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Macau Residents as Border People – A Changing Border Regime from a Sociocultural Perspective

Werner Breitung

Abstract: The concept of border people refers to people living with borders, dealing with the related difficulties and taking advantage of the respective opportunities. This concept is here applied to the residents of Macau, whose border checkpoint to the mainland has become one of the busiest in the world. Even though the border control is still in place, it has become very common for Macau residents to cross the border on an everyday basis. This paper links the people's border-related attitudes and activities to the process of Macau's integration with China and argues that the "integration from below" manifested in the growing exchange of people is a crucial factor in the overall integration process.

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Introduction

Research on borders and border regions is being conducted by a broad variety of scholars in various disciplines and from their specific perspectives (Donnan and Wilson 1999). For instance, geographers mainly emphasize spatial aspects such as territorial issues, impacts on regional development, and regional identity. This study of Macau contributes a sociocultural and an Asian perspective to geographical border studies and, at the same time, particularly illustrates the dynamism of border regimes. The cases of the Macau and Hong Kong Special Administrative Regions (SAR) are exceptional for several reasons:

1. Their boundaries do not have the status of national borders, nor does any party claim this status for them. Sovereignty in the SAR territories is to some extent ambiguous, but unlike so many other cases, it is not disputed, either internally or internationally.
2. Although the SAR boundaries are only internal boundaries, they are heavily fortified and controlled; and although they are heavily fortified and controlled, they manage one of the highest flows of border crossers and cross-border interaction worldwide.
3. Because of the 50-year period set out in the Basic Laws of Hong Kong and Macau, the SAR status has been, from the outset, limited in time. Thus, the boundaries of the two SARs have an explicitly fixed "expiry date" and are intended to constantly change in character and function.

As the two regions put existing categorizations into question, they open the eyes of observers to more dynamic and multifaceted concepts of borders.

This study on Macau is set against the background of the 50-year period mentioned above. Without being too particular about the actual number of years the integration will take, all changes in the border regime have to be understood as part of the broader integration of Macau into the Chinese nation. While this integration process is mostly portrayed as a "top-down" project, the approach of this study is sociocultural or "bottom-up". It takes the border people as the focal point of its research. The connection created between the border and the people is threefold: the border's impact on people's activities, the people's perception of the border, and the meaning of the border for people's ideas and identities.

Border Regions and Border People

Borders have become a much debated topic (Newman and Paasi 1998; Donnan and Wilson 1999). First, globalization, transnationalism, and the

consolidation of regional blocks such as the EU have led to ideas of a "borderless world" (Ohmae 1995; Yeung 1998); secondly, the surge of newly independent states and autonomous regions has created more national borders than ever; and finally, threats such as global terrorism, mass migration, and infectious diseases have led to a re-bordering discourse. All of these factors are reflected in a growing and diversifying academic debate on the nature and future of borders.

Given this situation, some reflections on a dynamic border regime may be useful. First, it should be clarified that the terms "border" and "boundary" are used more or less synonymously here. This is in line, for example, with Newman, who uses "boundary" in one paper and "border" in a very similar one (Newman 2002, 2003). As a side note, the official terminology in Hong Kong, but not so much in Macau, dropped the term "border" in favour of "boundary" after the handover (Breitung 2002a; Yang 2006). In reality, however, both border regimes have not changed significantly – and besides, border and boundary are actually not differentiated this way in English: there is nothing wrong with saying that countries have boundaries or that districts have borders.

Borders or boundaries in a geographical sense are the lines which separate areas or territories from each other. Borders and border regions can also be seen as lines or zones where contacts between states or territories are enacted. They not only allow such contacts, they also, by maintaining discontinuities, create the very opportunity to experience differences. If there were no political boundaries, cultural and economic differences would change gradually between regions and could not meet in a particular place. Political borders therefore create options and choices for people living in the border region – for example, with respect to languages, cuisine, shopping, housing, jobs, and marriage.

Research on border regions analyses the impact of a border on a particular region, for example, transborder labour and housing markets, and discusses suitable forms of cross-border governance. Anthropologists and social geographers have introduced the concepts of "border people" (Martinez 1994), "borderlanders" (Wilson and Donnan 1998), and "border communities" (Papademetriou and Meyers 2001) when analysing the relationship between borders and the people living with them.

The body of case studies on border regions is growing. Classical cases include the "Euregios" along the borders within the EU (van Geenhuizen and Ratti 2001; Kaplan and Häkli 2002); the US-Mexican border, where the main concerns are labour migration and border management (Martinez 1994; Papademetriou and Meyers 2001); and Asia, which has contributed the concept of "growth triangles", such as Singapore-Malaysia-Indonesia (Toh

and Low 1993; Ho and So 1997). In the Chinese Pearl River Delta, the mainstream research is economy oriented, but there have also been studies with a sociocultural perspective (Sklair 1986; Guldin 1995; Smart and Smart 1998) focusing on the daily practices of ordinary people rather than on institutional actors. These studies, however, do not sufficiently tackle the issue of change within an integration process.

Open Borders and Activity Spaces

A key variable for assessing a border regime is its openness (Rietveld 2001), which takes economic and psychological deterrents as well as legal or physical barriers into account. The more open a border regime is, the less it deters cross-border interaction. The openness can differ according to the direction and the type of interaction. One border may be relatively open to the flow of merchandise but a strong barrier to the flow of people, another may be more open in one geographical direction than in the other. Ratti (1993) has described borders as barriers or filters, and several empirical studies have tried to quantify the barrier or filter effect on, for example, trade, investment, and innovation (Helliwell 1998; van Houtum 2001).

When concerned with the everyday practices of ordinary people, the barrier or filter concept should be applied to those peoples' activity spaces. Activity spaces describe the spatial extent to which people move around in the course of their daily activities. These spaces can be drawn on maps or described for individuals or social groups. Social criteria such as age, education, and occupation influence them, as do external factors such as access to transport, available information, and actual or perceived barriers. A perceived barrier, such as a busy road, may not be a significant barrier for a long-distance trip or one with a clear target, but we would not cross it for just a short walk or an activity that we can do as easily on our side of it. Similarly, a border may not be a problem to cross on long-distance trips, but we avoid crossing it during our daily activities unless there is an additional incentive.

