

CHINESE TERRITORIAL ASSEMBLAGES & THE POLITICS OF SPATIAL GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

There are few concepts in international relations (IR) more pervasive than the theory of strong and weak states. The PRC's lack of exclusive control over the peoples of "autonomous regions" like Tibet, the economics of "Special Administrative Regions" like Hong Kong, and the domestic space of Taiwan fit all the requirements for being a weak state. At the same time, IR scholars and practitioners agree that China is undergoing epochal economic and imperialist transformations which signal either a "peaceful rise" or a "new hegemony" as a world superpower. This project addresses the gap by applying Deleuze and Guattari's method of assemblage thinking to answer the question: How does China produce, maintain, and hold together its multiplicity of territorial arrangements?

This dissertation traces the historical development of Chinese territorial capacities in contrast to the history of Anglo-European territoriality. It begins with an analysis of tianxia or "all under heaven" as a territorial strategy developed by the first Chinese empire to centralize territorial administration, divide land, and divide the power of elites through academic competition. The project then considers China's paradoxical governance of Hong Kong as an autonomous region allowed to manage its own international relationships while simultaneously preventing Taiwan's international independence. Instead of dividing elites through academic competition, it finds that the British created collaborative colonial capacities to govern Hong Kong by promoting a new gentry class from the Chinese merchants who collaborated against the Qing Dynasty during the Opium Wars. The PRC's initial decision to reclaim Hong Kong for China was accidental, but China took Hong Kong to incorporate collaborative colonial capacities into its administrative hierarchy of territorial governance. The dissertation ends with a case study of the PRC's deployment of tianxia strategies of centralized administration, capacities of collaborative colonialization, and cultural governance to assemble Sansha City on the artificial Yongxing Island as a territory of "Greater China" in the South China Sea. This dissertation uses assemblage thinking to generate an alternative understanding of the ways China interprets and applies territoriality differently than its international counterparts.

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Introduction

Chinese Territorial Assemblages

In our traditional imaginary, the Chinese culture is the most meticulous, the most rigidly ordered, the one most deaf to temporal events, most attached to the pure delineation of space; we think of it as a civilization of dikes and dames beneath the eternal face of the sky; we see it, spread and frozen, over the entire surface of a continent surrounded by walls.

—Michel Foucault, Preface to *The Order of Things*¹

There are few ideas in international relations (IR) more pervasive than the theory of strong and weak states, and the term “failed states” has become one of the most popular contributions IR has made to public discourse and public policy. Reporters from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, and other prominent news media continually discuss contemporary states in these terms. Practitioners from the United Nations to the U.S. Department of State have also deployed the strong, weak, and failed state categories when creating policies for addressing everything from the violent rise of the Islamic State of Iraq to the nuclear posturing of North Korea. States are considered strong or weak often depending upon their capabilities to regulate society, manage social relationships, extract resources, and use resources in a determined way.² Strong states are characterized by a powerful ability to regulate social relations and administrative boundaries under a relatively uniform system of government,

¹ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xix.

² Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*.

maintain obvious territorial distinctions over legal jurisdiction, and have clearly defined boundaries between those within the state and those outside its authority.

In the geographical terms of Robert Rotberg, failed states are characterized by their inability to control borders and their loss of “authority over sections of territory” where “the extent of a state’s failure can be measured by how much of its geographical expanse is genuinely controlled...by the official government.”³ Additionally, over the past several decades many scholars of globalization have argued that any state, strong or weak, will necessarily suffer a degradation of authority and sovereignty as a result of recent events like advances in communications technology, global flows of financial capital, and the effects of climate change.⁴

China has no shortage of territorial disputes, both inside and outside the country. The authority of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), or the “Central Government,” over the territories of Tibet and Xinjiang is regularly challenged. Similarly, the PRC has never managed to “genuinely control” the territory of Taiwan, despite decades of military threats and diplomatic negotiations. China’s racially and ethnically diverse population, its exotic territorial arrangements, and its authoritarian governance system fit all of the requirements for being a weak and failed state or, following Kenneth Waltz,⁵ an empire.

Samuel Huntington famously argued that “third world” states like China need to become strong states before they can develop economically⁶ and many IR scholars have argued weak states need authoritarian governance because they are too ethnically diverse. Even prominent

³ Rotberg, *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, 5–6.

⁴ Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*; Strange, “The Defective State”; Strange, *The Retreat of the State*; Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State*.

⁵ Waltz, “The Emerging Structure of International Politics.”

⁶ Huntington, *The Third Wave*.

specialists in Chinese politics like Lucian Pye have described China as “a civilization pretending to be a state.”⁷ More recently, IR scholars and practitioners have proposed democratic remedies to the problem of weak states. Scott Moore, Michael C. Davis, and Yongnian Zheng have all recently suggested the United States as a model China should emulate, especially the process by which the early U.S. state managed to confederate, and later federate, territories by combining multiple nations under one governmental system and economically develop.⁸

However, these proposals for a Chinese federation insist that China conform to the strong and weak/failed theoretical model of territorial control rather than develop an alternative account of Chinese territoriality. These proposals often fail to mention that China has, in fact, established a federal form of government on several occasions with limited success. For instance, after fourteen provinces claimed independence from the last imperial dynasty during the Xinhai Revolution, for example, the new Republic of China attempted to build the “Great Han Federal Democratic Republic” and the movement's leader Sun Yat-sen used the title “President of the Provisional Government of the United Provinces of China.” Even after the Communist Revolution, Mao was at times in favor of forming a federation of Chinese provinces and the CCP established the Chinese Soviet Republic in Jiangxi modeled on the federated republics of the Soviet Union. However, Chinese federalists have always been careful not to call their system of government a “United States” for fear that defining territories as states would be viewed as implying separatism. Most current proposals for a Chinese federation fail to understand the historical context which makes the possibility of separatism a problem in Chinese politics ever since the Qin united the Warring States territories into the first Chinese empire. Second,

⁷ Pye, “China.”

⁸ Moore, “The United States of China”; Davis, “The Case for Chinese Federalism”; Zheng, *De Facto Federalism in China*; Zheng, “Explaining the Sources of de Facto Federalism in Reform China.”

proposals for a modern Chinese federation modeled on the United States of America apply a Westphalian vision of states as containers for nations and natural resources defined territorially by a system of mutually respected borders. In the American Colonies, federalism developed so that small democratic states could be counted together as a strong state. Chinese territoriality does not arise from the mutual recognition of neighboring states to respect boundaries as in Europe or America. Chinese territoriality developed under an entirely different set of historical conditions vaguely defined by Chinese scholars as the “Tianxia” system or a highly centralized, hierarchical, and bureaucratic system of territorial administration. Terms like “territory,” “sovereignty,” and “authority” are recent additions to Chinese governmental vocabularies and their transliterated uses are often confusing to scholars and practitioners coming from the Anglo-European tradition.

