

The Ceremonial Wedding Costume in Macau: from Colonization to Globalization

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Abstract: This article is part of an on-going research project about the influences on fashion tradition, following the cultural encounters between Europe and Asia (16 c.) in the context of Macau, currently a special administrative region in China, formerly occupied and administrated by the Portuguese. In this text, we address how the ceremonial wedding costume was adopted in Macau, where cross-cultural and interracial marriages³ occurred. The analysis focuses on two historical segments: from the earlier colonial era until the end of the 19th century and from the 19th century until nowadays. The article includes a historical background of Macau, with its social classes and castes from the 16th to the 20th centuries, and the evolution of the wedding ceremonies and wedding dress in Asia, Macau and Europe, from the 16th century to nowadays. The research combines three methodological approaches: 1) historical bibliographical research; 2) visual anthropology from paintings and early photographs; 3) interviews with traditional Macau tailors and Macanese families. The gathered data suggests that the ceremonial wedding costume remained unaltered until the 1st Republic of China (1912-1949). After that, some Chinese men began to wear Western suits or a morning dress for their marriage ceremonies, and middle and upper class brides in cities like Shanghai, latterly Hong Kong and Macau, also adopted the Western style white wedding dress. In Macau, mixed wedding ceremonies and costumes were also very popular, as well as the “double wedding” (陳勁峰, 2013), where the bride and the bridegroom marry twice, in different ceremonies, with completely different clothing.

Introduction

This study approaches costumes from a social, cultural and historical perspective, aiming at shedding light on the acculturation processes that occurred between Asian and Western people in Macau. Before the research findings are discussed, a theoretical and conceptual framework will be outlined to highlight the main theories and concepts that are relevant to the study. This will be followed by a literature review, focusing on the historical perspective of Macau during colonial times, where interracial marriages occurred. Others methodologies will be addressed, such as visual methodologies and interviews.

The study of costumes in cross-cultural processes has been focused on and discussed by different authors, in the context of hybridization, cultural globalization and multiculturalism. Kraidy (2002) concludes that “Hybridity has become a master trope across many spheres of cultural research, theory, and criticism, and one of the most widely used and criticized concepts in post-colonial theory”. On the other hand, the phenomenon of globalization, “a concept that was rarely used until the 1990s” (James and Steger, 2014), can be applied to define cultural and economic exchanges found in previous historical periods, such as the one from 1500 to 1800, which Gunn

(2003) calls the “first globalization”, founded on the new and mutually beneficial intellectual and cultural exchanges taking place between East and West. Other authors, such as Northrup (2001), say that “The history of globalization has involved complex interactions among these economic, political, socio-cultural, and biological factors”. As we have seen, these authors speak about globalization, cultural exchanges and hybridization, but few authors have debated the impact of cultural crossings (or exchanges) on costumes, especially in the context of the wedding costumes and ceremonies in East Asia. In general, research studies in this field approached the topic of Cultural Identity (Reddy, 2009), textiles (Lemire and Rielli, 2006), African patterns (Shimeles, 2010) and feathers (Xiang, Soltis and Soltis, 1998), Indian dress and identity (Tarlo, 1996) and the Chinese *qipao* (Tomlinson, 2003).

The wedding costume represents a subgroup of cultural clothing, which is particularly interesting as it represents the actual moment where two cultures are mixed within the family (and even the genetic) context. In Macau, the wedding costumes and celebrations clearly reflect and convey this mixed cultural identity. However, there is a shortage of scientific literature where this data is gathered and analysed thoroughly. For example, some of the most relevant publications address Macau’s history since Colonial times (Scott, 2008), Christianity in Macau (Teixeira, 1976), Portuguese missionaries in Macau (Ljungstedt, 1999), how Chinese women are seen in contemporary society (Alves, 2002), how travellers report about Macanese women (Amaro, 1991), and the costumes of Macanese women (Amaro, 1989), among others.

Considering the importance of the topic and the scarcity of information, we have developed a study that provides documentation on which garment construction elements were used on Chinese and Western⁴ wedding dresses, as well as the aesthetic concerns related to both cultures and how they have embodied the *zeitgeist* across different eras. The research aims at contributing to a deeper understanding of both the Chinese and Western (Catholic) wedding culture in Macau and the meanings of the several ceremonial elements, tracing a parallel between the evolution of the wedding dress and the major social, political, and cultural influences derived from Western and Asian cultural exchanges. This study provides evidence on how globalization, has determined the way Macau’s local people have celebrated their weddings, both in the past and nowadays. Analysis of the data provides a coherent identification of which Western characteristics influenced Asian wedding dress.

Until the 16th century, weddings in Macau followed influences from China, functioning as an important symbol of the family’s reputation within a particular social context, such as a village, town or neighbourhood. The wedding union in China, according to Garrett (2007, p. 120), “was seen as a means of maintaining good ties and of establishing a firm bond between another family or village.” Nowadays, marrying in Macau somehow still holds this prerogative, providing an opportunity for the maintenance and affirmation of social status, therefore exposure is an important factor, demonstrated in the rental of luxury cars and expensive wedding dresses.

Methodology

In order to provide a good understanding of the Ceremonial Wedding Costume in the History of Macau, we have based our research on several methodological approaches. The first historic segment (from the earlier colonial era until the end of the 19th century) was mostly grounded in visual anthropology and iconographic sources, particularly from paintings, prints and early photographs, historical bibliographical research, as well as travellers and local people’s descrip-

tions published in books and journals. The second historic segment (from the 20th century until nowadays) followed the same approach, complemented with the addition of a survey aiming at collecting information about wedding traditions in Macau, especially those related with “mixed” marriages between people from Asian and Western cultures, focusing on the costumes used by the bride and the bridegroom.