Perceived barriers can also be reinforced by a lack of information about the places beyond them. This can explain the fact that even after the opening up of a border, the lack of awareness about the other side can constitute a very effective mental boundary. There are, for example, people in Berlin who, many years after the removal of the Berlin Wall, still rarely cross the now imaginary border. The case of Macau seems different, but there are also significant mental boundaries, which are caused by unfamiliarity. On the other hand, the relationship between activity spaces and awareness is reciprocal. If there are incentives causing people to cross boundaries, the extended activity space can contribute to an increasing awareness of places

beyond the boundary. This relationship between activities and awareness is relevant for our particular view on the Macau-Guangdong border.

Changing Borders and Changing Identities

Identities and borders are closely related. They can in fact be seen as two sides of one coin. Differences in identity between "us" and the "others" are a major rationale for erecting boundaries, and borders in turn create differences in identity.

A person's identity can be seen as a combination of attributes such as gender, age, ethnic group, nationality, religion, etc. Attributes of territorial belonging are rarely the most important, but they are significant (Kolossov 2002). Most people refer to a hierarchy of areal identities from local to regional to national and possibly supranational. For some, the national identity is dominant, for others the local or regional identity. Studies into such identities suggest that they may change over the course of our lives, and that they can depend on the situation, for example, who is asking us.

In Hong Kong, DeGolyer (1997) and Chung (2002) have both been conducting regular studies into the people's categorical areal identities in order to explain aspects of the city's sociopolitical transformation process, particularly with regard to the attitudes towards mainland China. In the case of Macau, the main focus of identity-related studies (e.g. Ngai 1999; Cheng 1999; de Pina-Cabral 2002; Berlie 2002) is the post-colonial coexistence of Portuguese and Chinese cultural elements.

The identities of places are even more complex than those of people. Massey (1998) has proposed a concept of place identity that is based less on the place as such than on the specific constellation of people meeting in this place and the interaction taking place. Such an identity is dynamic and socially constructed. It depends not only on a place's history, physical setting, size, and centrality, but also on the people and the meaning that the place has for them (Breitung 2002b). The identity of Macau, like all place identities, is subjective, manifold, and changing with the times. Important facets are the post-colonial situation, the Chinese cultural environment, the urban and maritime nature – and also, notably, the characteristics of a border city.

Introduction to This Study

Aim

This study links the issues of border openness and cross-border activity spaces to identities and attitudes in the context of the ongoing integration of

Macau with the Chinese motherland. It examines whether the changing border regime, with increasing cross-border travel and interaction, has an impact on cross-border contacts and whether these contacts have an impact on attitudes and identities. The ideal scenario for a smooth integration process would be that cross-border activities increase familiarity, contacts, and awareness, and that these attributes in turn remove prejudices, mental boundaries, and the feeling of separation.
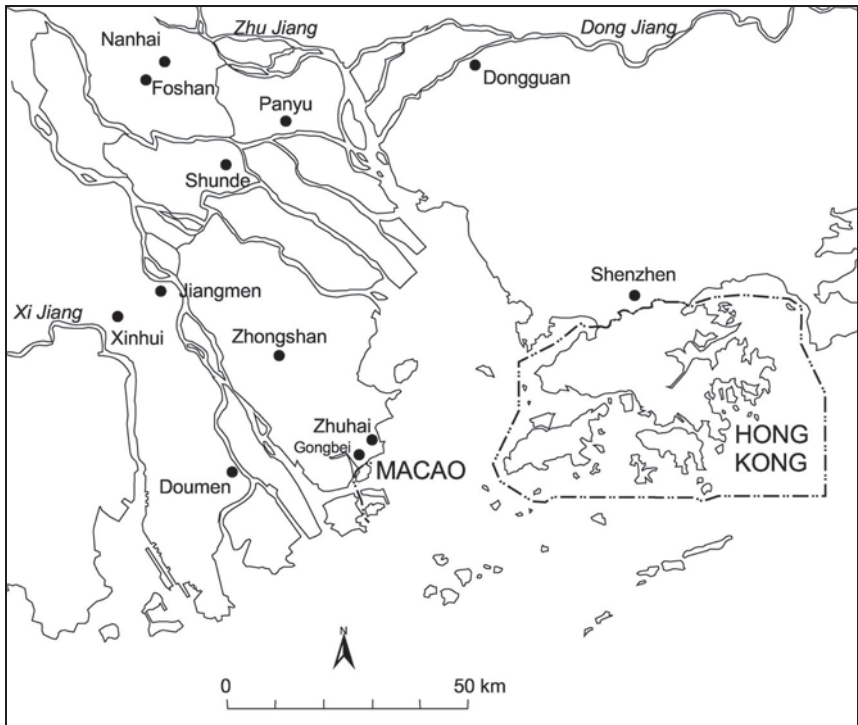
But is this happening? To answer this question, we have first looked at the people's border-crossing behaviour. Who is crossing the border; why are they doing this; and what are the cross-border activity spaces? Secondly, we have asked about contacts and familiarity. And thirdly, we have investigated identities, prejudices, and attitudes towards the border and the "other" on the other side of it. The outcome has been ambivalent and may not bode so well for a smooth integration process.

Methods

The empirical research documented in this paper took place from 2002 to 2005. It is documented in full as a book published by the Instituto Cultural in Macau (Breitung 2007). The research approach chosen uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. The descriptive quantitative analysis is based partly on available secondary data and partly on the author's own surveys. The latter consist of a large-scale cross-boundary travelling survey at the border (1001 respondents) and of four medium-scale surveys on cross-border contacts and attitudes in the inner cities of Macau, Zhuhai, and Zhongshan (comp. Figure 1). For the qualitative analysis, 37 in-depth interviews were conducted.

