

## The Acculturation and Identity of New Immigrant Youth in Macao

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**Abstract:** This study reports on the acculturation and identity development of new immigrant youth in Macao. New Immigrant youth are defined as people who migrated to Macao from China as minors, after the year 2000, and arrived under Macao's investment residency policy. Meanings and understandings are examined through cultural discourse analysis, paying close attention to local ways of talking about and referencing new immigrants. The study uses Berry's model of acculturation to understand attitudes and acculturation strategies, identity construction in interactions between local Macao and new immigrant youth. Data come from three focus group discussions conducted with new immigrant, local Macao youth, and a mixed group of local and new immigrant youth. Local Macao youth voiced a negative discourse that Macao is "invaded" by Chinese Mainlanders and new immigrants; mixed and new immigrant youth expressed a counter discourse, acknowledging, but rejecting or contextualizing negative understandings. These indicate that local youth are more likely to pursue strategies of separation or segregation from new immigrants, while new immigrants pursue an integrationist strategy. Findings point to multiple identity constructions, as local youth identified with Macao only, and new immigrants with both China and Macao.

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Macao, a former Portuguese colony, and since 1999, a "Special Administrative Region" (SAR) of China, is known for its world-class casinos and gaming industry. Wealth generated by the gaming industry has raised Macao's economy and its per capita GDP to third highest in the world (Country comparison, 2013). It is also a magnet for tourists, with more than 29 million visitor arrivals recorded in 2013 (Visitor arrivals, 2014). Yet while Macao's growth has brought wealth, it has also brought challenges. With a population of over 600,000 (Population estimate, 2014) on a land area of just 30 square kilometers (11 square miles, or about one-third the size of Manhattan), when ranked among the world's countries, Macao is the world's most densely populated (Population density, 2014). During times of peak tourist visits, such as the Chinese New Year, popular sites may become choked and lead to frustration among the local populace (Lau, 2014). Thus, while Macao's economy is enriched by visitors from elsewhere, most of whom come from Mainland China, local residents may at times resent such outsiders.

In the 1970s when China was in the throes of the Cultural Revolution, Macao was both a path and destination for many Chinese seeking to leave the Mainland (Zhu, 1995). Such immigrants came to be called by the Cantonese phrase, "*san ji man*" (*Xin yimin* in Mandarin, 新移民) or "New Immigrants." (Cantonese phrases are represented using Jyutping, a system developed by *The Linguistic Society of Hong Kong*, see Cantonese Romanization Scheme, 2012). While the term was originally descriptive in nature, it later acquired negative connotations as Macao faced social

and cultural problems associated with the rapid influx of these migrants (Cheng, 2011): A "*san ji man*" was originally perceived as someone poor, not rooted in Macao, and who may engage in crime or other illicit activities.

Decades later, as Macao was preparing for the transition from colonial rule under Portugal to a SAR of China, and experiencing an economic downturn, in 1995 the government encouraged migration through offering "investment residency" (Wan, 2005). Macao's housing market was depressed and the population flat or declining as many residents were uncertain about Macao's future status (Cheang, 2003). Yet by the middle of the 2000s, as Macao's economy improved and was stimulated by the opening of new casinos, the population increased rapidly and the investment scheme was "suspended" in April 2007 (Macao Immigration Investment, 2007). Those who came to Macao during this period, like earlier immigrants in the 1970s, notably from China, were again referenced by this same term, "*san ji man*."

When written in Chinese *san ji man* consists of three characters: 新移民 (Mandarin pronunciation *xinyimin*). *San* 新 means "new," and *Ji + Man* 移民 means to migrate (verb) or a migrant/immigrant (noun). While *san ji man* could presumably refer to any migrant to Macao regardless of national origin, in local usage it refers to migrants only from "Mainland China," that is, a Han Chinese person from the provinces of China. (Citizens of the People's Republic of China must obtain a special transit visa to enter Macao, just as they do for Hong Kong; areas of China exclusive of Macao and

Hong Kong are referred to as “Mainland China.”) While the term *san ji man* was first used in the 1970s, by the 1990s it was used less as the population stabilized and immigration was less of an issue. However, since 2000, and coinciding with the new wave of the immigrants, the term once again came to prominence.

The purpose of this study is to explore the meanings and interpretations of the term *san ji man* (new immigrant) as understood in the context of Macao. More specifically, it focuses on how it is used and interpreted among Macao’s generation of youth in their early to late 20s. Many members of this generation, who are now Macao residents, were born in Mainland China and lived part or most of their childhood there; after their parents gained Macao residency, most often under the investment scheme, these youth attended schools in nearby Mainland China, and then later came to Macao to work and/or complete university studies. Thus, they are a generation that has crossed a political border between Macao and China and are called *san ji man*. They may have experienced problems due to cultural differences, or negative acculturative stresses. An exploration of the term *san ji man*, and its associated meanings and interpretations in the context of Macao, provides a useful lens to better understand acculturation and intercultural communication. And since both newly arrived immigrants and the majority of the local residents are “Chinese,” it serves to unpack what it means to be Chinese—showing that there are multiple understandings of being Chinese.

The remainder of this introduction proceeds as follows. We begin by briefly describing Macao as a context, by discussing its history, people, and important events. This is followed by a discussion of acculturation and theories of intercultural communication, concluding with research questions and methods.

### Immigration History and Background

Macao (also spelled Macau) was first administered by Portugal in 1557 and made a colony of Portugal in 1887; Portuguese administration ended in 1999 when it was handed over to the People’s Republic of China to be administered as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, similar in status to Hong Kong (Hao, 2011).

