

Macao and Hong Kong, Convergence or Divergence?

The 2014 Retirement Package Bill Protest and Macao's Governance Crisis

ABSTRACT

By examining the origins of Macao's 2014 protest against the Retirement Package Bill, this paper intends to answer whether Macao is encountering a governance crisis like Hong Kong's. Through a careful comparison, it concludes that Macao and Hong Kong are unlikely to follow the same political development trajectory, as there are considerable differences in the level of social mobilization and governmental coercive capacity between the two cities.

KEYWORDS: Macao, Hong Kong, political stability, governance crisis, national identity

INTRODUCTION

Macao and Hong Kong, though both operate under One Country, Two Systems regimes since their handover to China, are cities characterized by distinctive political cultures and state–society relations. In Hong Kong, antagonism between the public and the Special Administrative Region (SAR) government has been continuously rising since the 2003 demonstration against the National Security Law (Article 23). With 500,000 participants, it was the largest protest since 1997.¹ Since then, Hong Kong has become a “city of protest”; more than 40,000 protests took place there up to the end of 2011.² Furthermore, Hong Kong's citizens have increasingly shown their

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1. Kin-man Chan, “Civil Society and the Democracy Movement in Hong Kong: Mass Mobilization with Limited Organizational Capacity,” *Korea Observer* 36.1 (2005): 167–82.

2. Chor-yung Cheung, “Hong Kong's Systemic Crisis of Governance and the Revolt of the ‘Post-80s’ Youth: The Anti-Express Rail Campaign,” in *New Trends of Political Participation in Hong Kong*,

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disdain for central-government interventions in local governance and their local democratization process. This, in turn, led to further deterioration in the legitimacy of Hong Kong's SAR government, eventually triggering the Umbrella Movement in 2014.

In contrast, Macao is a harmonious city. As the only city in China where gambling is legal, Macao has benefited from the prosperity garnered by the casinos. Gambling revenue in the city was US\$ 45 billion in 2013, making Macao the world's fourth-richest territory per person. The city's gambling industry is seven times the size of Las Vegas's.³ Some studies have observed that Macao citizens were politically apathetic and had little interest in political participation.⁴ As the city's economic development soared, it seemed that the local residents had no reason to complain even though they lack a democratic system.

However, the peace broke in 2014. On May 25, just a few months before the Umbrella Movement, around 20,000 citizens assembled in front of the Macao Legislative Assembly to demand revocation of the Retirement Package Bill (RPB), which they suspected of initiating serious benefits transfers. There are two reasons why the anti-RPB protest provides a unique opportunity to explore the dynamics of contemporary Macao politics. First, the protest is the largest example of collective action since Macao was returned to China by Portugal in 1999. This makes the incident comparable to Hong Kong's 2003 Oppose Article 23 protest, which constituted a clear sign of governance crisis. If Macao's citizens are not traditionally interested in politics, how can we explain the occurrence of this protest on such a large scale? Second, though differences exist with regard to their Basic Laws, Hong Kong and Macao operate within political systems structured by similar ideologies, that is,

ed. Joseph Y. S. Cheng, 417–48 (Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong, 2011); Daniel Garrett and Wing-chung Ho, "Hong Kong at the Brink: Emerging Forms of Political Participation in the New Social Movement," in *New Trends of Political Participation in Hong Kong*, ed. Joseph Y. S. Cheng, 347–84 (Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, 2014).

3. Charles Riley, "Macao's Gambling Industry Dwarfs Vegas," *CNN Money*, January 6, 2014, <<http://money.cnn.com/2014/01/06/news/macau-casino-gambling/>>; Angela Monaghan, "China's Gambling Capital Macao Is World's Fourth-Richest Territory," *The Guardian*, July 2, 2014, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/02/macau-china-gambling-capital-fourth-richest-in-world-per-capita>>, accessed April 4, 2017.

4. Herbert S. Yee, *Macao in Transition: From Colony to Autonomous Region* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 136; Herbert S. Yee, Bo-long Liu, and Tak-wing Ngo, "Macao's Mass Political Culture," *Asian Journal of Public Administration* 15.2 (1993): 177–200.

guided by the central Chinese government.⁵ Macao faces dilemmas similar to those faced by Hong Kong with regard to a lack of government legitimacy and institutional defects in democratic representation. The anti-RPB protest raises the question of Macao's political stability. Will it follow Hong Kong's path and become another city of protest?

This paper argues that the anti-RPB protest was the political consequence of two structural changes. The first was political: a regime change from a corporatist system to a subnational authoritarian regime. The second change was the emergence of post-materialism in the younger generation. This type of socioeconomic change has had a profound influence on political participation. Through a careful comparison with the case of Hong Kong, I conclude that Macao is unlikely to follow the same path because of significant divergences in the level of social mobilization and governmental coercive capacity. The paper proceeds as follows. The first section describes the context of the anti-RPB protest. The next two sections discuss structural changes in the political and socioeconomic systems in Macao since 1999. The fourth section considers the differences between Macao and Hong Kong with regard to factors that affect political stability. Conclusions follow in the fifth section.

THE 2014 ANTI-RPB PROTEST

According to the draft bill, the purpose of the RPB was to establish a fair and reasonable retirement security system for chief executives and heads of government departments. As it stood, the relevant regulations did not contain clear legal provisions, even though the sovereignty of Macao had changed over a decade earlier.⁶ The most controversial articles addressed regulations on criminal jurisdictional immunity and monthly allowance. Article 4 authorized criminal jurisdictional immunity for the chief executive while in office.

5. Anthony Bing Leung Cheung, "Executive-Led Governance or Executive Power 'Hollowed-out': The Political Quagmire of Hong Kong," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 15.1 (2007): 17–38; Yu Wang, ed., *Xiaoweiyun Lun Gang'ao Zhengzhi Tizhi* [Xiao Weiyun's Essays on Political Institution in Hong Kong and Macao] (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 2015).

6. In the RPB, "head of the government department" refers to the senior government officials who are endorsed by the chief executive and appointed by the central government. Currently, this definition applies to 10 government officials: the five secretaries in various realms, the head of the Commission Against Corruption, the head of customs, the auditor general, the police chief, and the chief procurator.

