords”, one with the local Macao

Communists and another one with the Guangdong's Foreign Affairs Bureau. As Percy Cradock (former UK Ambassador to China from 1978 to 1984, and past Prime Minister's Foreign Policy Adviser from 1984 to 1992), wrote and published in 1994 in his memoirs,

In Macao in December, after two months of rioting, the Governor had been compelled to sign a confession of guilt, release arrested rioters, pay compensation, ban pro-Nationalist activities and hand over Nationalists agents. Macao never recovered. (Cradock 1994, 58)

After the conclusion of the first stage of the GPCR, on 29 January 1967, both Macao's Portuguese Administration and Lisbon's Central Government thought that it had come to an end. However, the local and Guangzhou Communist's continued to cause turbulences in 1967 and 1968. Right away, the Portuguese central government sent a Macanese to Macao to act as the Deputy Governor,⁵ Alberto Eduardo da Silva (Fernandes 2006, 282-283), to help the new Governor, Brigadier Nobre de Carvalho, and to normalize the situation. However, before his departure from Lisbon to Macao, he received the news from a senior official at the Overseas (Colonies) Ministry that "we will always have to bear in mind that we stay in Macao[,] as long as [Mainland] China consents".⁶ Although they do not mentioned Macao, Brantley Womack and Frank Pfestch would have seen his method coming through is this major event. His homecoming was completely doomed, on 13th of April 1967, since many issues in Macao had become bustling.

One such case was the jail time for a Chinese street-walker named Lai Chun for having assaulted and battery charges against an agent of the Portuguese Judicial Police, José da Silva Gaspar, on 24th of October 1966. This led the Portuguese judiciary systems to break down completely in 1967. Judge Leal de Carvalho and the Prosecutor's Office, Freitas Mornas, did let Lai Chun go after great protests that happened at the Courts by the Street Walkers' Union, on 15th of April 1967. Although he received on the same day the "granting of prisoner's parole", soon after he escaped to

⁵ He was appointed as the "General-Secretary" of the Portuguese Administration, but in reality he was the Deputy Governor, from 1967 to 1971. Macao's Governor, Brigadier Nobre de Carvalho, wrote a private letter to the Overseas' Minister on 17 May 1971 that he was disappointed with his function. ASC, Cx. 63, No. 449, mct. 1, doc. 6-1, ANTT (Portuguese National Archives), Lisbon.

⁶ "Note, very secret, by Alexandre Ribeiro da Cunha, 7 March 1967, p. 1", MU/GM/GNP/022, E.6.1, Cx. 1, DABMNE (Archives of the Portuguese Foreign Ministry), Lisbon.

Taiwan and not to Mainland China, which was a major political embarrassment for local Communists and Guangdong authorities.

At the same time, there was a Macanese nurse, Boaventura Rosário, and his Chinese wife, Tong Kin-fan, which had to flee Macao and run to Europe because he and his wife were accused of performing female abortions. For Chinese women it was acceptable, but for the Portuguese and the Macanese it was a high crime due to the State and the Roman Catholics concordat, which forbid any such practices. In meantime, they had to pay a *mui-tsai*, Leung Lai-choi, who had been for several years a servant of the couple Rosário. Of course, Macao's Governor had to pay compensation using the "assets [of the] couple existing here"⁷ to Leung Lai-choi (Fernandes 2006, 283-284).

Then came the British Consulate and the Hong Kong Immigration Department had to be closed down after they had highly visible demonstrations and had painted all over the buildings and held the British's Consul, Norman Ions, for eight long hours in May. On the 25th of May 1967, both offices were closed forever (*Ibidem*, 285-286).

In the meantime, there was a nightmare that happened between a Portuguese girl, Felicia de Jesus, a 16-year-old, who was pulling down an anti-British poster outside the Flora Building, and was seen by a leftist student, on the 28th of May 1967.⁸ In a matters of minutes, more than 300 leftist students arrived at Felicia's home, and dragged her out into the street to make a public apology.⁹ She was made to kneel on the hard ground and recite Mao's thoughts as leftist students surrounded her and sang Communist songs and chanted Mao's quotations.¹⁰ A few days later,

"By superior order, the girl's parents were forced to take the child to the Communist School and apologize, where they forced her to be on the table to read Mao's thoughts".¹¹

⁷ "Cablegram No. 135, secret, from Governor Nobre de Carvalho to the Minister of Overseas, Joaquim da Silva Cunha, 15 April 1967", AOS/CO/UL-8J, Pt. 2, 9.^a Sbd, fl. 603, ANTT, Lisbon.

⁸ "Macao Girl's Ordeal", *The Hong Kong Tiger Standard*, 28 May 1967, p. 3.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ "Portuguese Private letter written by Cristina Rodrigues Ribeiro from Macao to her cousin Maria Amélia Pitta e Cunha in Lisbon", ASC, Cx. 63, No. 449, met. 3, doc 4-3, ANTT, Lisbon.

