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Post/Colonial Geography, Post/Cold War Complication: Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong as a Liminal Island Chain

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ABSTRACT

This essay engages in border studies by articulating a “liminal island chain,” linking Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, as a frontier of democracy in the rise of a new Cold War. Tracing the theoretical evolution from boundary to border and bordering in the recent scholarship, it aims to counter the island chain idea in international relations theory with an indigenous settler colonial perspective on the one hand, and to approach democracy as a political rhetoric deployed in Taiwan’s and Hong Kong’s anti-China protests since 2014 that constructed a biometric, emotional, and civilizational border against China on the other. By taking the Protect Diaoyutai (Baodiao) Movement of the early 1970s that linked Okinawa with Taiwan and Hong Kong as a critical juncture of Cold War bordering, the essay adopts a cultural studies approach to consider the implications of multiple bordering in East Asia as congealed in the social movements in Hong Kong and Taiwan, then and now, to offer an analysis of the unfolding of the new Cold War. By conceptualizing Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong as unwieldy liminal island chain as produced by post/colonial geography and shaped by post/Cold War entanglements, the essay hopes to unveil how multiple bordering is at work in East Asia, and to usher in a trans-local imagination of the democracy to come.

In East Asia, border is a laden word, because it is both a securitised zone and a space for encounter. It can be a line – a “boundary” between states – that restricts communication and exchange, as in the case of 38 Parallel North which divides the Korean peninsula, but it can also mean a “borderland” – a common “sphere of life” (*seikatsu ken*) for trade, commerce, dwelling, and other social interactions – as in the western Pacific where the islets nestled between Japan, Taiwan, and China – known as the Diaoyutais in Chinese and the Senkakus in Japanese – have been a common fishery for nearby islanders and thus an object of sovereignty contestation since the 1970s (Wakabayashi 2012; Arasaki 2013).¹ But “borders” are not just physical, nor are they limited to the lines and spaces in between nation-states, they are also mechanisms for surveillance and discrimination – as “bordering” practices to separate

ourselves from others or to screen out undesirable others amongst us (Martin, Erni, and Yue 2019). As Anssi Paasi (2012, 2013) reminds us, borders are technologies and events that shift and advance with geopolitical changes; relational, mobile, and biopolitical, they tell stories about both separation and connection.

From “boundary” to “bordering,” the idea of border has evolved from an entity passively identified into an action initiated by sovereign states, from what lies outside into what must be differentiated from inside, and therefore from a geographical concept into a cultural-political construction, now wired with the state of art digital technology. Moreover, the geo-cultural-political-ideological dynamic which myriad borders have set in motion in East Asia has much to do with the intertwined forces of post/colonial and post/Cold War histories and the attendant nationalisms that forced East Asia into a prolonged struggle over the “division system” (Paik 2005), a self-reproductive process to maintain both colonialism and the Cold War as a living reality even when they are claimed to be bygone pasts. Here, I inserted a slash in both “post/colonial” and “post/Cold War” to suggest that neither colonialism nor the Cold War is behind us, because our life worlds in East Asia remain entangled in a relationship with them, though the configuration of that relationship may have changed since the 1990s.

The impact of post/colonial and post/Cold War entanglements manifests itself most powerfully in the territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas, thanks to the recent rise of China and the long-term U.S. interventions in the region since 1945. Japan too have several heated and unresolved disputes with Korea, Russia, China and Taiwan, complexly tangled up in colonial memories and rival nationalisms. Approaches to these territorial disputes tend to locate them in international relations, focusing on analyses of either how to resolve these disputes in the framework of international laws (eg. Pan 2009) or how to assess their significance in regional conflicts and the contention for hegemony (Emmers 2010; Szanto 2018). The IR scholarship thus tends to consider the disputes strictly in a state-to-state framework, especially with a concern with security, even when cross-regional comparisons are attempted (Courmont, Lasserre, and Mottet 2017; Hara 2007; Teo and Satoh 2019). The disputed islands are therefore looked at more as separated flashpoints of conflict, rather than interlinked borders of geopolitical and historical entanglements. They are deemed attendants to continents, appendages to the states, either for expansion or containment, rather than active agents in response to history, geography, and power.²

This article makes two theoretical proposals to reflect on the evolution of border thinking sketched above: first, it argues that the island chain is a crucial aspect of border thinking that has long been subjugated by IR theory that focuses mainly on major power dynamics. Such a perspective overlooks the complexity of islands in history, especially in terms of the

indigenous resistance that contests major powers from within, and articulates a settler colonial perspective (Wolfe 1998) to recenter islands in post/coloniality and challenge the imagination of a unified nation-state. Second, it submits that liminality – meaning “threshold” – that refers to the state of transition or ambiguity, can be a useful idea to reconfigure the island chain in East Asia – here specifically Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong which share intersected colonial histories with ambivalent nationalisms – to explain how the advent of a new Cold War on these islands has conflated civilisational differences with geopolitical interests (Kaplan 2019).³ While British, Chinese, Japanese, and U.S. colonialisms subjugated these minor islands into colonies, the Cold War furthermore made them liminal – in-between, doubly bordered, and politically repressed – spaces with inchoate national identities in the scheme of imperial geopolitics. The new Cold War is being unfolded – practically intensified – by their coming out of liminality to control their own destinies. Conceptualising Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong as an unwieldy liminal island chain manufactured by post/colonial geography and post/Cold War complication can help to unveil the symbolic and physical violence that borders embody and impose on human beings and the spatial inequality mounted against the minor subjects. These islands and their native inhabitants are made liminal by the powers overtaking them, and that makes postcoloniality a story of their demand to restore their identity and space. As Paasi (2012) observes, the post-Cold War claims of the borderless world are facing a re-solidification of territorial borders, while bordering practices become more sensitive to cultural and ethnic borders, making the migrant a central issue of our time (Nail 2015). Concerns with the injustice of borders thus entail a radical democratic approach to the spatiality of power and ideology, by which equal access to the arrangement of space is perhaps more relevant than claims of sovereignty.

While this article is much inspired by cultural geographers working on the border question, its point of departure is more in line with cultural studies that intend to foreground a critical analysis of the present as a conjuncture of problems shaped by history and geography. As Lawrence Grossberg (2010, 40–41) suggests, “a conjuncture is a description of a social formation as fractured and conflictual, along multiple axes, planes, and scales, constantly in search of temporary balances or structural stabilities through a variety of practices and processes of struggle and negotiation;” yet at the same time, the conjuncture is not simply there, but what must be “constructed, narrated, and fabricated.” The border, especially when contested, is a conjuncture of this kind, because its maintenance depends on construction, narration, and fabrication.