While the Portuguese speaking population has comprised an important part of Macao’s population both in the past and today, most of Macao’s population is Chinese. This we see from information collected by the Macao government in the most recent comprehensive census conducted in 2011 (Results of 2011 Census, 2012). When asked to self-identify, as “Chinese, Chinese & Portuguese, Portuguese, Chinese and non-Portuguese, or Other,” 92.4 percent of Macao residents identified themselves as Chinese, less than 1 percent as Portuguese, and the remainder as either a combination

(e.g., Chinese & Portuguese) or Other. Cantonese is the language spoken by most, with 83 percent claiming Cantonese as their “usual language” and 90 percent able to speak it. Mandarin Chinese is the “usual language” of only 5 percent of the population, but many more (41%) claim the ability to speak it. Hokkien and “other Chinese dialects” are the usual language of nearly 6 percent, followed by Others (3%), English (2.3%), and Portuguese (0.7%).

Most Macao residents were born in either Mainland China (46%) or Macao (41%), with the remainder born in Hong Kong (3.5%), or other places (9.4%). Among those born in Mainland China, the census item “duration of time” living in Macao, shows two peaks that indicate high points of immigration—those who lived in Macao 25-34 years (29.6%) and recent arrivals who have lived in Macao less than five years (26.4%). These immigrant peaks correspond with the periods of the 1970s-1980s and mid 2000s, when events described above impacted immigration—the push of China’s Cultural Revolution and its after-effects, and the magnet of a growing economy during the period of casino-driven economic growth since the mid 2000s.

### Macao’s Immigration Problems

According to Cheng (2011), a local understanding in Macao is that immigrants are perceived as either “new” or “old,” with those who came before the late 1970s as “old” and those who came after as “new.” Prior to the late 1970s, when the border between China and Macao was strictly controlled, the number of immigrants was few. However, by the late 1970s as China began its policy of opening under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping (Spence, 1999), immigration increased rapidly—continuing through the mid-1980s. The rapid increase in the immigrant population led to social problems, including labor strife, illegal residency, and social resource allocation issues. Illegal residency was the greatest problem and led to antipathy on the part of local residents. By the 1990s, as housing problems were addressed, and the pace of immigration slowed, such feelings of antipathy lessened. By the end of the 2000s as immigration increased rapidly, housing costs increased and feelings of antipathy toward immigrants rose again.

Guo (2009) argues that conflicts between old and new immigrants are a reflection of a “passenger mentality.” For example, when people are waiting for a bus, they hope they can get on, but once they are on board and find a seat, they do not want to allow later-comers to arrive and claim space or a nearby seat. This is what happened in Macao: Once earlier passengers (old immigrants) gained the right of residency, feelings of antipathy, based on conflicts of

interest, arose as older immigrants feared that they would “lose” if they have to share such social resources as education, jobs, and social welfare with newer immigrants. Thus conflicts may arise due to a variety of issues that are related to the timing, channel, and processes of immigration.

### Acculturation

A theoretical concept that helps us better understand interaction between immigrant and nonimmigrant groups in Macao is Berry’s model of acculturation. He claims “[a]cculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (Berry, 2006, p. 13). In most instances, cultural groups are not equal numerically, economically or politically, and in popular understandings are identified by such terms as “mainstream,” “minority” or “ethnic group” (Berry, 1997, p. 8). The process of acculturation is not uni-directional; both mainstream and minority groups are mutually interacting and acculturating to each other (Berry, 2005) and the actions of the mainstream group impact the minority’s ability to successfully adapt (Sandel, 2014; Ward & Kus, 2012). Berry, therefore, refers to all parties in a context as “cultural groups” to indicate that cultural stress affects all; yet groups are relatively different in power, indexed by the terms “dominant” and “nondominant” (Berry, 1997).

There are two basic elements in the acculturating process: One is the maintenance of an original cultural heritage, the other is engagement and social contact with the larger community (Ward, 2008). These two issues can be weighed differently and impact acculturation strategies (Berry, 2006). The degree to which people pursue their cultural heritage and how much they participate in the larger society are the dominant indicators of acculturation; the combination of strategies, between dominant and nondominant groups, interact according to four different patterns. Assimilation describes people who prefer to contact and interact with the larger society and keep or maintain little of their cultural heritage. Separation describes people who seek cultural maintenance and avoid involvement with other groups. Marginalization happens when neither cultural maintenance by the non dominant group, nor social contact within the larger society is involved. Integration—claimed by Berry (2006) to be the ideal strategy in acculturating process—exists when both cultural maintenance and interaction with the larger society are pursued

In addition to acculturation strategies, a matter of importance is how well people adapt to the acculturating experience. Ward (1996) notes that there are two aspects to adaptation, one is psychological and the other

is socio-cultural. Psychological adaptation relates to personal well-being and good mental health, which involves family, original culture, and identity. It is also related to a person’s self-esteem, and level of stress (Sabatier & Berry, 2008). Socio-cultural adaptation relates to individual’s ability to gain skills (e.g., language ability) necessary to successfully interact with members of the dominant culture; it also involves interactions with peers, school, friends and the management of social life (Sandel, 2014).

### Immigrant Youth and Identity

Previous research on immigrant acculturation pays more attention to adult populations. In recent decades the experiences of adolescents’ acculturation have received greater attention. Duty (2015) argues that it is important to study youth, especially those from immigrant families, as they are in the stage of “emerging adulthood” and face a range of developmental issues, such as self-concept, language and social identity, and generational conflicts with parents and family. Other studies have focused on the psychological well-being of immigrant youth and shown that levels of acculturation are related to such matters as self-alienation, self-esteem, and self-satisfaction (Izumi, 2010; Ward, 2013). Furthermore, self-esteem is an important index of psychological well-being (Berry & Sabatier, 2011).