In the preparation of the cross-boundary travelling survey, a series of similar surveys from Hong Kong was very instrumental. These large-scale surveys (Planning Department 2000, 2002) were used as a model. Questions on the respondents' main language and identity ("Chinese", "Macau Chinese", "Macau people") were added, and due to the unforeseen outbreak of the SARS disease in March 2003, questions shifted from actual trips to usual trip patterns. The main differences in the results, compared to a pilot survey before the SARS outbreak, were a higher share of very frequent travellers and fewer occasional (1-4 times a month) ones, fewer Zhuhai-bound travellers, and fewer leisure and shopping tourists. It can thus be assumed that the biggest group, occasional shopping tourists to Zhuhai, would normally have been even stronger.

Figure 1: Map of Macau and the Pearl River Delta

Source: Own map.

The surveys in the urban areas of Macau, Zhuhai, and Zhongshan targeted the general public rather than border crossers specifically. These surveys included, among others, questions on the existence of and interest in cross-boundary contacts. They were conducted in 2003 at two locations each in Zhongshan (291 respondents), Zhuhai (395 respondents), and Macau (555 respondents). In 2004, a follow-up survey with 587 respondents was conducted in Zhuhai. The objectives of the additional in-depth interviews were to:

- obtain information about everyday experiences with the border,
- collect views on places and people on both sides,
- assess whether the border is a barrier to contacts and activities,
- understand the impact of the border on identities and life styles,
- review changes regarding these four issues over time.

Due to the small sample size, no quantitative conclusions have been drawn from the interviews. The interviews were open but guided by prepared questions and conducted in Cantonese; 23 were held in 2003, and 14 in 2005, partly as follow-ups with the same interviewees. Most of the interviewees were Macau people.

Border Crossing between Macau and Mainland China

History of Cross-border Flows

While Macau is often portrayed as a maritime enclave, there have always also been close interactions with the surrounding Chinese districts. Macau depended on the China trade and on food and water supplies from the mainland. Gongbei is the oldest and one of China's most important land border crossings. As early as 1887, Zhang Zhidong observed that:
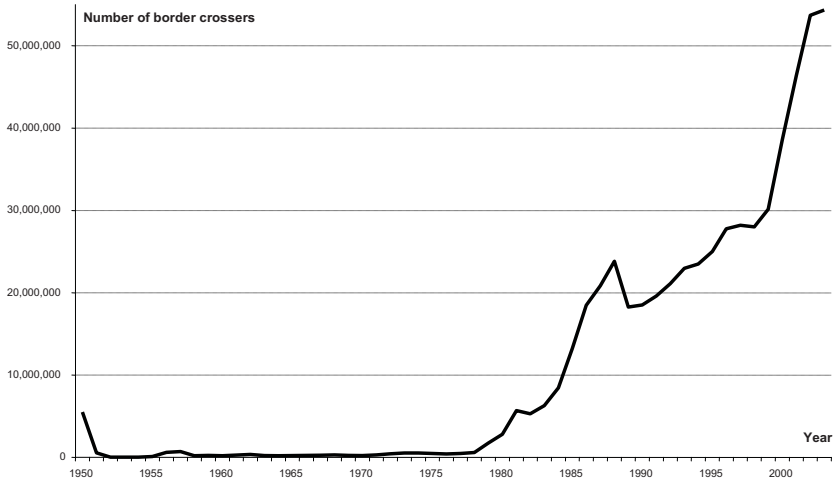
> merchants from the districts of Nanhai, Panyu, Xiangshan[1], and Shunde, exceeding tens of thousands, come and go between Macau and the province. They frequently set up livelihoods and establish businesses in both places, unrestrained by the borders, which causes excessive lawlessness among the people. Their endless traffic is like the weaving of cloth (Porter 1996: 52).

Close interaction facilitated political infiltration, for instance, during Sun Yat-sen's revolution in 1911 and the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. It also helped the people to overcome times of hardship such as the "Great Leap Forward", during which visitors from Macau carried large amounts of necessities into the mainland. Before 1951, there was no border control. From 1951 on, border crossers needed a permit and had to cross through official checkpoints, which led to reduced numbers until 1955 (Figure 2). In February 1956, Hong Kong and Macau people could visit the mainland with a "reference letter for home visits" instead of the permit. Visitor numbers again declined due to anti-rightist campaigns, but subsequently stabilized. Crossing the border in the early days was more difficult than today. People had to get a card proving their "correct political attitude" from their labour or neighbourhood association. At the border, they were then issued a reference letter stating the purpose of the trip, some information about family members, etc. to carry with them on the mainland. While the Gongbei border

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1   Former name of Zhongshan.

was always crowded, until 1998 there were only random checks on the Macau side.

Figure 2: Border Crossers (Inward and Outward) at Zhuhai's Gongbei Check-
point (1950–2003)

Sources: 1950-1990: Gongbei Customs Administration 1997: Table IV-2; 1991-2003: Zhuhai Government (various years). These are the best available figures on the total number of border crossers, although questions regarding the reliability remain.

As a result of China's opening up in 1979, the subsequent establishment of the Zhuhai Special Economic Zone, and Macau's handover in 1999, cross-border contacts and integration have grown to new dimensions (Kamm 1987; Ptak 1990; Edmonds 2002). This has put enormous stress on the border-control facilities. Before the inauguration of the new Gongbei checkpoint in 1999, both software and hardware in the checkpoint were insufficient. Since the reform, the personnel organization has been changed from a military to a civil service style, and work attitudes have improved. The job training has been intensified, a reward-and-punishment system established, and new rules and regulations (for example, against bribery) enacted. A central computer has since then facilitated control and supervision of all operations in the checkpoint; an "ID card-style" home-return permit has been introduced; and a supervision board with people from different sectors of society from Zhuhai and Macau is being convened annually (Xia 2002 and own interviews).

Macau's checkpoint (Barrier Gate) remained inadequate until 2004, because the necessary extension was not easy to realize. There was not

enough land between the city's densely populated Northern District in the south and the border in the north. Only in 2001 could an agreement with the mainland be reached to lease, for 50 years and for a symbolic price, a 2.8 ha plot in the so-called no-man's-land between the two checkpoints for the extension. A new border inspection complex, designed to handle a two-way flow of 300,000 people and 24,000 cars a day, was opened on this land in 2004 (Bruning 2001, 2004); however, it has already reached full capacity, even though electronic ID card-checking facilities have been introduced for Macau residents.

