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INTRODUCTION

Introduction: Who Belongs in the Empire? Culture, Race, and Malleable Identities in (semi)Colonial Port Cities, 1840–1960

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Identity in nineteenth-century British imperial port cities throughout East and Southeast Asia was imprecise and fluid, shifting according to socio-political, cultural, and racial exigencies. Such port cities have historically been understood as contact zones, nodes within or on the edge of imperial networks, or else as "in-between spaces," "bridges" between the maritime world of commerce and migration and the coastal hinterlands, across which goods, ideas, and people flowed.[1] In line with recent scholastic shifts, the papers collected here revisit these paradigms by examining semi-colonial and colonial port cities connected to the British Empire through the experiences of understudied communities living and working far from their purported homelands.[2] Building upon scholarly shifts away from analyses of East-meets-West encounters and towards explorations of the "multidirectionality" of interactions in colonial port cities, the case studies in this issue are grounded in the lived realities of distinct populations and their particular interactions with other port-city communities and (semi)colonial authorities.[3] The transient, mobile, and interconnected nature of these colonial and semi-colonial littoral spaces allowed engagement and encounter to erode not just geopolitical borders through the forging

[1] Sunil Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies and Fortunes of Migrants* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015); Leonard Blussé, *Visible Cities: Canton, Nagasaki, Batavia and the Coming of the Americans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008); John Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 4–6; Elizabeth Sinn, "In-Between Place: A New Paradigm for Hong Kong Studies," in *Rethinking Hong Kong: New Paradigms, New Perspectives,* ed. Elizabeth Sinn, Siu-lun Wong, and Wing-hoi Chan (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Centre for Asian Studies, 2009), 245–304. For a survey of the historiography of port cities and mobility, see Lasse Heerten, "Mooring Mobilities, Fixing Flows: Towards a Global Urban History of Port Cities in the Age of Steam," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 34 (2021), 350–74.

[2] See, for example, Sunil S. Amrith, "Tamil Diasporas Across the Bay of Bengal," *American Historical* Review 114:3 (2009), 547–72; Yin Cao, *From Policemen to Revolutionaries: A Sikh Diaspora in Global Shanghai, 1885–1945* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Vaudine England, *Fortune's Bazaar: The Making of Hong Kong* (New York: Scribner, 2023); Rajesh Rai, *Indians in Singapore, 1819–1945: Diaspora in the Colonial Port City* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[3] Elizabeth Sinn, "Introduction," in *Meeting Place: Encounters Across Cultures in Hong Kong, 1841–1984*, ed. Elizabeth Sinn and Christopher Munn (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 9–20.

of expansive and wide-reaching networks, but also the boundaries that governed the positionality of various ethnic and national communities.[4]

Drawing upon case studies from East and Southeast Asian port cities connected to the British Empire, the papers in this special issue collectively question how membership within political, racial, and ethnocultural communities was defined and what such membership meant for individuals on the colonial littoral, where multilevel forms of belonging existed. Conceptual innovations in global and imperial histories have permitted increasingly nuanced approaches to such spaces. Moving beyond characterisations of port cities as "hubs" or "gateways," recent scholarship has explored the contours of their specific connections with historical migrations.[5] Besides serving as sources, destinations, and transit points for trans-colonial migrants, these coastal urban spaces were uniquely shaped by the diasporic communities that constituted their social fabric. For instance, migrant merchant communities and the intermediary actors that facilitated their business shaped port city economies.[6] The differentiation of urban space also arose from the coexistence of different migrant communities, which often occupied discrete areas of the city, the boundaries of which were delineated along ethnocultural and socio-economic lines.[7] The segregationist impulses of colonial elites notwithstanding, colonial port cities can also be conceived of as "contact zones," in which different ethnic, national, and social groups encountered one another. Multiple "micro" contact zones existed within these urban spaces, including shipboard communities, hotels and lodging houses, the homes of the elite, marketplaces, and schools.[8] The articles collected here consider the role of various social, economic, and political spaces of contact, including clubs, associations, courtrooms, and prisons, in facilitating encounters between different colonial communities. It was in these spaces that sojourners, expatriates, and settlers negotiated relationships with other migrant groups, as well as with colonised peoples, and established the socio-cultural parameters of membership of their own communities. At the same time, these "contact zones" were spaces where mobile individuals who were adept at crossing both political and cultural borders could challenge formal discourses of belonging, exploit the gaps in colonial legal authority, and/or elude domination by slipping in and out of categories at scales often too small for governments to control or comprehend.[9]