At the same time, the private commercial station “Vila Verde” [“Green Village”] became a Maoist propaganda loudspeaker that reached not only, of course, Macao, but also Hong Kong. The British authorities allowed this. The Radio station “Vila Verde” went on to broadcast Communist propaganda from 2 June 1967 to 24 June 1969 (Fernandes 2006, 302).

Then on 16th of June 1967 the corporal Carlos Alberto de Luís Silva was forced to enter the Chinese demonstration. Nonetheless, he went to the Portuguese Garrison, but some of the Chinese demonstrators were following it. Soon after, the Portuguese soldiers attacked the Chinese demonstrators (who fought back) injuring seven Chinese. In the meantime, there was private Júlio de Oliveira Simões, who was detained by the Chinese Communists in Macao. He was then insulted and beaten on the same day. In the end, the soldier of the Portuguese Garrison was released to the Portuguese Public Security Police. This led to some serious concerns about Macao’s future when everybody in the hierarchy of Portuguese and Macanese knew that Mainland China had the upper hand regarding the territory’s prospects.

Then on 19th of June Major Rui Coelho Abrantes was appointed to apologize to the Chinese Communists by the Portuguese Defence Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Luís Mendes, the Chief of Defence Staff, Major Hernâni Ventura. In the meantime, Major Rui Coelho Abrantes imprisoned both of the Portuguese Defence Staff and he wanted to kill the top Communists in Macao. However, Major Hernâni Ventura was able to escape and to go to the Macao’s Governor, Brigadier Nobre de Carvalho, and he was the one who had to make the apologies and to pay a ransom price for the seven-Communists injured in the recent incidents (Fernandes 2006, 286-289).

Then there was the 14th Macao Grand Prix where the organizing committee, which were made up by Macanese, Portuguese, and English, had to disentangle themselves from the Maoist inspired “The Red-May Rebellious Combat Squad of Macao”. According to this group, no car driving or racing should take place in Macao, otherwise they would be taking their “own risk”. However, Teddy Hip, a race-car enthusiast and one of STDm’s major stockholders, offered HKD 100,00 to gamble on his Macao’s casinos. On the other hand, nineteen Communists said that the “Red-May Rebellious Combat Squad of Macao” was a group that did not represent anyone and it was acting in “bad faith”.

Then on June 1968 two Chinese agents of the Portuguese Public Security Police went from Macao to Taipa Islands and they were slapped

and bruised by the workers of the Taipa Residents Association. A few days later, the Governor and the high officers of the Portuguese Public Security Police had a confidential meeting with the Taipa Residents Association and some leading Communists where they set up a document on the obligations that the Macau's Police force could demand from Communist organizations.

The Roman Catholic Bishop, Paulo José Tavares, and the Diocese of Macao were the only two bodies that did not submit to the Communists. The answer why could be given with three narratives. First, due to the fact that the Holy See was deeply anti-Communist. Second, that Roman Catholic Bishop and the Diocese of Macao were totally dependent on the Holy See. Third, the Diocese of Macao was willing to see a very bad relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the "colonial" shaky Portuguese Administrators, from 1967 to 1974 (*Ibidem*, 290-293).

The 1971 the PRC managed to get in the United Nations and in 1972 they got Macao and Hong Kong back

The People's Republic of China had its foreign policy goal to become a United Nations, for a long time. To do this it had to disembark the Republic of China (Formosa/Taiwan) from the United Nations. In 1971, Albania, which was a close ally of Mainland China, proposed a simple majority, instead of the 2/3 majority that was proposed by the Americans. The U.S. State Secretary, William P. Rogers, wrote to the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Rui Patrício, that Portugal should support the American position in the General Assembly, and also the Taiwan Permanent Representative to the UN, Liu Chieh, the *Gaimshuo* of Japan, and the Australia Department of Foreign Affairs.

Both the Portuguese Foreign and Overseas (Colonies) Ministries had to do research because of Macao. The General-Directorate of Political Affairs of the Portuguese Foreign Ministry were in favour of abstention. However, the Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry, a senior diplomatic service, José Calvet de Magalhães, had a different opinion. On the 21 October 1971, the Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry was invited to the Belém Presidential Palace where the President, Américo Tomaz, Prime-Minister, Marcello Caetano, and the Foreign Minister, Rui Patrício, were discussing all the problems that we had with Macao and the "only attitude that can bring us some dividends" (Magalhães 1996, 39) is voting in favour.