Third, proposals for a Chinese federation assume that China is unique in its relationship with developed states. The U.S. administers an exotic array of territories from Washington D.C. and Texas to American Samoa and Native American lands. In this regard, China is not unique in its relationship with developed states as it already incorporates a diverse array of territories much like the U.S. does. What makes China unique is its relationship to developing states, with which it has much less in common even if it is seen as similar by many IR scholars. China’s territorial management strategies have more in common with the “strong” U.S. state than with the “weak” states of Vietnam or Nigeria. Similarly, arguments in favor of a Chinese federation almost always suggest China replace its centralized authoritarian government with a decentralized, democratic, form of government like those of the United States and United Kingdom. However, a key component of China’s territorial management strategy involves recognizing, even promoting, an assortment of alternative government or legal systems within its borders. The

PRC's "One Country, Two Systems" (*yiguo liangzhi*) arrangement with Hong Kong and Macau as Special Administrative Zones (*tebie xingzhengqu*) are the most obvious examples, but there are also numerous "autonomous regions" (*zizhiqu*) which provide special legislative rights to minorities, as in Tibet and Xinjiang, and different laws for the Special Economic Zones (*jingji tequ*) like those in Shenzhen and Xiamen. Each of these territories have developed along very different processes and historical conditions. Hong Kong is the product of colonization, what Chinese nationalists call the "century of humiliation" beginning with the Opium Wars between the Qing dynasty and British Empire, and the 1997 "return" of the island to China. Taiwan resulted from a long civil war between the Kuomintang government of the Republic of China and the CCP shortly after WWII and the interplay of international actors working to keep the island independent from the PRC. China's territorial governance is not as rigid or monolithic as IR scholars too often assume.

Finally, despite slowing in 2015, the Central Party's series of five-year plans have helped China become one of the fastest growing, and now second largest, economies in the world by nominal gross domestic product according to the World Bank⁹ and the largest economy in the world by purchasing power parity according to the International Monetary Fund.¹⁰ China's "socialist market economy" is also the largest exporter of goods, second largest importer of goods, and has the fastest growing consumer market in the world.¹¹ While income inequality continues to be high, in early 2016 Beijing's number of billionaires overtook New York.¹² Rather than have its authority and ability to expand geographically weakened by the forces of

⁹ "GDP Ranking."

¹⁰ "IMF DataMapper."

¹¹ Barnett, "China."

¹² "胡润百富 (Hurun Global Rich List 2016)."

globalization, China is becoming increasingly influential as it begins transforming from the largest manufacturing economy to the largest consumer in the world and aggressively pursue expanding sovereign claim over the territories of the South China Sea. China may not yet be counted as a “developed” state, but it is far from weak or failed.

Despite years of criticism and theoretical failures, the strong vs. weak measure of a state’s ability to retain sovereignty and autonomy continues to be the dominant way international relations scholars and practitioners theorize states in general, and the Chinese state in particular. Outside IR, scholars have begun moving towards a more complex understanding of China and Chinese territoriality. Asian Studies scholar John Fitzgerald has recently argued that, rather than the strong/weak state classification given by international relations theorists like Rotberg, a better measure of China’s power is the way its government can reconcile the complementary and sometimes conflicting interests of dispersed territories effectively.¹³ Similarly, the political geographer Carolyn Cartier has asserted that “Chinese space economy is an actively scaled territorial mosaic whose dialectical interrelations the state seeks to manage in order to spur economic development while simultaneously maintaining political control.”¹⁴ Even at different scales, as John Agnew points out, the size and shape of China remains a subject of contention within China as well as in relation to neighboring countries.”¹⁵

At the same time, critical territoriality scholars like Stuart Elden and Saskia Sassen have shown how the dominate description of the nation-state as “bordered power-container”¹⁶ with

¹³ Fitzgerald, *Rethinking China’s Provinces*, chap. The Province in History.

¹⁴ Carolyn Cartier, “City-Space: Scale Relations and China’s Spatial Administrative Hierarchy,” in *Restructuring the Chinese City: Changing Society, Economy and Space*, ed. Fulong Wu and Laurence J. C. Ma (Taylor & Francis, 2004), 21-38.

¹⁵ Agnew, “Looking Back to Look Forward,” 307.

¹⁶ Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, 120.

exclusive control over a territory has a recent and contingent history. Rather than reproduce state-centric histories or Westphalian conceptions of territory and territoriality, they urge researchers explore “the conditions of possibility of such a configuration”¹⁷ and examine how the global, the state, the nation, and territories “became assembled into different historical formations”¹⁸ in the first place. IR scholars need a better way to assess state power than simply asserting that weak states cannot control territories and strong states can. Without a historically contextualized understanding of the processes by which China manages its complex territorial arrangements and creates new territories, or what Alexander B. Murphy calls “sticky” territories,¹⁹ we are left with a poor accounting of Chinese territoriality and the role China plays in contemporary global politics. This dissertation addresses the need for a better theory of Chinese territoriality by answering the question: How does China produce, maintain, and hold together its multiplicity of territorial arrangements?

Methodology and Scope

To answer the question of what holds China together, I employ the analytic framework of “assemblage thinking” articulated by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987)²⁰ and most notably applied by Sassen to analyze the economic and cultural processes of globalization,²¹ Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier to conceptualize neoliberalism,²² and Ignacio Fariás and Thomas Bender to describe the organization of cities.²³ A recently published

¹⁷ Elden, *The Birth of Territory*, 3.

¹⁸ Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*, 4.

¹⁹ Murphy, “Entente Territorial,” 168.

²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

²¹ Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*.

²² Ong and Collier, *Global Assemblages*.

²³ Fariás and Bender, *Urban Assemblages*.

collection of interviews and essays by these prominent scholars who have employed assemblage thinking to their IR research, *Reassembling International Theory* (2014) edited by Michele Acuto and Simon Curtis,²⁴ provides several helpful examples and methodological suggestions for this study. Specifically, Christian Bueger provides several “rules of thumb for the study of the international” using assemblage thinking that this dissertation project will apply to the question of what holds China together.²⁵ Following Bueger, assemblage thinking is a research program where:

- (1) the researcher should be suspicious towards anything that is presented or taken to be a coherent whole, whether it is an object, system or logic...
- (2) Thinking multiplicity is an invitation to go beyond binaries and dualisms. Classifications such as state/ non-state, human/non-human, modern/post-modern and material/ symbolic are not explanatory frameworks. They are distinctions that require explanations themselves and attention to how they are enacted.
- (3) The vocabulary of assemblage is voluntarily poor. It does not want to limit a priori what are the most important elements and what their properties are.
- (4) Assemblage thinking implies attention to detail and the mundane activities of doings and sayings by which realities are enacted, relations are built and ordering takes place.
- (5) This implies an ethnographic gaze, yet there is no singular methodology by which assemblages can be opened up. Methodologies are, as Law (2004)²⁶ has shown, assemblages in their own right, they order the world in a distinct way.
- (6) In representing assemblages the scholar is inevitably entailed in the enactment of an assemblage. Scholars perform the world in distinct ways and not others. Representing an assemblage in an academic narrative hence always entails a political choice.
- (7) Since assemblages are made of real-time enactment, no representation of an assemblage will ever be finite or complete.²⁷

Assemblage thinking is useful for understanding how components like economic policies, flows of capital, remnants of colonial infrastructure, documents and textbooks, ceremonies, political

²⁴ Acuto and Curtis, *Reassembling International Theory*.

