

## **Which “Casa de Macau” are you from? The mnemonics of “Home” in the context of the Macanese diaspora**

**Mariana Pinto Leitão Pereira**

**Independent Researcher**

This paper unfolds with the personal journey of how I left my hometown, Macau (China), and became part of what is considered to be the Macanese diaspora. As a migrant, I came to be a member of the Casa de Macau in Portugal, or House of Macau, one of several non-governmental associations that exist in different countries, which sprung mostly from efforts of the Macanese community to provide support for dispersed migrants, a way for intangible practices to be safeguarded and for contacts to be kept and continued, not just among migrants, but also with what was considered to be “Home”. Together with a periodical event known as the Encontros, the Casas have created opportunities for those living abroad to stay connected to Macau, as the “place of origin” of the diaspora. However, the correlation between “Home” and “place of origin” is far from being a consensual notion, and is thus at the center of complex personal and community-based compromises, redefinitions and tensions. By exploring the Casas de Macau, this paper reflects on the way these associations become mnemonic organisms for how “homeness” and community identities are (re)created, and especially for how these diasporic organisms are shaping understandings and practices of both the dispersed Macanese communities and the Macanese who stayed in Macau. In an encounter between Macanese, often it is asked “Vôs sãm filo di quim?” (You are a son of whom?). In the context of diaspora, the question now becomes “Which Casa de Macau are you from?”