Current Cross-border Flows

Today the absolute number of border crossers is among the highest of all border checkpoints in the world, which is astonishing given the small size of Macau. In 2002, the Gongbei/ Barrier Gate checkpoint registered more than 50 million border crossings, which means on average 140,000 per day (Xia 2002). Most of the border crossers are Macau residents (Table 1). These figures suggest that the average Macau resident travelled to the mainland more than 40 times per year (calculated from DSEC 2002). The data is slightly distorted by professional petty smugglers, who cross the border many times a day. Without them, the figure may be roughly 10 per cent lower, but still over three times a month. In comparison, the average Hong Kong resident crossed the Hong Kong border 4.7 times in 1995 and 8.7 times in 2001. The rate of increase is also higher in Macau than in Hong Kong and probably most other borders in the world.

Table 1: Estimated Total Number of Arrivals from and Departures to the Mainland in Millions (2001-2004)

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004
Macau residents	34.9	39.4	36.8	42.3
Visitors	10.2	11.8	13.6	20.8
Total	45.1	51.2	50.5	63.2
% Macau residents	77.4	76.9	73.0	67.0

Note: The Macau resident figures are the official totals for the Barrier Gate crossing plus an estimated 2% for other checkpoints. The visitor figures are two times the official arrival figures by checkpoint (minus estimated 60% at the airport and 95% at the Outer Harbour for non-mainland-related arrivals). 2003 was the year of the SARS epidemic.
Sources: DSEC 2002, 2005, 2006.

Among the five existing checkpoints, the Barrier Gate stands out clearly with about 97 per cent of all trips to the mainland; the rest are divided between the Inner Harbour and Cotai checkpoints as well as about a third of the airport traffic and a few high-speed ferries (DSEC 2002, 2005). Road traffic to the mainland is still very limited, but it is growing at a rapid rate. So far, only vehicles with registration on both sides are permitted to cross the border – mostly lorries and trucks, but also some businessmen's cars. The bulk of cross-border traffic is by foot.

The Border-Crossers

The following sections are based on the cross-border travel survey undertaken in 2003 by the author, partly in comparison with data from Hong Kong (Planning Department 2000, 2002).

Compared to the Hong Kong case, where approximately 70 per cent of the trip-makers to the mainland are male, the gender distribution of cross-boundary trip-makers between Macau and the mainland is much more balanced. Among the Macau residents in the survey, male travellers were just slightly overrepresented (51.8 per cent), as were female travellers among the mainland residents (51.3 per cent). Only among the smaller number of residents from other places did male travellers clearly dominate (75.8 per cent).

In terms of age, Macau residents were broadly distributed (23 per cent under 20; 37 per cent between 20 and 39; 34 per cent between 40 and 59; 7 per cent over 60), but among the mainland residents the 20-39 age group dominated with more than 75 per cent. The low representation of youth and the elderly was due to the limitations on outward travel permits, which were mainly issued for work- and business-related trips. In comparison, at Hong Kong's borders only 4 per cent of all cross-border travellers were under 20 years old, less than a quarter of the respective share of 17.6 per cent in Macau. Hong Kong residents of all ages are free to travel, so there must be a different reason here. Activity spaces usually grow from childhood to youth to adulthood. Given the smaller distance between Macau and Zhuhai, it is natural that the latter becomes part of Macau people's activity spaces at a younger age. In Hong Kong, costs, transport issues, and parents' concerns prohibit many young people from crossing the border.

As many as 95 per cent of the Macau residents and 69 per cent of the mainland residents interviewed were Cantonese speakers. This is of little surprise with regard to the Macau residents, but it is interesting to note that the majority of the mainlanders who travel to Macau are rooted[have roots] in the region, particularly since there are also many non-Cantonese residents, for example, in Zhuhai. Less than 1 per cent of our respondents were usual

speakers of non-Chinese languages. This shows that cross-border travel is very much a matter of Chinese, and probably local, cross-border contacts.

The terms "Macau resident" and "mainland resident", as used above, describe legal status (ID card) rather than actual place of residence. It is sometimes difficult to identify the exact place of residence since some people have places to stay on both sides and make use of them to different extents. The surveys at the Macau border therefore asked where the respondents spent most of their time, and in 71 per cent of the cases this was Macau. In the Hong Kong case, 83 per cent lived in Hong Kong. The difference is not surprising given the different population sizes (travellers from Hong Kong and Taiwan account for a higher percentage of travellers in Macau than Macau and Taiwan people in Hong Kong). What is really remarkable is that 10 per cent of the border crossers in Macau spent less time on the side of their citizenship than on the other side (4.2 per cent mainland residents in Macau, 5.7 per cent Macau residents in Zhuhai or Zhongshan).

The Cross-border Trips

The majority of the travellers in Macau (58 per cent) cross the border at least once a week, and about 20 per cent of the Macau residents even cross it four times a week. The latter number is greater than in Hong Kong, even in absolute figures. In 2001, only about 500,000 people crossed the Hong Kong-mainland border at least once a week, and only 43,000 at least four times a week (Planning Department 2002).

Table 2: People Crossing Macau's and Hong Kong's Borders to the Mainland by Main Purpose

Main purpose	Macau[1]		Hong Kong[2]	
	All trips[3]	Macau residents	All trips[3]	Living in HK
Shopping/leisure	56	64	39	42
Work	13	9	9	4
Business	8	6	29	30
Family	18	19	18	20
Other purposes	4	5	4	3
Total	100	100	100	100

Note: [1] Barrier Gate, [2] all crossing points, [3] both directions.
Sources: Planning Department 2002 for Hong Kong; own survey at the Barrier Gate in Macau (2003).