[4] Oiyan Liu, "Mixed Bloods in a Plural Society: Recovering the Place of Hybridized 'Chinese' in Indonesia's Port Communities," *Journal of Social Sciences and Philosophy* 人文及社會科學集刊 343 (2022), 625–63.

[5] Christina Reimann and Martin Öhman, eds., *Migrants and the Making of the Urban-Maritime World: Agency and Mobility in Port Cities, c. 1570–1940* (London: Routledge, 2021).

[6] See, for example, Mark Ravinder Frost, "Emporium in Imperio: Nanyang Networks and the Straits Chinese in Singapore, 1819–1914," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36 (2005), 29–66.

[7] John M. Carroll, "The Peak: Residential Segregation in Colonial Hong Kong," in *Twentieth-Century Colonialism and China: Localities, the Everyday and the World*, ed. Bryna Goodman and David Goodman (London: Routledge, 2012), 81–91; Xu Yuebiao 徐曰彪, "Xianggang de shehui jiegou 香港的社會結構" [Hong Kong's social composition], in *Shijiu Shiji de Xianggang* 十九世紀的香港 [Nineteenth-century Hong Kong], ed. Yu shengwu 余繩武, Liu cunkuan 劉存寬, and Zhu Bian 主編 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1993), 353, 367.

[8] Antoinette Burton and Tony Ballantyne, eds., *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005); Christopher Munn, *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841–1880* (Richmond, U.K.: Curzon, 2001), 79–80; Maurizio Peleggio, "The Social and Political Life of Colonial Hotels: Comfort Zones as Contact Zones in British Colombo and Singapore, ca. 1870–1930," *Journal of Social History*, 46:1 (2012), 124–53.

[9] For contact zones and mobility, see Haiming Liu, *The Transnational History of a Chinese Family: Immigrant Letters, Family Business, and Reverse Migration* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2008), 1–12; Louise Pubols, *The Father of All: The de la Guerra Family, Power, and Patriarchy in Mexican California* (Berkeley: Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West, 2009).

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Two of the most influential paradigms for approaching ports-as-contact zones are Elizabeth Sinn's conceptualisations of the "in-between place" and the "meeting place" which have progressed how historians think through the ways such spaces facilitated the movement of people, goods, and ideas, while reminding that these spaces acquired unique characters through such regular transfer and contact.[10] Such work has inspired a rise in studies that offer new perspectives on how identity and belonging functioned in imperial sites far from the metropole.[11] Works focusing specifically on British imperial port cities suggest nuanced patterns of negotiation between Anglicisation and ethnicity occurred in the struggle of non-Britons for advancement, privilege, and/or power.[12] In each instance, Sinn's paradigms have been used to recalibrate studies of port cities on the imperial periphery, highlighting the dense web of connections that wove such spaces—at once transitory and congregative—into the fabric of empire.

Building upon this historiography, the collected papers intervene in emerging debates that have considered how mobile actors shaped littoral cities, turning the lens back upon the actors themselves and the ways these sites shaped those that settled in or traversed them.[13] By exploring the activities of marginal individuals and extra-imperial communities in British imperial port cities across Asia, the gathered papers contend that the contentious, continuous, and contingent processes of race-making, nation-making, and identity formation that were features of port cities across the world were amplified by the integration of these littoral spaces into British imperial infrastructure.[14] Each essay highlights how residents used the tools of colonial and semi-colonial port cities—including but not restricted to diasporic public spheres, new forms of citizenship, extraterritorial judicial systems, and multiracial associational spaces—to negotiate empire, race, class, and nationality, and forge new alliances away from centres of political power. We draw from a range of approaches inspired by bottom-up histories of colonialism, studies of imperial and colonial port cities, and trans-imperial frameworks to discuss the numerous ways identity and belonging functioned for a variety of communities converging along the Southeast and East Asian edges of the British Empire.[15]

[10] Sinn, "Introduction," ix–xix, ix; Sinn, "In-Between Place," 245–304, 251–2.