Visual Methodology

A significant part of the research is based on the visual analysis of pictorial elements, such as photographs, paintings and illustrations. Visual methodology is an approach based on the analysis of images, commonly practiced in the social sciences. “(...) interest in disseminating research results using visual images has been growing among social researchers across a much wider range of disciplines, and the kind of visual material that might be used to convey research results has also expanded. (...) for many researchers, images carry different kinds of information from the written word. (...) are often more evocative of the sensory, as well as richer in information, than interview talk or written text can be, (...)” (Rose, 2016, p. 330).

For this study, we have selected 46 images that represent the wedding costumes from Western and Asian cultures in six epochs, from the Earlier Colonial Era to the 18th Century; 19th Century to the 20th century; the beginning of 1st Republic of China (1912) to the 1930’s; from 1935 to 1960; 1965 to 1990; and 1999 to nowadays. These six epochs were defined by considering some significant alterations in the ceremonial costumes both on the bride and the bridegroom, such as modifications on the cuttings, fabric, silhouette, details and colour, on both Western and Asian wedding costumes. Furthermore, the proposed periods were also created by taking into account the social, political and cultural exchanges in Macau. The results from this methodology will be presented along the different sections of the text, as they provide the basis for the historical costume analysis.

Survey methodology

The survey was separated into 3 parts: the first part addressed the biographical and demographic characterization of the sample, the second focused on the respondents’ wedding experiences and the last part targeted the wedding and/or fashion business.

The survey design included both closed and open-ended questions. Closed questions (Single choice, Multiple choice, Likert-scale) addressed predominantly biographical and demographic information of the respondents, such as: age range, nationality, place of birth, marital status, wedding ceremonial style (Western style, Chinese style, both styles, or other), which culture do they identify themselves with (Chinese, Portuguese or Macanese), if they are a religious person and which religion they follow, among other questions. The open-ended questions were used mainly to characterize their personal experiences and family background (ancestry information), their experiences of their wedding and weddings they had participated in (ceremony and costumes), if they ever noticed an aesthetic fusion between the West and Asia, if they had ever heard about the “double wedding” concept and if they have experienced one.

The survey was conducted online using the @Google Forms service and was distributed by email and @Facebook, targeting specific interest groups, such as Macau tailors, Macau residents and Macau local families. Since the goal was to characterize the wedding culture in Macau, it

was important that respondents were acquainted with such a reality. By distributing the survey using specialized channels (online groups, e-mail lists), it became possible to reach the desired sample. Additionally, all the responses that came from people not closely related to the topic were discarded. The survey was conducted during 4 months (February 2016 to May 2016) with 104 valid responses being collected during that period.

Historical Framework of Macau Cross-cultural Dynamics

Macau's Background

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to settle on the coast of China in the early 1500's. And by the end of the 16th century, Macau had become an important midpoint in the trade of gold, silver, silk and porcelain between Goa, China and Japan. Jesuit missionaries followed the Portuguese to spread Roman Catholicism in Asia.

Macau is a former colony of Portugal and was administered from the mid-16th century until late 1999, when it was the last remaining European colony in Asia. In 1557⁵, the Chinese Empire accepted the presence of the Portuguese, allowing them to stay in Macau and use it as a trading port in exchange for paying land taxes. By that time, until today, Macau represents a peculiar fusion of Oriental and Western influences (Loureiro, 1999). The Portuguese administered the city under Chinese authority and sovereignty until 1887, when Macau became a colony of the Portuguese empire as a consequence of the Opium Wars. As a former Portuguese enclave, it is uniquely Portuguese in character, with its legal system, architecture, and administration all reflective of this. It was also through Macau that Western mathematics, astronomy, geography, art and music were introduced to China. Through Portuguese intellectuals in Macau, Chinese literature, Chinese medicine, art, painting and architecture have been passed to the West. The Chinese influence has not only happened in different artistic fields, but also as an influence in fashion styles, ultimately becoming known in history as *Chinoiserie*.

The First recorded Chinese inhabitants of the area were people seeking refuge in Macau from invading Mongols during the Southern Long. Under the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), fishermen migrated to Macau from Guangdong and Fujian (Macao Electoral, Political Parties Laws and Regulations Handbook - Strategic Information, Regulations and Inc. 2015). However, Macau did not develop as a major settlement until the Portuguese arrival. In 1513, Jorge Álvares became the first Portuguese to berth in China. In 1535, Portuguese traders obtained the rights to anchor ships in Macau's harbours and to carry out trading activities. "Around 1552-1553, they obtained temporary permission to erect storage sheds onshore, in order to dry out goods drenched by seawater; they soon built rudimentary stone houses around the area now called Nam Van" (International Business Publications, 2015, p. 38).

By 1564, Portugal commanded the western trade with India, Japan and China; by that time, Macau's Portuguese population was about 900 people. As the Portuguese increased their presence along China's coast, they began trading in slaves. Many Chinese slaves were sold to Portugal by Chinese slave trades. Since the 16th century, Chinese slaves existed in Portugal, most of them being children and a large amount having been shipped to the East Indies (India, Southeast Asia, Indonesia, and adjacent lands). Some slaves were also being used by the Portuguese to translate Chinese texts into Portuguese. Chinese slaves were prized and regarded as better than Moorish and black slaves. Some were sold in Brazil, due to hostility from the Chinese regarding the trafficking in Chinese slaves (Semedo, 1655).

