

Chinese languages in official contexts was curtailed. Now that Macau is under PRC administration, old resentments make some local Chinese reluctant to use Portuguese in official and administrative contexts or make symbolic concessions recognising and valuing the minority Portuguese-speaking Macanese community.

In Malaysia, the government only recognises the aboriginal *Orang asli* in areas that do not threaten Malays, such as forest hunting and gathering and crafts. This suggests formal equality, but in practice denies both equality and the recognition of difference.

(e) Deepening democracy allows for the recognition of both individual and group rights, needs, and aspirations, while also recognizing the diverse and sometimes contending understandings of individual and group identities at play in all societies.

3. RETHINKING THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY IN CULTURALLY DIVIDED SOCIETIES

Outside governments and multilateral institutions should not promote economic and political liberalization, including democratic elections, without first considering whether these changes are likely to prompt conflict between groups claiming to be culturally distinct and taking appropriate steps to prevent such conflicts, even if this means delaying the introduction of elections.

The evidence from Africa, East and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, and the Asia Pacific is that political and economic liberalization, as well as the introduction of electoral democracy, do not always foster ethnic conflict, but can do so in some circumstances. The introduction of electoral competition has encouraged political parties in Taiwan to respond to the demands of many vulnerable groups, including aboriginal peoples. In Indonesia, democratization has been associated with rising communal conflict along some cleavages in some parts of the country, but not in all cases. The relationship between democratization and inter-cultural group relations is complex and not completely understood by scholars. However, we can draw attention to the following considerations:

Pre-existing state and societal institutions: The nature of both societal and state institutions in the authoritarian period influences the likelihood that the introduction of democratic elections will generate violence or exclusive claims on the part of culturally distinct groups (Brown 2000).

If the authoritarian societal and state institutions that maintain inter-communal accommodations are undermined during or prior to democratic transitions, and there is little breathing space for the peaceful renegotiating of a *modus vivendi* or, ideally, an inclusive civic identity, democratization may result in violent conflict, as it has between Christians and Muslims in Maluku after the fall of Suharto (Bertrand 2000).

At the societal level, when there are no channels of citizen mobilization available during democratization other than those involving claims of exclusive ethnonationalism, the risk of violent conflict is high. Thus, democratization is less likely to foster nationalist or communal conflict if societies first develop the rule of law, an impartial bureaucracy,