Article 5 provided chief executives who retired from office with a monthly allowance equal to 70% of monthly salary. This quasi-pension was to be suspended only when the chief executive began a new career in the private sector. Thus, in theory, this is a lifelong allowance.⁷

Macao citizens are quite entitled to question the reasonableness of the RPB. The chief executive's monthly salary is MOP 269,725 (US\$ 33,738), which is a considerable income for a government leader, even after a cross-national comparison.⁸ If the RPB is intended to compensate the opportunity cost of the chief executive's tenure, this has already been accomplished by a healthy salary. What, then, is the justification for paying an ex-government official from public tax revenues? The article about criminal jurisdictional immunity reflects public fury over official corruption. Fighting corruption was a useful strategy for Edmund Ho, Macao's first SAR chief executive, in building his reputation and government legitimacy.⁹ Such efforts largely failed when the Ao Man Long case exposed the city's corruption in 2006.¹⁰ Ao was the secretary of transport and public works before he was arrested. His estimated illegal income totaled MOP 800 million (US\$ 100 million). With such a high-ranking official involved in this crime, the public's faith in government officials was shaken. Many citizens now believe that the criminal jurisdictional immunity article represents acquiescence to corruption, as the legal system can now choose to turn a blind eye.

Even though Macao society also holds counterviews on the aforementioned articles, the RPB was planned for a vote at the legislative assembly on May 27, 2014. The Macao legislative assembly now has 33 members, chosen via three different methods. Of these 33 members, 14 were chosen through direct election. A functional constituency elected another 12

7. Draft articles can be found on the Macao Legislative Assembly website, <http://www.al.gov.mo/proposta/chefe/Proposta_cn0512.pdf>, accessed June 2, 2016.

8. For information on the monthly salary of the Macao SAR chief executive, see <http://bo.io.gov.mo/bo/i/2014/04/lei02_cn.asp>; for a cross-national comparison of government leaders' pay, see <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/chinese/hc/sub_leg/sc55/papers/sc550530cb2-2262-1-ec.pdf>, accessed June 2, 2016.

9. Newman M. K. Lam, "Aomen Gonggong Xingzheng Gaige de Tiaozhan he Celue" [Challenges and Strategies in Macao's Public Administration Reform], *Xingzheng* [Administration] 18.68 (2005): 413–33; Bill Kwok Ping Chou, "Legitimacy-Building and Public Sector Reform in Macao: Administrative Measures to Address Political Problems," *China: An International Journal* 10.3 (2012): 133–48.

10. See the report by the *Wall Street Journal*, <<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303830204577445361095752908>>, accessed June 2, 2016.

members via indirect election. The chief executive appointed the last seven members. The latter two selection methods shield over half of the parliamentary members from electoral competition. These 19 members are from the pro-establishment camp, almost always lining up with the SAR government. Thus, it was highly likely that the RPB would pass.

To pressure the SAR government into withdrawing the bill, Macau Conscience, an active local online pressure group, posted an event on Facebook on May 20, calling for an offline protest five days later.¹¹ Macau Conscience represents a new kind of political mobilization force in Macao. The organization is leaderless; its structure is horizontal rather than hierarchical. As a result, Macau Conscience relies heavily on the Internet for propaganda and event recruitment. But its most salient feature is its preference for unconventional political participation, such as protests, demonstrations, and assemblies. While these activities are normal in democratic regimes, they are considered controversial and a threat to political stability in the context of Macao's political culture.

With this in mind, the expected number of participants for the organization's May event was merely 1,000.¹² On May 25, however, 20,000 citizens assembled on the lawn in front of the legislative assembly.¹³ Various media reports noticed that the primary participants were young people, the so-called Post-80s and Post-90s generation. Ng Kuok Cheong, a local pro-democracy legislative member, explained: "It is the awakening of political awareness of Macao's young well-educated generation."¹⁴ The SAR government clearly felt pressure from the protest. The next day, a press release from the chief executive's office announced that Chui Sai On, the chief executive, had already made a request to suspend the policy agenda and that the legislative assembly would vote to agree or disagree with this move. Moreover, the controversial articles would be revised before the next vote.¹⁵

11. Facebook, <<https://www.facebook.com/events/584951708284794/>>, accessed June 2, 2016.

12. Kwok Ping Chou, "Social Grievances and Institutional Defects behind Macao's Retirement Package Bill," *Hong Kong Economic Journal Monthly* 7 (2014): 74-76.

13. *South China Morning Post*, <<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1519928/hundreds-surround-macao-legislature-protest-retirement-package-bill>>, accessed June 2, 2016.

14. Video interview of Ng Kuok Cheong, <<http://www.inmediahk.net/node/1023209>>, accessed June 2, 2016.

15. Macao SAR Government Information Bureau, <<http://www.gcs.gov.mo/showNews.php?DataUcn=78857>>, accessed June 2, 2016.

This announcement, however, failed to appease the public. What they sought was revocation, not small revisions. As a counter to the government's response, Macau Conscience launched a second protest on May 27. Though the scale was smaller than the first one, there were still 7,000 protesters standing outside the legislative assembly when the members sitting inside voted unanimously to stop the law from passing. The two large-scale protests eventually forced the SAR government to withdraw the RPB on May 29. Chui Sai On made a speech from government headquarters that day saying, "We need to listen to people's opinions in order to narrow the difference and form a consensus [on RPB]." He also emphasized that, "Though I am fat, I don't intend to fatten myself [through the RPB]."¹⁶

FROM CORPORATISM TO A SUBNATIONAL AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

Political Reasons for the Anti-RPB Protest

Why did the SAR government initially not notice the extent of objection to the RPB? Indeed, even the former Portuguese government would not have risked launching a controversial bill like the RPB. Macao's existing institutions under Portuguese rule known as associations had, following the hand-over, clearly lost some of their capacity for conflict mediation.

The scholarly literature describes Macao's political system as corporatism.¹⁷ Corporatism, in Schmitter's definition, is

system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports.¹⁸

As a useful conceptual tool, corporatism captures the reality that associations were the most important political actors in Macao during the Portuguese era.

16. See the video record from Teledifusão de Macau, <http://www.tdm.com.mo/c_video/play_video.php?id=17838>, accessed June 2, 2016.