The City is not great. In it are about 900 or 1000 Portuguese, who are all rich, and live very splendidly; there are many Chinese Christians, who are clothed, and live after the Portuguese fashion, there are also Chinese who are Gentiles, and are clothed, and live after fashion of their Countries: all the Artisans of the City consist of this last sort, as also the Shopkeepers and Retailers &c. and are in all about 5 or 6000 (Semedo, 1655, pp. 169-170).

When the Portuguese first arrived in Macau on their boats, they were fascinated by the Chinese women, who also ambulate in the sea, belonging to the group of fishing people in southeast China known as Tanka (Daan ga). This group wore a distinctive style of *shan ku*⁶: the younger and newly married women normally wore bright colours, such as pale green or blue, turquoise, yellow and pink. The older women wore darker colours. The top was fitted, often darted at the waist, with long tight sleeves, a narrow collar band and sometimes with the edges in different colours. Below, they wore trousers. Both men and women used a bamboo hat with a domed crown and turned-down brim. Many people still wear them today. Men's hats were undecorated, but often women embellished their hats with a cord, in the form of a star, because they believed that the star would give them luck with the weather and a safe return (Garrett, 2007). In this earlier period, besides Chinese slaves, Tanka people were the only social group that married with Portuguese men ('Tanka (ethnic group)', 2016). They were considered the lowest social class in Macau.

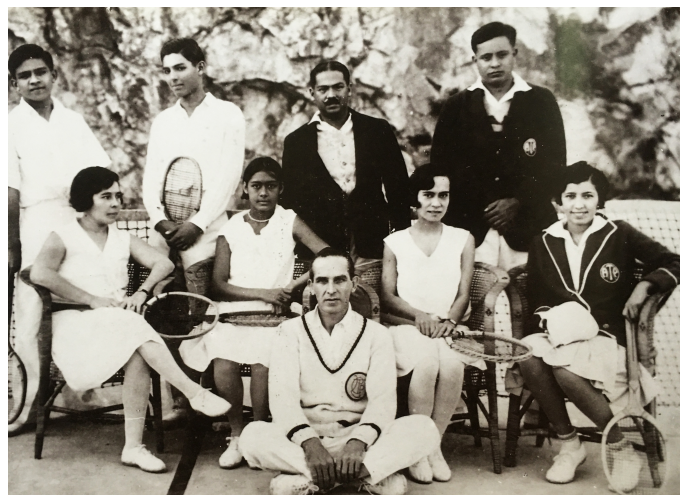
Classes and castes, slavery, concubines and marriage in Macau: 16th to 20th centuries

Macau, although largely composed of ethnic Chinese peoples, was stratified into three major groups during colonial times: the Portuguese (a small minority of "pure" Portuguese, often immigrants sent or appointed from Portugal); Macanese (some original Portuguese-Malay unions) and Chinese. The way they dressed, their diet, religion and leisure activities distinguished the various groups from one other. Nevertheless, elite groups tended to resemble one other, sharing smart western clothing, choosing the best residential areas, doing the same leisure activities, such as attending horse and grey hound races, and tennis clubs (Figure 1), participating in literary events and international travelling. These three groups all had to deal with critical social concerns, such as choosing a marriage partner. Due to the difficulty of access to Chinese women and the shortage of European women in Macau, many young Asian women in the final decades of the 16th century were forced to marry soldiers, traders, politicians and others, through kidnapping, purchasing, trading and slave rescue. In this way, wives of the Portuguese were usually Chinese or mixed race (Boxer, 1963).

Since the late 16th century, several rescued women in different parts of the South China Seas and Southeast Asia, as well as mainland Chinese children and youth were bought or kidnapped in commercial and maritime activities, marrying with Portuguese or turned into their servants. With the agreement of the local authorities, the late 17th century witnessed a rise in the practice of redemption and purchase of children and young Chinese women, recruited both among the poorest sections of the population and orphanages. This situation raised many fears and scandals that were criticized by the Church and the missionary religious orders, especially the massive amount of female slavery driven from Macau's harbour (Pons, 2002).

There were few Portuguese-born men in Macau or Goa. From the beginning in the sixteenth century, there had been very few women accompanying men to the Far West. To ensure their permanent occupation of the places they had occupied, commanders from Albuquerque onwards encouraged their men to marry local women, (...) (Braga, 2015, p. 101)

Figure 1: *Macau tennis players, 1929 (Jorge and Coelho, 1993, p. 112)*



Women, who provided domestic and sometimes sexual services to rich families (both Chinese and Portuguese) were systematically Asian, predominantly with a Chinese lower social status, and who were bought, traded and abducted with the cooperation of the local authorities. They were known as '*muitsai*', and would be represented as the weakest sector of Macau's population (Sousa, 2011). Mostly slaves, devoid of any rights, they could sometimes be given manumission by marriage or for their service, but would quickly become in situations of deep subordination and marginalization. The bankruptcy of a merchant, a shipwreck, a supply crisis or an epidemic echoed hardest among this population thrown into the social margins and inferiority of the city. However, despite their fragility, these women's groups were absolutely crucial in structuring a matrimonial trade, generating particularized forms of 'supply' and 'demand' of women. They have become vital in structuring Euro-Asian kinship and in ensuring the continuation of the mercantile families. As Braga mentions,

By the late eighteenth century, most Macanese people, other than the ruling elite, were racially mixed (Braga, 2015, p. 102).