²⁵ Bueger, “Thinking Assemblages Methodologically: Some Rules of Thumb,” 65.

²⁶ Law, *After Method*.

²⁷ Bueger, “Thinking Assemblages Methodologically: Some Rules of Thumb,” 65–66.

offices, taxation, farming,²⁸ census-taking²⁹ and other elements operate to maintain the components, their relationships, and their role in assembling Chinese territories. However, assemblage thinking should not be confused with simply the thinking on, or about, assemblages. As a method, “assemblage” following Sassen, is “an analytic tactic to deal with the abstract and the unseen”³⁰ and “thinking,” as described by Michael J. Shapiro, is “used to compose the discourse of investigation with critical juxtapositions that unbind what are ordinarily presumed to belong together and thereby to challenge institutionalized ways of reproducing and understanding phenomena.”³¹ I understand assemblage thinking to be a method for analyzing the abstract and unseen forces holding China together.

The three islands of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Sansha in the South China Sea are exemplary cases of Chinese territoriality. Each island has been historically assembled into radically different territories with dissimilar, even antagonistic, relations to the Chinese state. Additionally, just as Michel Foucault described “society” as emerging as an object of governance through political economy and statistics,³² each of these territories are also what Olaf Corry calls a “governance-object” which are “a kind of assemblage in so far as it becomes recognized” but unlike other assemblages “it is also somehow rendered governable.”³³ This dissertation methodically applies assemblage thinking to the significant primary source materials China finds necessary to govern Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Sansha as territories.

²⁸ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

²⁹ Scott, *Seeing like a State*.

³⁰ Acuto and Curtis, “The Carpenter and the Bricoleur: A Conversation with Saskia Sassen and Aihwa Ong,” 18.

³¹ Shapiro, *Studies in Trans-Disciplinary Method*, xv.

³² Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*.

³³ Corry, “Global Assemblages and Structural Models of International Relations,” 52.

To trace the emergence of Chinese territories as political objects, I apply assemblage thinking to historical records and philosophical treaties concerned with territoriality such as *The Mozi* and modern texts like Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* (1836).³⁴ The chapter on China's governance of Hong Kong relies upon official political discourses like the 1841 Treaty of Nanking and 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, as well as recently declassified personal accounts of diplomatic meetings between Deng Xiaoping and Hong Kong Governor MacLehose.³⁵ The Sansha chapter employs Bugar's rules of thumb for assemblage thinking to trace the circulation of texts, economic instruments, island-building technologies, and concepts of territoriality expressed in Sansha tourism advertisements, recent speeches made by President Xi, and Chinese investments in the international film industry. Applying assemblage thinking to these primary sources allows me to analyze the abstract and unseen forces holding China together. It is also the method I will use to challenge the institutionalized discourses of Chinese territoriality in IR which describe China as a weak state pretending to be strong or make normative prescriptions that China must reform itself to resemble nation-states like the U.S. if it wants to be a responsible member of the international community. As a result, this project also engages with the secondary literature on assemblage theory and Chinese politics in IR.

My methodological approach and contrast of Chinese with European territoriality is indebted to Sassen's influential assemblage thinking of European territoriality in *Territory, Authority, Rights*.³⁶ However, the scope of this project and its focus on China creates several points of disagreement and divergent from the secondary literature's assemblage thinking on territoriality and Chinese politics. For example, unlike the European conceptions of territory

³⁴ Yan, *墨子簡編* (*The Mozi*).

³⁵ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 214.

³⁶ Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*.

Sassen uncovers, which arose “from the ground up” and were then later installed as a “built-in capability for the emergent territorialities of national states,”³⁷ I find that the PRC employed the Qin emperor’s territorial system of classification to redefine Sansha on Xishan Island as a city and make historical claims over the South China Sea. Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Sansha are therefore simultaneously complex arrangements of objects, qualities, and bodies that come together for a time to create new ways of functioning that can be measured, mapped, and governed by China.³⁸ For this reason, I refer to them as “Chinese territorial assemblages” and find that assemblage thinking is the method best suited for understanding how they work.

Chinese Contributions to Assemblage Theory

Assemblage theory has been widely used in the studies of humanities and social sciences, but its meaning, applications, and limits remain the subject of much debate. English Professor John Phillips thinks two reasons have contributed to this lack of definition. First is this word is generally considered to be the original French word *agencement*, which is used by Deleuze and Guattari. According to Phillips, “Tracing the concept in its philosophical sense back to their texts, one discovers that it cannot easily be understood except in connection with the development of a complex of such concepts. *Agencement* implies specific connections with the other concepts. It is, in fact, the *arrangement* of these *connections* that gives the concepts their sense.”³⁹ In this regard, as a study of social science, assemblage is widely used as a “loose descriptor of heterogeneous structures, consisting of human as well as nonhuman elements.

³⁷ Sassen, 73.

³⁸ Deleuze and Hand, *Foucault*, 36.

³⁹ Phillips, “Agencement/Assemblage,” 108.

While these structures may have a more or less consistent identity, they are at the same time constantly put together in a dynamic manner.”⁴⁰ The second reason Phillips identifies is that “the translation of *agencement* by *assemblage* can give rise to connotations based on analogical impressions, which liberate elements of a vocabulary from the arguments that once helped form it.” When Paul Foss and Paul Patton in 1981 translated Deleuze and Guattari’s article “Rhizome,” they use *assemblage* for *agencement*. “Since then many (though by no means all) translators and commentators have agreed, in a loose consensus, to keep to this early translation of *agencement* by *assemblage*, while acknowledging that the translation is not really a good approximation.”⁴¹

Sassen’s use of *assemblage* in *Territory, Authority, Rights* (2008) is similar with what Collier and Ong called *global assemblages*, which by their definition, are “the actual configurations through which global forms of techno-science, economic rationalism, and other expert systems gain significance. The global assemblage is also a tool for the production of global knowledge, taken in the double sense of knowledge about global forms and knowledge that strives to replace space, culture, and society-bound categories that have dominated the social sciences throughout their history.”⁴² In a recent interview, Sassen makes this clear by saying she is not worried about “what an assemblage is” but that she thinks of assemblages as “an analytic tactic to use formats which enables me to bring into the picture pieces of what are, in more conventional thinking, thought of as fully fledged institutions.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Palmas, “Deleuze and Delanda: A New Ontology, a New Political Economy?,” 1.