In addition to psychological adaptation, acculturating immigrant youth also face identity issues. Farver, Narang and Bhadha (2002) claim that immigrant adolescents must negotiate and consolidate values and behaviors of their ethnic group against those of the host culture. During negotiation with multiple culture and identities, identity conflict is one of the most crucial issues for those adolescents (Duty, 2015). Adolescents involved in the acculturation process go through a long-term transition, from identifying themselves with their ethnic culture, to absorbing novel and different elements of the host culture (Stuart & Ward, 2011). Thus, identity conflict might emerge through developing a cultural identity, which leads to contrary ways of feeling, thinking and behaving, as these are influenced and restrained by both ethnic and national communities (Stuart & Ward, 2011).

### Research Questions

This study poses the following Research Questions:

RQ1. What are terms of reference for describing Macao residents, including *san ji man* (new immigrants), and what are the meanings associated with these terms?

RQ2. How do attitudes or preferences about *san ji man* impact acculturation strategies and associated behaviors?

RQ3. How do local and new immigrant youth in Macao identify themselves? In what ways are they similar or different?

### Methods

Data for this study were collected in two stages: (1) Three focus group discussions and (2) observations and follow-up interviews over a four-month period of research in 2014. (This study reports on findings from focus groups; follow-up interview data were used to check and confirm our interpretations of focus group sessions, but are not presented here.) This study follows an interpretative approach which uses naturalistic methods, including interviewing, observation and analyses of existing data; conceptual themes are then derived from these data (Martin & Nakayama, 1999). The interpretative paradigm assumes that the perception of reality consists of individuals engaging in interaction and attaching meanings to such interaction (Zoller & Kline, 2008). Keyton (2010) suggests that focus groups allow researchers to study deliberation, dialogue, and democratic practices; they also stimulate interaction and conversation among participants, facilitating dialogue. Furthermore, Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) claim that compared with interviewing, focus groups better allow researchers to both observe and explore what is happening in participants' conversations and solicit participants' comments on topics or issues at hand.

With the above in mind, focus group discussions were the primary means for collecting data for this study. It focused on the acculturation of youths who are so-called "new immigrants" (*san ji man*) in Macao; comparative meanings and understandings were solicited by also conducting focus groups with participants who spent all their lives in Macao, are "local people," and do not count as new immigrants. Thus, focus groups consisted of three different types of participants. One involved only new immigrant youth, asking questions about their early adjustment to living in Macao, what they thought of and perceived were cultural differences, and how they identified themselves to others when in a range of social situations. Two was mixed and included both new immigrants and Macao local youth; this arrangement solicited comments and reflections on how young people from these two groups get along, and what is their attitude toward new immigrant youth as they interact with the dominant community. The last type included Macao local youth only. The aim was to solicit a range of opinions about the new immigrant issue and understand the dominant culture's attitude and acculturation strategy toward new immigrant youth.

Following focus group discussion, in-depth interviews were conducted with six focus group participants. These were designed to uncover how people think and feel about their communication

practices, and check how they interpreted comments made during focus group sessions. In addition to the above methods, the first author kept and wrote field notes throughout the period of study; these were based upon her daily observations, conversations, and interactions while living in Macao.

### Participants

A total of nine people participated in three focus group sessions. They were recruited by the first author through personal contacts. As noted above, one session was comprised of three new immigrant youth; a second of three local "Macao persons"; a third was a mixed group of two new immigrants and one local Macao youth. All participants were in their twenties, ranging in age from 21 to 29. Participants were selected on the basis of purposeful sampling, based upon their age, immigrant status, and knowledge and understanding of the topic (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010). All participants were currently living in Macao and spoke Cantonese fluently, the language used for most data collection. New immigrant youth were slightly younger (mean age: 23) than Macao local youth (mean age: 25). Most were well educated and either possessed or were pursuing a university degree or higher. At the time of the study three new immigrant youth participants were in their last year of university study; one local youth was pursuing a post-graduate degree. All new immigrant youth had completed their pre-university studies (primary through high school) at schools in Mainland China.

New immigrant youth came to Macao through their parents' residency obtained through Macao's *Investment Residency*; the earliest a participant gained residency was 2002 and the latest was 2007. Furthermore, according to legislation in Macao, people who immigrate to Macao through the investment policy first obtain "non-permanent" residency; this can become "permanent residency" after a period of seven years. By the time of the study, four of the new immigrant participants held permanent residency, while one was "non-permanent" and could obtain permanent status after one more year. The four local Macao youth recruited for this study ranged in age from 22 to 29; they considered themselves to be "authentic" Macao local people, meaning they were born in Macao and had lived all or most of their lives in Macao.

### Procedures

Focus groups began with general questions about personal information and awareness of the issue of immigration and "*san ji man*." Then, according to the composition of each group, follow-up questions varied. For example, new immigrant participants talked about their identity, shared experiences, and interaction and connection with the local community; they also

shared their feelings about being called *san ji man*. Local Macao participants discussed their interactions with immigrant youth; they discussed the topic of immigration in general, and their personal feelings and experiences. In addition, an open-ended discussion on identity was conducted with all three focus groups. This was done by posing several items and terms for discussion, and then asking participants to define and reflect on each.

Two of the focus groups were conducted in a coffee shop and one was held in a participant's home. Locations and times were discussed and agreed by both interviewer and interviewees, with preference for an undisturbed and relaxed environment to facilitate a naturally flowing conversation. Each focus group lasted 50-60 minutes; follow-up interviews with six focus group participants lasted 15-20 minutes. The main language used in all focus groups and interviews was Cantonese; English and Mandarin words and phrases were sometimes also spoken. All participants received and signed a consent form to voluntarily participate and agreed that focus group sessions and interviews could be audio-recorded. Such recordings were later transcribed by the first author into Chinese for analysis. Excerpts were finally translated into English by the second author.