(...) after nearly three centuries in Macau, its inhabitants had adopted none of the cultural attributes of the Chinese Empire to the fringes of which they had clung for so long, domestic architecture, furniture, language, dress. They remained resolutely Portuguese in all respects save one, the necessity of intermarriage with local people (Braga, 2015, p. 167).

As female infanticide was common practice in China, many Chinese, pressured by poverty, rather than killing their daughters, sold them to the Portuguese. Others would steal or purchase these girls from their countrymen and then resell them in Macau. The trade or reselling of stolen children seems to be the most used means to acquire concubines and indentured girl-servants, also known as the '*muitsai*'.

In the rich Chinese families, the concubines were only accepted officially with the consent of the legitimate wife: they have a simple marriage ceremonial, with no nuptial rituals, they were carried to the house through the back door with a simple sedan chair, no banquet, no betrothal

gifts, no nuptial cup exchange between the bride and bridegroom, and the tea ceremonial was only celebrated by offering the tea to the legitimate wife. Their children were raised by the legitimate wife or first wife, calling her 'mother', and they would have the same rights as the other sons. The other wives were called second, third, fourth mother, and so on (Jorge and Coelho, 1988).

The description of Chinese travellers exalts the luxury and extravagance of the Portuguese, noting also that the men could not keep at home more than one wife because the women complained to the bishop, as bigamy was prohibited. On the other hand, wealthy Chinese could keep multiple wives in their homes, the first wife being the one who enjoyed the perks of housewife and mother of all sons.

The early Macanese were the result of interracial marriages between Portuguese men, on the one hand, and Malaysian, Indonesian, and Japanese women, on the other. "By 1625, one report by Jesuits at the time claimed that many wives of Portuguese men were already Chinese or had Chinese blood. At the same time, there were also interracial marriages between Portuguese men and Filipino and Vietnamese women" (Hao, 2011, p. 104). Within a rich Macanese family, they would have a Chinese maid for their sons and daughters, who could breastfeed them if needed, but the parents would be responsible for their children (Figure 2). Many of these servants would be a part of the families until death, if they wished so, some also being catechized and baptized, even in old age.

Figure 2: Chinese maid in a Macanese wealthy family. (Forjaz, 1996, p. 279)



According to (Morais, 1994), the 'dream' of the Macanese girl was to marry a Portuguese man. Each new face that appeared in Macau was immediately seduced to all kinds of invitations. In 1569, the Holly House of Mercy of Macau started providing social and moral guidance by imposing

the dowry, standards and especially the Catholic education of Asian women and girls who wanted to marry or serve the local people (Hao, 2011).

This [the Macanese] was a unique community. Its people had to develop their own ethnic identity and their own language they called patuá⁷, a creole composed largely of Portuguese and Malaccan influence (Braga, 2015, pp. 117-118).

Considering the lack of protection granted to the wives and the double standards regarding Chinese and Portuguese law in Macau, on the 31st of July of 1909, the government of Macau created a law named the Code of uses and customs of the Chinese of Macau (Ministério dos Negócios da Marinha e Ultramar, 1909), mainly to ensure the legal rights and obligations of Macau's married couples, which was based on the Portuguese Civil Code of the 1st of July, 1867 (extended to the Portuguese colonies on the 18th of November, 1969). At Chinese weddings, if the husband did not write a clause for his wife to have access to the common property, she will be left with nothing. These codes have been followed and continued to be adjusted until 1948 (Ministério das Colónias, 1948), when in the eyes of the law, women and men have the same rights. In China, after the 1st republic, bigamist marriages were totally abolished. In Macau, with the following codes, Chinese couples were forced to marry a second time, with civil marriages, so as to recognize their matrimonies. But some controversy appeared during that period, because the law only recognized the ceremony date of the civil marriage, and only in 1987, with the "Macau civil registry code", did both marriage dates become authorized (Chinese ceremony and civil ceremony), and this is when the Double Wedding got stronger (Jorge and Coelho, 1988).

The Ceremonial Wedding and Costume

The Ceremonial Wedding and Costume in Asia

The marriage ceremony in China has always been of great significance, not just for the bride and the bridegroom, but also for their families and for the community in which they live. Chinese pre-wedding customs are traditional Chinese rituals prescribed by the Book of Rites the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial, now known as the Three Letters and Six Rites. Marriage was always an arrangement made by a matchmaker that consulted horoscopes, in an effort to find a suitable match. Only when parents considered that the two-family conditions were similar and could be matched, would the marriage procedures move forward. The couple could not see each other before the actual wedding day. Part of these traditions are still observed in China nowadays.