⁴¹ Phillips, “Agencement/Assemblage,” 108.

⁴² Ong and Collier, *Global Assemblages*, 24.

⁴³ Acuto and Curtis, *Reassembling International Theory*, 18.

The differing approaches to Deleuze and Guattari's use of *agencement* and *assemblage* in Anglo-European scholarship becomes even more complicated when considering the circulation of these concepts in Chinese academia. Several theories from Deleuze and Guattari were inspired by Chinese philosophy and other concepts, like the "body without organs," fit surprisingly well with Chinese theories of how the world works.⁴⁴ In 2010, Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House released a Chinese translation of *A Thousand Plateaus* made by philosopher Yuhui Jiang.⁴⁵ Translating complex concepts from French into Mandarin is a difficult task which required Jiang to make some artful substitutions. Jiang translated *agencement* into simplified Chinese as 配置 which carries a military connotation and refers to advantageous deployment of material, soldiers, and weapons against an enemy or a strategic placement of pieces on a chess board. Jiang's translation is far different from the messy and distributed agency of things Anglo-European scholars have tended to read into Deleuze and Guattari's conception of assemblages. This difference is not only a matter of translation but a result of state pressures on Chinese academia.

The publication process for Chinese scholarly journals is similar to the Western system of peer-review with final decision to publish a text resting on the chief editor, but the importance of the state cannot be ignored in Chinese academia. Most of the major journals and research institutions in China are heavily dependent on the state for funding. Additionally, the CCP Propaganda Department regularly reviews published materials and the state further regulates academic publishing by issuing printing permits. As a result, Chinese academic publications are

⁴⁴ My mother, who recently retired from her career practicing medicine in China, asked me to describe a theory from the Deleuze and Guattari book I had open writing this section. I translated a paragraph on the "body without organs" and my mother thought I was reading a medical textbook. As a medical student, my mother was taught that the body consists of "overlapping systems" and the chi's "spheres of energy" or a "system that reflects the flows of the world." She was glad to hear that Deleuze and Guattari did not believe the Western idea that the body is "meat" cut up into specific functions.

⁴⁵ Jiang, *资本主义与精神分裂 (卷2): 千高原 (A Thousand Plateaus)*.

often normative and aimed at solving specific policy problems. In his contrast of the academic literature on the concept of sovereignty in Anglo-European journals with Chinese journals, Sow Keat Tok describes the situation as one in which “By and large, Chinese academic papers are often problem-solving endeavours, packaged in a scholarly manner that draws references to intellectual origins.”⁴⁶ Additionally, the difficulty of translating texts into Chinese means there is a considerable time delay between the major debates of Anglo-European and Chinese international relations scholars. Chinese translations of major classical and modern works by Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Hume, Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, and lately Foucault can be easily found in China. Given the policy-oriented focus of Chinese academia, however, the only contemporary Anglo-European writers quickly translated into Chinese tend to be the normative work of policy-oriented scholars like Joseph Nye, John Mearsheimer, Alexander Wendt, and Kenneth Waltz. Very few or no translations of prominent contemporary critical IR theorists like Saskia Sassen, Stuart Elden, James Scott, and Michael J. Shapiro or even critical China scholars such as Lynn White and William Callahan have been made.

The academic orientation towards policy recommendations in China has also meant that very few scholars have attempted to use Deleuze and Guattari to address questions of Chinese politics, through several recent conferences in China and publications outside the country demonstrate a growing interest in their work. In addition to Jiang’s translation of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Henan University recently held a symposium on “Deleuze in China,” the University of Nottingham Ningbo held another symposium on “Deleuze, Guattari and China,” and the First International Deleuze Studies in Asia Conference was held in 2013 at Tamkang University.

⁴⁶ Tok, *Managing China’s Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, 54.

These events resulted in a recent special issue of *Deleuze Studies* edited by Paul Patton,⁴⁷ another in *Theory & Event*, also edited by Paul Patton with Craig Lundy,⁴⁸ and a special issue of the *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* on “Deleuze and Chinese Cinemas” edited by David Martin-Jones and David H. Fleming.⁴⁹ This sudden flurry of work applying Deleuze and Guattari to the study of China has provided novel readings of Chinese literature and painting,⁵⁰ observations on the translation of Anglo-European concepts into Chinese,⁵¹ and explored how the recent migration of workers from villages to cities is influencing traditional Chinese social relations.⁵² However, the only published attempt to explore how China assembles together its multiplicity of territorial arrangements so far is the 2011 inaugural issue of *Cross-Currents* on “Territoriality and Space Production in China” edited by You-tien Hsing.⁵³ The difficulty of translating the often explicitly non-normative philosophic concepts of Deleuze and Guattari to normative debates over policy may also help explain why, aside from a handful of philosophy articles, Jiang’s translation of *A Thousand Plateaus* has had little impact on Chinese academia and no discernable influence on Chinese international relations scholarship so far.

Additionally, most Anglo-European scholars refer to Chinese people, places and things using the Romanized pinyin system for Chinese words. Pinyin is becoming more common across China and the Chinese diaspora, but there are still significant differences even within the pinyin system especially between Mainland China and Taiwan. For example, the leader of the Republic

⁴⁷ Patton, “Introduction.”

⁴⁸ Lundy and Patton, “Deleuze in China.”

⁴⁹ Martin-Jones and Fleming, “Special Issue.”

⁵⁰ Yin, “Becoming-Animal”; Wong, “The Melodic Landscape.”

⁵¹ Bogue, “On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature”; Lee, “Translating Deleuze”; Braidotti, “Nomadic Ethics”; Smith, “Temporality and Truth”; Gao, “Deleuze’s Conception of Desire”; Min’an and Xie, “The Chinese Cultural Revolution, Deleuze, and Desiring-Machines”; Lundy, “Why Wasn’t Capitalism Born in China?”

⁵² Lai, “Immanent Sociality.”