Despite what the Secretary-General of the Portuguese Foreign Ministry said, the Foreign Minister's Office prepared a memorandum, which lasted six-long pages, in which the Prime Minister's Office was detailed in every aspect. Regarding Mainland China, it was assumed that the two countries Mainland China and Taiwan were not feasible to the first country, but instead of two countries,

win the good graces of the Beijing Government 'in principle', although our vote in favour will not guarantee us for ever the respect of Mainland China for Portuguese sovereignty over Macao, nor the abandonment by the former of its ideological position on matters of foreign policy, namely, with regard to the Portuguese overseas problem, support and assistance to the liberation movements.¹²

In the meantime, Macao's Governor Brigadier Nobre Carvalho had received Ho Yin, on the 22th of October 1971, who had come from Beijing and Guangzhou with some key contacts. The latter one said to him that, "that Portugal should vote for the Albanian motion, as England is revealing an independent position from the USA".¹³

However, the supposed "allowance" was short lived. Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Premier, gave an interview to a leading Japanese newspaper *The Asahi Shimbun*, right after on 28 October 1971, in which he declared,

Portugal voted for us also. Portugal has colonies in Africa but China supports the national liberation movement of the peoples in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea. Because of this, Portugal may be thinking as follows: We have supported China, so China should not attack us on the colonial question in the U.N. the Security Council. This, however, is something we cannot agree to.¹⁴

By the 9 March 1972, the permanent representative of the Mainland China, Ambassador Huang Hua, wrote to the President Special Committee on the Situation with regard to implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to colonial countries and peoples, Salam A. Salam. Right at the beginning, it says:

¹² "Memorandum prepared by the Foreign Affairs Minister's to the Prime Minister's Office, 24 October 1971, p. 4", DABMNE, S3. E49. P3 / 35262, Lisbon.

¹³ "Secret cablegram from the Macao's Governor to the Overseas Minister, 22 October 1971, p. 2", DABMNE, S3. E49. P3 / 35262, Lisbon.

¹⁴ "Excerpts From Text of Zhou's Interview with Tokyo Editor", *The New York Times*, 9 November 1971, p. 1.

As is known to all, the question of Hong Kong and Macao belong to the category of questions resulting from the series of unequal treaties left over by history, treaties which the imperialists imposed on China. Hong Kong and Macao are part of Chinese territory occupied by the British and Portuguese authorities.¹⁵

On the 6 June 1972 they approved the 24th Committee (Decolonization), despite Sweden, Venezuela and Fiji having serious reservations.

At the opening session of the Macao's Legislature Assembly, General Nobre de Carvalho reiterated that his Portuguese Administration would not tolerate any attitude or actions against the interests of the People's Republic of China and it would do all possible actions that would facilitate useful relations with her (Carvalho 1987), 82). It was a big contradiction between right-wing elements, the Portuguese and Macanese, and left-wing, the Chinese.

Erhard Haubold, the Sydney correspondent of "*Der Tagesspiegel*", a Berlin-based daily newspaper, writing on the 2 April 1974, says that "[a]fter Goa was lost to India and since China has practically taken over control of Macao" (Haubold 1974, 3) it has one colony in Asia, 'Portuguese Timor', and nothing else".

Portugal's regime change and the Macao affair

However, after the 25th of April *coup d'état* in Portugal, everything seemed oddly enough on Macao's Portuguese Administration. The Governor, General Nobre de Carvalho continued for seven months, until the 14th of October 1974. Two Army men, Major Maia Gonçalves and Major Garcia Leandro, came from Lisbon to rearrange everything that was possible. For example, one of them, the former, had to stay in Macao, to replace Coronel Mesquita Borges (Military Commander of the local Portuguese Garrison) due to corruption charges.

The Portuguese language biweekly newspaper, *O Clarim*, which was owned by Macao's Roman Catholic Diocese, had the following in its editorial on 6th of June 1974;

¹⁵ This position was already known since 27 October 1955, when the "4th Centennial Commemoration" was stopped due the Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai, had prohibited. According to the New China News Agency, Portugal had only "administrative powers", while the "sovereign rights" belonged to Mainland China (Fernandes 2008, 206-208).

We cannot ignore, however much we want to hide the fact, that in Macao there are restrictions on our sovereignty, one for one reason, others for another, but all dictated, more or less, by conditions that we cannot change, without provoking reactions that are dangerous and even decisive for our presence. (A.T.R. 1974, 6)

However, the reporter Stewart Dalby, who was in Macao for some time in early October 1974, wrote on *The Financial Times* an article titled “*Macao: No time for changes*” on 9th of October 1974 which said the following,

Since 1966 when the Portuguese effectively agreed to bow out after the Cultural Revolution had spilled over to the colony, Macao has been run by a curious combination of Communist Chinese controlled by Beijing and capitalist Chinese businessmen from Hong Kong. Portugal’s influence is minimal. (Dalby 1974, 1)