The Chinese women in some families were destined, from the day of their birth, to move to the husband's home, and this was represented by the sedan chair, which was used to transport them to the house of the bridegroom. The wedding arrangements were arranged by the families when bride and bridegroom were still children, of 3 to 6 years old. In some cases, the daughter-in-law would live in the bridegroom's home from childhood until she reached the age of marriage (Jorge and Coelho, 1988). The bridegroom's family would send the bride a girdle, a headdress, a silk cover for the head and face, and the rest of the costume was ready-made for the occasion, borrowed or rented. The colour of the wedding outfit has been changed throughout the Chinese Dynasties, for example, black and light red was the main colour used in the Zhou dynasty; then in the later ages, bright red was used. During the Zhou dynasty, the dressing had two layers, white being for underwear, black and light red for the outerwear. The Tang dynasty combined the sombreness from the Zhou dynasty and the joy of later ages. The veil worn by the bride is known to have been used from as early as the Song dynasty. The bridegroom costume was based

on the Manchu official dress. If the bridegroom was an official, a centre-opening surcoat with badges of the rank would be fixed to both the front and back, and this was worn over a dragon robe. A plain surcoat and a long blue gown were worn if the man was not an official. A red sash or two, symbols of a graduate of the civil service examinations, were draped over the shoulder and tied at the waist. If he had such a status as that of a mandarin, a winter or summer hat was worn. Fixed at each side of the hat were the two gilt sprays of leaves, which were part of the graduation dress. The bride would be dressed in a red embroidered dragon jacket or *mang ao* around which was a hooped belt, known as *jiao dai*. The less wealthy did not wear the *mang ao*, and the bride wore a plain red silk or cotton *ao*, sometimes with a detachable four-pointed 'cloud collar', known as *yun jian*, to compensate for the plain neck of the *mang chu*, a pleated skirt (the colour of which varied according to personal taste, although red and green were the most common), with panels at the front and back decorated with dragons and phoenixes (Yao, 2015). The embroidered dragon and phoenixes represented the emperor and empress of China; they were used to emphasize the relationship between the imperial family and their subjects and indicated that the couple were 'emperor and empress' for the day. In order to raise the status of the skirt, the streamers were often attached to the pleated parts, in some cases the overskirt was worn, with two elongated pointed embroidered panels at the front and back and loose streamers at the sides attached to a cotton waistband. The skirt without the streamers could be worn in other formal occasions.

The wedding dress in the Tang Dynasty was subject to some changes due to transformations in the political system and power structures. Men started to use red for their wedding dress colour and the women's wedding dress is turned into a pale green. Head accessories are made with gold and silver jewellery, decorated with a coloured glaze and the inside garment in blue colour. After the Tang Dynasty, the wedding dress began to simplify and civilians could also wear light red. Brides often wore *qipao*⁸ or an embroidered red skirt. The bridegroom usually wore a blue robe, covered with a red sash and a black jacket.

In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, men could wear official turquoise uniforms, while a traditional Chinese bride wore the *XiaPei*, the upper body being covered with a red silk unlined upper garment and a jacket embroidered with red flowers, the bottom being composed of red pants or a red skirt, with red embroidered shoes. On the wedding day, "the bride left her home in a richly decorated sedan chair, closed and hidden from view" (Garrett, 2007, p. 120). When the bride arrived to the bridegroom's home, he would knock on the door of the chair with his fan; the bride then walked out from the chair and the bridegroom raised the red veil over the bride's head, but her face remained mostly covered by the heavy headdress decorations, with many strings of pearls covering her face. Based on what the bridegroom sees of the bride's face, he decides if he is willing to marry her or not (Ball, 1892). Before the bride and bridegroom entered the nuptial chambers, they exchanged nuptial cups and performed ceremonial bows. On the third day, the ancestors were worshipped, and the couple paid a visit to the bride's parents. After that day, the communication between the bride and her family was little, as she was now considered to belong to her husband's family and it was quite likely she would not see them again (Perkins, 1999).

On the Cantonese tradition of wedding rituals, Cantonese brides invariably wore a highly embroidered red silk dress, called the *kwàhn kwáa*, consisting of a petticoat adorned with the images of a dragon and a phoenix, and a long skirt. A hair combing ceremony was also conducted on the eve of the wedding. To wish the couple a sweet marriage and to complete the hair combing ceremony, a sweet dessert soup, *tong yuhn*, was served. In addition, the bridegroom was expected to give a pair of matching (most commonly made of gold) dragon and phoenix bracelets to the

bride, to be worn during the wedding festivities. On the third day following the wedding, the newlywed bride would make the first return visit to her family home after marriage, following the same procedure as mentioned for the traditional Chinese wedding. A whole roasted pig was presented to the bride's family, who customarily would keep the pig's body and return the pig's head and legs, along with other gifts. Traditionally, a perfect roasted pig was offered as a sign of the bride's virginity (Monger, 2013).

In 1911, the democratic revolution led by Sun Yat-Sen ended 2000 years of feudal imperial rule in China. The garment industry was then greatly influenced by western culture (including the wedding clothing), combining Chinese and Western clothing elements. In China, the *cheongsam*⁹ became popular and almost all women would use it. This choice was also reflected on the wedding dress: there was a shift between the Chinese "tunic suit" (*kwàhn kwáa*) and the *cheongsam*. The *cheongsam* could be in white or red colour. The white colour was typically a western-style colour, and when the western wedding dress became popular in Shanghai, it affected the whole of China.

After the 1st Republic of China, a number of men began to wear Western suits or a morning dress for their marriage ceremonies; middle and upper class brides in cities like Shanghai, and latter Hong Kong and Macau, also adopted the Western style white wedding dress. Some bridegrooms might have worn the Chinese traditional jacket (*chang shan ma gua*), which would be an acceptable attire in place of the surcoat. In other cases, the couple wore the western suit and white wedding dress for the photo session and wore the traditional Chinese style for the marriage day (Garrett, 2007).

Following the Cultural Revolution in the late 60's and 70's, the style of the wedding dresses suffered significant changes, as many brides started to wear the white wedding dress, even though the *kwàhn kwáa* was still in use. In the Chinese weddings, usually couples hired a *Tai Kam Je*, a lady who understood the details of the ceremony and all the pre-ceremony steps. The wedding day was not the only thing couples had to follow; preparation works could take about one year.