⁵³ Hsing, “Territoriality and Space Production in China.”

of China, 蔣介石, is *Jiang Jieshi* in pinyin on mainland China and *Chiang Kai-shek* in Taiwan but is sometimes also spelled *Chiang Chieh-shih* depending on the source. Translation is complicated by the fact that Chinese people, including Chiang, often change or use different names several times throughout their lives. Similarly, the point closest to mainland China on Taiwan island is *Jinmen* in the pinyin system but is also known as *Quemoy* or *Kinmen* in colloquial and official documents. This dissertation will follow the academic convention of recent decades and use the common hanyu pinyin system of mainland China when an English translation is not available.

Applying concepts originally written in French converted to simplified Chinese characters for an English language dissertation on territories which have long been governed in Mandarin, Cantonese, and traditional Chinese characters may require more transliteration than translation. However, as Xavier Guillaume notes in his comparison between varying English translations of *agencement*, “Translations can be conceptually alienating but also liberating.”⁵⁴ Anglo-European scholars from Sassen to Manuel DeLanda have tended to translate Deleuze and Guattari’s assemblage theory into a means of drawing attention to the ephemeral, contingent, and seemingly irrelevant forces shaping international relations. Jiang’s translation of *agencement* into the strategic concept 配置, or *peizhi* in pinyin, makes sense within the policy-oriented and state dominated environment of Chinese academia. But *peizhi* also provides an alternative to the common practice of using assemblage thinking mainly as a means of critiquing conventional theories in international relations. In his review of the ways scholars have used assemblage theory to challenge traditional concepts in IR, Graham Harman asserts that “Now that the battle

⁵⁴ Guillaume, “Agencement and Traces: A Politics of Ephemeral Theorizing,” 108.

against stasis and abstraction is won, perhaps the next battle is to recover the non-relational autonomy of assemblages, with a renewed focus on stability and its merely *intermittent* crises. But this would mean the transformation of assemblage theory into something else altogether.”⁵⁵

IR scholars have often been interested in the assemblage thinking method for challenging the assumption that states are containers of societies and act as strategic or self-interested entities. These scholars argue that a more dynamic ontologies like assemblage theory recognizes the flow, fluidity, and contingency of the state form. However, this dissertation also recognizes that one of the most durable assemblages in the world today are states and that states do contain peoples, things, and even temporalities. The state is not the natural order of things but, as Stephen Collier points out, “it is an important feature of our order of things.”⁵⁶ The People’s Republic of China, for example, was only recently established after WWII, but the PRC also contains 5,000 years of Chinese history, capacities of statecraft, and social organizations. The Chinese state is also able to organize coherent action at a national and planetary scale. The Chinese territoriality also prioritizes the role of the state in the governance of a region and the Chinese way of organizing territory is always understood to be a function of the territory’s placement within the administrative hierarchy. In the Chinese administrative system, regions are considered to be places to be governed and are not understood to be regions which exist before governance.

China is not distinctly assemblage-type state distinct from the Westphalian model of container-states. Applying Jiang’s strategic translation of assemblages allows this project to do more than just contest the idea that states are containers for nations, raise questions about the

⁵⁵ Harman, “Conclusions: Assemblage Theory and Its Future,” 129.

⁵⁶ Acuto and Curtis, “Assemblages and the Conduct of Inquiry: A Conversation with Stephen J. Collier.”

viability of nation-states as central political actors, or prove that the strong or weak states theory fails to adequately describe every situation in international relations. *Peizhi* contributes to the existing scholarship on assemblage theory by accounting for the strategic processes by which many forces, including a centralized and authoritarian state, arrange heterogenous peoples, autonomous regions, and disputed territories into the durable assemblage we call China.

Contributions to the Study of Chinese Territoriality

In his landmark book *Human Territoriality* (1986), Robert Sack defines territoriality “as a spatial strategy to affect, influence, or control resources and people, by controlling area” and, in terms similar to what Deleuze and Guattari call “deterritorialization” and “reterritorialization,” Sack finds that “as a strategy, territoriality can be turned on and off.”⁵⁷ For Sack, territoriality is a form of human behavior which employs delimited space as a means of reaching specific political and social goals. Since Sack, political geographers have disagreed over the role of the state in human territoriality. Peter Taylor, for example, has asserted that territoriality is “a fundamentally state-centric social process”⁵⁸ and Alexander B. Murphy has criticized Sack for having a “conception of territory [which] is very much rooted in understandings of space that developed in conjunction with the modern state system.”⁵⁹ Elden and Sassen have also persuasively shown that this concept of territoriality, like the nation-state, emerged from the economic, philosophic, ideological, and technological conditions specific to Renaissance Europe.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Sack, *Human Territoriality*, 2.

⁵⁸ Taylor, “State/Space,” 101.

⁵⁹ Murphy, “Entente Territorial,” 163.

⁶⁰ Elden, *The Birth of Territory*; Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*.

Scholars interested in Chinese politics have tended to view the development of Chinese territoriality in ahistoric and primarily economic terms. The success of government policies like the 1978 “Reform and Opening up” (*gaige kaifang*) reforms, which established new institutions and adjusted territorial arrangements to create Special Economic Zones with special tax incentives to attract foreign investment, seems to confirm the developmental economist’s view that Chinese territoriality is driven by economic behavior (especially in terms of customs and tariffs). However, as Claude Raffestin has pointed out, behaviorist accounts of territoriality tend to describe “a product rather than a process”⁶¹ and reproduce assumptions about the regional and urban planning practices of western-style democracies or liberal markets.⁶² This can lead to surprisingly narrow conclusions about Chinese territoriality. Robert Ash and Y. Y. Kueh in a special issue of *The China Quarterly* devoted to the possibility of a new economic Greater China, for example, argued in 1993 that the political goal of reintegrating Taiwan with mainland China had already been accomplished by increased trade between both territories because “economic integration is essentially a process of unification.”⁶³ Events like Taiwan’s rejection of the CCP’s “One China” Consensus and suspension of cross-strait communications in 1992, the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996, the sharp rise of Taiwanese nationalism in recent decades, and the election President Ma and other Taiwanese politicians viewed as being too friendly to China in 2016 show that economic behavior is only one force among others producing contemporary Chinese territorial assemblages.

⁶¹ Raffestin, “Territoriality,” 141.

⁶² Cartier, “What’s Territorial about China?”; Liu, *Zhongguo Xingzheng Quhua de Lilun He Shijian (China’s Administrative Divisions in Theory and Practice)*.

⁶³ Ash and Kueh, “Economic Integration within Greater China.”