Nonetheless, a “confidential memo” from Hong Kong it said, “Beijing of course was satisfied with the situation in which it had exercised a veto over the dictatorial colonial government [of Macao]”.¹⁶

After the Portuguese Administration had imposed a new Governor of Macao, Colonel Garcia Leandro, he was able to accommodate to “local constraints” shortly after he had arrived in Macao. H.D. White, Australian Commissioner to Hong Kong went to visit Macao’s Governor on 15 April 1975, and he heard the following remarks on the part of Colonel Garcia Leandro,

The real representative, he claimed, was one O Cheng-peng, head of the *Nam Kwong* Trading Co., the Macao equivalent of *China Resources* of Hong Kong. It was O, he said, who came forward during the disturbances in Macao at the same time of the Cultural Revolution but the Chinese used him only when serious problems arose.¹⁷

Although the daily Macao Chinese newspaper, *Seng Pou*, said that Colonel Garcia Leandro was doing a good job under the circumstances, but he had almost the same colonial attitude that Portugal had towards Macao for more than four centuries,

¹⁶ “Confidential memo 629 from Hong Kong, 7 June 1974”, in “China – Relations with Macao, 1966-1978”, NAA, A3107/40/64/1 Part 1, p. 106.

¹⁷ “China – Relations with Macao, 1966-1978”, NAA, A1838/3107/40/64/1 Part 1, p. 126.

Politically, the Governor of Macao has unequivocally made his best efforts to gradually change the form of government, in fact colonizing, which has been applied to Macao for centuries.¹⁸

Meanwhile, Macao's Governor, Colonel Garcia Leandro, wrote to Portuguese President General Ramalho Eanes to let him know that "tourists" from Eastern Europe and Cuba were visiting Macao and that he felt he was being threatened with exposure to foreign governments. He accused many Yugoslavs, Polish, Hungarians, Bulgarians, and Czechoslovakians of holding passports for "any espionage activities being carried out against China".¹⁹ Therefore, Colonel Garcia Leandro proposed that the Portuguese Foreign Ministry gave orders to its embassies and consulates in these countries that they should not give "visas" to Macao. In case they gave "visas", they should be communicated to Macao's Portuguese Administration, on 11 May 1977.²⁰ After having received this highly secretive document, President General Ramalho Eanes gave its formal consent to contact with the Portuguese Foreign Ministry in order to rearrange the "visas" application for East European countries and Cuba (*Ibidem*).

However, a senior diplomat of the Australian High Commissioner in Hong Kong, First Secretary M.B. Cascoigne, spoke to the Hong Kong Police Special Branch in charge of inspecting such events in Hong Kong. The latter confirmed that the Hong Kong Government had not been contacted by Macao's Portuguese Administration, but there was very little it could do due to the fact that those were Portuguese problems. He believed, though, that the total tourist numbers were more or less 10 per year and not the amounts that Colonel Garcia Leandro's had said in Macao's Legislative Assembly.²¹

During his political memoirs Coronel Garcia Leandro said that "O Cheng-peng lived very far from the Portuguese Administration, rarely appearing in public and creating, by his absence, a certain charismatic image and a demonstration of power" (Leandro 2011, 244). However, on 29th of September 1978, O Cheng-peng invited for the first time Macao's Governor, Colonel Garcia Leandro, to come to the 28th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, on the National Day of Mainland China. It

¹⁸ "Comments in a few lines", *Seng Pou*, 25 September 1976, p. 1.

¹⁹ "Red Europeans worry Macao", *South China Morning Post*, 7 November 1977, p. 7.

²⁰ "Secret, Macao's Governor, Garcia Leandro, to the President's Office, General Ramalho Eanes, 11 May 1977", in "Macao (1976-1986), PT-PR-APHR-CC-CC029-1967", p. 234.

²¹ "Macao: China Watchers from Eastern Europe", Australian Commission of Hong Kong, 11 November 1997, NAA: A1838, 3107/40/64/1, Part 1, p. 211.

was attended by more than 1,000 invitees.²² From then on, all of Macau's Governors had to attend this function until 1999.

By mid 1978, Colonel Garcia Leandro and O Cheng-peng had started to talk about the Chinese refugees that were coming mainly from Guangdong Province into Macao (*Ibidem*, 250). However, the answer was that they should keep the "gentlemen's agreement" (*Ibidem*) between the two, granting that the Guangdong Foreign Affairs Bureau Agreement of 29th of January 1967 was signed by himself, O Cheng-peng. Nevertheless, in the first few months on the job of Macao's new Governor General Melo Egídio (that is, from February to June 1979), between "50,000 and 70,000 mainland Chinese migrated" (*Ibidem*) illegally to Macao, "which structurally altered the whole life" (*Ibidem*).