Hence, this essay begins with identifying the Chinese diasporic activism – the Protect Diaoyutai (hereafter Baodiao) Movement of the early 1970s that took place in the U.S., Hong Kong, and Taiwan – as a critical conjuncture, to

explain how its eruption, for nationalist claims of territorial sovereignty, articulated a view of Cold War division in East Asia as an ideological arrangement of borders that sustains colonial histories and overlooks the indigenous presence. By identifying the entanglement of colonial histories and Cold War geopolitics that created the Diaoyutai/Senkaku dispute, Baodiao activism forced into a view a construction of border as both divisive and cohesive, physical and emotional, real and imagined. At the same time, an indigenous perspective breaks down Baodiao's narratives of territorial nationalism by reinscribing in them complex issues of post/colonial injustices and the need of trans-local dialogues as the basis for radical democracy. Considering borders as both processes of ordering and othering (Meier 2018), this essay furthermore complicates the settler colonial critique by attending to the struggles for democracy in Taiwan and Hong Kong since 2014, which used democracy as a political rhetoric to erect "emotional and biometric borders" (Johnson et al. 2011) against China – from opposing China's interferences to overt claims of independence, and from throwing racist slangs on Chinese to separating out citizens with connections to China as "traitors" – to the extent of turning Taiwan and Hong Kong into the "frontier of democracy" in the global fight against China.⁴ The emotional and biometric bordering, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic in Taiwan and Hong Kong, helped to usher in the new Cold War against China led by Donald Trump. Though Trump has failed in the run for the 2020 presidency, it is too early to tell what awaits us there. But a critical reflection on the making of the frontier of democracy might offer some insight into how borders work today.

As Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) pointed out, borders are productive in the fabrication of the world, because "Symbolic, linguistic, cultural, and urban boundaries are no longer articulated in fixed ways by the geopolitical border. Rather, they overlap, connect, and disconnect in often unpredictable ways, contributing to shaping new forms of domination and exploitation." Walker and Sakai (2019) contend that bordering, constitutive of area studies, has cognitive functions, because it is fundamentally a mapping act, to capture and solidify the references of differences within which geography, identity, and civilisation are collapsed in the lines of division to transfer anthropological differences. Yet, borders also have geographical characters, and it is important to note how geopoliticized history contributes to the making of borders, real and imagined. The historically conditioned articulation of Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong as a liminal island chain that I illustrate in this essay seeks to bring geography back to border studies to speak against the lines of domination and exploitation, and to reveal and explain how borders *order* and *other* through complex narrations. Hence, the essay also reveals the shifts in borders studies towards human mobilities and regional conflicts in the field's evolution that Paasi (2013) urges us to attend.

The Baodiao Movement: a Liminal Political Story

But on what basis can we articulate Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong into an island chain, since these are separate islands with distinct identities and histories? The contestations over the Diaoyutai/Senkaku islands by Taiwan, China, and Japan since the 1970s offer a critical suturing point that made their connection in separation visible and meaningful. I should note here that while the Baodiao activism occasions a view of Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong as a liminal island chain haunted by colonial history and imperial geopolitics, my discussion below will tilt more towards Taiwan and Hong Kong, partly because the Okinawan struggle has been disarticulated from Taiwan and Hong Kong in the unfolding new Cold War, and partly because the third part of the essay focuses on the anti-China sentiment in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Regrettably such a disarticulation of Okinawa from Taiwan and Hong Kong only increases the burden of Okinawans who are forced to host the U.S. military to keep the peace and security of East Asia – the latest development of which is the increase of defensive infrastructure in the Yaeyamas to monitor Chinese activities in the region (Fujiwara 2020).⁵ The absence of Okinawa in the narration of new Cold War borders, despite being made a part of it, therefore not only adds to the liminality of Okinawan struggle – against U.S. military bases and for greater autonomy – but also shows the amnesia of post-war nationalism in East Asia that necessitates the rebordering of Taiwan-Hong Kong-China relations. In this sense, while not the focus of the story to follow, Okinawa is at the heart of the liminal politics that Baodiao activism brought to light.

However, it should also be pointed out that, while not the main focus of Baodiao activism, from the beginning Okinawa was inseparable from the Diaoyutais/Senkakus dispute. Because the dispute originated in the U.S.-orchestrated reversion of Okinawa and the torturous histories of Japan's annexation of Okinawa in 1879 and colonisation of Taiwan in 1895, the Chinese until 1972 (under Chiang Kai-shek's KMT) believed that based on the Cairo Declaration, the Ryukyus should be restored an independent kingdom after the World War II. The protection of the Diaoyutais thus works in tandem with the demand of Okinawan autonomy, although the latter point was not made explicit at the time.⁶

According to journalist Ren Xiaoqi (1997, 30–34), in mid-December 1970, a group of Chinese students from Taiwan and Hong Kong, led by James Lee and Shen Ping, organised the first Baodiao Action Committee at Princeton University and publicised the dispute in a pamphlet called “What You Need to Know about Tiao Yu Tai.” The pamphlet was soon sent to other university campuses through personal contacts and existing student networks in the U.S. and beyond. The New York Baodiao Action

Committee, which included a hundred or so East Coast participants, was quickly formed after the Princeton meeting, and a decision was made to hold demonstrations in six U.S. major cities to express the students' concerns and position on this issue. The Baodiao manifesto – declared in the New York demonstration on January 30, 1971 – consists of four basic tenets:

- (1) Opposition to the revival of Japanese militarism;
- (2) Determination to safeguard Chinese sovereignty over the Diaoyutais;
- (3) Opposition to the American support of Japan's claim; and
- (4) Opposition to any joint development in the area before Chinese sovereignty over these islands is recognised.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senkaku_Islands_dispute#/media/File:Senkaku_Diaoyu_Tiaoyu_Islands.png, accessed on July 24, 2020.