17. Sheng Hua Lou, *Zhuanxing Shiqi Aomen Shetuan Yanjiu—Duoyuan Shehui Zhong Fatuan Zhuyi Tizhi Jiexi* [Associations in Transitional Macao: Corporatism in a Pluralistic Society] (Guangdong: Guangzhou People's Publishing House, 2004).

18. Philippe C. Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?" *Review of Politics* 36.1 (1974): 85–131.

Three kinds of functions are served by associations. The first is the provision of public goods. This is particularly relevant because the Portuguese were hesitant to invest in public goods like schools and hospitals. Associations largely replaced the colonial government as the supplier of education and medical services. For example, the Kiang Wu Hospital, the first local hospital, was established in 1871 by a charity now registered as the Kiang Wu Hospital Charitable Association. In the early 2000s, only 18.5% of all educational institutions (a total of 124) were public schools; 22% of them are still managed by associations.¹⁹ Even now that government expenditure on public goods has increased, associations remain an indispensable auxiliary source of funds for these needs.

The second function is political mobilization. In democratic regimes, elections take place in a competition between political parties. In the case of Macao, the protagonists are essentially different associations, since political parties have never existed. In direct elections, candidates are usually endorsed and supported by specific associations. As a result, winners usually come from associations that have abundant resources or the capacity to mobilize supporters to vote. Take the 2013 election (Table 1) as an example. The winners of the direct election, Wong Kit Cheng, Ho Ion Sang, and Kwan Tsui Hang, came from well-established peak associations (considered by many the sole representatives of sectoral interests) like the Macao Federation of Trade Unions (FTU), General Union of Neighborhood Associations (GNA), and Women's Association of Macau (WAM). Similarly, Leong On Kei, Chan Melinda Mei Yi, Chan Meng Kam, and Zheng Anting were either casino owners or had close affiliations with the gambling industry. Such profitable businesses offer candidates the capacity to mobilize during elections. This is the reason some scholars called this trend "casino politics."²⁰ Particular social groups, such as civil servants, middle-class citizens, or pro-democracy voters, support the remaining elected members. In indirect elections, peak associations decisively determine the result, as members are elected

19. Sheng Hua Lou, Guan Jin Pan, and Lin Lin Zhao, *Zizhi yu Tazhi—Aomen de Xingzheng Sifa yu Shetuan (1553–1999)* [Autonomy and Heteronomy: Administration, Jurisdiction and Societies in Macau (1553–1999)] (Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2013), 347.

20. Shiu Hing Lo, "Casino Politics, Organized Crime and the Post-Colonial State in Macau," *Journal of Contemporary China* 14.43 (2005): 207–24; Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo and Eric King-Man Chong, "Casino Interests, Fujian Tongxianghui and Electoral Politics in Macao," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 46.2 (2016): 286–303.

TABLE 1. Legislative Assembly Members and Their Affiliations

Appointed members (affiliation)	
Tsui Wai Kwan (MCC)	Fong Chi Keong (MCC)
Lau Veng Seng (MCC)	Vong Hin Fai (no clear affiliation)
Tong lo Cheng (no clear affiliation)	Sio Chi Wai (MCC)
Ma Chi Seng (MCC)	
Indirectly elected members (affiliation)	
Ho Iat Seng (MCC)	Lam Heong Sang (FTU)
Chui Sai Cheong (MCC)	Kou Hoi In (MCC)
Leonel Alberto Alves (MCC)	Cheung Lup Kwan Vitor (MCC)
Chan Chak Mo (MCC)	Cheang Chi Keong (MCC)
Chan Iek Lap (Macao Chinese Medical Association)	Chan Hong (CEA)
Lei Cheng I (FTU)	Chui Sai Peng Jose (MCC)
Directly elected members (affiliation)	
Kwan Tsui Hang (FTU)	Ng Kuok Cheong (New Macau Association)
Au Kam San (New Macau Association)	José Maria Pereira Coutinho (Macao Civil Servants' Union)
Leong On Kei (Aliança para Desenvolvimento de Macau)	Chan Meng Kam (ACUM)
Mak Soi Kun (Uniao de Macau-Guangdong)	Ho Ion Sang (GNA)
Chan Melinda Mei Yi (Aliança Pr'a Mudanca)	Leong Veng Chai (Macao Civil Servants' Union)
Zheng Anting (Uniao de Macau-Guangdong)	Si Ka Lon (MCC, ACUM)
Wong Kit Cheng (WAM)	Song Pek Kei (ACUM)

SOURCE: Bill Kwok Ping Chou, "Politics and Social Organisations in Macao: A Historical Institutional Analysis," *China: An International Journal* 13.1 (2015): 22–42.

NOTE: ACUM = Associação dos Cidadãos Unidos de Macau; CEA = Chinese Educators' Association of Macau; FTU = Macao Federation of Trade Unions; GNA = General Union of Neighborhood Associations; MCC = Macao Chamber of Commerce; WAM = Women's Association of Macau.

by the association, and not by individuals.²¹ Of the 12 current members, eight have affiliations with the Macao Chamber of Commerce (MCC), the most influential and oldest association in Macao, founded in 1912.

21. By seats in the legislative assembly, the five peak associations in Macao are MCC, FTU, GNA, CEA (Chinese Educators' Association of Macau), and WAM.

The third function, as described under corporatism, is interest representation. Because institutional channels such as elections, and forms of democratic deliberation and public participation for policy preferences are either nonexistent or restricted, the Portuguese government had a great deal of difficulty receiving feedback from society and had to rely on public opinion as collected by the peak associations. The latter, in return, usually defended the interests of Chinese society through negotiation and consensus-building with the Portuguese government on related policy issues.²²

In summary, the political stability of Macao before 1999 largely depended on how well peak associations were able to serve as middlemen. The Portuguese government would not have been able to govern without the peak associations, given its weak legitimacy and poor capacity for social control. On the other hand, for the majority of Chinese residents in Macao, associations were a source of livelihood and could function as a spokesperson for their interests, in exchange for acquiescence to the status quo. Throughout the twentieth century, the tiny colony saw a mere 11 disturbances.²³ It is fair to say that associations were remarkably successful at mediating conflict between the colonial government and Macao society. But the intermediary role they once played has deteriorated with the change in regime.