As many as 53 per cent of the Macau residents travelling to the mainland usually do not go further than to Gongbei, the Zhuhai district just behind the border, and only 17 per cent go to destinations beyond Zhuhai. This behaviour is probably not even appropriately described as "travelling", but rather as an extension of activity spaces across the border. In Hong Kong, the picture is different. The 2001 survey found that 60.7 per cent of the cross-border travellers living in Hong Kong usually travel to Shenzhen. This is significant, but much less than in the Macau-Zhuhai case (especially taking the bigger size of Shenzhen into consideration). In addition, 14.0 per cent went to Dongguan, 7.7 per cent to Guangzhou, 3.1 per cent to Zhongshan, and 14.5 per cent to other places on the mainland. It is clear that the network of mainland destinations from Hong Kong is much wider, whereas Macau travellers go more often but concentrate on very few places, all of which are nearby.

The main reasons for these short-distance trips by Macau residents to Gongbei are shopping and related activities (Table 2). Since the shops of Gongbei provide most services desired by Macau customers, there is little need to travel further. In our qualitative interviews, most people conceded that they seldom venture further than to Gongbei and Xiangzhou in Zhuhai. Some travel to other places in the Pearl River Delta region to visit relatives or do business, but most interviewees spend their time only in Gongbei, to shop, relax, eat out, or otherwise entertain themselves. This restricts their activity spaces to only a small area beyond Macau. Some are unfamiliar with anything beyond the Gongbei shopping mall, and most respondents do not know many streets and bus lines in Zhuhai. All interviewees were significantly more familiar with places on their side of the border than on the other. The border therefore makes a big difference in terms of activity space and familiarity.

Cross-border Consumption by Macau People

The interviews provide insights into the typical patterns and motives of cross-border consumption. Most interviewees go to Gongbei mainly for shopping and related activities. For example, a 60-year-old housewife frequently visits the markets there to buy food and household goods for her family since she is out of a job and prices are lower in Gongbei. A 26-year-old teacher buys books and CDs and strolls around the streets to relax. He likes to buy on the mainland because the books are cheaper. Two ladies, around 30 years old, see shopping for shoes, clothes or books as their favourite entertainment – followed by a massage, dining or bowling, or a visit to the hairdresser or tailor. A 10-year-old girl often goes to Gongbei with her parents. She bought her violin and clothes there and sometimes just wanders in the mall to enjoy

the air conditioning. Lastly, the owner of a small restaurant goes to Gongbei ten times a year to buy goods for the restaurant.
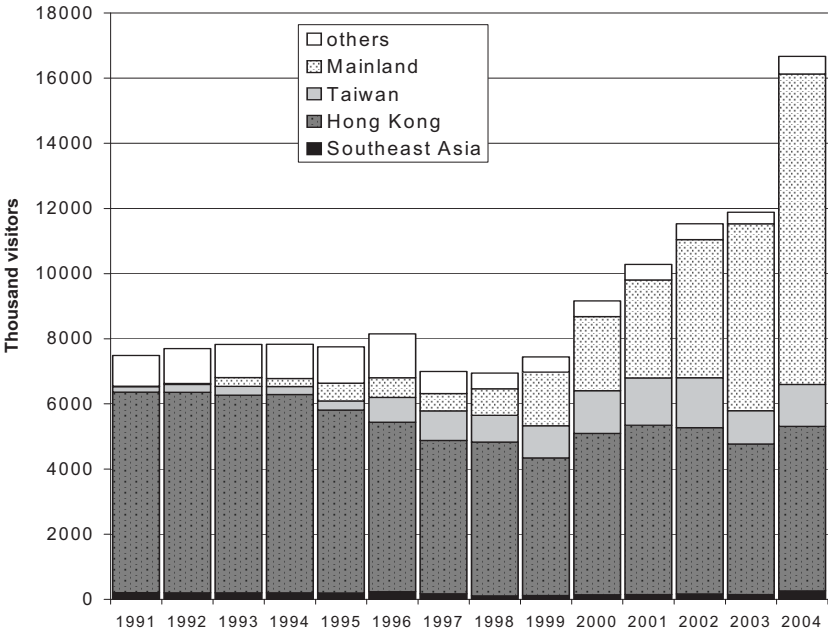
Different surveys on this issue have found that it is very common for Macau people to buy in Zhuhai weekly or even more often. They are drawn by lower prices for goods and meals and by more variety, even though 73 per cent claim that they would prefer to shop in Macau and only 19 per cent prefer Zhuhai (Lui 2001). Consumption trips to Zhuhai appeal mainly to young and middle-aged people, to the lower income groups, and especially to Northern District residents. The latter live closer to the border and tend to be poorer, and as recent immigrants they are more familiar with consumption patterns and products on the mainland (Macau Management Association 2000). Different surveys assess the average amount spent per trip at approximately CNY 300, although many people spend less. Lui (2001) further differentiates spending into purchases of goods (CNY 160), dining (CNY 113), and entertainment (CNY 73). The trips normally take less than one day (82 per cent). For 80 per cent of Macau people, the price differential is the main motivation (*Xinhua Aobao* 2002). According to the same source, Macau residents spend CNY 100 million a month for shopping and leisure in Zhuhai; this equals roughly CNY 2,000 per person, which is a considerable proportion of their monthly expenditure.

It has often been claimed in Macau that this trend has a serious negative impact on the city's retail, catering, and entertainment industries. Some representatives of these industries have therefore suggested a border tax to reduce the advantage of lower prices in Zhuhai. Similar proposals have also been made in Hong Kong. In contrast to the case in Hong Kong, this proposal has received little support in Macau since it would in fact block low-income residents from an affordable supply of daily necessities. It has to be recognized that this option provides Macau with a very useful social buffer. It reduces poverty problems, which would put pressure on the government to allocate more substantial amounts for social welfare. This consideration may be a higher priority socially than the profits of the retail sector. The problem of border crossing distracts higher-income groups more than the poor, which is a good mechanism for making sure the needy benefit most. The border tax has not been implemented by Macau (nor by Hong Kong) and in fact may not be necessary any more: with the new policy for individual mainland tourists, an even stronger counter-movement has emerged and the retail sector in Macau is booming because of the high number of mainland shoppers.