### Data Analysis

Data obtained from ethnographic observations, interviews and focus groups were analyzed according to Carbaugh's (2007) work in cultural discourse analysis. The first step was to write verbatim transcripts of all three focus group sessions. This yielded a total of 75 double-spaced pages of transcripts. Second, focus group sessions were supplemented with field notes taken by the first author, based upon her observations and interpretations, in order to understand situated meanings by making connections between the participants' response and the broader social context. Third, verbatim transcripts were read closely, paying close attention to specific terms and phrases, sentences and dialogues, in order to understand symbolic meanings and gain an understanding of participants' sense of who they are, who they are with (or against), or how they are feeling (Carbaugh, 1996). Particular kinds of terms in certain systems of communication are productive for cultural explorations, and understanding the cultural discourse of such terms is a valuable way to recognize people's identity, behavior and emotions (Carbaugh, 2005, 2007). The final step was to make comparative analyses, comparing statements responses from all three focus groups, looking for points of connection and dissonance.

### Results

Findings are organized to address the three research questions. The first section presents and

discusses the range of terms used to reference and index different groups of people in Macao. The second discusses acculturation strategies and associated behaviors, and the last addresses local and new immigrant youth identity.

### Terms of Reference

While the focus of this study was on understanding *san ji man* (new immigrants), the term was discussed and interpreted in relation with other terms. These are presented as they emerged in the three focus groups.

**Terms indexing political borders.** From focus group sessions with local, new immigrant, and mixed youth, we found they described different types of people using terms that referenced a political entity. These included: *Ou-munjan* 澳門人 [Macao person or persons], *Daai-luk jan* 大陸人 [Mainland person(s)], *Naap-dei jan* 內地人 [Mainland or inside-land person(s)], and *Zong-kwok jan* 中國人 [China or Chinese person] (Cantonese words and phrases are written in Jyutping without tone marks.) Likewise, they spoke of people who are geographically near, and often come to Macao as tourists, students, and/or residents, including *Hoeng-gong jan* 香港人 [Hong Kong person(s)] and *Toi-waan jan* 台灣人 [Taiwan person(s)]. New immigrant youth who spent most of their lives in China, spoke of classmates associated with cities located within China. One described classmates who came from the city of Shanghai and called them *Soeng-hoi jan* 上海人 [Shanghai person(s)]; another, whose family came from the nearby city of Zhongshan, said that she does *not* like to identify herself to people in Macao as someone who is a *Zong-saanjan* 中山人 [Zhongshan person(s)]. That is, local ways of mapping and expressing groups of people most often reflected the historical and contemporary political sites and/or boundaries that must be crossed as a person moves from one region to another.

The above can be better understood when considering that Macao is geographically very small, and whenever a person looks in the distance at nearby hills and waterways, she sees places that are under the political administration of China's Guangdong Province; furthermore, the passageway used by most people to travel between Macao and China is accessed by foot on a strip of land that connects Macao with nearby Zhuhai. Yet despite this close proximity with China, the border is tightly controlled, and depending upon the type of documents one possesses, may take a person anywhere from 15 minutes to several hours to cross. Therefore, when the terms used to reference or index (point to) the peoples of Macao, they most often signify politically bounded entities.

**Terms indexing cultural identities and behaviors.** In addition to terms that indexed political borders, others emerged. The most important, and the focus of this study, was *san ji man* (new immigrant). We will discuss this in depth below. During the “mixed group” session the term *Huaren* 華人 (Chinese) was discussed. This came up in response to the researcher’s question—asked of participants in all sessions—how they self-identified. *Huaren* is a term that can be translated as “Chinese” and carries with it the meaning of people who are cultured and civilized (Sandel, Wong Lowe, & Chao, 2012). The three participants agreed that this term refers to “all the *Huaren* of the world” and includes people from Macao, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Mainland, and “overseas” Chinese who live in other countries. In other focus groups this same belief was associated with the term *Zong-kwok jan* (*Zhongguoren* 中國人), another term that is often translated into English as “Chinese.”

Of more interest, and the focus of this study, was the term *san ji man* and related variants; we first discuss such variants. The “new immigrant” focus group described the earlier 1970s and 1980s immigrants as people who “swam” to Macao, crossing the short waterway that separates Macao from Guangdong Province; they also described them as “smuggled” immigrants. These were contrasted with immigrants of the late 1990s-2000s who came under the investment policy. This latter group of migrants was called “*tau-zi ji-man*” (投資移民) or “investment immigrants.”

During the session with local youth, they discussed a number of terms that defined and described new immigrants in unflattering ways, terms that did not come up in the other focus group sessions. One term was *touhou* 土豪 and can be briefly translated as a “tyrant.” It describes a person who is rich, spends money ostentatiously on items he or she does not need, and likes to show off in front of others. It is similar in tone to the concept of the “ugly American” of the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, who came into wealth suddenly from a poor background, then went to Europe and spent money lavishly, but without displaying any of the refined behaviors or taste that Europeans expected of a person with wealth. A second term they discussed was *baan saai haai* 扮曬蟹. It is composed of three characters, *baan* 扮 means to dress up, *saai* 曬 means to dry or bask in the sun, and *haai* 蟹 means crab. Combined, the term describes someone who is a show off. It connotes the image of someone who likes to dress in a showy way and walk in a sideways or dramatic manner like a crab. But the awkward horizontal movement implied by the term “crab” implies that such a person does not look cultured and does not have the ability, or perhaps the wealth, to truly show off.

**True and “fake” Macao persons.** Another term discussed by local youth, that did not come up in the other sessions, was “*gaa Ou-munjan*” 假澳門人 or “fake Macao person.” The Macao administration offers two kinds of residency, one is non-permanent and the other is permanent. Persons who have applied for and received the right to Macao residency are first admitted as non-permanent residents. If they live in Macao for seven years and do not commit any acts that would cause them to lose this status, they may then become permanent residents. This is similar to an immigrant in the U.S. who first is granted a “green card,” and then after a period of years may apply for and become a U.S. citizen. Likewise, those persons in Macao, who after a period of seven years become permanent residents, have passed an important legal requirement and may then have the right to live and work permanently. To many people they are then perceived as true “Macao persons.” This understanding was challenged by local youth.