With respect to sovereignty, the handover of Macao was a process of decolonization. However, its return to China did not change the form of government but only turned it into a subnational authoritarian regime. Article 45 in Macao's Basic Law says:

The Chief Executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region shall be the head of the Macao Special Administrative Region and shall represent the Region. The Chief Executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region shall be accountable to the Central People's Government and the Macao Special Administrative Region in accordance with the provisions of this Law.²⁴

The foundation of power for Macao's chief executive thus derived from the central government and from support from local political coalitions. While it is difficult to ascertain the considerations behind the central

22. Lou, *Associations in Transitional Macao*.

23. Guan Jin Pan, *Aomen Shetuan Tizhi Bianqian – Zizhi Daibiao yu Canzheng* [Transformation of Macau Association System: Self-Governance, Representation and Political Participation] (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2010), 39.

24. <http://bo.io.gov.mo/bo/i/1999/leibasica/index_cn.asp>, accessed June 2, 2016.

government's selection of a government head in Macao, political cooptation is easier to observe. As in Hong Kong, the coalition between government and business has been a priority.²⁵ One example of the influence of the business sector can be seen in Macao's public housing policy. From 2004 to 2015, Macao's housing prices rose tenfold, from MOP 8,259 (US\$ 1,058) per square meter to MOP 86,826 (US\$ 11,131). During the same period, the medium monthly income only increased threefold, from MOP 5,167 (US\$ 662) to MOP 15,000 (US\$ 1,923).²⁶ Even though housing prices are higher than the majority can afford, the SAR government has hesitated to increase provisions for public housing. Land shortage is the usual reason cited in response to criticism from society, but this is unpersuasive, as land concessions are determined by the government itself.²⁷

Since the relevant government departments are unwilling to reveal the details of land concession concerns, Macao media outlets have revealed that a certain number of idle land plots have already been contracted out to the business sector.²⁸ On the other hand, business elites (see the MCC affiliations in Table 1) enjoy a disproportionate number of seats in the legislative assembly. Most of these members are involved in the real estate industry and thus simply ignore social demands for public housing. Though several directly elected members, like Kwan Tsui Hang and Ho Ion, who come from traditional peak associations, have made various presentations on this policy issue, they have been witness in most cases to government inaction. As Chou has illustrated, the FTU and GNA have received large subsidies from the Macao Foundation (a public-sector association managing a huge amount of funds received through gambling tax revenues) in exchange for their political support of the SAR government.²⁹ In 2014, a total of MOP 1,740,324,364 (US\$ 223,118,508) was spent.³⁰

25. Brian Chi Hang Fong, "The Partnership between the Chinese Government and Hong Kong's Capitalist Class: Implications for HKSAR Governance, 1997–2012," *China Quarterly* 217 (2014): 195–220.

26. Related statistics can be found on the Macao SAR Statistics and Census Service website: <<http://www.dsec.gov.mo/default.aspx?>>, accessed June 3, 2016.

27. *Macao Business Daily*, <<http://macaubusinessdaily.com/Politics/Ros%C3%A9rio-%E2%80%9Cmoment-we-haven%E2%80%99t-recovered-any-idle-plots-land%E2%80%9D>>, accessed June 3, 2016.

28. *Oriental Daily*, <http://orientaldaily.on.cc/cnt/news/20150811/00176_027.html>, accessed June 3, 2016.

29. Bill Kwok Ping Chou, "Politics and Social Organisations in Macao: A Historical Institutional Analysis," *China: An International Journal* 13.1 (2015): 22–42.

30. Macao Foundation 2014 Annual Report, <http://www.fmac.org.mo/updatafile/fcUpdatFileSort_4>, accessed June 3, 2016.

The approval procedure is opaque. All we know from the Macao Foundation's annual report is that the trustees' commission approved 70% of the subsidies and that the chairman of the commission is the chief executive himself. The above example suggests that rent distribution, a classic political cooptation strategy listed in authoritarian politics studies, has been used to garner political support.³¹ Under the political coalition entrenchment, Chui Sai On has the despotic power to impose unwelcome policies on society that even the colonial governors did not possess. Meanwhile, the functions of conflict mediation and interest representation that the peak associations used to perform have been significantly weakened by more and more pro-establishment sentiment, whether inside or outside the legislative assembly. As a result, there is growing discontent with this type of government–business collusion. This is especially true for young people, who are frustrated by government failure and have no hope of owning property.

EMERGING POST-MATERIALISM IN MACAO'S YOUNGER GENERATION

Socioeconomic Reasons for the Anti-RPB Protest

Given an annual GDP growth rate in Macao of 10.4% from 2001 to 2015, striking changes have also occurred in the socioeconomic realm. With guaranteed abundant tax revenues from the gambling industry, Macao residents now enjoy 15 years of compulsory education, from kindergarten to high school, a longer span than that provided in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China. Since 2008, permanent residents receive a dividend from the SAR government every year.³² For small-business owners, there is also a wide range of tax exemptions, such as those for sales taxes, peddler license fees, and

31. Martin K. Dimitrov, "Understanding Communist Collapse and Resilience," in *Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe*, ed. Martin K. Dimitrov (Cambridge University Press, 2013): 3–39; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); Milan W. Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Jennifer Grandhi and Adam Przeworski, "Cooperation, Cooptation, and Rebellion under Dictatorships," *Economics & Politics* 18.1 (2006); Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

32. Non-permanent residents also receive dividends, but in smaller amounts. For example, in 2015, the dividend was MOP 9,000 (US\$ 1,125) and MOP 5,400 (US\$ 675) for permanent residents and non-permanent residents, respectively.

TABLE 2. Education in Macao

	2001	2011
Whole population		
Primary school or less	54.6%	34.2%
Junior school	22.3%	22.8%
High school or more	23.0%	42.8%
<i>N</i>	424,203	539,131
Ages 15–34		
Primary school or less	26.9%	9.1%
Junior school	36.9%	24.8%
High school or more	35.9%	65.6%
<i>N</i>	131,693	193,416
Ages 35–59		
Primary school or less	48.2%	29.9%
Junior school	26.1%	27.9%
High school or more	26.6%	40.2%
<i>N</i>	167,722	227,217

SOURCE: Macao Census (2001, 2011).

NOTE: Sum of categories does not equal 100% because special education is not included.

stamp duties. As people become materially more secure, they are more willing to invest in education.