[11] Kate Bagnall, "Circulations of Belonging: Chinese-British Subjects in Australasia, 1880–1920," in *The Making and Remaking of Australasia: Mobility, Texts, and Southern Circulations,* ed. Tony Ballantyne et al. (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 135–52; Ashutosh Kumar, *Coolies of the Empire: Indentured Indians in the Sugar Colonies, 1830–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 15; Thomas M. Larkin, "The Only Girl in Amoy: Gender and American Patriotism in a Nineteenth-Century Treaty Port," *Gender & History* 35:3 (2023), 955–6; Catherine Ladds, "Educating the China-Born: Colonial Cosmopolitanism in Shanghai's Schools for Settler Children, 1870–1943," *Journal of Social History* 55:1 (2021), 180–206.

[12] Catherine S. Chan, "Cosmopolitan Visions and Intellectual Passions: Macanese Publics in British Hong Kong," *Modern Asian Studies* 56:1 (2022), 350–77; Vivian Kong, "Exclusivity and Cosmopolitanism: Multi-ethnic Civil Society in Interwar Hong Kong," *Historical Journal* 63:5 (2020) 1281–302; Bernard Z. Keo, "Between Empire and Nation(s): The Peranakan Chinese of the Straits Settlement," in *Colonialism, China and Chinese,* ed. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick and Peter Monteath (London: Routledge, 2020), 99–117.

[13] Mark Dizon, "Reciprocal Mobilities in Colonial Encounters in Eighteenth-Century Luzon," *Itinerario* (2022), 1–16; Lisa Hellman, "Enslaved in Dzungaria: What an Eighteenth-Century Crocheting Instruction Can Teach Us about Overland Globalisation," *Journal of Global History* 17:3 (2021), 374–93. See also Takahiro Yamamoto, *Demarcating Japan: Imperialism, Islanders, and Mobility, 1855–1884* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2023).

[14] See Robert Bickers, "Shanghailanders and Others: British Communities in China, 1843–1957," in *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons over the Seas,* ed. Robert Bickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 269–302; Elizabeth Buettner, "Problematic Spaces, Problematic Races: Defining "Europeans" in Late Colonial India," *Women's History Review* 9:2 (2000), 277–98; Klaus Mühlhahn, "Negotiating the Nation: German Colonialism and Chinese Nationalism in Qingdao. 1897–1914," in *Twentieth-Century Colonialism and China: Localities, the Everyday, and the World,* ed. Bryna Goodman and David S. G. Goodman (Abingdon, U.K.: Routledge, 2012), 37–56.

[15] See, for example, Clare Anderson, *Subaltern Lives: Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Chiara Betta, "From Orientals to Imagined Britons: Baghdadi

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Underpinned by this rich literature on imperial belonging, the papers in this collection present examples of how littoral colonial sites were not just places where identities were fluid and ambiguous, or where, as colonial authorities feared, national bonds were effaced through processes of deracination. Rather, settlers and diasporas in port cities worked out new and distinctive identifications with national, imperial, and local communities. As Catherine Chan asserts, Hong Kong provided a space for the Macanese diaspora to negotiate new identities, which reconciled a cosmopolitan consciousness with love for the Portuguese homeland. In contradiction to the often-voiced complaints of colonial and consular authorities in Asia about the shallow imperial loyalties of the Straits Chinese, Bernard Keo demonstrates how the Anglophile Straits Chinese navigating British colonial and semi-colonial entrepots throughout the region understood and courted "imperial citizenship" through cultural terms. Americans in Hong Kong, on the other hand, retained a keen sense of their national affiliations while simultaneously finding it economically and socially advantageous to adopt the social trappings of Britishness abroad. By contrast, Catherine Ladds shows how the complex genealogies and intra-port mobility of marginal and "delinquent" Europeans on the multinational China coast enabled them to slip in and out of national categories when judicially or politically expedient.[16] Despite the attempts of consular and court authorities to sort settlers into discrete national categories, multinational and multiracial affiliations became a cornerstone of the identities of marginal "white" communities on the China coast. Read together, these case studies highlight how local colonial entanglements were as important as metropolitan policy in determining who belonged to the empire, in both legal and ideological dimensions.