Raffestin suggests an alternative approach which resonates with assemblage theory by defining territoriality “as the ensemble of mediated relationships linking individuals and/ or social groups with exteriority and alterity” or “a set of relationships rooted in ties to the material environment and other people or groups, and mediated by existing techniques and representations.”⁶⁴ For Raffestin and this study, territoriality is process that defines and sharpens spatial boundaries and non-spatial processes, including historical configurations and representations which have since become components of other assemblages. Sassen describes this process, borrowing from complexity theory, as the circulation of “capabilities” built with a specific arrangement of historical conditions and institutions that can become part of new organizational logics that have little to do with the original. For example, the divinity of the French monarchy was originally legitimated by the Pope but was later invoked to establish autonomy from the papacy with a secular form of sovereignty the French Revolution tried to replace with popular sovereignty. Nationalism and patriotism are “capabilities developed through territorial kingship and its claim to divine origins”⁶⁵ which dislodged from the decomposing feudal order only to be relodged within modern nation-state and international assemblages of territory, authority, and rights. China developed some of these territorial capabilities along similar lines as European states but with some significant differences.

In 230 B.C.E., King Zheng of Qin took advantage of a severe famine and devastating earthquake to begin conquering the other Chinese kingdoms of Han, Zhou, Yan, Wei, Chu, and Qi. Zheng changed his name to Shihuangdi, literally “First King Emperor,” integrated the Zhou and Qin dynasty governments, abolished feudal holdings, and required noble families to live in

⁶⁴ Murphy, “Entente Territorial,” 161–62.

⁶⁵ Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*, 19.

the new capital city under surveillance to create the first Chinese empire. The Qin held the former Warring States together by standardizing units of measurement, distance, and written Chinese characters. The Qin also tied the states together by building a national road and canal system that facilitated the collection of taxes using a new standardized currency. The national roads and canals could also be used to easily supply and quickly deploy the Qin's large army. Almost immediately after conquering the last kingdom of the Yellow River Plain, Shihuang also began efforts to expand the new Chinese empire by sending his armies south against the Yue tribes and sending farmers from the central plains to colonize lands occupied by Xiongnu nomads.

The Qin transformed the cosmological and philosophical concept of “tianxia” or “all under heaven” into a political system managed by a new bureaucratic organization that came to be called the “administrative hierarchy” (*xingzheng quhua*). It was during this period that a new durable Chinese territorial assemblage emerged which the influential Chinese political theorist Liang Qichao describes as a reimagining of the gap between the geographical coverage of the Qin empire and its political system to a new cosmographic territoriality⁶⁶ organizing people, places, and things by their physical proximity to Shihuang. Unlike the European model of territoriality emerging from the Middle Ages which Sassen summarizes as a system “based on mutual ties, hierarchical but not clearly defined,”⁶⁷ this new assemblage clearly became geographically centered on the Yellow River Plain and hierarchically below the *Tian Zi* “Son of Heaven.” In other words, during the Qin dynasty, tianxia went from describing the cultural

⁶⁶ Liang Qichao continues to be an influential political and geographical theorist in China, but few of texts have been translated into English. For a good overview of Liang's contribution to the study of tianxia, see: Mingming, “All under Heaven (Tianxia): Cosmological Perspectives and Political Ontologies in Pre-Modern China,” 338.

⁶⁷ Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*, 35.

practices uniting Chinese people “all under heaven” into a moral, ethical, and territorial strategy to “unify all under heaven.”⁶⁸

The Qin dynasty did not last long but the tianxia assemblage of Chinese territoriality became the dominant organizational logic for subsequent dynasties and developed capabilities which would become relogged in modern territorial assemblages. After the Qin dynasty disintegrated, the capacities of centralized government run by a professional class of bureaucrats became relogged in the Han administrative hierarchy. Even after the Xinhai Revolution and Communist Revolution in the 20th century, territorial capacities developed with the Qin and Han dynasties continue to circulate in contemporary Chinese assemblages. Redeploying Qin and Han capabilities, the PRC organizes territories into an administrative hierarchy according to population size, geographic conditions, historical traditions, political governance, and economic strength within an administrative hierarchy. Under the Central Government in Beijing, the levels are ranked with the provincial level (*shengji xingzheng qu*) at the top, followed by the prefectural-level (*diji xingzheng qu*), county-level (*xianji xingzheng qu*), township-level (*xiangji xingzheng qu*), at the bottom the village-level (*cunji xingzheng qu*). Each level is administered by a dual administrative structure similar to the Qin, but with party elites instead of an aristocracy working alongside the professional class of state bureaucrats empowered to exercise economic power, political autonomy, and legal jurisdiction over a fixed territory.⁶⁹

Most scholars agree that the hierarchical and China-centric tianxia system disintegrated after it came into violent contact with the Western world order in the late Qing dynasty. Earl

⁶⁸ The Warring States period philosopher Mozi was among the first scholars to describe tianxia as more than just a set of unified moral or cultural values. In *The Mozi* he redefines tianxia as a project of Chinese political unification directed by the Son of Heaven in Yan, *墨子簡編 (The Mozi)*, chapters 11-13: 109-153.

⁶⁹ Chung, “State Regulation and China’s Administrative System.”

Macarney's famous refusal to perform the traditional kowtow ceremony expected of vassals before the Son of Heaven in 1793 and the Qianlong Emperor's refusal to deal with King George III as an equal sovereign are often cited as the beginning of the end for China's tianxia territorial assemblage. The subsequent military losses to European and Japanese naval powers, and the loss of territories like Hong Kong and Macau in "unequal treaties" to Great Britain and Portugal, made it impossible to continue insisting on the superiority of everything Chinese. However, recent critics like Tok have complicated the apparently radical transition of China from tianxia to the Westphalian world order by drawing attention to the circulation of capabilities, technologies, and people developed outside China that became lodged within the formal institutions and informal practices of Qing governance. The late Qing dynasty's "Self-Strengthening" movement (*zhiqiang yundong*) of the 1860s led by the influential reformer Zeng Guofan to fend off foreign powers and prevent domestic unrest by adopting Western technologies is the most salient example. The Qing incorporated Western technologies of war by buying guns and retrofitting ships with European cannons. They also studied and adapted Western technologies of statecraft, elevating their treatment of Westerners from people existing outside the Chinese cultural sphere (*fan*) to members of political organizations (*guo*) and rearranged bureaucratic structures to create the *Zongli Yamen* or Office of Management of the Affairs of All Foreign Countries. This new office cautiously recognized the sovereignty of foreign nations and helped transform the Chinese Emperor from a dynastic ruler with the Mandate of Heaven to the temporary occupant of China's seat of power or head of state. This office played a critical role in incorporating capabilities of Anglo-European nation-states into the Qing territorial assemblage by, among other things, translating texts like Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* (1836) into Mandarin and circulating them within the Chinese administrative hierarchy.