In 17 September 1980, *Nam Kwong's* Chairman, O Cheng-peng, the multimillionaire Ho Yin, and his private secretary, Roque Choi, came to Lisbon due to the fact that the Portuguese economy was opening up and the Chinese were interested in making some investments. They had several meetings in Lisbon, including an audience with the Portuguese President, General Ramalho Eanes, in the Presidential Belém Palace (Nam Kwong 1989, 64). After this they opened a Branch of *Nam Kwong* Trading Company in Lisbon who lasted to 2000, when they moved to Madrid and to Brasília, the capital of Brazil, because it had a greater impact on European and Latin America trade.

Meanwhile, in October 1982, the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office were in the process of starting negotiations over Hong Kong to hand it over to the People's Republic of China. In order to do this, its research department wrote down a confidential on "Macao". It dealt with Portuguese constitutional principles, Macao's Organic Statute (mini-constitution) and other political and economic affairs, such as the following,

Chinese influence over the Government of Macao reached its height following riots of 1966 inspired by the Cultural Revolution, and the acceptance by the Governor of a series of humiliating demands. [...] But the Macao Government takes care of consul unofficial Chinese representatives, or sound them out indirectly, on important issues. China's ability to influence events in Macao remains great.²³

²² "Sir Murray makes history", *The South China Morning Post*, 1 October 1978, p. 7; "Sir Murray attends China National Day Party", *The Hong Kong Standard*, 1 October 1978, p. 1.

²³ "Confidential – Macao": Research Department Note No. 22/82, Lesley A. Dean, Far Eastern Section, October 1982, UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, National Archives of Australia, hereafter NAA: A3626/BJ801/13/3 Part 1, pp. 152-151.

For the time being, Dong Dafei, the Deputy Foreign Minister, came to Lisbon after having visited Angola to deal with Chinese interests in that part of Lusophone Africa, since both countries established relations only on 12th of January 1983. While in the Portuguese capital he took the initiative to approach the Portuguese Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Paulo Marques. During the lunch at the Chinese Embassy in Lisbon, on 16th of May 1983, Dong informed Marques that the situation in Macao was reasonable, but regarding Hong Kong there seemed to be various difficulties. However, Macao's Governor, Vice-Admiral Almeida e Costa, gave an interview to a right-wing newspaper in Lisbon, *O Dia*, on the 19 May 1983, in which he said,

I am authorized by the Portuguese President to emphasize and confirm that the visit of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to Portugal has nothing to do with Macao, nor were matters related to the territory discussed, which allows us to conclude that the whole issue is unchanged as until now.²⁴

This has instead forced the Portuguese President, General Ramalho Eanes, to write to Macao's Governor, Vice-Admiral Almeida e Costa, giving him the full report of Paulo Marques,

considered satisfactory the current situation on the territory [Macao], which seemed adequate to the reality and interests of both parties, underlining its economic and commercial roles. In contrast to this assessment, the Deputy Minister referred to the situation in Hong Kong that would face some difficulties, although he was led to believe that the level of relations between London and Beijing would allow them to overcome them with dignity.²⁵

During the audience that the Portuguese President, General Ramalho Eanes, gave to the Ambassador of China in Lisbon, Lu Jixin, on the 22nd of May 1984, the latter passed on a written reply by the Chinese Government about the *Nam Kwong* Trading Company. Regarding who were the main delegates of Mainland China, it said,

²⁴ "Encontro de Eanes com o ministro chinês: Governador de Macau esclarece diálogo de Lisboa", *O Dia*, 19 May 1983, p. 12.

²⁵ "The Acting Chief Staff to the Portuguese President, General Ramalho Eanes, to the Macao's Governor, Vice-Admiral Almeida e Costa, on confidential, 23 May 1983", PT/PR/AHPR/CC/CC0209/1697, Lisbon.

The Chinese government reaffirms that the General Manager of the firm *Nam Kwong* [O Cheng-peng,] is the representative of the Chinese government in Macau. *Nam Kwong* is the agent body of the Chinese government in the territory.²⁶

Only after the Portuguese Governor and the General Manager of the firm *Nam Kwong* could not agree they would go up further, and they would have at the Ambassadorial level – namely the Chinese Embassy in Lisbon and talk to different departments, the President, the Premier, and the Foreign Minister in Portugal. The Portuguese President, General Ramalho Eanes, was thankful to him because it had clarified the Chinese overall policy towards the Macao. Therefore, it was “immediately brought to the attention of the Governor”, Vice-Admiral Almeida e Costa, on the 22nd of June 1984.