If the essays gathered here recognise the ways informal forces moulded the sociocultural contours of colonial communities, each also presents important insights into the role of colonial institutions in giving shape to and sustaining group identities. As Thomas Larkin explains, colonial clubs, committees, and social events in nineteenth-century Hong Kong provided "white spaces" which cut across national divisions. The ascription of "clubbability" to wealthy Americans firmly established them as members of the white elite, a status which was reproduced through social rituals and in social spaces which largely excluded non-white and non-elite actors.[17] Chan and Keo explore the role of civic organisations in promoting specific political identities and community solidarities. The Straits Chinese British Association vigorously asserted the British imperial affiliations of its members, often in performative ways, as community leaders demonstrated their understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship by participating in government institutions. While Americans made efforts to participate in British institutions and Straits Chinese used associations to perform their Britishness, for Macanese cosmopolites Portuguese clubs in Hong Kong and throughout the East Asian littoral provided spaces to work out distinctive and often locally informed expressions of Portuguese patriotism. Beyond the well-documented role of colonial social institutions in perpetuating white British social and economic capital, civic organisations and clubs proliferated on

Jews in Shanghai," *Modern Asian Studies* 37:4 (2003), 999–1023; Lynn Hollen Lees, *Planting Empire, Cultivating Subjects: British Malaya, 1786–1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). For more on trans-imperial framing, see Kristin L. Hoganson and Jay Sexton, eds., *Crossing Empires: Taking the U.S. into Transimperial Terrain* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2020); Satoshi Mizutani, "Introduction to 'Beyond Comparison: Japanese Colonialism in Transimperial Relations,'" *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Cultural Review* 32 (2019), 1–21.

[16] See also Lysa Hong, "Extraterritoriality in Bangkok in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn, 1868–1910: The Cacophonies of Semi-Colonial Cosmopolitanism," *Itinerario* 27:2 (2003), 125–36.

[17] Mrinalina Sinha, "Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere: The Genealogy of an Imperial Institution in Colonial India," *Journal of British Studies* 40:4 (2001), 489–521; See also Vaudine England, *Kindred Spirits: A History of the Hong Kong Club* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Club, 2016), 11.

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the edges of empire because they gave public voice to the vast range of overlapping political and cultural identities that jostled for position in British imperial port cities.

Together, the works featured trace the histories of specific communities in colonial port cities from the height of British imperial power in the nineteenth century to the beginnings of its ostensible demise in the twentieth century, highlighting the continuities and breakages of ideas of belonging within the British Empire and beyond it. Each article generates new insights into how their case studies became crossroads for imperial interaction and debate through the activities of people moving—or trying to move—across colonial borders and through imperial space. Collectively, they exhibit the colonial and semi-colonial port cities of Hong Kong, the China coast, and Malaya as "contact zones" where new forms of "white" privilege, "Portuguese" patriotism, Britishness, and imperial citizenship were established by people living away from imperial and/or national centres.

For the American and Macanese communities on the China coast, colonial Hong Kong and the semi-colonial treaty ports were well removed from the socio-cultural and political influences of their respective metropoles. Such distance prompted both communities to undertake negotiated processes of assimilation which simultaneously strengthened and eroded ties with the homeland. Each experienced competing impulses to adapt to colonial mores while retaining those salient aspects of their national and cultural identity. Invariably, their acts of strategic assimilation simultaneously entrenched colonial mores within their host society and strengthened these respective communities' overseas patriotic sentiments.[18] Others still, including marginal Europeans or colonial subjects such as the Straits Chinese, had a more destabilising effect, the compounded liminality of their status and situation along the imperial fringe undermining the desired colonial order.[19] Debates around the status of these marginal communities encouraged imperial officials to develop refined, if arbitrary, taxonomies of vagrancy and subjecthood. But those such as the Straits Chinese also used their fluency in British socio-cultural mores to articulate their imperial belonging.