While scholars like Tok have questioned the popular narrative that the disintegration of the weak Qing state coincides with the disintegration of the tianxia system, little attention has been paid to the circulation of tianxia components in contemporary IR. The massive development of industrial capabilities and high-levels of economic growth in China since the reform and opening up policies, coinciding with the de-industrialization and fading economic power of the United States after 2008, has put a growing number of Chinese products, people, and territorial concepts into positions of power. Many Chinese scholars have recently called for the creation of a new “China School” of international relations citing the inability of Western democracies to address international problems like climate change and the United States’ increasingly belligerent use of military force in the Middle East and Africa. One leading voice for the China School, philosopher Tingyan Zhao, prefaced his rejection of the weak vs. strong state debate in a February 2018 opinion editorial for *The Washington Post* by asserting that “we are headed beyond failed states to a failed world order.”⁷⁰ According to Zhao, “the most important political problem today is not the so-called failed states but the *failed world*”⁷¹ resulting from the Westphalian organization of Hobbesian individuals in competition with each other and the cooperative demands of new globalized economic and information sharing networks.

In the policy-oriented language of Chinese academia, Zhao has a solution to the failed Westphalian world. Aligning with President Hu Jintao’s use of ancient philosophy to name the CCP’s transition of leadership from Jiang Zemin “Socialist Harmonious Society,” Zhao proposes a transition in international relations from the Westphalian world order to a modern form of

⁷⁰ Tingyang, “Can This Ancient Chinese Philosophy Save Us from Global Chaos?”

⁷¹ Callahan and Barabantseva, *China Orders the World*, 33.

tianxia. Callahan has criticized Zhao's proposal by pointing out that Zhao ignores the numerous changes tianxia underwent during its long history, assumes the conquests of imperial China were peaceful, and draws attention to the ways China's "contemporary history in Tibet, Taiwan and Xinjiang is instructive for what happens to difference that prefers to stay outside and not be transformed into a 'friend'."⁷² Agreeing with Callahan, critics like Ban Wang find that Zhao's proposal to dislodge tianxia from its imperial Chinese encasement and install it in a world institution wavers between "the quest for universal principles and ideological justification for domination."⁷³

This project contributes to the growing literature on Chinese territoriality by contextualizing the development of tianxia as it related to "foreign" Chinese living outside the Yellow River plain on the islands of Hong Kong and Taiwan. It also contributes to Callahan and Wang's resistance to the China School's goal of re-centering the world on China by applying the de-centering analytic framework of Deleuze and Guattari to this imagined global tianxia system. This dissertation will show the ways in which China, even when accepting territoriality as a key principle of IR, interprets and applies territoriality differently than its international counterparts.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1: Tianxia Territoriality: Foreign Chinese Relations and "One Country, N Systems"

This chapter traces the reformation of tianxia territoriality as China was forced to develop new relationships with imperial European, American, and Japanese states and the "foreign"

⁷² William A. Callahan, "Chinese Visions of World Order," 757.

⁷³ Wang, *Chinese Visions of World Order*, 19.

Chinese living under colonial rule. It begins by describing Chinese foreign relations to “barbarians” before the Opium Wars and the late Qing empire’s attempt to use Western technologies of international statecraft to defend against territorial losses. Next, it shows how the translation of Westphalian territorial concepts from Wheaton’s *Elements of International Law* continue to influence Chinese governmentality. Finally, this chapter critiques the China School project to reassemble ancient Chinese philosophy, modern foreign relations, and contemporary economic capabilities into a new hegemonic global tianxia assemblage.

Chapter 2: Reterritorializing Hong Kong: Rocks, Walls, and Tianxia Cultural Governance

The first case study of this project focuses on the development of contemporary Chinese territorial assemblages by contrasting China’s management of Hong Kong with Taiwan. It begins by recounting the colonization of the island by Chinese immigrants, the recolonization of the “barren rock” by Great Britain, and reformulation of the tianxia system after the Chinese Emperor was forced to sign the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 and recognize the “extraterritoriality” of British subjects. Following Ó Tuathail’s observation that “every deterritorialization creates the conditions for a reterritorialization,”⁷⁴ I next show how China manages Taiwan using a “fleet in being” strategy or what Deleuze and Guattari called a “vector of deterritorialization”⁷⁵ and Great Britain prepared Hong Kong for Chinese reterritorialization by demolishing the anarchic Kowloon Walled City. Finally, this chapter draws attention to cultural governance projects aimed at encouraging Hongkongers and Taiwanese to identify as Chinese. Specifically, I analyze the ways in which the PRC hopes to manage a revival of tianxia culture by sponsoring the 2002 film

⁷⁴ Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*, 230.

⁷⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 387.

Hero about the Qin unification of China directed by the influential Chinese director Zhang Yimou and starring famous mainland Chinese, Hongkongese, and Taiwanese actors.

Chapter 3: Tacky Territorial Assemblages: Building Sansha City in the South China Sea

The second case study of this dissertation concentrates on China's recent island-building projects in the South China Sea. These artificial islands, and China's claim that 2,500 occupants of Sansha live in a Chinese city, have been the subject of serious debate and contention as China attempts to territorialize significant amounts of hydrocarbon reserves in traditionally international waters near Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines. This chapter contextualizes China's 2012 promotion of the Sansha to a prefecture-level city within the government's administrative hierarchy as a strategy for extending territorial control over the Spratly Islands, the Parcel Islands, Macclesfield Bank, and Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea. It is tempting to describe China's effort to "striae" the formerly "smooth" space of international waters to create what Murphy calls a "sticky" territory. However, I argue that the geopolitics of the South China Sea and difficulty China has maintaining its artificial islands Sansha an unstable "tacky" territory for international relations and the PRC.

The concluding chapter begins by summarizing the primary methods China uses to produce, maintain, and hold the territories of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Sansha together as a contemporary Chinese assemblage. While the scope of this project is limited to these island territories, I indicate how future research might apply assemblage thinking (especially in the Chinese transliteration *peizhi*) to critically account for China's management of the autonomous mainland territories Tibet, Xinjiang, Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, and Ningxia. I argue that assemblage thinking could also be used to challenge institutional discourses in IR reducing

China's recent agricultural investments in Tajikistan and Africa to colonial "land grabbing"⁷⁶ or celebrating China's massive \$8 trillion "One Belt and One Road Initiative" as rebuilding the ancient Silk Road⁷⁷ to help, as Xi Jinping puts it, "people and things flow" more efficiently between Asia and Europe.⁷⁸ This research resists the dominant strong vs. weak state or Tianxia vs. Westphalian world order debates in IR and instead describes China's current expressions of territoriality and its future place in the world.

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⁷⁶ Sy, "What Do We Know about the Chinese Land Grab in Africa?"; Yu, "Motivation behind China's 'One Belt, One Road' Initiatives and Establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank."

⁷⁷ Yu, "Motivation behind China's 'One Belt, One Road' Initiatives and Establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank."