Mainlanders in Macau

Whereas up until the 1990s border crossing was an option for Macau and Hong Kong people but not for mainlanders, the situation has changed drastically since then. The number of mainland tourists in Macau tripled from 2000 to 2004, and the total surpassed the number of Hong Kong tourists. The mainlanders have become the biggest group of visitors in Macau. Their share in 2004 accounted for almost 25 per cent of all border crossings into Macau, compared to 55 per cent for Macau residents (calculated from DSEC 2005).

Figure 3: Visitors to Macau by Home Region (1991-2004)

Source: DSEC 2006.

The boom can be traced back as far as 1998 (Figure 3), when the number of visitors from Hong Kong had dropped in the wake of triad battles in Macau. This was before it became official mainland policy to promote tourism to Macau. The first measure to facilitate the then strictly limited tourism to Hong Kong and Macau was the introduction of three-year business-travel permits in December 2001. One month later the quota for tourist groups to

Hong Kong and Macau was lifted, and in May 2002 a five-year tourist-travel permit was introduced (Yau 2002; Hong Kong Tourism Board 2004).

The most effective measure, however, was the introduction of the individual traveller scheme in July 2003. Under this scheme, the citizens of selected places can, normally within one to two days, get tourism travel permits without having to join a group tour. This privilege was initially available to residents of five smaller Pearl River Delta cities such as Zhongshan, and it has since been gradually extended to all of Guangdong and the better-developed cities of China (Chan 2004; Wong and Eng 2005). In 2004, about 3.5 million out of 9.5 million mainland visitors (37 per cent) came to Macau using individual travel permits (DSEC 2006). This shows, on the one hand, the big impact of this scheme but, on the other hand, that the majority of travellers still travel using other schemes. Even without the individual travel permits, the number of mainland visitors has already surpassed that of visitors from Hong Kong. This demonstrates that the phenomenon of mainland tourism to Macau goes beyond the introduction of one single scheme. The new openness should be seen as a means to accommodate an increasing desire for trips abroad among the Chinese middle class, without diverting too much of the national income into foreign countries.

The rapid increase in visitors from mainland China has had an immense impact on Macau – on its economy, its character, some people's attitudes, and possibly on the political integration process. The increased retail spending and the mainlanders' property investments have had the greatest influence, while the tourism industry and casinos have also strongly benefited. The indirect influence of gambling tax has helped increase government revenue, which has resulted in higher public expenditure for welfare, infrastructure, and education. Interestingly, most of the interviewees in this study agreed that the impact on Macau is great (and mostly positive), although many of them saw no significant impact on their personal lives.

The mainland tourists are not just additional spenders in Macau, they actually spend much more money in the city than other visitors. Their average spending per capita is 2,576 MOP (2,239 MOP per day) against 1,497 MOP (1,352 MOP per day) for the average visitor. These figures exclude gambling and property investment, otherwise the differences would be even greater. Among the total expenses, shopping accounts for 59 per cent, compared to 43 per cent for all tourists. Mainland tourists tend to buy a lot, and they buy differently than other visitors. Whereas Chinese pastry, candy, and food are the preferred shopping items for visitors from Hong Kong and Taiwan, mainlanders purchase mostly jewellery/ watches and cosmetics (DSEC 2004). There are several reasons for this unusual shopping behaviour:

- The prestige gained by the purchase of expensive goods.
- The expectations of colleagues and relatives that they receive gifts after the trip.
- The desire to buy brands which are not available in mainland China.
- A lack of trust in mainland retailers.

The retail sector has developed significantly following the introduction of the new policy. Especially in some sectors, the inflow of purchasing power has more than compensated for the previously bemoaned loss of customers to Zhuhai. The result is a sectoral change in the Macau retail sector away from daily necessities, which can be bought in Zhuhai, towards high-end products.

Apart from shopping, the itineraries of mainland tourists (and in fact most tourists) in Macau include casinos and sightseeing. Visits to friends and relatives are of less significance. Shopping and casinos rank higher for the Chinese, whereas Western tourists put more emphasis on sightseeing. Since the mainland tourists usually stay in groups, they do not mix much with the locals. Yet, most of our interviewees have received between 4 and 30 personal visitors since the implementation of the individual traveller scheme. There was no consensus as to whether the contacts have improved as a consequence of these visits, but the general view was that such visits do not lead to new contacts. Those visitors who already had contacts before met their friends or relatives when they were in Macau, but only one interviewee knew of a story where a new friendship between a Macau resident and a mainland visitor had developed.

Cross-border Contacts

According to the surveys in the three cities, many Zhongshan residents have relatives in Hong Kong (57 per cent) or Macau (48 per cent), while the respective figures for Zhuhai residents were less than half. The Zhuhai Special Economic Zone has attracted people from all parts of China, who may have no family ties in the region. On the other hand, 31 per cent of the respondents there had friends or acquaintances in Macau, compared with less than 27 per cent of the respondents in Zhongshan. The latter place has long-standing family links with Macau, while Zhuhai provides more opportunities for non-family contacts. With 56 per cent of people in Zhuhai and 38 per cent in Zhongshan having no personal contacts in Macau (Table 3), the border can be seen as a significant barrier to such contacts.

Macau people of all ages cross the border frequently, but few in the younger generation have real contacts on the other side. The older generation has typically always had contacts on the mainland. Their travelling motives

include social ones, whereas young people tend to go with Macau friends for shopping and entertainment only.

Table 3: Cross-border Contacts of Respondents in Zhongshan, Zhuhai, and Macau (in per cent).