As each of the cases underpinning the collected papers suggests, identity in the imperial port cities of Hong Kong, the Straits Settlements, and within the semi-colonial foreign concessions along the China coast was not a rigid marker of belonging but rather a malleable tool for securing social and political acceptance, shifting according to local circumstances as mobile groups of settlers and expatriates spread across the British Empire. For some, identity was uncertain, entangled within debates about what it meant to be a British imperial subject and who could make legal and cultural claims to that status. For others, such as those non-elite and extraimperial communities, identity required exploiting, adapting to, or undermining the hierarchies developing in these port cities, entrenching or testing the cultural, political, and racial values of the colonial elite. In each instance, however, the ways these communities navigated borderland contexts were calibrated according to—and helped to reify—imprecise and shifting colonial mores.

Spanning the mid- to late nineteenth century, Larkin's paper considers how the socio-political circumstances of life in Hong Kong encouraged the colony's white elite

[18] Stacilee Ford, *Troubling American Women: Narratives of Gender and Nation in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 179–80. For more on the tensions inherent in such assimilation, see Stuart Braga, "Making Impressions: The Adaptation of a Portuguese Family to Hong Kong, 1750–1900" (PhD diss., University of Strathclyde, 1982), 105; Ricardo K. S. Mak, "Nineteenth-Century German Community," in *Foreign Communities in Hong Kong, 1840s–1950s,* ed. Cindy Yik-yi Chu (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 74.

[19] See, for example, Thomas Larkin, "'White' Undesirables: Socio-cultural Hierarchies and Racial Anxiety in Early-Twentieth-Century Shanghai," *Cultural and Social History* 17:2 (2020), 207–25; Liu, "Mixed Bloods in a Plural Society," 625–63; Kirsten McKenzie, *Imperial Underworld: An Escaped Convict and the Transformation of the British Colonial World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Gregor Muller, *Colonial Cambodia's Bad Frenchmen: The Rise of French Rule and the Life of Thomas Caraman, 1840–87* (London: Routledge, 2006).

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to entrench class- and race-based hierarchies. For the small elite American community Larkin examines, Hong Kong was a formative space where American imperial aspirations were given room to breathe. Imperially ambitious but vocally republican U.S. subjects living and trading in the colony navigated a peripheral space where their commercial goals and the sparsity of their community incentivised them to publicly embrace aspects of empire and reconcile extant rivalries with their British hosts in the interests of social cohesion. This process relied upon the identification of commonalities with the British, not least of which a unifying racial sense of whiteness and shared Anglo-Saxon heritage amplified in contradistinction to the colony's Chinese community. Far from the influence of the U.S. metropole, American elites accordingly suppressed Anglo-American incongruities and strategically adapted, reframing and repositioning themselves in private and public, through rhetoric and action, as members of a homogenous white colonial elite.

Hong Kong's social vibrancy provides especially fertile ground for assessing how contact zones permitted selectively adaptative identities to form. If the colony's American community refashioned themselves relative to elite mores, Chan's article on the Macanese shows that such refashioning was part of an interwoven and contingent process repeated by cosmopolitan communities of varied status. As Macanese communities throughout the East Asian littoral established themselves, they became embroiled in debates about what it meant to be Portuguese. Chan notes that for those Macanese traditionally on the fringes of the Portuguese Empire, an increasingly cosmopolitan mindset developed in Hong Kong, which in turn sparked fraught expressions of Portuguese patriotism and a desire for the authority to reconcile Portugueseness with their visions of a Macanese identity. If, as Larkin argues, Hong Kong operated as a periphery of the U.S. that allowed Americans to express their imperial appetencies, Chan confirms that it functioned in a comparable capacity for the Portuguese Empire. The port provided an environment where conflicting or overlapping ideas held by diffuse Macanese communities of what it meant to be Luso-Asian sparked new debates that sought to reframe "Portugueseness" according to local contexts far from the socio-political influence of Goa and Lisbon.