Local youth participants were asked who counts as a Macao person. One said that it is a person who came to Macao “very early,” whose parents were born in Macao, then was born and raised in Macao. Another then said that a Macao person is someone born in Macao and then “has permanent residency status.” This was then qualified by the claim that not all people with permanent status count as Macao persons.

L: Actually I feel that if a person came from the Mainland, and then has lived in Macao for the required seven years, she [or he, gender is not marked] is not a true Macao person.

Researcher: Why?

L: Because your root is not here and you did not grow up here, and so culturally

J: [interrupts] She [he] is a fake Macao person [*gaa Ou-munjan* 假澳門人].

L: Right. Really the culture is different. Maybe she [he] has already lived [here] seven years, and maybe during these seven years she understands Macao, but her education from the time she was small until an adult, those things that she was instilled with, these are different things.

Researcher: So you don’t think she’s a Macao person?

L: Right.

In the above we see that both L and J agree that even if a person has lived in Macao more than seven years and has permanent residency, such a person is not a real Macao person. The education that a person received as a child growing up in China, and the culture that was acquired, are differences that cannot be changed simply by receiving a document that officially states someone is a permanent resident.

**Mainlander behaviors and situated meanings.**

The term *san ji man* (new immigrant) and its associated meanings is situated between two others, Mainlander and Macao person. In all three focus group sessions participants discussed the characteristics of a *san ji man* in comparison with, and in contrast with these other terms.

The Chinese Mainland as a place, or Mainlander as a person (interchangeably called *Daai-luk jan* 大陸人或 *Naap-deijan* 內地人) is often portrayed negatively. Local Macao youth said that those from the Mainland have a problem of “quality” and “values.” L said, referring to Mainlanders, “they are different from us who have grown up here: One simple problem is that of queuing [lining up].” J agreed and said, “Right, queuing, and they won’t greet properly, and when they open the door they won’t help you, and they won’t give room for an older person to go first.” Then later during the session L spoke forcefully about a habit of Mainlanders that she dislikes:

So [I] just hate them. And I don’t think there is much to be gained if you confront them directly, because that is their habits. The things that they habitually do will affect us. For example when you go to the toilet, “Why don’t they close the door! There is a door and why don’t you close it? Just use the toilet door to cover yourself.” If you go to the *New Yaohan Department Store* you will meet many of them. Sometimes I will kick on the door, and then I’ll hear “Ai ya. I am in here” [spoken in Mandarin in an annoyed voice]. It is so strange!

J’s complaint about bathroom etiquette is one familiar to many in Macao. Some female tourists from China, especially those who are older and grew up in rural places when and where sanitary conditions were different, are not accustomed to bathroom stalls with doors. Furthermore, most toilets are not “western” in design but are of the “squat” type, and when the door is left open gives the passerby an unpleasant view.

Similar sentiments about people from the Mainland were voiced during the mixed and new immigrant focus group sessions. A, a student at a local university, said that some of her teachers and classmates will say, “The Mainland is thus and so, the safety is very poor, driving is unsafe, Mainland people are like this. ... And then they will say that other than Macao and Hong Kong, the Mainland is very dirty.” She, however, objected to this characterization. D, a local Macao youth, put the issue of these behaviors in context. He said that he could understand the criticisms: “The Mainland population is so great, and many people do not have much education, and so of course there will be those people of a lower quality. And so that there are some people who will do these things. But this is not a reason to label everyone this way.” He then addressed the issue of public urination:

If you come from the countryside, and you urinate or defecate publicly, no one will say anything. Then you come to Macao, and your child does that, you don’t understand, and maybe you will really let [your child] urinate on the street. This is something you can understand. ... But if you are an adult, ... this really is too much.

Unlike J above, D both acknowledged and explained the problem of Mainlander’s behaviors. He understood that in some rural areas of China behaviors are acceptable when done in their home environment. This may explain why they do these things in Macao. But he does not believe it fair to “label” all Mainlanders as lacking in “quality”; likewise he does not find it acceptable that Mainland Chinese adults do not modify their behaviors when in Macao.

From the above we can infer the implied meaning that Macao is a place where some undesirable behaviors are unacceptable, the “quality” and “education” is better, and people are more polite. Participants in the new immigrant session, who were employed full-time in Macao also made comments about business practices. K said: “Mainland people, ... they depend on *guanxi* [relationships]. *Guanxi* is more important than ability. We have a saying, ‘To know one more character is not as important as to know one more person.’” He then added that after he came to Macao he learned:

Macao really is a place where there are more things to operate and manage, show [your] abilities; and requirements are higher. When they want you do something, it is not because you came [to the job] through introductions, and if you do or don’t do what you are asked it doesn’t matter. If you are given something to do, you must do it, and they will look at your work performance, and your abilities.

Ma (2011) claims that social relations, or *guanxi*, is one of the most important components of Chinese interpersonal communication. K’s comments indicate that *guanxi* is less important in Macao than the mainland China, and may point to why participants in this study said the culture and communicative practices of Macao and the mainland differ. K then elaborated on differences in how one behaves with work colleagues, saying that in “Mainland [is a place where people] like to eat and drink [*jingcao*, 應酬], a lot, drink and eat.” But in contrast, he said, “Macao is nine-to-five; people are not willing to go out to eat and drink. Those who have ability to do things just use their ability.” It seems ironic that Macao, the place where tourists and vacationers come to gamble, drink, and be entertained, for locals is not a place where drinking and social entertainment mix with doing business.

**San ji man as a negative marker.** We now discuss how participants in the three focus groups defined and discussed *san ji man* (SJM). There was agreement across

all focus groups that *san ji man* is understood as negative in connotation. Yet participants framed the negative meanings of this term differently.