Table 2 illustrates the education level in Macao as taken from the most recent two censuses. In 2001, average education was relatively low. More than half of the population had only primary school or less. Only around 20% had junior school and high school. However, just 10 years later, the circumstances had changed completely, with a remarkable increase in people attending high school or above (from 23% to 42.8% of the population in 2011). If the population is divided into two age cohorts, we further notice that the increase in education level is uneven. Of people in the 15–34 age cohort, 65.6% had studied at either the high school or university level. However, in the 35–59 age cohort, the percentage is roughly 40%. This suggests that the Post-80s and Post-90s cohorts represent significantly well-educated generations.

Post-materialist theory has long argued that socioeconomic development and rising levels of education trigger a value shift in societies from “materialist” to “post-materialist.” The greater the economic development and

education in a society, the more likely it will give “top priority to autonomy, individual choice, and self-expression.”³³ Profound impacts on post-materialist values emerge from new forms of political participation. As Inglehart and Welzel have noted, “In postindustrial society, the emphasis is shifting from voting to more spontaneous, issue-specific, and elite-challenging forms of civic action. New forms of political self-expression extend the boundary of politics from the narrow domain of elite-led electoral campaigns into increasingly autonomous forms of public self-expression.”³⁴ The anti-RPB protest fits this narrative well. More specifically, the younger generation has changed the form of political participation in Macao in two distinct ways.

First, younger generations are more inclined to use protests or demonstrations in public to express their opinions. As mentioned in the second section, political elites from associations were interest spokespersons for Chinese society in the Portuguese era. However, the patron–client relationship that once existed does not buy off the youth of today. Unlike their parents, they grew up with material security. There is no need for them to seek protection. What is even more important is that social problems nowadays are more complex and diversified. In Macao, the well-educated younger generation is increasingly unhappy with the government’s official emphasis on economic development and its unresponsiveness to policy issues of concern. They express dissatisfaction by founding their own pressure groups, like Macau Conscience. They also attempt to raise public concern through issue-oriented offline protests and demonstrations. The anti-RPB protest was definitely the biggest, but it is not the only one to have had an impact. Youth Power, another active pressure group organized by young people in 2010, has organized a dozen demonstrations in recent years covering a wide range of issues, from official misconduct to housing policy and urban planning.³⁵ In contrast, Casino Frontline, which was initiated

33. Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977); Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

34. Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 37.

35. Facebook, <<https://www.facebook.com/macau.myd/events>>, accessed June 3, 2016.

TABLE 3. Education and Internet Use

	<i>Communication</i>	<i>Searching information</i>
Primary school or less	69.2%	50.1%
Junior school	86.4%	61.4%
High school or more	92.4%	73.9%
<i>N</i>	420,500	420,500

SOURCE: Macao SAR Department of Statistics and Census Service.

by a Post-80s dealer called Ieong Man Teng, concentrates on employee benefits in the gambling industry.³⁶

Second, the younger generation is sophisticated when it comes to using social networks and new media to bypass the associations' dominant status in public affairs. Unlike the associations' use of material incentives,³⁷ the younger generation prefers social networks like Facebook to recruit supporters. This is the rational choice, as they were born in a digital age. Table 3 presents a household survey of Internet use conducted by the Macao SAR Statistics and Census Service in 2014. The pattern is straightforward. A positive correlation was found between education and frequency of Internet use for the purposes of communication and searching for information. Combined with the findings from Tables 2 and 3, it can be concluded that younger people not only are better educated than their parents, but they are also likely to be more adept at acquiring information.

Social networks help in promoting cyber-activism. According to Howard, cyber-activism is "the act of using the internet to advance a political cause that is difficult to advance offline." The "goal of such activism is often to create intellectually and emotionally compelling digital artifacts that tell stories of injustice, interpret history, and advocate for particular political outcomes."³⁸ This is particularly important in Macao because almost all of the media, whether it be television, radio, or newspapers, is either publicly owned or receives government subsidies. Though there is no official inspection system,

36. Reuters, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/macau-casino-labour-woes-idUSL4NoQ64JC20140804>>, accessed June 3, 2016.

37. Lo and Chong, "Casino Interests."

38. Philip N. Howard, *The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Information Technology and Political Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 145.

self-censorship is common.³⁹ News reports that may jeopardize political stability will not appear.

However, in cyberspace the inverse is true; harsh criticisms of the SAR government are favored. For example, Chao Teng Hei, a core member of Macau Conscience, founded a popular new media site called Macau Concealers. Its content consists mainly of spoofs of government officials and policy, but readers' comments on public affairs are also received and published. Whenever events are launched, Macau Concealers plays its role as a partner of Macau Conscience in mobilizing and spreading information. Macau Concealers now has nearly 85,000 followers on Facebook, which makes it competitive with even the largest local newspaper, the *Macao Daily News*, which has a daily circulation of between 80,000 and 100,000.⁴⁰ Social networks construct virtual public spheres that do not exist in reality.⁴¹ Unsurprisingly, these networks can become platforms for identifying social problems, exchanging information, and cultivating political awareness. But when controversial public issues arise, social networks become what Lee et al. observed during the Umbrella Movement: "An insurgent public sphere for issue advocates to galvanize into collective action, making demands and putting pressure on the political authorities."⁴² Without social networks acting as intermediaries between issue-framing and political participation, it is difficult to accomplish large-scale protests like the anti-RPB protest.

CONVERGENCE OR DIVERGENCE WITH HONG KONG?

Future Political Stability in Macao

As Chan explains, the transitions to Chinese sovereignty in Hong Kong and Macao differed, mostly due to distinct controversial issues in China's bilateral

39. Shih Ding Liu and Lai Chu Lou, "Wangluo Zuwei Aomen de Linglei Gonggong Lingyu" [Internet as an Alternative Public Sphere in Macao], *Xinwenxue yanjiu* [Mass Communication Research] 102 (2010): 253–93.

40. Degang Yin, "Aomen Dazhong Chuanmei Xianzhuang yu Fazhan Fanglue" [Overview of Mass Media in Macao], in *Aomen Renwen Shehui Kexue Yanjiu Wenxuan Zonghejuan* [Selection of Humanity and Social Science Studies in Macao Synthetic], ed. Zhiliang Wu and Zhenyu Chen, 331–42 (Beijing: Social Science Press, 2009).