The Ceremonial Wedding and Costume in Europe

In this section, we briefly introduce the concept of the ceremonial wedding and costume in Europe, focusing on the Catholic union. The aim is to establish the parameters used in comparing the influence of European culture in Macau ceremonial wedding and costume. The Catholic religion has been chosen due to its strong presence in Macau. Even nowadays, there are more than 10 churches celebrating regular catholic holy masses in Macau, Taipa and Coloane, either in Portuguese, Cantonese, Mandarin, English and Tagalog.

Not unlike China, weddings performed in Europe during and immediately following the Middle Ages were often more than just unions between two people. They could be a union between two families, two businesses or even two countries. Many weddings were more a matter of politics than love, particularly among the nobility and the higher social classes. Brides were therefore expected to dress in a manner that cast their families in the most favourable and elegant way, befitting their social status, for they were not representing only themselves during the ceremony. The Catholic matrimonial law is focused on marriage as a free mutual agreement, notwithstanding several requirements need to be met before Catholics can be considered validly married. The Church provides classes several months before marriage to help the participants inform their consent. During or before this time, the spouses are confirmed if they have not previously received confirmation and this can be done without a great deal of inconvenience. On the other hand,

although the Catholic Church recognizes marriages between two non-Christians or those between a Catholic Christian and a non-Christian, these are not considered to be sacramental and in the latter case, the Catholic Christian must seek permission from his/her bishop for the marriage to occur. The Church prefers that marriages between Catholics, or between Catholics and other Christians, be celebrated in the parish church of one of the spouses. While marriage between a Catholic and any non-Catholic is commonly spoken of as a mixed marriage¹⁰, in the strict sense, a mixed marriage is one between a Catholic (baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it) and a non-Catholic *Christian*.

In the 16th and the 17th centuries, the bride generally wore her best dress, whatever colour it was, and if the bride was well off, she would be ordered a new dress in her favourite colour for the wedding day. The typical fashion style of the 18th century was a tight white satin bodice with panned sleeves lined in pink and matching petticoat with wide side hoops. The bride's wedding dress of western style adopted the white colour in 1840, after the marriage of Queen Victoria to Albert of Saxe-Coburg, where Queen Victoria wore a white gown with lace details. The official wedding portrait photograph was widely published and many brides opted for white gowns in accordance with the Queen's choice. Nowadays, the white colour is still widely used, carrying the meaning of virginity and purity. As for the bridegroom, before the 20th century, he would wear what was trendy for his time.

Regarding the designs, it was common that wedding dresses adopted the styles of the epoch. For example, in the 1910's, brides wore Edwardian lace wedding dress, and in the 1920's, dresses were typically short at the front with a longer train at the back and were worn with cloche-style wedding veils (Figure 3); in the 1930's, Sweetheart or V necklines were used. This tendency to follow current fashions continued until the late 1940's, when it became popular to revert to long, full-skirted designs reminiscent of the Victorian era. After the war, in the 50's, ready-to-wear flourished, and so many brides bought their dresses ready-made. The styles, with a corseted waist and full skirt, were in fashion, yet harked back to an earlier era. Ballerina-length dresses covered with laces were also stand-outs. In the 1960's, the waistline moved higher to an empire line. Then, in the 70's, batwing sleeves became popular, becoming a puffer sleeve in the 1980's.

The bridegroom, throughout the 20th century, kept wearing a tuxedo with tail coat or a single button jacket with flat front pants and a white vest, with tie, top hat and leather shoes. White gloves were sometimes worn. After the 20th century, the bridegroom began wearing a wing collar, with a white single-cuffed shirt, morning coat, waistcoat and trousers in the same colour and material. By the mid-20th century, the bridegroom started wearing black or white suits. In current fashion, the design of the wedding dresses does not follow strict rules but in general they follow styles that were worn from the 1900's through to the 1990's.

The wedding ceremonial in Macau: a current perspective

Nowadays in Macau, the wedding industry has become a very popular and lucrative industry, with more than 30 stores registered in the Yellow Pages, just for selling wedding dresses and accessories. Due to the gambling industry, the mainstay of Macau's economy, Macau had an average GDP of MOP 155.0 billion (USD 19.40 billion) at the end of September 2016, according to the AMCM (Autoridade Monetária de Macau, 2017), making it one of the top three countries in the world with the highest GDP (International Monetary Fund, 2016). With the economic growth that followed the liberalization of gambling, and being rated by the World Tourism Organization as one of the world top tourism destinations (World Tourism Organization, 2015), Macau's quality

Figure 3: Wedding of D. Alberto de Eça, with D. Alda Loureiro, Hong Kong, 1924. (Forjaz 1996, p. 103)



of life became enhanced and getting married now goes beyond the simple religious ceremony and a legal settlement. According to the local Wedding Industry Commercial Association, the whole process includes various industries such as hospitality, tourism, jewellery, and flower retailers, among others (Yu, 2013).

The Wedding Industry Commercial Association was founded in 2013 with the main purpose of promoting the development of the Macau wedding industry, giving support in different areas such as wedding planning, photography, banquets, flowers, site layout and wedding designers. In 2016, they organized the 7th Asia Wedding Celebration Expo, expecting to attract 500 couples from Macau, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Asia and Australia. Many young couples soon-to-be married aim for a fashionable and customized wedding, stirring up the development of specialized wedding clothes' design and tailoring.