The manifesto set the early keynote of the Baodiao activism that deems the reversion of the Ryukyus – in which the Diaoyutais/Senkakus are included as the “territory belonging to the Ryukyus” – as an act of the U.S.-Japanese imperialisms and a replay of Japanese invasion of China. The Diaoyutais/Senkakus are a string of five uninhabitable isles in the East China Sea; the main island Diaoyutai/Uotsurishima is about 330 km to Wenzhou, China, and 170 km, respectively, to Ishigaki, Okinawa, and Keelung, Taiwan, as [Figure 1](#) above indicates. In premodern times, they were used by sailors as locators for the passage between China and the Ryukyu Kingdom for trade and tributes. Japan annexed the Ryukyus and turned it into the Okinawa Prefecture in 1879, but the Diaoyutasi/Senkakus were not included as part of Japan's territory until January, 14, 1895, during the first Sino-Japanese War, for which China ceded Taiwan to Japan (Hamakawa 2007).⁷ In modern times, the waters nearby the islands were used by Taiwanese aborigines and Han settlers in Taiwan as fisheries, but Japanese merchant Koga Tatsushiro had explored the islands since 1885 and leased them from the Japanese government for business, creating a small fishing community of about 200 people on the Diaoyutai/Uotsurishima, the largest of the islands. The community dissolved as Tatsushiro's business stopped in the 1940s. The end of the World War II then brought Okinawa under U.S. occupation; the islands were used by the U.S. as sites for military exercise and bomb testing, and thus for the most part “forgotten” by China, Taiwan, and Japan until oil and natural gas deposits were discovered under its seabed, and the reversion of Okinawa emerged as a pressing agenda in late 1960s (Suganuma 2005).



Figure 1. Location of the Diaoyutai/Senkaku Islands.

Identifying the U.S. and Japan as the violators of Chinese sovereignty, Baodiao activism effectively aligned Chinese communities in Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, and other diasporic locales. It also revealed the plight of Okinawans who have no control over their fate as reluctant and peripheral subjects of Japanese and U.S. empires (Arasaki 2005; McCormack and Noritatsu 2012).⁸ That casts the Okinawan response to the dispute in the shadows of Tokyo's nationalist stance and political discourse, allowing Japan to overwrite its own colonial history with claims of territorial sovereignty. But as Okinawan historian Arasaki (2013) points out, it sounds odd for Okinawans to hear Japan claiming the Senkakus as its "inherent territory" (*koyu no ryodo*) because the Ryukyus were an independent kingdom before they were made a Japanese prefecture. Professor of French literature at University of the Ryukyus, Kenichi Uezato (2013, 152–155) also argues that we need a longer view of history to understand the Senkaku dispute in Okinawa, because Japan's annexation of the Ryukyus was a ten-year long process with many twists and turns that at times included the Senkaku islands as part of Okinawa and at other times not. Moreover, the theory of "residual sovereignty" that the U.S. held as the basis for the reversion of Okinawa destabilised Japan's claim of

the Senkakus as “inherent territory.” For him, the staunch position that the Senkakus are part of Japan’s “national interest” will only escalate tension with its neighbours and bring trouble to Okinawa, a border archipelago that regards itself as the place that bridges the world. Thus, Uezato (2013) submits that the Senkakus be approached as an Okinawan rather than Japanese issue, to promote and secure the fishermen’s right to livelihood and Okinawan self-determination, and to form and expand people’s solidarity in Asia. To unplug Okinawa from being what Hara (2007) calls the “wedges” of containment, professor of politics at Okinawa International University, Manabu Sato (qtd. in McCormack and Noritatsu 2012, 219) likewise suggests that “Okinawa has to find a future as an ‘open’ border land” and “make every effort to build stronger ties with neighboring nations.”

By articulating Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Okinawa into a trans-local conjuncture, the Baodiao movement brings into view the problems of Cold War bordering, both territorial and ideological: whereas the KMT Taiwan faintly protested Japan’s move on the Diaoyutais to secure a space in the U.S.-Japan security umbrella, Hong Kong and the Chinese diaspora stayed remote yet concerned with the issue, thanks to the national memory of Japanese invasion. Meanwhile, the U.S.-occupied Okinawa stood bizarrely inside and outside Japan because Okinawans intended the “reversion” to be more of an instrument for decolonisation and demilitarisation (Yamazaki 2018, 191), but it also wedded Okinawa to the project of Cold War containment, as a militarised frontier for future conflicts.

The Baodiao movement is thus critical for two reasons: first, its eruption in the 1970s and continuing controversy reminds us how colonialism haunts us in postcolonial times, while territorial sovereignty remains the ultimate goal of nationalism – a legal fiction of the Westphalian system which ironically has become an expression of subjectivity (Anghie 2004; Benton 2010; Liu 2004; Teson 1998). Second, it puts into focus how Cold War geopolitics dictates our political imagination where anti-communism supersedes other more important concerns with the everyday survival of the people and the environment, as it is evident in Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong during the Cold War. Revisiting the Baodiao movement enables us to detect the limits of sovereignty claims – Japanese, Chinese, and Taiwanese – which can be challenged from a settler colonial perspective, for which alternative visions of land, life, and space-making are actually more relevant and important. Beyond the limits of sovereignty is the spatiality of power in both domestic and international settings that pushes us out of the nation-state frame to think about radical democracy in a trans-local setting: namely, what entity can represent the people in the contention over territorial sovereignty, and what happens when that entity itself is settler colonial state? Hence, the contention over the “right to ownership” would become first and foremost an investigation of identity, and how identity is spatialised in the inter-state framework.

Two demonstrations were held in January and April, 1971, with an amazing turnout of participants. It took the KMT government by surprise, because the students were able to organise so effectively. So, the KMT suspected that the movement was supported by the PRC and identified some of the student leaders as “Maoist bandits” – who were blacklisted and barred from returning to Taiwan. Indeed, it was the tail end of the storming 1960s, and the Baodiao student activists were inspired by the peaceful protests of the civil rights and anti-war movements as well as the more radical actions by SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and Black Panther Party in the U.S (Bukh 2020).⁹ Some indeed became leftists, believing that the solution to the Diaoyutai dispute lies in Taiwan’s reunification with China, while others argued that Taiwan independence is the more urgent task than fighting over some uninhabitable rocks in the ocean; yet others, albeit a minority, believed that only an independent Okinawa can lead to a peaceful resolution. As a result, Baodiao broke into three bifurcated positions: pro-PRC reunification, pro-KMT reformation, and pro-Taiwan independence, which are tangled up with ethnic tensions between the so-called *benshengren* (Han settlers who came to Taiwan before 1949) and *waishengren* (mainlanders who arrived with the KMT after 1949). This bifurcation has since been a curse for Taiwan’s political imagination.¹⁰

While the Baodiao movement was initially based in North America, the news that the KMT government would consent to the return of Diaoyutais to Japan soon spread and caused an uproar in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Though under surveillance, university students in Taiwan went to the streets in June to protest U.S. and Japanese militarisms; meanwhile the students in Hong Kong organised a demonstration in Victoria Harbour in July that met police violence, making the protesters bleeding for a remote island they knew little of.¹¹ Mabel Cheung’s 1997 sentimental film *City of Glass* captures glimpses of that era of youthful idealism and the anti-colonial elements in Hong Kong’s Baodiao activism, set against the looming future of its return to China in 1997 – a nostalgia that has turned sour today. From today’s hindsight, it is safe to argue that Baodiao created a critical linkage between Taiwan and Hong Kong after 1949, based on a pan-Chinese identification, and ushered in a vision of Cold War division in which Okinawa is oddly absent but meaningfully aligned with them as fellow victims of imperialism. Of course, Baodiao politics was not the only thing that linked Taiwan and Hong Kong. Since both islands were intensely involved in the U.S. cultural Cold War, they were connected by various literary and cultural collaboration and exchange, to serve as critical nodal points for anti-communism in Southeast Asia (Huang and Li 2009; Wang 2015; Shen 2017).¹² But Baodiao activism repoliticized the Hong Kong-Taiwan connection by challenging the Cold War design.