Local Macao youth discussed *san ji man* most negatively. L said “When I hear *san ji man*, then maybe I will say, ‘*SAN JI MAN*.’” As he said, “*SAN JI MAN*” he frowned and knitted his brows, and spoke it in a tone of voice that communicated contempt. C agreed, and said “It is because most *san ji man* act out in this way, their actions are normally like that, their attitude, they all give you a very stereotypical impression.” J said when she sees someone acting badly or in a boorish manner, and then afterwards learns that the person is a *san ji man*, she said it explains the behavior: “Oh, it’s because she is a new immigrant.” J then described a former classmate, a *san ji man* who grew up in the Mainland and now lives in Macao. She said this person does not make friends with local Macao people and associates mainly with other *san ji man*. The only Macao people she makes friends with are those who “boring” and “simple” people who are not very fashionable; this person is “unable” to “assimilate” into Macao.

During the mixed group S said that Macao people have a negative attitude against *san ji man*. She illustrated the point by telling a brief story: “A few days ago when I was riding the bus; on it were two Macao people talking; it was late in the night and we were drifting along on the bus.” She struck up a conversation with the other passengers and the problem of crime came up, and she told the name of the apartment block where she lives. She then said that even though her flat is more expensive, there is not much crime there. They then said to her, “You who live in that area have so much money, and buy flats there, you should expect that there will be crime.” S, who is a *san ji man*, said that they then talked about many other reports of crime, implying that *san ji man* are the cause—because thieves target them for their assumed wealth.

D, a Macao person who was dating S, said that one time he was eating with his family members and watching the television news—reporting on problems in Mainland China. His younger brother, who was in primary school, then said: “Those Mainland people are all like that.” D replied, “You don’t know what you’re talking about. You shouldn’t listen to all the nonsense that others say.” S then explained that when she first started to date D, and his mother learned that she was a *san ji man*, she asked D if S and her family had a lot of money, and was concerned about the negative attitudes and behaviors of *san ji man*. It was hard for S at first to be accepted by D’s family. But over time she was able to “let her [D’s mother] taste [or experience] things from the Mainland.” D’s mother “worked hard to taste and experience things from *san ji man*.” Now, S explained, while sometimes differences arise, unlike

before when she felt discriminated against by D’s family, they now show respect.

**San ji man: Differentiating and defending.** The “*san ji man*” focus group talked about the term *san ji man* like the mixed group. P said that “when some people talk about this term [*san ji man*] they say negative things.” When asked to elaborate, she replied, “Some of the people who immigrated from the Mainland, especially those low in quality [or lower class], that group of Mainlanders, ... they have made Macao chaotic [*lyun 亂*].”

D said that he hears the term *san ji man* used negatively when he is at work, but not in conversations with friends and family. However, the place where *san ji man* appears most often, and is discussed negatively, is a local online forum hosted by CTM: “All of this is expressed on the CTM discussion forum. And of course, I feel, ‘*san ji man*’ carries with it negative meanings, according to what I understand.” D then shifted the tone of his talk to personally address people in Macao, using the indexical pronoun “you”:

If you don’t want it to be like this, then why do you say these things that discriminate and separate. Now I myself am already a Macao person, and so why do you use these three characters as a label? To label us? First, we truly immigrated here, and most have immigrated from the Mainland. And so as it was just said, one is the problem of quality, and this will then influence them [Macao people]. The second I feel is that [immigrants] bring more energy, they stimulate the economy. First, if you are a *san ji man* you must necessarily buy a house [or flat], or [another way to immigrate] is to engage in a fake marriage, but I don’t want to say more about that. Let’s just talk about what is legal, and to buy a house really is a legal way [to immigrate]. I really don’t know what Macao people think, that is to say, that it brings to them a kind of, you can’t say it is jealousy. They think that we are, that is to say *san ji man*, have bought their houses [flats], have taken their jobs. And so that is a conflict of interest. So you say these three characters, they necessarily are negative. Other than government officials, or the official news media, except for them I have not heard anything that is positive, *san ji man*, these three characters. And so according to my understanding, I have not heard anything positive.

In the above excerpt D iterates a number of problems, and conflicts that are associated with the influx of investment migrants from China. He claims that most have come to Macao legally, and in order to meet the government mandated conditions for investment residency, must buy a house or apartment flat. This action, and the money which they have brought to Macao, stimulates the economy and leads to higher prices. Many who find jobs in Macao are



perceived as taking away positions from the local populace. Therefore, they are labeled as “*san ji man*” and seen in a negative light.

### Acculturation Behaviors and Strategies

In this next section we show how members of the three focus groups discussed acculturation behaviors and strategies. As claimed by Berry (2006), dominant and nondominant groups are mutually interacting, and their actions may follow one of four acculturating strategies. When we look at data from across the three focus groups, we find different strategies. Some of these have been alluded to above. For instance, S, a *san ji man* who was in a long-term dating relationship with D, a local Macao person, said that she tried to get her boyfriend and family members to “taste” things from the Mainland. This could be seen as an integration strategy. Members of the local Macao focus group, however, showed strategies of separation and marginalization. L and J described people from the Mainland with residency as “fake” Macao people who cannot count as “true” Macao persons. L said that she disliked Mainland tourists because of their habits, and sometimes would confront them in the public stalls. A pattern to emerge from the data is that local Macao youth showed mainly marginalizing and segregating strategies; both *san ji man* and mixed focus groups expressed behaviors and beliefs that pointed to a strategy of integration. In the following we give more examples.

Local Macao youth, similar to what was discussed by D in the mixed group above, saw *san ji man* as a threat to Macao people. J said that Macao people are not as competitive as *san ji man*, and that the latter will actively seize new opportunities. L agreed, and added that “local Macao people feel that [they] have been invaded by outsiders. So they [Macao people] don’t like [them].” He said that it was fine if outsiders came for tourism, but he does not want them to come and take jobs, saying that it was like they were “robbing food.” J said that in neighborhoods and apartment blocks where *san ji man* moved in, local Macao people responded by moving out.