As mentioned before, a survey was conducted in order to understand wedding traditions in Macau, especially those related with mixed marriages between people from Asian and Western cultures. The survey was divided into three parts, namely: 1) biographical and demographic characterization of the sample, 2) wedding experiences and 3) the wedding and/or fashion business.

Survey results

The survey was conducted during 4 months (February 2016 to May 2016) with 104 valid responses being collected during that period.

Biographical and demographical data

From the 104 respondents, 36% reported to be married. Their nationalities are the most varied, according to the following distribution: Portuguese 37%, Chinese 45%, Macanese 10%, Others 8% (Belarus, American, Philippines and Cape Verde). Such diversity reflects well the mix of cultures found in Macau. The age range of the sample follows the resulting distribution: 21 to 30 years' old - 52,3%; 31 to 40 years old - 29%; and above 41 years old - 18,6%. We believe that this distribution towards the younger population is related with the online distribution of the survey. Nonetheless, we do not consider this a major issue, as this group is within the age range when people usually get married or are willing to do it in a near future and often attend weddings ceremonies. When asked about which culture they would identify with the most, the majority said it was Macanese (62,9%) followed by Portuguese (13,3%), Chinese (12,4%) and others (11,4%). When asked if their ancestry was Macanese, only 34,6% said yes, while the remaining 65,4% reported their parents came from elsewhere (China, Portugal, Mozambique, Spain, Malaysia, Africa, Hong Kong). Regarding the religious background of the respondents, 44% said that they are religious, with the majority (66%) being Catholic, followed by Buddhist (31%) and other religions (3%).

Wedding experiences

The second part of the survey addresses the experiences that the respondents have with regards to the wedding ceremonials taking place in Macau. When asked if they have participated in a Wedding Ceremonial, 88% said yes, of which 64% reported to have seen mixed costumes on the weddings that they have participated in. Later, they were asked to specify what type of mixture they found regarding the costumes.

By the replies from the respondents (open ended question) we have identified two main groups: 50% have participated in weddings where two different costume styles (Chinese and Western) were used, while 21% have noticed that the costumes had mixed influence (fusion) between Chinese and Western styles. 29% of the respondents stated that there was some sort of fusion but mostly regarding the ceremony itself (religious practice, food, music, among others), not specifying such fusion in the wedding costumes themselves.

One of the questions addressed the concept of a “double wedding” (陳勁峰, 2013), where the bride and the bridegroom marry twice, in different ceremonies, with completely different clothing. 30% of the respondents said they were aware of this concept, providing clear descriptions of such kind of ceremonies:

- “[...] in the morning we celebrate the Western Church ceremonial, and Chinese style dinner at night”
- “For the wedding album, couples will use one Chinese costume and two Western costume, one in white and other with colour. I follow all the Chinese tradition on my wedding, and the party is in both style.”
- “Western style wedding dress, very detailed (more detailed than most western dresses) and bridesmaid dresses very colourful. Ceremony was in a Macanese style in a Catholic Church, Western music and Chinese music, and Chinese food.”

- “Usually my friends rent their western wedding dress for the day time and the ceremony. Chinese traditional wedding dress for part of the reception. Most of my friends in Macau have Chinese wedding reception. Few of them have western style reception.”
- “The weddings in Macau are always quite elegant and grand. People are willing to spend lots of money to celebrate their special day. Comparing to other cultures, the weddings in Macau are either only following the western style, the Chinese style or the mixture of both (western style - going to the church in the mornings and dinner in Chinese style including Chinese restaurants and the bride and the bridegroom wears the Chinese wedding costume).”

Wedding and fashion business

In this section, the survey addressed those who were related to the fashion and wedding business. Of all the respondents, only 12% reported to have some sort of relation with the wedding and/or fashion business, including wedding planners, fashion designers and makeup artists. Focusing on their designs (make up, accessories, clothing), 58% admit some sort of aesthetic fusion between the West and Asia, reflected in the colours used on the costume (some use red on western style garments and white on the Chinese version), cutting, fabrics and head accessories. One of the respondents said that “The wedding dress designs, even by some famous western brands, are no longer that traditional. I saw dresses that are more revealing (western aspect), but with details that are more accepted by Asian or Chinese cultures. Wedding dress designers are also prepared to meet the demands in Macau and probably in Hong Kong.”

Discussion

As a former Portuguese colony, and presently as a Chinese Special Administrative Region, Macau lives in the frontier of these two different cultures. Therefore, it is the perfect starting point for reflection on how the translation of cultures can be relevant to the deepening of the relationship between the two countries. As pointed out throughout the article, it can be concluded that Macau has had a mixed cultural background since the beginning of the 16th century, reflecting the mixture of cultures present in the territory from colonial times until today. This was highlighted by one of the respondents of the survey who mentioned that “Macau is a multicultural place. The wedding ceremonies tend to reflect these aspects. In most of the ceremonies there is a mingle between Chinese and Western style.” The arrival of Portuguese settlers to Macau, in 1557, brought a strong Catholic presence to the territory and, as a consequence, a number of Chinese people converted to Catholicism (a large number of Macanese can trace their roots to these New Christians). Many of these Chinese people were assimilated into the Macanese community, dropping their Chinese surnames and adopting Portuguese surnames. The evidence collected led us to believe that the catholic presence in Macau has fostered the emergence of different fusion strategies, blending Chinese and Western cultural ceremonies. Regarding how this fusion of cultures occurred in the wedding costumes in Macau, we can conclude that different strategies were followed, depending on the circumstances, such as familiar background, religion and era.