Both Larkin's and Chan's cases further suggest that foreign communities' efforts to redefine identity according to British imperial mores helped to concurrently remodel and entrench aspects of the port's socio-political and cultural order. But while such hierarchies in colonial Hong Kong largely conformed to an inherent—if inconsistent—imperial logic of belonging, Ladds's research on "white" criminality emphasises how semi-colonial spaces with ambiguous systems of authority amplified concerns around race, class, and who, precisely, belonged. Ladds's article shifts the focus to disorderly Europeans in Shanghai, a port city where colonial anxieties were magnified due to both the British community's tenuous hegemony over the International Settlement's social life and the treaty port's multi-jurisdictional character.[20] In such a context, the presence of lower-class whites threatened the moral authority administrators thought essential to projecting British colonial power. Their presence can be understood as having two seemingly oppositional effects upon "white" (semi)colonial identity. On the one hand they represented social fragmentation, often hidden behind a binary rhetoric of "whiteness" and "Otherness," that comprised these ports' foreign communities. On the other, they paradoxically encouraged the settlements' police and consular officials to develop distinct taxonomies of criminality, morality, and white vagrancy. In this sense, their presence

[20] For an overview of the multiple formations and imperial ambitions that fragmented Shanghai, see Bryna Goodman and David S. G. Goodman, "Introduction: Colonialism and China," in *Twentieth Century Colonialism and China: Localities, the Everyday, and the World,* ed. Bryna Goodman and David S. G. Goodman (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 1–22, 8–9.

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contributed to a more concrete hierarchy of imperial belonging than might develop in spaces firmly under British jurisdiction.

Despite their destabilising potential, white criminals remained imperial insiders, but as Keo's discussion of the Straits Chinese in colonial Penang, Singapore, and Malacca suggests, those lacking the explicit metric of racial belonging had far more tenuous access to imperial citizenship. For such theoretically de jure British subjects, the uncertainty surrounding such ambiguity fuelled debates about Britishness and how those inhabiting peripheral but intraimperial spaces might best articulate their claim to imperial citizenship. Keo demonstrates how the Straits Chinese community, on the fringes of both the Qing and British Empires, calibrated their civic and cultural performances to demonstrate their imperial belonging. Keo emphasises that this was a necessary act as these nominally British subjects lived in, studied in, or traded between colonial ports such as Rangoon or Hong Kong and treaty ports such as Amoy that linked East and Southeast Asia and fell (sometimes ambiguously) under British imperial jurisdiction. Keo develops broader insights about the ways metropolitan practices were diffused, adopted, and refined within the colonial periphery, as the Straits Chinese community used language, education, culture, and symbolism to cast themselves as active participants in the British Empire. Mirroring trends in in each of the preceding articles, their success at doing so relied upon interwoven and fluid conceptions of race, culture, class, and nationality, upon the negotiation of multiple and overlapping loyalties, and upon the socio-political ambiguity of the port cities in which they operated.

Although spanning geographically distant spaces and distinct communities, a concern for repeated processes of colonial inclusion and exclusion thread these articles together. Whether white elites from without the British Empire reinforcing British colonial hierarchies, Macanese migrants recalibrating their patriotic identity, marginal Europeans undermining British prestige, or Straits Chinese articulating their "Britishness" in Malaya, the communities at the core of the collected studies navigated similarly racially, culturally, and politically charged environs. The strategies they deployed to adapt reflect the multiple paths to—and nuanced meanings of—belonging within British imperial contact zones. These papers have endeavoured to use colonial and semi-colonial port cities in East and Southeast Asia to explore the interrelation between local and transimperial contexts; to explain the overlapping forces that shaped experiences of contact zones, in-between places, and meeting places throughout the British Empire; and to assert the multiple strategies that communities deployed to establish their position within British colonial society. Taken together, this issue answers renewed calls to decentre global histories of empire by transcending familiar stories of twentieth-century anti-colonial nationalism to highlight the diverse articulations of national, colonial, and transimperial belonging that emerged in the late-nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries.[21]

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[21] Rachel K. Bright, Andrew R. Dilley, "After the British World," *Historical Journal* 60:2 (2017), 547–68.

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