While geographically, Hong Kong has never been conceived as part of the first island chain, the Cold War made it possible for Hong Kong to align with Taiwan and Okinawa in the containment of China, turning it into a porous

border and a sanctuary that took in refugees from and channelled capital into China on one hand, and served as a political battleground and space for liaison in the contentions between the Communists in China and the Nationalists in Taiwan on the other (Chan 2012). The fact that Hong Kong and Taiwan are “Chinese,” but do not belong to the PRC, since the 2010s especially, made it possible for them to be part of the anti-China front, linked to the U.S. bases in Okinawa in the master design of Cold War geopolitics, subverting the anti-imperialist politics of Baodiao activism, except that they now consider China a colonizer. Like the Koza Uprising of 1970, though it was little known to the Baodiao activists then, the Baodiao movement was also a challenge to this design.¹³

The transpacific connection of the Chinese students in North America, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and the inter-Asian crosscurrents between Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Okinawa, thus constituted a subterranean political geography in the Cold War era. On the surface, the hope to protect Diaoyutai brought “Chinese” students together across oceans, boundaries, and citizenships, but in fact they were already connected to one another through transpacific and inter-Asian migration and the higher education system: Hong Kong students came to study in Taiwan as “overseas Chinese” students, while the students in Taiwan had strong ties to their seniors studying in the U.S., who served as vital sources of information about the outside world in a time of surveillance and censorship. Obviously, “Chinese” was a useful identity for Baodiao activists to connect with one another and mobilise political action, even though the notion of Chineseness was far more complicated than they had imagined. At the same time, patriotism has diverse impacts in different contexts: that is why Baodiao’s anti-imperialist discourse could find shifting targets in Japan, the U.S., KMT Taiwan, and British Hong Kong, and it could feed into the formation of local identities. Patriotism is a powerful affect that can be wedded to any instance of injustice through a politics of dis/identification – be it Chinese, Taiwanese, or Hong Konger. In the case of Baodiao activism, it also grew out of Taiwan’s and Hong Kong’s liminality in international politics – namely, lack of recognition as an independent country – and Okinawa’s subservience to U.S.-Japanese colonial design. The Diaoyutai islands are therefore more of a geographical metaphor of identity than an object of territorial sovereignty.

The liminality of identity in Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong suggests that these are border islands that have been dominated and exploited by external powers. They are liminal, not by nature, but made so by the empires overpowering them, treated as outposts, appendages, and trophies of imperium. To grow out of liminality means that they can determine what the border means, respatialize their sense of belonging and identity, and have a choice between being Chinese/Japanese and otherwise.¹⁴

What Does Caliban Want?: a Settler Colonial Critique

The Baodiao movement unwittingly articulates two important threads in the island thinking: On one hand, islands are regarded as extensions of continents – since the continental shelf can be used by the state in control to claim the natural resources underneath it – and are critical objects of territorial sovereignty. This view deprives the island of its character as the “contact zone” and a common “sphere of life,” a place where people cross, reside and share subsistence with neighbours. Legal historian Benton (2010) in her work on law and geography in European empires argues:

The imperative to control islands closely was related to their place in the political economy of militarily protected European commercial networks. Sheltering traders and fledgling settlements from attack by sea marauders and populations on shore, islands as sites of “garrison government” were familiar features of early European colonial enterprise, and variants of a more widespread pattern of military command over specialized colonial enclaves.

In other words, the destiny of the island is tied to the military needs of empire, and effective control, not governance, of the islands is essential to the success of military manoeuvre and the security of the colonial settlements. The islands can be conceived as a constellation of colonial enclaves from which effective control of strategic location for garrison points, settlement, shipping routes, and military command is essential, and that usually requires the displacement of the native people who happen to occupy such “strategic sites.” That is why remains of these colonial settlements are found in the port areas of Malacca, Macau, and Taipei, and why the Okinawan archipelago remains haunted by the U.S. military today as China covets to restore Taiwan to launch its fleet into the Pacific. However, native experiences could render alternative geographies out of these colonial-nationalist mappings.

Geographers know well that islands are not solitary, closed-up, distant places, but united by water, as what Pacific island theorist Epeli Hau'ofa (1994) calls “our sea of islands,” constituted by what Japanese anthropologist and writer Imafuku Ryuta (2008) calls the “archipelagic communion,” an echo of differences. The indigenous view of archipelagos, articulated in the imagination of the Pacific and the Oceania in the last three decades – represented by the critical works of Teresia Teaiwa (1994) on the nuclearised Pacific, Wilson and Dirlik (1995) on the Asia/Pacific, Édouard Glissant (1996) on the Caribbean, and Gary Okihiro (2008) on Hawaii, to name a few – has resurrected a vision of islands as worlds in and of themselves, independent from the continent. Specifically, the oceanic vision resists imperial greed and geopolitical strategizing that divide “our sea of islands” into minuscule and insignificant units at the disposal of the military and tourism industries, which negatively impacted on the island life and world (Gonzalez et al. 2016).

Contrary to that of the archipelago, the idea of the island chain has an origin in geopolitical thinking – as a geographical barrier to separate us from enemies. This idea has been attributed to U.S. diplomat John Forster Dulles (1952) who during the Korean War conceived of the island chain strategy to stop the spread of “communist imperialism.” The strategy consists of a three-prong architecture of Pacific security that includes Japan, the Philippines, and Australia and New Zealand as the foundation, with the Ryukyus and Taiwan as the keystones of defence. While Dulles did not define this “offshore” island chain as “a distinct geographical area,” it clearly embodies a stretching border garrison to guard the “free world” against communism.¹⁵ As Toshi Yoshihara (2012) of U.S. Naval Institute noted, in China’s maritime vision, the island chain is not only a physical barrier, but also “an evocative metaphor for the resistance that they anticipate from the occupants of the first island chain, not the least of which include latent maritime competitors such as Japan and the United States.” The Baodiao activists then, like China today, subscribed to this vision of border and deemed retaking the Diaoyutais and Taiwan as key to China’s breaking of containment and evolution into a maritime power. This, in a way, is also the genesis of China’s Belt and Road initiative (Baik 2019).