41. Liu and Lou, "Internet as an Alternative Public Sphere in Macao."

42. Paul S. N. Lee, Clement Y. K. So, and Louis Leung, "Social Media and Umbrella Movement: Insurgent Public Sphere in Formation," *Chinese Journal of Communication* 8.4 (2015): 356–75.

negotiations with the United Kingdom and Portugal.⁴³ From China's perspective, the return of Hong Kong was a priority because of its economic and political status; the resolution of Macao's status was secondary and would follow after a resolution with Hong Kong. To some extent, China's attitudes toward the two cities persisted even after the handover. Hong Kong has always received more attention from the central government and is expected to make contributions to China's economic integration into the global market. Macao must learn from Hong Kong's experience in this regard. Ironically, as there has been growing conflict between Hong Kong and the Mainland in recent years, Macao has actually become a model for the One Country, Two Systems idea. The central government has repeatedly emphasized that Macao's economic accomplishments and its political stability are results of the implementation of its Basic Law and the support it receives from state policy.⁴⁴ At the same time, the central government continues to overlook the fact that same defects in political system that exist in Hong Kong also exist in Macao. In a recent study, Fong argues that the Hong Kong SAR government maintains a government–business coalition similar to its colonial predecessor. The business sector becomes powerless in mediating state–society conflict because of “their increasing disconnection from the community and [they] have done nothing to re-establish such connections with the community by participating in mass politics.”⁴⁵ In line with Fong's argument, the anti-RPB protest raises the issue of Macao's political stability: will Macao suffer the same turbulence that overtook Hong Kong?

Because it is impossible to compare all the structural differences within one article, I had to rely on theoretical framework to capture the most crucial factors. As argued above, Macao had been transformed into a subnational authoritarian regime after 1999, while recent studies have described Hong Kong as a hybrid regime. Therefore, it is possible to make a comparison in the framework of authoritarian politics, where pursuing political survival is the core assumption.⁴⁶

43. Ming K. Chan, “Different Roads to Home: The Retrocession of Hong Kong and Macau to Chinese Sovereignty,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 12,36 (2003): 493–518.

44. Xi Jinping's address on the 15th Anniversary of Macao's Return, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-12/20/c_1113717267.htm>, accessed June 3, 2016.

45. Brian Chi Hang Fong, “State-Society Conflicts under Hong Kong's Hybrid Regime: Governing Coalition Building and Civil Society Challenges,” *Asian Survey* 53,5 (2013): 854–82.

46. Mesquita et al., *Logic of Political Survival*.

Cooptation and repression are considered the two essential strategies to achieve this purpose.⁴⁷ The target of cooptation is loyalty from elites, whose support is essential for governing. Cooptation may take forms such as rent distribution or power-sharing in decision-making, while repression is used to cope with mass discontent. Although the tenure of the chief executive is limited, he has the same incentives as any authoritarian leader to maximize his interests by preserving political stability to avoid sanction from Beijing. Previous studies and my aforementioned analysis demonstrated that cooptation has applied in both cities,⁴⁸ so repression should be the determinative factor for political stability in a comparative study. Repression as a method of social control, however, does not solely depend on coercive capacity but is also influenced by the capacity of social mobilization to challenge the government. In her study of the robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East, Bellin well illustrated how different combinations of institutional character of the military and level of social mobilization explained the success of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt and its failure in countries like Bahrain, Libya, Yemen, and Syria.⁴⁹ Inspired by Bellin, the following comparison will concentrate on these two factors (see Figures 1 and 2).

Indeed, the level of social mobilization in Hong Kong since 1997 is impressive. It is no longer a “minimally-integrated social-political system” where people are politically apathetic.⁵⁰ To understand how such political changes evolved, one must take into account rising local identity in recent years. Evidence of this can be seen in the annual national identity survey conducted by the Public Opinion Program at the University of Hong Kong.⁵¹ Respondents were asked to categorize themselves as Hongkonger, Chinese, Chinese in Hong Kong, or Hongkonger in China.

47. Svobik, *Politics of Authoritarian Rule*.

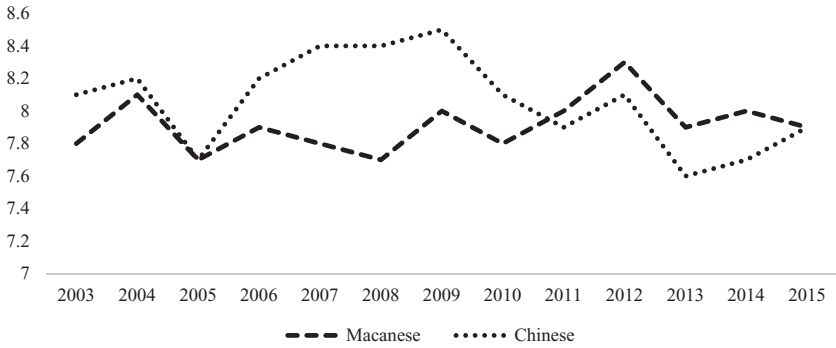
48. Fong, “State-Society Conflicts”; Fong, “Partnership between the Chinese Government and Hong Kong’s Capitalist Class”; Ngok Ma, *Political Development in Hong Kong: State, Political Society, and Civil Society* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007).

49. Eva Bellin, “Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring,” *Comparative Politics* 44.2 (2012): 127–49.

50. Siu-kai Lau, *Society and Politics in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1982).

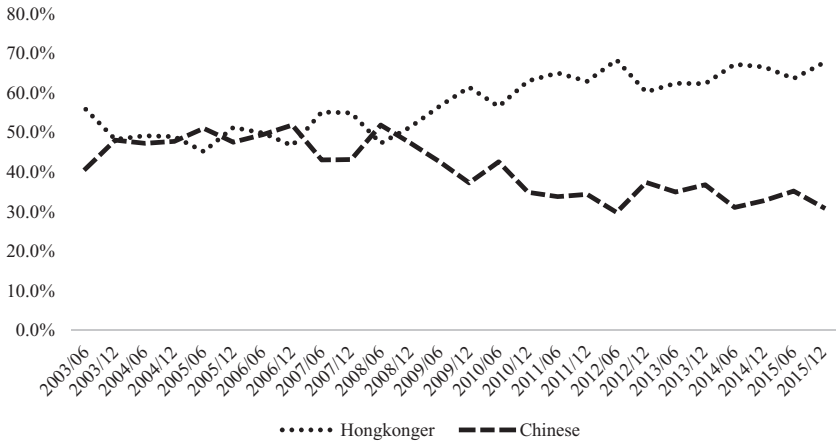
51. Respondents were reached by telephone interview in both surveys. The survey conducted in Macao is an annual survey of approximately 500 people. The survey in Hong Kong is conducted twice a year, and the sample size is around 1,000. For more details of the sampling method, see <<https://www.hkupop.hku.hk/chinese/macau/>> and <<https://www.hkupop.hku.hk/chinese/popexpress/ethnic/>>, accessed June 6, 2016.