The Foreign Ministers of both countries, China and Portugal had a joint meeting at the UN General Assembly on 25 November 1985. The Chinese Foreign Minister, Wu Xueqian, began to express the “wish” of the President of the People’s Republic of China to meet the Portuguese President, General Ramalho Eanes, on the occasion of their visit to New York in October, to attend the 40th anniversary of the United Nations.²⁷ After a general exchange of views regarding the US, the USSR, economic changes in China, replacement of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and Taiwan, according to Chinese Foreign Minister, Wu Xueqian, he considered that there were developments favourable to the internal unity of the CPC, the actions towards the coming Portuguese elections, and a conversation on their views on Macao.

The Director of *Xinhua* Press Agency of the Hong Kong, Xu Jiatur, had a banquet in the private residence of *Nam Kwong*’s Board President, O Cheng-peng, and the second in line of the political affairs of *Nam Kwong*, Li Iau-kei. Though, O Meng-wa used to be Director of *Nam Kwong* he had become the Deputy Director of *Xinhua* of Hong Kong, on the 3 January 1986. Stanley Ho, Ma Man-kei, Chui Tak-kei and Roque Choi were present. In addition to Governor Vice-Admiral Almeida e Costa and his wife, the Commander of

²⁶ “Cablegram No. 9, personal and secret, from the President, General Ramalho Eanes, to the Macao’s Governor, Vice-Admiral Almeida e Costa, 22 June 1984, p. 1”, Macao (19-8-1976 to 25-1-1986), PT/PR/AHPR/CC/CC0209/1697, Lisbon.

²⁷ “A secret note by the Portuguese Foreign Ministry Matos Proença, General-Director of Political Affairs, of the ‘meeting of the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Jaime Gama, with his counterpart, at his request, at the headquarters of the United Nations, p. 1”, Macao (19-8-1976 to 25-1-1986), Reference Code PT/PR/AHPR/CC/CC0209/1697, Lisbon.

the Security Forces, Colonel Amaral de Freitas, and the Chief of Staff of the Governor's Office, Seixas Serras, were also present.²⁸

In the meantime, the Australian Consul General in Hong Kong and Macao, P.A. Wensley, went to Macao to have discussions with leading Portuguese Administrators and the *Nam Kwong's* Director of Foreign Affairs on 5 May 1986. The first one to meet was the Macao's Secretary of Administration, Maria Adelina de Sá Carvalho. She told Wensley that it "was not satisfactory working in a lame-duck administration: the Portuguese no longer had full authority, the period of colonial administration had ended, yet the Chinese were not ready to take over".²⁹

After coming to an end with Macao's Secretary of Administration, she followed up the *Nam Kwong's* Director of Foreign Affairs Office, Tang Xingxu. He was a Mainlander Chinese who had been in Macao for two years. According to him, the local economy was doing just fine, but he showed his great interest in Australian investments in Macao. However, when it came to major political matters he showed no interest at all. As she said he "was not particularly loquacious when it came to discussing details of the political agenda".³⁰ After finishing with the *Nam Kwong's* Director of Foreign Affairs Office, he went to see the Macao's Secretary for Social Affairs, Roque Martins. Right away the matter of "sovereignty" had not been an issue since the 1979 establishment of diplomatic relations because Portugal had signed an agreement on Macao's future, which envisaged Taiwan and the Soviet Union as the main targets of the Mainland China's policy. Nevertheless, Roque Martins acknowledged "that the Communist Party of China had made much greater inroads into Macao than it had in Hong Kong".³¹ The last person to be interviewed was the Acting Governor and Secretary for Security Affairs, Colonel Amaral de Freitas. He said that

²⁸ "Cablegram No. 2/86/6 to the Presidency of the Republic, General Ramalho Eanes, by the Chief of Staff of the Governor of Macao, Seixas Serras, 4 January 1986", Macao (19-8-1976 to 25-1-1986), Reference Code PT/PR/AHPR/CC/CC0209/1697, Lisbon.

²⁹ "Confidential Record of Conversation between the Australian Consul General in Hong Kong and Macao, P.A. Wensly, and the Macao's Secretary of Administration, Maria Adelina de Sá Carvalho", NAA, A7326, BJ801/13/3 PART 1, p. 288.

³⁰ "Confidential Record of Conversation between the Australian Consul General in Hong Kong and Macao, P.A. Wensly, and the *Nam Kwong's* Director of Foreign Affairs, Tang Xingxu", NAA, A7326, BJ801/13/3 PART 1, p. 284.