However, not all islands are *terra nullius*; people, indigenous or settler, have lived on islands for ages before western colonisers arrived. Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and Martinican writer Aimé Césaire’s postcolonial rewrite of this play both capture the dynamic interplay between the coloniser and the native, where Caliban the native, albeit the legitimate owner of the island, is made a slave by Prospero the magician. Rather than conceiving the island as the land of the native, Shakespeare viewed the island as a fantastic stage for resolving the political drama of the European court where Caliban is made a rebel to be pacified and tamed, whose desire is irrelevant to Prospero’s concern. Separate and independent, island people, however, regard the island as “da mainland” and the homeland (Balaz 1989);¹⁶ and the idea of the Oceania powerfully articulates this indigenous vision to counter colonialism’s vision of islands by declaring the indigenous right to retake them. Thus, Césaire’s *A Tempest* ends with nature’s revenge to siege Prospero and wrack the civilisation he upholds.

The Amis, an indigenous tribe on the Eastern shores of Taiwan, have argued that the Diaoyutais are their “traditional territory” that has been used for generations as their place for ancestor worshipping (China Times 2013). Another tribe, the Ketagalan, also claimed that the Diaoyutais are their “traditional territory,” because their ancestors named these islands “Diao yi daya” where the remains of their ancestors lay (Yang 2012). Though these claims have not been scientifically verified, they are powerful testimonies to alternative mappings and sovereignty imaginations. Since the Diaoyutai islands were not included as part of Japan’s territory until January 14, 1895, and the Japanese colonial government did not have complete control of

Taiwan until 1915, Taiwan aborigines have the stronger claim on these islands' sovereignty.¹⁷ Based on tribal memories and oral accounts, the indigenous builds their claims on a primordial relationship to the Diaoyutais, but it can neither be recognised nor adequately dealt with in the sovereignty framework of the inter-state system, because it would recognise only the claims of a state. The indigenous campaign in Taiwan for the rights to "traditional territory" since 1988 has been a critical movement to redress the post/colonial injustice caused by settler colonialism, but that is separate from the domain of sovereignty (Yang 2015). It means that even if the aborigines could contend that the Diaoyutais are part of their "traditional territory," they would not be able to represent themselves on this issue in the international court of justice. The indigenous claim would be harder to prove in the international court as it is not based on written records and effective control of the islands, but they provide a compelling perspective for reconsidering the issue as one of settler colonialism, rather than nationalism.

Framing the Diaoyutai issue just as a territorial dispute between China and Japan thus not only reduced the complex historical formations that made Okinawa and Taiwan significant, albeit liminal, territories of empires, but also neglected the complex question of the "native," and failed to perceive the subterranean ties between Okinawa and Taiwan as sites of settler colonialism.¹⁸ The Baodiao movement in Taiwan today continues to frame the Diaoyutai issue around fishing rights and territorial sovereignty, an approach that while seeking to unite the nation across ethnic divides in Taiwan, also risks neglecting, if not erasing, the indigenous relations to the Diaoyutais. In short, what Baodiao activism in the 1970s failed to address, has now emerged as the more urgent question: Who is the Caliban of the Diaoyutais and what does he want?

Taking these questions seriously will compel us to consider the issue of liberty and democracy in the settler colonial contexts of Okinawa and Taiwan respectively where identities are organised both ethnically and spatially. In particular, it brings the post-structuralist variant of radical democracy to the foreground to consider the paradox of sovereignty and democracy in a settler colonial society, and to recast the scale of democratic deliberation beyond the nation-state.¹⁹ Laclau and Mouffe (2001) contended in their preface to the second edition of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*:

Radical politics should concern "life" issues and be "generative," allowing people and groups to make things happen; and democracy should be envisaged in the form of a "dialogue," controversial issues being resolved through listening to each other.

For Laclau and Mouffe, the rise of new feminism and other protest movements of ethnic, national, and sexual minorities in the 1980s were important signs of how liberal democracies have failed to recognise and respect diverse identities that constitute, but are marginalised in the civil society and the state. Their

project of radical democracy is to reopen the political in the constitution of politics by attending to identity-based movements, of which the indigenous activism in Taiwan, Okinawa, and elsewhere is a part. It is “antagonistic” not only in the sense of critiquing the dominant ideology, but also in the way it challenges the exclusive foundations on which principles of equality and liberty are instituted. Radical democracy thus means both recognition and inclusion of marginalised claims as the basis for democratic procedure, and a reconstitution of democratic imagination from the ground up.

In her response to Laclau and Mouffe, Doreen Massey (1995) argues that “spatiality is also implicated in the accomplishment of difference and identity,” because “social relations which are the medium and the form of power are necessarily spatialised.” Massey’s suggestion reminds us not only to consider the space where political subjectivities are constituted, but also to understand that spatial arrangement is a manifestation of power. As border making is in essence the state’s assertion of power in spatial terms, imaginations of radical democracy based on differences need to contest both the identity of ownership (*writ large* as territorial sovereignty) and the unequal access to border-making. In the context of the Diaoyutais/Senkakus dispute, that means an indigenous settler colonial perspective challenges both the state’s claim of sovereignty and demands a reconstitution of the border as a trans-local “sphere of life” that can be dislodged from the nationalist frame of sovereignty. After all, the nationalist claims of sovereignty are not complete, at least in the case of Taiwan, without a negotiation with aboriginal sovereignty and the reform of settler colonial statehood.