FIGURE 1. National Identity in Macao



SOURCE: Public Opinion Program, University of Hong Kong.

FIGURE 2. National Identity in Hong Kong



SOURCE: Public Opinion Program, University of Hong Kong.

NOTE: The sum of the categories is not equal to 100% because “Other” and Don’t Know/Hard to Say” are excluded.

In order to compare these results here with results from Macao, “Hongkonger in China” and “Chinese in Hong Kong” were merged into “Hongkonger” and “Chinese,” respectively, in Figure 2. Identifying as Chinese was the overwhelming choice in the early 2000s, but since then it has continuously decreased. After 2008, the Hongkonger identity became the mainstream choice and now consistently captures approximately 60%–70% of

the sampled population. Although a similar question was asked in Macao, circumstances there contrast strikingly with that in Hong Kong. Respondents graded their identity as being Macanese or Chinese on a 10-point scale, from 1 equals “totally disagree” to 10 equals “totally agree” in Figure 1. In contrast with Hong Kong, the two identities drew very similar percentages from 2003 to 2015. It seems that there is a mixed identification as both Macanese and Chinese, or at least for Macao national and local identities are non-exclusive.⁵²

Explaining the variation in national identity between the two cities is beyond the scope of this article, but let us emphasize the political implications behind it. As Morris and Vickers have recently pointed out, the local identity of Hongkongers is rooted in popular culture and everyday life experience, which suggests that the Hong Kong lifestyle is

characterized by garish consumerism, irreverent humor, and, increasingly, pride in a Hong Kong seen as exemplifying the rule of law, civil liberties (and the associated willingness to challenge authority), urban sophistication, and, above all, prosperity and the freedom to flaunt it.⁵³

This local identity provided the cultural resources to distinguish “us” (Hongkongers) from “them” (Mainlanders); collective identity had long been recognized by scholars as one of the essential mechanisms for organized social movements. Polletta and Jasper summarized that “changes in collective identity captured impacts beyond institutional reform.”⁵⁴ They further mentioned that although “mobilization does not always require preexisting collective identities, activists’ efforts to strategically ‘frame’ identities are critical in recruiting participants. ‘Frames’ are the interpretive packages that activists develop to mobilize potential adherents and constituents. When successful, frames make a compelling case for the ‘injustice’ of condition and the likely effectiveness of collective ‘agency’ in changing that condition.”⁵⁵

52. Wai-man Lam, “Promoting Hybridity: The Politics of the New Macau Identity,” *China Quarterly* 203 (2010): 656–74.

53. Paul Morris and Edward Vickers, “Schooling, Politics and the Construction of Identity in Hong Kong: The 2012 ‘Moral and National Education’ Crisis in Historical Context,” *Comparative Education* 51.3 (2015): 305–26.

54. Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 283–305.

55. *Ibid.*

The above is indeed what happened in Hong Kong in the past decade. Local identity as a catalyst of social mobilization was first observed at the 2006 public protests against the demolition of the Star Ferry Pier (which was considered part of the collective memory of Hongkongers). A similar event happened at the demolition of Queen's Pier in 2007. These early spontaneous collective actions were cultural, not political. The protest against Moral and National Education in 2012, however, became a turning point. Moral and National Education was originally a proposal to promote patriotic education in Hong Kong, but it unintentionally provoked the fear of loss of Hong Kong's uniqueness and core values.⁵⁶ As the vice-chair of the Democratic Party, Emily Lau, claimed, "They want us to have one country, one system. They want us to be like other Chinese cities."⁵⁷

Since then, the interaction between Hongkonger and Beijing has fallen into a vicious circle. The more Beijing emphasizes national security and Hong Kong's political stability, the more local identity and intensive resistance from Hongkongers is triggered. The latest Legislative Council of Hong Kong election is a good example. Traditionally, the Legislative Council is a battlefield between pro-establishment and pan-democracy forces. Unexpectedly, in the 2016 election, the Localism movement, which emphasizes Hongkongers' interests and independence from China, won six out of 70 seats. One of the Localism candidates, Eddie Chu Hoi-dick, even won the most votes in the direct election. Another candidate, Nathan Law Kwun-chung, became the youngest elected council member in history.⁵⁸ The election result clearly demonstrates that the political spectrum in Hong Kong has dramatically changed within just a few years.

The power and possibility of local identity serves as a framing strategy in social mobilization, also illustrating a fundamental distinction between Macao and Hong Kong. Certainly, Macao's young generation is more politically active than their parents, but without a strong local identity as a catalyst, they do not have the urgency, ambition, or motivation to challenge the national government in the hope of accelerating local democratization. On the other hand, Macao was not promised universal suffrage from the central government,

56. Garrett and Ho, "Hong Kong at the Brink."

57. *Time*, <<http://world.time.com/2012/07/30/hong-kong-divided-over-plans-for-patriotic-lessons-in-schools/>>, accessed Nov 19, 2016.

