

## *Ruling Coalition Restructuring under Macao's Hybrid Regime\**

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### *Abstract*

The existing literature has long recognized that the postcolonial Macao government relies on traditional pro-Beijing associations to mediate state–society relations. However, the political significance of traditional associations has gradually been diminishing due to growing disconnection from the community, while some casino and construction tycoons have been establishing and sponsoring communal associations to mobilize societal support and expand their political influence. This article argues that the existence of ruling coalition restructuring is crucial to the postcolonial Macao government maintaining the persistence of its regime. The analysis indicates that tycoons use communal associations to build co-optation networks, defend government policies, fulfill political mobilization, and, more importantly, protect the current hybrid regime. The findings further show that the elite cohesion among the ruling coalition is maintained due to the Beijing government's coordination, although under the process of coalition restructuring. This article contributes to the literature by offering a casino-sponsored communal association perspective to understand contemporary politics in Macao, and provides an interesting case study of the democratization of a subnational regime.

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