Attention to the spatiality of power and identity thus raises the question of how to deliberate on the Diaoyutai issues outside the sovereignty framework as a concern of cross-border communities where the issues of military bases, nuclear power plant, and ecological crisis are in fact mutually constituted and affected. After all, Taiwan is said to be included in the perimeters of defence that the U.S. military in Okinawa claims to be responsible for; thus, a war on Taiwan would likely implicate Okinawa. Likewise, should the nuclear power plant in the northeastern Taiwan melts down, it would also gravely affect the people of Okinawa. The geographical proximity of and historical ties between them thus suggest alternative approaches to the Diaoyutais/Senkakus dispute. Since the Diaoyutais are closer in distance and relationship to Okinawa and Taiwan, why should Tokyo and Beijing instead dominate the negotiation to determine its belonging? Why couldn’t Okinawan and Taiwanese fishermen and aborigines sit together to deliberate on how to best utilise and protect this body of water and rocks? Wouldn’t the latter option be more democratic and better suited for the cause, and a trans-locally grounded democratic procedure a stronger guarantee of equality, liberty, and autonomy? Rhetorical questions aside, the real challenges are: Can we recast our democracy by speaking from the position of this trans-border, indigenous local, by turning the site of

security and blockage into a space of conviviality? Will such an indigenous trans-border solidarity be enough to kick out the military bases and shut down the nuclear power plant? While answers to these questions are not yet in sight, and perhaps even negatively determined by the resurgence of the Cold War, they suggest alternative approaches to the sovereignty contestation on the Diaoyutais, and an imagination of radical democracy as an antagonistic project for remaking the world. They moreover contest the hegemonies of both nationalism and Cold War division, which are spatial forms of power that subjugate and exclude the indigenous claims to their land and livelihood.

Frontiers of Democracy: spatiality of Ideology

While the Diaoyutais/Senkakus issue is unresolved and continues to be a volatile point of conflict between Japan and China, implicating the islands and lives of Okinawans every step of the way, the dominant mentality in Taiwan and Hong Kong, especially among the younger generation, has quietly slipped away from these islets to the ever-present shadow of China over their shoulders; and democracy, as a way of life and a form of political imagination, has resurged as a civilisational border that separates them from China. There is no doubt that a rising China weighs heavily on the people in Hong Kong and Taiwan, especially after the Sunflower and Umbrella movements of 2014. The anti-extradition protest since the summer of 2019 and its aftermath – the implementation of China’s national security law, the adoption of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act in the U.S. parliament, and the U.S.’s revocation of Hong Kong’s “separate customs territory” status – are making the future of Hong Kong even gloomier. As China holds Hong Kong as a model of the “One Country, Two Systems” to be applied to Taiwan in the future, Hong Kong and Taiwan – and arguably Tibet and Xinjiang too – are seeing each other as mirrored in a destiny of uncertainty, sharing a fight for democracy and freedom against China.

But witnessing how Hong Kong has fared under “One Country, Two Systems” has decidedly turned Taiwanese against it. The “One Country, Two Systems” was originally designed to keep Hong Kong as an ambivalent border space that is nominally Chinese but substantially not. The assumption was that China would restore Hong Kong to its territory without fully assimilating it. Autonomy is granted by the design of the Special Administrative Region (SAR) with the promise of a general election to come, so Hong Kong could retain its status as a free trading port and cosmopolitan city-state, autonomous but not independent. All of these promises are quickly disappearing.

There was indeed an atmosphere of pessimism about the handover of Hong Kong in 1997; some left but returned later, as Hong Kong witnessed the handover with a strange sense of nostalgia, what cultural critic Ackbar Abbas (1997) called “*deja disparu*,” that is, when Hong Kong finally obtains

a sense of self-identity, that self-identity is already disappearing. But even in that context, Hong Kong people did not deny their Chinese identity, nor did they seek to separate Hong Kong from China; instead, many people believed that Hong Kong could serve as a model for China in the future, that the design of the “two systems” could have a positive impact on changing the “One Country” for the better.

Much has changed since then: not only did Hong Kong identity not disappear, the expectation of transformation moreover took a different course that is eroding the foundation of “two systems.” Democracy, simplistically but usefully interpreted as “having a choice” (as in the form of the general election) in the context of the Umbrella Movement of 2014, becomes the measurement that sets Taiwan and Hong Kong apart. The 2019 protests instigated by the extradition bill proposed by the Hong Kong government evinced that many Hong Kong people consider China an aggressor, if not a coloniser; they actively aligned themselves with British and American flags, pleading the democratic West to support their fight with China, rekindling a nostalgia for the British rule and the Cold War memories of anti-communism and anti-totalitarianism.²⁰

In the 2020 presidential campaign in Taiwan, this image of China as an aggressor exercising its devious influence through the united front tactics was also prominent, making it necessary to defend Taiwan’s democracy and liberty by vote. Although there are some truths to it, democracy and freedom in effect are being used as a rhetorical border against China, to set Taiwan apart and demand Taiwan independence. The result of the 2020 presidential election can be interpreted as an assertion of the public will to keep Taiwan independent from China, reinforcing the old discourse of democracy versus communism, but ironically at a time when the geographical border – i.e., the Taiwan Strait – is no longer tenable. Since 1987 there has been a lot of cross-Strait traffic, most notably the growing number of cross-Strait marriages, Taiwanese merchants in China, and PRC students on exchange or for degree in Taiwan. As of 2019, there are about 340,000 PRC citizens married to Taiwanese, constituting more than fifty percent of “foreign brides” in Taiwan (Lin 2019), and a regular influx of PRC students since 2011 bolstered cross-Strait exchange – though the policy was suspended in April 2020 – not to mention short-term academic exchange and long-term economic investments and cultural exchange on both sides. Although the economic integration, the migration of people, and the cultural synergy have redefined the Taiwan Strait more as a space of interaction, rather than militarised blockade, they have also brought new concerns about China’s influence in Taiwan, as China’s resolve to “restore” the island by force becomes more adamant. If trade and exchange have blurred the boundaries between China and Taiwan, paving the road for an eventual reunification, the result of the 2020 election definitively rejected that possibility by resurrecting an ideological border based on identity and civilisational discourses.

Taiwan's response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis since late January 2020 shows that emotional and biometric bordering is running rampant, not only to stop the spread of the pandemic, but also to re-erect the border against China. Since February, Taiwan has taken discriminatory measures against the PRC citizens, banning their entry, to the point of even restricting Taiwanese citizens sojourning in Wuhan from returning home. Though the government has changed this policy in June 2020 to allow Taiwan citizens in China to return home in chartered flights, and reopened the border in late August for PRC students and the children of PRC brides from their previous marriages over six years old, the exchange across the Taiwan Strait, though not forbidden, is not the same anymore. To effectively monitor and control the spread of the pandemic, Taiwan authorities integrated national health insurance with immigration and customs databases to form the basis of big-data analysis to track suspicious cases and create a "digital fence" for quarantine, raising concerns about possible infringement of privacy and human rights (Lee 2020) – a policy that is likely to stay after the pandemic. Its insistence on naming COVID-19 the "Wuhan virus," disregarding the WHO guidance and repeated petitions from the civil society – a policy yet to be amended as I finalise this essay in January 2021 – especially contributed to the intensification of emotional and bio-metric othering of China. This is effectively coupled with the anti-infiltration bill, passed on December 31, 2019, during the period of presidential campaigning, which "aims to safeguard national sovereignty, uphold Taiwan's free and democratic constitutional government, and supplement existing regulations on illegal external infiltration" (Republic of China (Taiwan) Mainland Affairs Council 2019). These bordering acts, evolving out of the fear of infiltration and contagion, re-solidify the Cold War borders in the name of containing the "virus." Taiwan's wish to become a model minority in the global fight against COVID-19 also contains a political agenda.²¹