**New immigrants as intermediaries.** In both the mixed and new immigrant focus groups, participants described themselves as “intermediaries” (*zung gaan jan* 中間人). S, who is a *san ji man*, said that the cultures of Macao and the Mainland are different. One practical difference is that in Macao vehicle traffic is on the left, like in Hong Kong or the U.K., whereas in the Mainland it is on the right, like in the U.S. Drivers in the two regions have different habits and this sometimes leads to quarrels. She said that people from Macao and the Mainland do not often socialize together and do not understand each other’s cultures. Mainland and Macao classmates have

different conversation topics; when she is with Mainland classmates they will talk about their experiences in high school, and what places in China they have visited. Macao students will not go to China, and instead take trips to Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Malaysia. “They will talk at length about Hong Kong and what they do there. But if I’m with Mainland classmates, we’ll talk about Beijing, how big it is, so beautiful. Our conversation topics are really very different.” S explained her role:

I take the role of being an intermediary, and can socialize with either side. When [I] am with Mainland classmates, doing a homework project together, [I] will put more effort into it. But maybe when I’m with Macao classmates I’ll be more relaxed. Really I’m okay with both groups.

K and P described their role much in the same way as S above. K said, “I understand the role of being an intermediary. ... You have the background of getting an education in the Chinese Mainland, and at the same time you know the education and culture of Macao. So adding the two together ... your own position is to be an intermediary.” P said that when she goes out with a group of friends that includes people from both Macao and the Mainland, the Macao friends will sometimes ask her questions about the Mainland, and so she “really becomes like ‘an intermediary’ and then has to communicate with both sides.”

A, a student in university, said that when doing group assignments “Mainland students very rarely work with Macao students. Mainland students will choose people. If someone does not speak Mandarin well, has bad grades, or is lazy, they will say that they do not want you to join their group.” She explained that Mainland and Macao students also separate because of language. Mainland students will associate only with those who speak Mandarin, or their local dialect. Media consumption also separates the two groups. In Macao local students will watch Cantonese language programming from Hong Kong and Macao. But Mainland students are not aware of such programming, and do not know that Hong Kong dramas are in Cantonese. When they are in China and watch such shows on the internet they are dubbed in Mandarin, not Cantonese. And A said that in companies that hire both Mainland and Macao employees, Mainlanders and local Macao people will not eat or socialize together. Yet A said she can understand and socialize with “both sides,” thus demonstrating a strategy of integration.

### Identity

Participants in all three focus groups were presented with a list of terms referencing identities, and asked to choose one or more that described their own. These were listed in order as Chinese (中國人), Macao

person (澳門人), New Immigrant—*san ji man* (新移民), and Mainlander (內地人).

**New immigrants' identity.** The three new immigrant focus group members and the two new immigrant participants in the mixed group all chose Chinese as the most important term to describe their identity. K explained that he chose it because China is where his parents come from, he was born in China, he has Chinese blood, and this makes him Chinese. Both S and A in the mixed group said they first identify as Chinese, second as *san ji man* (new immigrant), third as Macao person, and last as Mainlander. Later S was asked again how she identifies herself in different situations, and she replied: "I will look at who I'm with!" When she is with Mainlanders she presents herself as a Mainlander, and with Macao persons she is a Macao person. This was then linked to her role as "intermediary" as explained above.

**New immigrants accommodate but do not assimilate.** New immigrant youth saw themselves as actively accommodating to people of Macao. P said that "I will cater to them [Macao persons]. Because I am the one who in reality came to this place, it's not that they came to my place, so I will do my best to cater to them, and I do not ask them to understand what I say." To illustrate, she said that a new term, *Diaosi* 屌絲 (a term that describes a person from the countryside who has become wealthy and moved to a city) is well-known in China. Yet Macao people do not know this term, and she does not believe it necessary to explain it to them. N said explained that with effort it was not difficult to "accommodate" (*jung gap* 融合) or "assimilate" (*tung faa* 同化) to Macao: "The differences with [Macao] are not very great. So you cannot say that you are unable to accommodate, that it is very hard to accommodate." She came to Macao in her teens and received a university education; at first she experienced major differences in culture and habits. "But then you have to work hard to accommodate, and then we were quickly able to accommodate and assimilate."

Later in the conversation K was asked if he believed it important to completely assimilate to Macao, or should he maintain some part of his original culture and habits. K replied:

Accommodating is definitely important. You must adjust to a new environment; in the work environment you must accommodate. ... But on the other hand, you must have your own self, culture, thinking, or your principles. It's not that when you go to a new environment you must change your own thought processes. So you must keep these separate. If it is something individual, you should keep those things, you should hold onto those things. I will hold onto them. But

for the work environment, I must force myself to accommodate.

As K articulates most eloquently, he expresses a stance that can be explained by Ward's (1996) claim that there are two aspects to acculturation, one is socio-cultural and the other is psychological. K explains that in order to do well in the work environment of Macao he must learn the social and cultural skills necessary to perform the task. But psychologically he does not change. He holds onto the principles, thoughts, culture, and parts of himself that are most important to him. Thus, he sees himself accommodating to Macao's local culture, but not completely assimilating his thoughts and identity.

**Local Macao youth are Macao person only.** In contrast with new immigrant youth who identified with China, and as intermediaries who could adapt and adjust to the local environment and social situation, all three local Macao youth, and D in the mixed group, said they were Macao persons only. When asked which term he identified with, J said: "Macao person. Um and I do not choose Chinese person, even though I have to recognize it." That is, while he recognized that he counts as Chinese, he resisted it. D in the mixed group said: "I am a Macao person. [pause] Just a Macao person." He was then asked by the researcher if did not want to select any of the other choices, and replied that he did not. He explained that he was born in Macao and grew up in Macao. Their responses to this question were consistent with other responses that conceptually and behaviorally mapped out distinct cultural worlds, separating a "true" Macao person from all others.