In the early days of the arrival of the Portuguese to Macau, Chinese people living in Macau would adopt Chinese traditional wedding costumes and Portuguese couples (both coming from Portugal or descendants of Portuguese families in Macau) would adopt the western style costumes (by this time, one could not say that a particular wedding costume design existed). Chinese

women marrying Portuguese men would traditionally adopt Christian wedding ceremonies, with the clothing displaying a fusion between Chinese and western styles or just western styles. This fusion can be seen, for example, in the traditional Chinese cutting using white colour, which in the Chinese tradition used to be red, since white is the colour for funerals (Figure 4). The reasons for the fusion to exist in the costume's design are not only due to the cultural backgrounds of the bridegroom and the bride, but also due to the shortage of western tailors in the region.

Figure 4: Bride fusion costume: cheongsam cutting in white colour, 1939. (Morais 1994, p. 224)



Sometimes women wore the traditional *ao kun* with a white veil for the wedding. An alternative to this a calf-length embroidered red satin dress, cut like the *cheongsam*, which was worn with silk stockings and Western court shoes (Garrett, 2007, p. 152).

In Chinese weddings, where both members of the couple were Chinese, fusion between the Western style and the Chinese style also occurred, especially after the 1st Republic of China. The conservative brides would wear a black jacket with front opening and a red or pink satin skirt with front and back panels attached to the side gores, ornamented with gold and silver embroidery with the auspicious dragon and phoenix. In these cases, some sort of fusion occurs when instead of the dragon and phoenix, flowers and birds are used. At the beginning of the 20th century, wedding dress design was increasingly rich. Both bridegroom and bride used western wedding gowns, with the bride using a modified *cheongsam* decorated with western romantic elegant details, such as lace details. The colour of the dress was not limited to white, it could also include light blue, light pink, red and rose pink, amongst other colours. Chinese brides also used a bunch of flowers, romantic and beautiful wedding gowns, wore the veil, and often wore lace gloves. At the end of the ceremony, the bride would change into a Chinese style wedding dress for the guest's toast.

The intermingling of Western-style wedding dresses and Chinese style wedding dresses represents a new era of cultural assortment, and this has continued to the present day (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Bridegroom and bride in Macau, 1954, using western style wedding gown with little Chinese elements (family album).



Owing to the influence of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960's and 70's, clothing suffered a significant change: it started to be simplified, which also influenced the wedding dress. In the 1980's, with the reform and opening of the country to the rest of the world, the influence of foreign cultures became stronger. Chinese bridegrooms usually used fashion suits, the brides wore white, elegant wedding dresses and the western-style wedding dress became the main choice among Chinese brides.

Nowadays, based on the observation and analysis of the products offered by the wedding industry and the survey conducted during the research process, we can conclude that fusion-wedding ceremonies exist as part of the wedding culture in Macau. The strategies adopted for this fusion can follow, among other options, the “double wedding”, where two ceremonies take place: one using the Chinese costume and traditions and another following western tradition (mostly the Catholic wedding and civil matrimonial). This situation mostly happens when the couple come “from very different religious cultures, friends and families” (Gudorf, 2013, p. 50).

Besides the “double wedding”, a fusion process can also adopt other strategies, in some cases, couples decide for a total Chinese ceremony but adopt western style costumes, in other cases, the costumes themselves present some design fusion, blending, for example, Chinese cuts with western fabrics and colours, something that could be found in early times. Besides the couples, during the wedding day, friends, family, and others in the group wear a mixture of Western and Chinese dress (Figure 6).

In some wealthy families, it is becoming more common, both in Macau and Hong Kong, to wear several costumes during the wedding day, in different circumstances, both related with Western and Chinese ceremonial (Garrett, 2007). This increases the price of the ceremony package (some

Figure 6: Catholic wedding in Macau, 1932, bridegroom and bride in western style gowns, guests in Asian and western styles (Jorge and Coelho, 1993, p. 149).



even include a wedding planner and a Public Relations team, Master of Ceremony for the stage and coordinators in general), which relate to the social status of the families involved. Besides the weddings that show some degree of fusion, there are still weddings that strictly follow the traditional Chinese ceremony and others that follow a Portuguese/western style.

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Notes

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³Terms like miscegenation (Sonnenburg, 2003), hybridization (Pons, 2002) and acculturation (Ptak, 2004) can also be found in literature to approximately express the same kind of social and cultural dynamics found in Macau.

⁴Western culture referrers in this context to the habits and cultural traits found in the predominant Portuguese Catholic community, however, due to the influence of other European communities (and later the American), authors have decided to use a broader term.

⁵As noted by Mendes (2013), several authors mention different years for the definitive settlement date of the Portuguese in Macau, within the period of 1953 e 1957.

⁶A garment style used by the Tanka people, characterized by an upper part (*shan*) and loose straight trousers (*ku*)

⁷Patuá (Macanese creole) was a language based on a combination of Portuguese, Malay, Cantonese and Sinhalese, originally spoken by the Macanese community and still spoken by a few families in Macau.

⁸*Qipao* is a traditional Chinese dress, also referred as *Cheongsam*. It can be a one-piece or two-piece dress, covering the whole body, from shoulders to the ground, with a mandarin collar.

⁹See endnote 8.

¹⁰Despite this definition, in the context of this study, “mixed marriage” is assumed as a marriage between people from Asia and Western countries.

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