As a consequence, despite that Hong Kong and Taiwan are economically and historically tied to China, ideologically and geopolitically, the Taiwan government is reasserting itself as a "frontier of democracy," while the Hong Kong government is giving in to China to corrode and take over its "system." The liminality both had in connection to China's modern history through migration, revolution, the civil war, cultural exchange, and economic cooperation, is fast dissipating. As China tightens its grips on them, Taiwanese are tilting more towards independence, and Hong Kong youths becoming street fighters. Both scenarios reinforced Dulles' risky fiction of "first island chain" as a real threat to China that is turning these two islands into hotspots of the new Cold War. Emerging before us is the solidification of borders across the Taiwan Strait (against the earlier phase of loosening) and the conjuration of "external infiltration" – as agents of social unrest and enemies of the state – invoking the "fifth column" of the Cold War era, or more blatantly the "Chinese invasion" to come.

“Frontiers of democracy” are thus coded with double meanings: Hong Kong and Taiwan are frontiers because they are framed as an opposition to an un-democratic state; at the same time, such democracies are in a frontier state of things – that is, not fully democratic, always susceptible to attack, and thus inclined to a state of instability where democracy exists only in name or form, but not in substance. In this way, democracy works less as a political system than an ideological bordering device that “re-orders” the state and “re-others” its citizens (Chu and Hsu 2018), and it is mapped onto the anti-communist geopolitics of the “first island chain.”²²

With such deep-seated worries about China in Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as the frustration of anti-U.S. bases activism in Okinawa, it seems fair to say that these islands are at best “frontier democracies” where democratic autonomy is either only partially implemented or seriously curbed by a larger force behind. Democracy here is at most a description of how things ought to work, rather than an active force at work. It is a rhetorical border, and there is nothing radical about it, because it is less about how people want to live as it is about the imperial geopolitical manoeuvres they have no control of. To return to the roots of democracy where the people, not the state, are political subjects, we ought to renounce democracy as Cold War political rhetoric and bordering device (as evident in U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s “free world” speech [2020] in front of the Nixon Library)²³ and insist on the radical democratic approach to life and politics that problematise and contest the lines of subjugation and exclusion.

Conclusion: border and Sovereignty

In summary, the Baodiao movement of the 1970s forced the Diaoyutais into visibility as an unsettled border space to be resolved by nationalist claims, without recognising, let alone coming to terms with, the indigenous rights and the settler colonial history in the region. Its wish to “secure” the borders not only reflected the nationalist mentality informed by the history of colonialism, but also unleashed an anxiety about China’s annexation of Taiwan and Hong Kong, which are now engaged in the process of cultural de-Sinicization, if not political separation.

If the alleged end of the Cold War ushered in an age of globalisation in the 1990s that claims to rebuild the world as a “global village,” what we witness in this post/Cold War moment ironically is a further entrenchment of borders as lines of division and blockade for the politics of disidentification. Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Okinawa, which were locked in the liminality of Cold War peace, are now recaptured by the anti-China ideology. The desire to grow out of political liminality, as Okinawan, Taiwanese, and Hong Konger, are clearly embedded in the anti-communist structure of feeling that Trump is drumming up with sanctions of various kinds.

While much attention is given to the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea where the U.S. and China are posing with their fleets in a bluffing game, the Diaoyutais/Senkakus remain a hotspot for conflict. The recentering of border spaces as lines of division is not only tied to the demands of sovereignty, especially in the case of Taiwan, but moreover coded in the language of identity and subjectivity to demand recognition and equality. Indeed, the post/colonial world is still haunted by the spectre of colonialism, and Caliban is trying hard to make his voice heard and recognised as an equal to Prospero. The differences are that Prospero is no longer just white and European, and Caliban is not really indigenous, but a settler coloniser masqueraded as such, who finds the Cold War mentality a useful weapon to secure his possession to ride on a populist oligarchy of the few and elite.

In this sense, while sovereignty is the symbolic language of equality, it does not have to be the ultimate expression of subjectivity. The failure of the Baodiao movement tells us that without a recognition of coloniality and the damage it has done to the indigenous population and the environment, the language of sovereignty is inherently flawed, insufficient, and the geography we take for granted is only a product of power. Walker and Sakai's (2019) reminder that borders and areas are “epistemological-political technique” is highly pertinent, and I hasten to add that they are at the service of empire. We need to recognise and redress the violent conjugations of territorial sovereignty and national subjectivity that have taken a toll on the indigenous communities in Okinawa, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, whose liminal geopolitical histories can tell us much about the grips of empires. Moreover, complex claims of ownership on the Diaoyutais/Senkakus brings to light a curious story about geography in which oceanic spaces are charted by continental imaginations and geopolitical strategizing: the Diaoyutais/Senkakus are rock formations in the ocean, not a territory, as the “island chain” is in fact sporadic and unconnected islands that only exist in the minds of strategists. While sounding naïve and utopian, this hindsight urges us again to resist the territorial logic and restore the ocean to multi-layered and inter-linked spheres of life as the foundation of democracy, since the root of democracy should be the people, not the state.

Thus, what is “post” in the post/colonial and the post/Cold War is more than a wish to detach the world from colonial and Cold War influences, but one that hopes to reshape the world towards alternative, sustainable futures for the people. The challenge at hand is manifold: the rising China as the new, and possibly worse, empire to be resisted; flawed discourse of democracy and freedom as weapons against China and internal dissensus; and the lack of attention to the indigenous history in us all that is made subaltern to international and national laws. Indeed, the road to decolonisation is long and windy, but the struggle of the islands, for better or worse, may contain a silver lining and a trace to the future, even at their defeat.