Just as we saw in the discussion of terms of reference above, Macao youth framed their identity in distinction with others, namely those from the "Mainland." J said: "They [Mainlanders] count as outside invaders; they have a competitive spirit ... are very hardworking, they are educated, have money, are opportunistic. But Macao people are simple [*daan-seon* 單純], and sluggish." In a competitive environment local Macao people are "invaded" by Mainlanders, and lack the ambition and drive to succeed. J explained that this is because of the Portuguese influence on Macao: "Portugal is a country that is very leisurely, where [people] enjoy drinking beer. So Macao is also a place where people enjoy their leisure." In sum, J sees his identity linked to personality traits of society as a whole and impacted by colonialism; furthermore, Macao people are threatened by aggressive and competitive Chinese Mainlanders.

## Conclusion

This study posed three questions. One was what are terms of the reference and associated meanings used to describe Macao residents and new immigrants or *san*

*ji man*, two was how do attitudes or preferences about *san ji man* impact acculturation strategies and behaviors, and three was how do local and new immigrant youth in Macao identify themselves? Furthermore, similarities and differences in the responses given across the three focus group sessions were also explored.

As findings demonstrate, there was widespread agreement that the term *san ji man* is associated with negative meanings, indexes a person from China who has come to Macao through the investment residency program, is rich, and displays behaviors that differ from local norms. Yet there was variation across the groups in the degree to which these meanings were accepted or resisted. In their session local Macao youth were most critical, using terms such as *tou hou* 土豪 or “ugly Chinese” and *baan saai haai* 扮曬蟹 or “showy and awkwardly moving crab” to describe new immigrants. They decried the actions of “Mainlanders” who came to Macao, and claimed that even though a new immigrant may have obtained permanent residency in Macao, such a person is a “fake” Macao person. They did not believe that such a person could count as a “true” Macao person and behave and act in accord with acceptable local norms.

While new immigrant youth recognized and narrated problematic behaviors displayed by “Mainlanders,” they rejected the criticisms of *san ji man* that local Macao people make. They contextualized the issue, pointing out that the requirements of the investment resident policy—that an immigrant must spend money on an apartment flat and “invest” in Macao—have led to rising housing prices. They see that there are cultural, educational, and “quality” differences between Macao people and those from the Mainland, but these are not necessarily the “fault” of immigrants.

Acculturation strategies and behaviors differed across the groups. Local Macao youth separated themselves from new immigrants. They would confront or “scold” people who did not act appropriately; they would move out of an apartment when new immigrants would move in; they would not go to China for vacation, preferring to go to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, or Korea; they perceived new immigrants to be a threat who “robbed food” from them; they were not interested in socializing or making friends with new immigrants or Mainlanders. New immigrant youth, however, found themselves playing the role of “intermediary” between local Macao youth and Mainland youth. Because they grew up in China, and they now lived and worked or studied in Macao, they could understand both places. They were able to make comparisons between the cultural practices of both places, pointing out relative strengths and weaknesses. During social interaction they may foreground either a Macao or Mainland identity, and explained actions and behaviors to both sides. Clearly they pursued a strategy of integration.

The last research question examined issues of identity. Consistent with other responses, local Macao youth and new immigrant youth defined themselves differently. Local Macao youth saw themselves as “Macao persons” and did not want to also count as “Chinese.” New immigrant youth primarily identified themselves as “Chinese” as it was the place of their birth, their families, and where they had spent much of their life. But they also embraced a “Macao person” identity and to some extent, a “new immigrant” or “*san ji man*” identity.

### Implications

The findings of this study demonstrate that, in support of Berry’s (2006) model, acculturation is a dual process of interaction between dominant and nondominant groups. The presence of individuals and groups who cross borders from one place to another results in cultural stresses that impact all groups, not just the group or individual that is the nondominant migrant. Macao, however, is a unique context. The recent influx of large numbers of immigrants, mostly from nearby Mainland China, have created stresses on the resident population, and local residents have responded differently from newcomers. Instead of seeing themselves as more integrated with—identifying more strongly with a “Chinese” or “Mainland” identity—local Macao youth have moved in the opposite direction. They see their culture and “quality” as better than that of “Mainlanders.” They do not want to travel to or visit sites in China and prefer to visit and talk about Hong Kong than Beijing. Thus, they are more likely to follow strategies of segregation and marginalization than integration. Individuals who are more likely to pursue a strategy of integration are new immigrant youth who have lived in both China and Macao, and may serve as “intermediaries” between both sides.

There are two implications to be drawn from this study. One is that a “Chinese” identity is not singular, but varies across contexts, even in China. This supports the argument of Sandel, Wong Lowe, and Chao (2012) who found not a singular Chinese identity, but multiple understandings. And while the current study did not make comparisons across the generations, there were indications from these data that generational differences may also be found in the context of Macao. This warrants further study.

A second implication is that closer proximity does not mean greater integration. While we did not review this in the literature, it is common knowledge that a goal of the “one-country, two-systems” arrangements for Hong Kong and Macao is that by the end of the 50 year agreement, local people in both places will identify with China, and there will be no need for a “border” between these administrative regions. However, these data indicate that the opposite is happening in Macao. Local

Macao youth who have lived a majority of their lives as part of China identify exclusively with Macao, and do not want to be identified as “Chinese.” This is similar to what recent events in Hong Kong indicates is happening among youth there (Wong & Wong, 2014), who identify more strongly with Hong Kong the city, and not China the country. Therefore, even though Macao is a place where it is difficult not to see people from the Chinese Mainland on a daily basis, local Macao youth prefer to separate themselves from such people in their friendships and social interactions.

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