³¹ "Confidential Record of Conversation between the Australian Consul General in Hong Kong and Macao, P.A. Wensly, and the Macao's Secretary for Social Affairs, Roque Martins", NAA, A7326, BJ801/13/3 PART 1, p. 283.

the Portuguese Administration had “no benefits for Portugal staying in Macao”.³²

Less than eight months of Sino-Portuguese they decided to launch Macao’s future in Beijing. In less than four rounds, they agreed that the Portuguese Administration would be running Macao’s until the handover to Mainland China on the 20th of December 1999. Unlike the Sino-English Joint Declaration, the Portuguese one provided a memorandum for the Portuguese “passports”. The Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration was signed in 23 April 1987 in Beijing. However, the Macanese side of it were invited by the Chinese side such as the Speaker of Macao’s Legislative Assembly, Carlos d’Assumpção; the Secretaries-Adjunct of the Portuguese Administration; and even the Roman Catholic Bishop of Macao, Arquimínio Rodrigues da Costa (Jornal Ou Mun 1987, 44-45, 65).

Nonetheless, in less than five-months *Nam Kwong* Trading Company became Chinese press agency *Xinhua* Macao’s branch on the 21st of September 1987. According to the monthly magazine *Macau*, it was credited before the Portuguese Foreign Ministry as the “representative of the diplomatic interests of the People’s Republic of China in this territory under the Portuguese Administration”.³³ However, the Head of the Bureau of *Xinhua* Press Agency was Zhou Ding, who has for two years been the Vice-President of the Board of Directors of *Nam Kwong’s* Trading Company. The hierarchy of *Nam Kwong* Trading Company and especially President O Cheng-peng became the counsellors of *Xinhua*. Indeed, during the Sino-Portuguese joint negotiations in Beijing, O Chen-peng had been very forthcoming about Portuguese “colonialism” and the decision by the Portuguese President, Mário Soares, to delay the Portuguese Administration handover either to 2007, after four-hundred-and-fifty-years of Portuguese presence, or 2057, after five-hundred-years of Portuguese presence, which were completely opposed by the Chinese side (Fernandes 2000, 416-417).

³² “Restricted Record of Conversation between the Australian Consul General in Hong Kong and Macao, P.A. Wensly, and the Acting Governor and Secretary for Security Affairs, Colonel Amaral de Freitas”, NAA A7326, BJ801/13/3 PART 1, p. 282.

³³ “Actual: Agência Nova China abriu delegação em Macau”. *Macau* [澳門], no. 5, September 1987, pp. 5 and 6.

The Tiananmen's upheavals

More than 150.000 Chinese held a big demonstration against the massacre of Tiananmen Square in Macao on 6 June 1989. The representatives of the 150,000 protesters submitted a letter of protest to the delegation of Macao of the *Xinhua* Press Agency to the sound of the slogans “*End the slaughter*” and “*Down with the murderers Li Peng, Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkung*” (Fernandes 2000, 449). However, the demonstrators did not pass beyond the Barrier Gate, the land border between Macao and Mainland China, for fear that the soldiers of the People's Liberation Army will open fire.

The Portuguese Central Government in Lisbon and the Macao's Portuguese Administration were very concerned about the evolution of Chinese policy, but they expect to maintain the precarious situation in Macao as it was enshrined in Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration.

Three-months had passed since the Tiananmen Square crackdown, when on 4 and 8th of October 1989, the Portuguese's Governor, Carlos Melancia, went to Beijing and held meetings with those responsible for the Tiananmen massacre. The Chinese decision makers highly praised the Portuguese cooperation and support for “one country, two systems” and contrasted it with the attitude of the United Kingdom. He was received by the Premier, Li Peng; Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs at the State Council, Ji Pengfei; and the Deputy of Foreign Ministry, Zhou Nan. To defend himself against accusations that he was in agreement with people responsible for a bloodbath, Governor Melancia makes the following comment,

Portugal understood that it should not suspend contacts with the People's Republic of China, because the Macao problem is, by far, more important to us. I would like, however, to remind you that after Portugal had taken this position, Great Britain would end up resuming contacts with Mainland China, and then the United States of America itself. (Duarte 1990), 5)

The illegal Chinese refugees from Guangdong into Macao in 1989 and 1990

The Portuguese Public Security Police had decided to tackle the problem of illegal Chinese immigration on the 9th of September 1989. The process consisted of registering undocumented minors who could prove that they belonged to one of the groups or situation listed below. First, with parents who hold an Identity Document (ID) issued by the Portuguese Administration. Second, to have been born in Macao and one of the parents

having an ID issued by the Portuguese Administration. Third, being born in Macao and having a family member in Macao with the ID issued by the Portuguese Administration.

On the 9th of September 1989, an official announcement was issued for the following day's "*Operation Dragon*", for which everything was already prepared, since the Portuguese Public Security Police (thanks to a previous screening) already knew how many minors would register. However, problems began to appear with large groups of illegal people, who, convinced that an amnesty was going to be enacted, increasingly swelled the already large number of people who were waiting for their turn to come.