Place of survey	Zhongshan			Zhuhai		
Place referred to	HK	Macau	Neither	HK	Macau	Neither
Have been to	32.0	30.9	60.1	17.7	32.7	66.1
Have friends in	28.9	26.8	60.5	31.1	31.4	60.0
Have relatives in	56.7	47.8	36.8	25.6	20.0	69.4
Don't know anybody	27.8	38.5		51.6	55.7	
Would like to visit	70.4	69.1	19.2	69.6	71.9	18.0
Would like to work in	24.1	18.2	70.8	29.4	26.6	59.7
Would like to study in	13.7	11.0	80.4	8.6	11.1	84.6
Would like to live in	13.7	9.3	82.8	10.6	9.4	83.8

Place of survey	Macau			
Place referred to	Zhuhai	Zhongshan	HK	Neither
Have been to	97.8	88.5	90.6	1.1
Have friends in	27.7	25.2	64.3	24.7
Have relatives in	24.1	27.2	82.0	10.6
Don't know anybody	60.7	59.3	9.0	
Would like to visit	69.2*		69.4	16.0
Would like to work in	12.8*		16.8	74.6
Would like to study in	11.5*		10.8	80.7
Would like to live in	13.0*		6.8	84.1

Note: * Question referring to Guangdong.
Source: Own surveys in 2003.

By 2003, almost all Macau residents had been to Zhuhai or Zhongshan at least once, but only a minority of people in these places had been to Macau. This asymmetry was a result of the travel regulations in place at that time. The interest in visiting the other side was almost exactly the same in all three places – 70 per cent – with regard to both Hong Kong and Macau (Table 3). However, only a minority of respondents were interested in working, studying, or living across the border. In line with the gap in wages and living expenses, cross-border work was more attractive for Guangdong people and

cross-border residence for Macau people (Table 3). The border is thus a partial barrier. People have some interest in the places behind the border, but they see them as too different to live there.

After the introduction of the individual travel scheme, the share of people in Zhuhai who had been to Macau rose from 32.7 per cent to 40.2 per cent and to Hong Kong from 17.7 per cent to 25.0 per cent (survey in 2004). This has, however, increased neither the number of Zhuhai people's friends and acquaintances in both places nor their interest in working, studying, or living there.

Macau people lead border people's lives more than Zhuhai people or Hong Kong people. The following examples illustrate the increasing number of Macau residents who divide their lives in one way or another between Zhuhai and Macau.

- Mr. Lao (46) was born in Guangzhou but has lived in Macau most of his life. He previously owned a factory in Zhuhai and still conducts business on the mainland. He has many personal contacts on both sides and is engaged in political activities on the mainland. He holds a dual car licence which allows him to drive in both places. He crosses the border one to two times per day. Although he owns an apartment across the border, his family, home, and primary workplace are in Macau.

- Mrs. Ian (32) is a mainland resident. She moved to Zhuhai in 1989, and there she met a man from Macau, whom she married. In 1998, she went to Macau to give birth so that her child would become a Macau resident. Since then she has lived in Macau on two-year visas, but has to report to her hometown government every three months. She wants to receive a Macau ID card, but would actually prefer to live in Zhuhai because of the better living environment there and her personal contacts. She does not know many people in Macau and seldom talks to others. Additionally, her husband is now unemployed, which makes staying in Macau even harder. According to her, crossing the border is annoying for people without Macau ID.

- Mr. Ng (30+) was born in Zhuhai but emigrated at a young age to Macau. He later found a wife in Zhuhai, who followed him to Macau and gave birth to two children. They all have Macau ID cards, but they have decided to move back to Zhuhai. Mr. Ng still works in Macau and has a second apartment there, where he often stays overnight. His family mostly stays in Zhuhai, where the children go to school.

- Mr. Kwan (39) from Zhongshan entered Macau illegally at 15 years old to find work. With a work permit he could work in factories that had government permission to employ non-residents. Their salaries were

about one-third lower than those of Macau residents, and they could normally not get residential ID cards. He later returned to Zhongshan but frequently travels to Macau for business, gambling, and entertainment. He knows both sides well and has contacts, friends, and family on both sides.

Two respondents mentioned owning a second apartment on the mainland; one said that her brother had recently moved to Zhuhai, another had a girlfriend in Guangzhou who later moved to Zhuhai to facilitate their meetings. Two interviewees had a dual car licence to cross the border in their own car. Two revealed that they had studied on the mainland, and three were raised by mainland relatives during part of their childhood. While one respondent wanted his children to enjoy a better school education in Zhuhai, two commuted in the other direction to a school in Macau. More and more exclusive commercial housing areas have been developed in Zhuhai and Zhongshan recently, and many Macau people are among the buyers and residents there. However, most of our interviewees would not yet consider living in Zhuhai and working in Macau or the other way round because crossing the border is still too troublesome, especially as long as it continues to close at midnight.

According to one woman, many men are attracted to Zhuhai because they have a greater choice of wives there. Fifty-four per cent of all marriages in Macau are with a mainland wife, and strikingly, the most common combination (30 per cent) is marriage between two partners born on the mainland. We must, however, take into consideration the fact that 47 per cent of all Macau residents are born on the mainland (DSEC 2001, 2005). The Macau society as a whole is largely formed by cross-border movements. A major reason for immigration, involving mostly women and children from the mainland, is marriage and family reunion. Young women and children are overrepresented among the mainland immigrants.

Well-known border-related issues in Macau also include "second wives" and extramarital affairs. This was indicated, for example, by a literature project at the University of Macau which asked students to write stories about "Crossing the Border". Interestingly, the majority of these stories were about cross-border extramarital affairs (Kelen 2003). Zhuhai and Macau are both also notorious for prostitution, which is typical of border regions. This is reflected in the high percentage of young women among the illegal immigrants.

Self-image and Attitudes Towards Mainlanders in Macau

The increase in cross-border contacts of course has consequences for the attitudes of the different groups towards each other. On the one hand, frequent contacts can foster understanding and even lead to some degree of assimilation; on the other hand, each encounter holds the potential for conflicts and can reinforce prejudices. It seems that both things are happening. Most interviewees initially claimed that they would treat all people the same – or at least their compatriots from across the border, who share the same language, values, and consumption patterns – but as the interviews progressed they tended to emphasize differences. It can be assumed that the first answer is the politically correct one whereas the later ones are influenced by more deeply rooted prejudices.