58. *New York Times*, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/05/world/asia/hong-kong-election.html>>, accessed Nov 19, 2016.

which means that, at least in the legal sense, political reform is negotiable and incremental, though not necessary.⁵⁹ This point of view is echoed in an interview with Sou Ka Hou (another core member of Macau Consciousness), where he states, “Macao people believe that there are many methods that include negotiation with the center in fighting for democracy or establishing a civil society. We hope to make progress on the above targets in a moderate, not a confrontational manner, when facing the central government. A benign conversation space is depended on by both sides.”⁶⁰

It is also relevant that a seldom-noticed but crucial difference between Hong Kong and Macao is the governmental coercive capacity in terms of social control. According to Levitsky and Way, coercion may be implemented in two distinct ways: high-intensity and low-intensity.⁶¹ High-intensity coercion usually targets a large number of people and involves violent repression. In contrast, low-intensity coercion involves the punishment of opponents on a small, less visible scale. These approaches serve different functions in maintaining political stability: “Whereas high-intensity coercion is often a response to an imminent—and highly threatening—opposition challenge, low-intensity coercion is often aimed at preventing such challenges from emerging in the first place.”⁶² While high-intensity coercion is rare in both Hong Kong and Macao, evidence suggests that low-intensity coercion is more prevalent in the latter. Because low-intensity coercion does not rely on large-scale violence, its efficiency depends on state penetration into society to extract dissident information and then to apply sanctions. A recent comparative case study of Communist Bulgaria and Ba’athist Iraq by Dimitrov

59. Article 45 of Hong Kong’s Basic Law stipulates, “The method for selecting the Chief Executive shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures.” Article 47 of Macao’s Basic Law states, “The Chief Executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region shall be selected by election or through consultations held locally and be appointed by the Central People’s Government”; there is no direction on democratization. See <http://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/tc/basiclawtext/images/basiclaw_full_text_tc.pdf>, accessed June 3, 2016, and <http://bo.io.gov.mo/bo/i/1999/leibasica/index_cn.asp>, accessed June 3, 2016.

60. Yannan Jiang and Yongxiao Zhu, “Aomen Biange Qishi Xianggang Chaoyue Rentong Weiji Huajie Shengceng Maodun” [Macao as a Model of Hong Kong in Beyond the National Identity Crisis], *Yazhou Zhoukan* [Asia Weekly], December 28, 2014, 84–89.

61. Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

62. *Ibid.*, 58.

and Sassoon provided convincing evidence that “as the quality of information increases, repression becomes more selective and targeted.”⁶³

Compared with Hong Kong, Macao’s economic structure is homogeneous: Macao relies almost entirely on the gambling industry. Because its market capacity is so small, the SAR government has become the biggest employer for professions like university teachers, civil servants, doctors, and reporters. Enterprises in the remaining industries, including gambling and finance, while outside the public sector, would prefer to have a good government–business relationship. As a result, without entrenchment in a strong civil society like Hong Kong, dissidents in Macao are in a precarious situation, and the risk of sanctions is commonplace. An accurate count of incidents is unclear, since such activities are implemented secretly, but examples are still to be found in media reports. For example, Chou Kwok Ping, an associate professor at the University of Macau, was dismissed for overly eager criticism of government policy and officials.⁶⁴ Éric Sautédé, a professor at the University of Saint Joseph, was laid off for a similar reason.⁶⁵ Au Kam San, political partner of Ng Kuok Cheong and a well-known pro-democracy legislative member in the local government, lost his high school teaching job because of his political attitudes in the 1980s.⁶⁶

Macao may also use high-intensity coercion with legal foundations, after it passed the National Security Law in 2009.⁶⁷ The People’s Liberation Army may crack down on the Umbrella Movement if it travels to Macao. The unclear and unspecific definition of state classified information is also worrisome, as in recent years this has become a justification for the Chinese government to arrest dissidents. Hence, the government’s coercive capacity in Macao is potentially greater than in Hong Kong.

The Macao SAR government has faced increasing demands from the younger generation, specifically for improved government responsiveness and

63. Martin K. Dimitrov and Joseph Sassoon, “State Security, Information, and Repression: A Comparison of Communist Bulgaria and Ba’athist Iraq,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16.2 (2014): 3–31.

64. <<http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/news/art/20140824/18842842>>, accessed June 3, 2016.

65. Ibid.

66. See the biography on Au Kam San’s Facebook public page, <https://www.facebook.com/Au-Kam-San-%E5%8D%80%E9%8C%A6%E6%96%Bo-111358238886242/info?tab=page_info>, accessed June 3, 2016.

67. National Security Law, <http://bo.io.gov.mo/bo/i/2009/09/leio2_cn.asp>, accessed June 3, 2016.

accountability. However, due to the aforementioned factors, the issues are dissimilar to those in Hong Kong. Lack of a strong local identity and an underwhelming political reform scheme determine preferences for the status quo. In turn, this has mitigated challenges to governance and legitimacy concerns in Macao. What may be more essential, from the viewpoint of Macao youth, is that both the local and central governments offer an opportunity for conversation, rather than a target for challenge. It is also arguable that the Macao SAR government has more means to cope with its opponents when it comes to preserving political stability. In short, the governance crisis in Macao is sporadic, not systemic.

CONCLUSION

In *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Huntington proposed a classic explanation for regime instability, suggesting that it was “in large part the product of rapid social change and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics coupled with the slow development of political institutions.”⁶⁸ Even half a century later, this judgment is still appropriate and particularly convincing in the case of Macao.

By examining a case of governance crisis—the anti-RPB protest—this paper has attempted to uncover the structural factors that triggered this incident. As the evidence demonstrated, on the one hand, the anti-RPB protest originated from political change that has occurred in Macao since its handover. The transformation from a corporatist system to a subnational authoritarian regime has undermined the middleman role that the associations used to play in state–society conflict mediation. On the other hand, the material security brought by economic development has bred a well-educated generation of young people. Following predictions from post-materialist theory, this younger generation prefers self-expression and is more willing to challenge authority through unconventional political participation. Moreover, with the assistance of social networks, the youth in Macao are able, through political mobilization, to make a dent in the associations’ monopoly on public affairs and their influence on government policy. Without considering the rapid changes that have taken place in the political and socioeconomic

68. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 4.

realms in recent years, it would be difficult to explain how such a large-scale protest happened in a city like Macao, which has been widely characterized as politically apathetic.

The anti-RPB protest evidently reflects growing discontent with government failure and can be tied to incidents such as the anti-National Security Law protest and the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. Though both cities have experienced governance crises, differences with respect to the level of social mobilization and governmental coercive capacity put the two cities on divergent political trajectories. Without the restlessness triggered by local identity, the magnitude of state-society conflict in Macao has been moderate compared with Hong Kong's, especially in the absence of harsh antagonism toward the central government. Hence, acceptance of the status quo is relatively effortless. A stable political order might still be maintained through a combination of cooptation and repression.