Notes

1. While the Diaoyutais/Senkakus issue has been framed by competing states as an issue of territorial sovereignty, Okinawan scholars such as Arasaki (2013) and Chiyo Wakabayashi (2012) have invoked the notion of the “sphere of life” to refer to this area and to counter state-based territorial claims. As I discuss below, this notion suggests a radical democratic approach to the issue that is trans-locally grounded. On the Diaoyutais/Senkakus dispute, there have been numerous publications on the topic in English, Japanese, and Chinese. For some recent accounts of its origins and historical developments, especially after 2012, see Szanto (2018); Li (2014); Yabuki (2013); Toyoshita (2012).
2. Kimie Hara’s work (2017) is an outstanding exception in the IR literature, because it attempts to explain the territorial disputes in East Asia through the vantage point of San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1952. But even so, the analytical impulse is to explain how these islands were divided by an incoherent post-war international system, rather than linking the disputes from the struggles of the islands themselves.
3. My usage of “liminality” is literal with the intent to depict a condition that is experientially ambivalent, in between, and complex. Liminality is not simply negative, but rather rich with the possibility of becoming, and not being fixated to a particular identity and position. For discussion of liminality in geography, see Downey, Kinane, and Parker (2016).
4. The Brookings Institute, an U.S. think tank at Washington D.C., identifies Asia as “a frontier of democracy” and in its website runs features articles on Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, and Indonesia under this title. But whenever China is invoked in this column, it is cast as the opposite of democracy. See “Asia: A Key Frontier of Democracy,” Brookings Institute, <https://www.brookings.edu/series/asia-a-key-frontier-of-democracy/>.
5. Despite the protests of local residents, the Japanese government continues to build an ammunition depot in Miyako Island, after successfully installing a new military radar in Yonaguni Island in March 2016. As Shinichi Fujiwara of *Asahi Shimbun* reported, “It was envisaged that missile units would be introduced to Miyakojima, Ishigakijima and the Amami-Oshima islands as Chinese vessels and aircraft use those areas to reach the Pacific, while a coast monitoring corps was eyed on Okinawa’s Yonagunijima.” These moves no doubt will push the Yaeyamas to the frontline of military conflict.
6. Lu (2006), a China historian in Taiwan, wrote in 1972 that the key to the Diaoyutais dispute lies in the Okinawan independence. The late Baodiao activist Wang (1996) also contended in 1970 that Japan’s move on the Diaoyutais is an imperialist act subsequent to its takeover of the Ryukyus.
7. Hamakawa (2007) notes that as early as 1884 the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture had proposed to the Cabinet to erect national markers on the Senkaku islands, the proposal was not accepted until January 11, 1895, when Japan was clearly winning the war against China, to include Kuba Island and Uotsuri Island within the jurisdiction of Okinawa Prefecture. Former Japanese diplomat Ukeru Magosaki (2012, 67–68) also indicates that it was because the Shinomoseki Treaty of May 1895 which concluded the first Sino-Japanese War did not include the Diaoyutais/Senkakus as part of the territory that Qing China ceded to Japan that the Meiji government “officially included it in the Japanese territory” to “prudently ensure of the erasure of the traces of the Qing Chinese governance on it.”
8. (2005) (2012). Okinawan identity is also formed in a complex relation to nearby archipelagos: the Amamis, Yaeyamas, and Sakishimas. See Yamazaki (2018).
9. (2020).

10. On the diverse political implications, including ethnic tension, of Baodiao movement from the 1970s onwards, see Wang (2013) and Honda (2019).
11. In 1996, Hong Kong activist Chen Yuxiang, in the attempt to swim to the shore of Diaoyutai from a motor boat, drowned in the ocean, and became the first person to have sacrificed for the Baodiao cause.
12. See Shen (2017); Wang (2015); Huang and Li (2009).
13. The Koza uprising took place on the night of December 20, 1970, when the Baodiao activists were gathering in Princeton, was a spontaneous protest against U.S. military occupation in Okinawa. The uprising was occasioned by a hit and run accident in Koza (now Okinawa City) where an Okinawan was run over by a car driven by an American soldier. The witnesses of the accident crowded the scene, sparking a clash between Okinawans and U.S. military police. The uprising is deemed a symbol of Okinawans' wrath and resistance of U.S. occupation.
14. While given the state of current affairs, the choice for independence seems obvious and desirable for people in Taiwan and Hong Kong, it is less so in Okinawa. Though Okinawans also have a clear sense of identity different from Japanese and a group of independence activists that formed the Kariyushi Club (formerly Ryukyu Independent Party), the demand for Okinawan independence is not as loud as expected.
15. On Dulles's vision of Cold War geopolitics, see Immerman (1992).
16. In "DaMainland to me," Hawaiian poet Joseph Balaz's reverses the relationship between islands and continents to assert an identification with Hawaii as the mainland and homeland.
17. It is important to take a longer view on such historical transitions, as they tell stories of resistance and incomplete control that "sovereignty transition," often understood as a one-time event, tends to conceal.
18. I put the "native" in quotation mark to signal the complex articulation of the term in Taiwan because the native now refers to both the aboriginal communities that despite intermarriage with the Han settlers are Austronesian in origin and the Han settlers who came to Taiwan *before* 1949, who are better known as *benshengren* (people of Taiwan province) as opposed to *waishengshen* (people from other provinces) that came with the KMT regime *after* 1949. During Japanese colonisation, the distinction of identity in Taiwan is made between "people from the inner land" (*naichijin*) and "people of this island" (*hontojin*). The spatial distinction is critical to the articulation of identity. Yet, while the ethnic labels of *bensheng* and *waisheng* are still in use today, both groups have become "native" after 70 years of localisation. Thus, while Baodiao's nationalist politics has the potential to unite ethnic differences, it also conceals the ethnic hierarchy and social inequality in the making of the "native." On the liminality and intimacy between Okinawa and Taiwan, see Matsuda (2019).
19. For other variants of radical democracy and their relations to Laclau and Mouffe, see Little and Loyad (2008).
20. The media covered Hong Kong protestors' waving of British and American flags and considered that an invocation of nostalgia, resistance, and call for help. See for instance Coulson (2019); Sum (2019); Torres, Davies, and Yiu (2019).
21. Though what is described here are fluid situations that may change over time, the sentiment built over these bordering acts will not vanish overnight. Likely, it will linger a while longer as or than the pandemic.
22. This idea of re-ordering the state and re-othering the citizenry is borrowed from Chu and Hsu (2018), who argue that Kinmen and Matsu islands in the evolution of cross-strait relations take on the function of "double bordering." This idea is further developed in Chu's Ph.D dissertation (2019).

23. For a transcription of Pompeo's speech, see <https://www.state.gov/communist-china-and-the-free-worlds-future/>, accessed July 26, 2020.

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