As the operation was aimed at registering 4,000 minors and the structure set up only took into account that number plus the accompanying family members, there was a need to resort to another service points in addition to requesting the collaboration of other public entities to support the Macao Social Welfare Institute and the Red Cross, which provided and distributed bread and milk (mainly for children). "After the assessment and selection of the registered people, the identity card was awarded to around 4,500 people" (Chan 2020, 14).

Illegal immigrants gathered in front of the Macao Government Palace shortly after the announcement on 27 March 1990 that the Portuguese Public Security Police were going to start legalizing the undocumented parents of around 4,500 undocumented minors. The Portuguese Public Security Police dispersed the crowd. The following day, the concentration of illegal immigrants in front of the Government Palace increased again and, at a certain point, reached many thousands of people.

The process of granting Police Identification Cards to the parents of legalized students in 1989 covered nearly 4,200 undocumented parents residing in Macao. On 28 March 1990, the crowd was estimated to be between 30 and 40,000 people. In the final scheme 32,779 were legalized (Chan 2020, 23), in clear contradiction of Guangdong's Foreign Affairs Bureau and O Cheng-peng requirements when they signed the deal.

The highly controversial Portuguese statue of Ferreira do Amaral

According to the political memoir of Macao's last Portuguese Governor, General Rocha Vieira, right at the beginning of his term came up the divisive statue of Governor Ferreira do Amaral, who was assassinated by the Chinese on the 22nd of August 1849 (Silva 2002, 303-304).

In 1940, when China was occupied by Imperial Japanese Armed Forces they granted the Portuguese Administration to a chance to apply for a highly contentious statue of Macao's Governor, Ferreira do Amaral, to bring out the inconsistency between the two communities, China and Portugal. Although the Portuguese Administration wanted the contentious bronze statue of Ferreira do Amaral to be near the Border Gate checkpoint in the area of northern Macao on its border with Mainland China, instead the Imperial Japanese Armed Forces wanted the Ferreira do Amaral's statue to be close to the façade of Ferreira do Amaral's Roundabout, in front of the Bank of China and Lisbon Hotel.

The Deputy Director of the State Council for Hong Kong and Macao Affairs, Lu Ping, wanted to tear it down "since it is a colonialist symbol" (Vieira 2010, 126) by the 28th of June 1990. After two-years and a few months, on 28th of October 1992, the controversial statue of Governor Ferreira do Amaral came down and was shipped to Portugal (*Ibidem*, 125).

Still, the Governor referred to both *Xinhua* Press Agency's Directors, Guo Dungpo, who became a good friend, from 1990 and 1995, and then Wang Qiren "was always respectful from side to side, to maintain the negotiations and be always correct", from 1995 to 1999 (*Ibidem*, 235). As Macao's Governor, General Rocha Vieira, always said the weak Portuguese Administration had always to look up to the *Nam Kwong* Trading Company and the *Xinhua* Press Agency due to the fact they knew everything, be it political, economic, financial, and cultural affairs, and also for having been "shadow government" of Macao or has he says "Macao was a fragile reality and very dependent on [Mainland] China" (*Ibidem*, 237).

Conclusion

The outcome from the stages of GPCR in Macao was such a frail Portuguese Administration that it lasted only until the 19th of December 1999. Macao's Portuguese Administration had to submit to the *Nam Kwong* Trading Company, and later in 1987 to the *Xinhua* Press Agency. However, the hierarchy of *Xinhua* Press Agency all came through the *Nam Kwong* Trading Company since 1949. It is clear that the Portuguese side lost its precarious Portuguese Administration in 1966 and since then it was all in the hands of the *Nam Kwong* Trading Company.

One writer, Brantley Womack, says absolutely nothing about Macao, due that they are talking about Vietnam and China for the last three millennia.

However, it could have written a small part of Chinese foreign policy regarding Macao for the last four-and-fifty years and probably see what they have in common or disagreements, for Vietnam and Macao. Frank Pfetsch was written on European common policies. Portugal is a small state with very insignificant political inputs and outputs at the European politics, and, also, at the Macao question from 1949 to 1999. No foreign countries have spoken about this, especially the British.

This was known by both Portuguese key decision makers, be it the authoritarian right-wing government that lasted until 1974 or the democratic Portuguese government after the 1974 revolution. Still, the same type of authoritarian Chinese regime was always present. From 1949 to 1987 it had *Nam Kwong* Trading Company, then it was replaced by the *Xinhua* Press Agency which made no changes in the political outcomes to be a “shadow government” of the Portuguese Administrators until the final takeover in 1999.

Therefore, the *Nam Kwong* Trading Company was the key element for what the Communist Party of China wanted for Macao in a highly dominated and frail Portuguese Administration. The Chinese decision makers, whether the ones at the Central Government or at the Guangdong level, wanted a rather passive Portuguese administration and thus constantly set the very same shameful conditions that the feeble Portuguese Administration had to endure during these years.

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