Asked about their own identities, most respondents described themselves as Chinese, giving reasons such as "I was born in China", "my father is Chinese", "because of my strong feeling of nationalism", or "because Macau people are not different from Chinese" (which are all, in fact, quite different concepts). Many stressed that this feeling has never changed and will last forever. Others did talk about changes in their identity. One woman, for example, viewed herself as Chinese when she lived on the mainland but as Macau Chinese after settling in Macau. Three interviewees said that the answer would depend on who was asking. To a foreigner they would identify themselves as Chinese or Macau Chinese, but to a mainlander they would say they are Macau persons. One girl said that, on the one hand, she sees Macau as her "mother country, which gives a feeling just like parents. This feeling is greater than it is with China". On the other hand, most of her family was born in China and they are rather traditional; this also affects her identity.

Some said that it is increasingly difficult to differentiate between mainland and Macau people. Interestingly, these were mostly people who knew the mainland well and had mainland-related backgrounds themselves. They may not be willing to recognize differences. The majority of our respondents could distinguish Macau people from mainlanders by their style of dress (described as old-fashioned for the mainland), speech (Putonghua or Cantonese with accent), and behaviour.

Many provided examples of mainland peoples' behaviour, often revealing negative views. Even people who had immigrated themselves or claimed not to differentiate between the two groups came up with characteristics such as poor education, low ethical standards and social conscience, bad behaviour, and bad taste. Very few respondents explicitly attributed positive characteristics to mainlanders ("hard working", "tough")

or negative ones to Macau people ("lazy", "go to work late"). Some differentiated between "real" Macau people and recent immigrants, arguing that many Macau residents were not educated in Macau and their behaviour should therefore not be considered that of Macau people. On the one hand, it was claimed that the manners of Macau residents were deteriorating because of immigration and the bad examples set by visitors. On the other hand, it was often stated that attitudes toward mainlanders have recently improved due to (a) more contacts and better communication; (b) development and progress on the mainland; and (c) the spending power of mainland tourists, which is recognized as crucial to Macau's economic well-being.

So, the influx of mainland tourists has positive aspects. All interviewees recognized the related economic revival. However, they also noted many negative impacts on the society, culture, and environment of Macau which affect their feeling of "home". They expressed concerns regarding an increased crime rate, bad behaviour, crowdedness, increases in prices, and "labour tourism". The crime rate was the most frequently mentioned point, although no one referred to their own experiences but rather to news reports. Regarding bad behaviour, most interviewees could relate their own experiences. They mentioned mainlanders who behave rudely, speak loudly, squat on the streets, litter, and spit. This seems foreign to the people in Macau, and they do not wish to see it in their streets. Discontent was expressed with the enforcement of hygiene and public behaviour rules by the Macau authorities, who were blamed for treating mainlanders too leniently. Several interviewees disliked the growing importance of the gambling industry for Macau, since many mainlanders spend most of their money in the casinos. This may bring wealth to the city, but it is seen by some as an unhealthy development. It was particularly pointed out that some money spent in the casinos is in fact public money abused by corrupt government officials from the mainland.

Despite the considerable number of serious concerns, most interviewees wish the individual traveller scheme to be extended further – eventually to the whole of China. After all, the economic benefits prevail, and the impact of the new visitors is spatially concentrated in particular places. Thus, people may avoid the crowded city centre on weekends and feel less affected in their residential neighbourhoods. Some added that the extension of the scheme would depend on the degree of "civilization" of the mainlanders. They referred to mainlanders as less civilized. Interestingly, while many Macau people feel that Hong Kong people or the Portuguese look down on them, their statements about mainlanders suggest an even stronger case of such feelings of superiority. One went further and provided the following analysis: "Macau people look down on mainland people, mainly because their income

is low, but in the same way rich mainland people also often look down on their poorer compatriots". So, prejudices and discrimination do not need borders to develop.

Conclusion

Getting back to the research question and theoretical framework laid out at the beginning of this article, we have found a significant extension of activity spaces across the boundary due to the actual or at least perceived new openness of the border in recent years, and we have been able to link these extended activity spaces to an increasing awareness of places and developments on both sides. In terms of contacts, there is a clear generation gap. Older people with existing cross-border contact networks can enhance and develop these networks, whereas for most younger respondents border crossing is more functional and without immediate impact on personal contacts. What is interesting is the discrepancy between the alleged convergence of identities and the persistence of prejudices and mental boundaries. Although objectively speaking the culture on both sides of the border does not differ much and people increasingly identify themselves as "Chinese" – often with some nationalistic undertones – they display a strong sense of difference. Sometimes it is precisely the increased contact that leads to this perception of difference between "us" and the "other".

   In line with this persisting sense of difference, there are no serious attempts underway to speed up the removal of the border. While a Zhuhai resident among the interviewees presumed that Macau people would feel enclosed because they have to pass the border wherever they go, the Macau residents did not agree. They pointed to the media and the freedom they enjoy. The vast majority of interviewees insisted on keeping the border and border control in place. They are worried about issues such as security, health, immigration, and the labour market. The theme of a "crowd of people that would come" can be identified in many of the more emotional statements, often in connection with the themes of crime, bad behaviour, or even diseases. Even a woman who recently came to Macau in search of opportunities, and who still has no resident status, stated, "[t]he security would be bad. Everyone could enter Macau if they want. Many poor Chinese people would come to Macau and search opportunities to become rich. Macau people will not be safe anymore." The border is seen as a filter and a protective wall rather than a hindrance. The general view is that this filter or wall should stay in place and its operation be optimized. It should let in rich mainland tourists but keep out immigrants and "labour tourism".

The second theme mentioned frequently is more political. Macau's autonomy needs to be preserved, because of differences in identity, because of the superior political system, or because of economic advantages. Still, all respondents welcomed close cooperation between the governments of Macau and Guangdong or Zhuhai. The preferred strategy is to increase cooperation while at the same time preserving the border and Macau's special identity.

However, one has to keep in mind that this border has an "expiry date". In a few decades the border is supposed to go, and the people on both sides should be prepared for it. The increasing contacts and shared activity spaces today need to play their role in this process. The view of integration as a "top-down" process of intergovernmental cooperation must be complemented by an awareness of "bottom-up" initiatives and the promotion of contacts in people's everyday lives.

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Contents

Editorial

Introduction

Research Articles

Analysis

Contributors   203