⁷⁸ "习近平在'一带一路'国际合作高峰论坛开幕式上的演讲-新华网 (Xi Jinping's Speech on 'One Belt, One Road' at the International Cooperation Summit Opening)."

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Chapter 1

Tianxia Territoriality:

Foreign Chinese Relations and “One Country, N Systems”

Formerly Portugal presented tribute;
Now England is paying homage.
They have out-traveled Shu-hai and Heng-chang;
My Ancestor’s merit and virtue must have reached their distant shores.
Though their tribute is commonplace, my heart approves sincerely.
Though what they bring is meagre, yet,
In my kindness to men from afar I make generous return,
Wanting to preserve my good health and power.

—Qianlong Emperor on meeting the first British envoy to China in 1793⁷⁹

Ever since it was first proposed in the 19th century that China’s failure to prevent the invasion of Western powers into Chinese territories resulted from its peculiar approach to foreign relations, international relations scholars and practitioners have made it standard practice to describe traditional Chinese foreign relations as a “tributary system.” Additionally, after John King Fairbank’s influential study in the 1930s, Chinese and Anglo-European scholars have often conflated the tributary system with the concept of “tianxia” or the organization of lands, space, and area under the divinely sanctioned cultural authority of the Chinese emperor. In their recent response to Tingyang Zhao’s analysis of tianxia, for example, Yongjin Zheng and Barry Buzan describe traditional Chinese foreign relations as a “tributary system not just as a structure of strategic interaction and economic exchange between Imperial China and other participants in

⁷⁹ Quoted in Klekar, “Prisoners in Silken Bonds,” 1.

the system, but as an articulation of the existence of international society in East Asia.”⁸⁰ Zhao argues that tianxia and the “China School” are an alternative to the Westphalian international state system and the “English School” of IR. Critics of Zhao’s reading of tianxia like Zhang Feng and William Callahan have pointed out that IR scholars often assume that China was “somehow radically different from the foreign policies of other great powers in history”⁸¹ and, especially after Deng Xiaoping’s reforms, have tended to describe policies or ideas in terms of Chinese exceptionalism or as “having Chinese characteristics.”⁸² However, Zhang and Buzan also assume that Chinese states have historically conformed to the Cold War-era American theories that international cooperation and conflict result from the interaction between rational and self-interested states by describing Zhao’s tianxia as a “game theoretical approach” to traditional Chinese foreign relations.⁸³ Zhang and Buzan, and even critical scholars like Sow Keat Tok, recognize that the tributary system was constantly being contested and breaking down but account for these inconsistencies by citing Stephen Krasner’s argument that the “organized hypocrisy” of participants’ discourses and behaviors in international society often violate longstanding norms without challenging the system’s legitimacy.⁸⁴

In contrast, Peter Perdue has gone to great detail to show that any semblance of a tributary system in East Asia was “never stable, fixed, nor uniform”⁸⁵ and John Wills has also pointed out that “the tribute system was not all of traditional Chinese foreign relations.”⁸⁶ Odd Arne Westad goes further to argue that “there was no tributary system” and Perdue has pointed

⁸⁰ Zhang and Buzan, “The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice,” 6.

⁸¹ Feng, “Rethinking the ‘Tribute System,’” 547.

⁸² Callahan and Barabantseva, *China Orders the World*, 252.

⁸³ Zhang and Buzan, “The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice,” 7.

⁸⁴ Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*; Zhang and Buzan, “The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice,” 29; Tok, *Managing China’s Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, 27.

⁸⁵ Peter Perdue, “A Frontier View of Chineseness,” 67.

⁸⁶ Jr, *Embassies and Illusions*, 4.

out that the idea of a Chinese tributary system was “created by Western scholars, to describe a mystical, ineffable Oriental reality which is claimed to be inaccessible to Western or Eastern minds—except the mind of the Oriental scholar himself.”⁸⁷ In short, while many studies have advanced the tributary model and several have challenged it, few researchers have explored the other relations of people and things the “tributary system” model of Chinese foreign relations has to systematically exclude in order to identify the key constraints and possibilities of Chinese politics.

This is where Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of assemblage, or more accurately Jiang’s translation of assemblage as the strategic concept *peizhi*, comes in handy because it rejects totalizing systems without rejecting systematicity. Assemblage or *peizhi* does not reproduce Zhao, Zhang, and Buzan’s assumption that traditional Chinese foreign relationships necessarily constitute a closed system or “Chinese world order” and allows this study to contribute to Callahan, Wills, and Perdue’s critiques of the tributary system by interrogating what constitutes the basic ingredients of Chinese foreign relations. As noted in the introduction, the concept of *tianxia* or “all under heaven” first emerged during the Warring States period (475–221 B.C.E.) and described the common ritual and literary practices of “civilized” people living in Yellow River Plain. The first Chinese emperor, Qin Shihuang, began the process of transforming *tianxia* into a strategy for unifying Chinese territories hierarchically below the geographically unbound authority of the emperor. Under the subsequent Han dynasty, *tianxia* began involving the payment of tribute and performance of Chinese ceremonies by “inner” and “outer” barbarians alike. However, there was never any consistent agreement as to what counted as a payment of tribute, tributes payment from vassals were often intermittent or disrupted by domestic

⁸⁷ Perdue, “The Tenacious Tributary System,” 1006.

rebellions, and on several occasions Chinese emperors were forced to pay tribute as vassals to other empires. Similarly, as Perdue points out, the supposed cultural alternative to military force of the tribute system and tianxia territoriality ignores the estimated 3,756 wars fought between Chinese states from 770 BCE to 1912 AD, and the Ming dynasty's initiation of at least one conflict every four years with the Mongols.⁸⁸

Rather than imagine a model of traditional Chinese foreign relations and fit the terms of those relationships into a model tributary system or international community, this chapter employs assemblage thinking to reveal how, following Deleuze, “the assemblage’s only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a ‘sympathy’” and in Chinese foreign relations it was “never filiations that are important, but alliances, alloys.”⁸⁹ These sympathies and alloys of Chinese relations can be most clearly seen during the 19th century not because of the failure of any traditional model of Chinese foreign relations to be reconciled with a Westphalian model, but because China suddenly had to develop new relationships with territories that had been Chinese until taken by Great Britain, Portugal, France, Japan, and other imperial states. This chapter begins by exploring how the late Qing dynasty, Republic of China (ROC), and People’s Republic of China (PRC) managed their relationships with foreign powers and the newly foreign Chinese people living in colonies using territorial capabilities developed by Qin, Han, and Ming administrative hierarchies. I argue that the tianxia territorial assemblage incorporated international and foreign peoples even before the concept of “national” and “international” or distinctions between issues domestic and foreign were part of the administrative hierarchy. Next, I consider how Qing administrators plugged territorial capabilities developed by the modern

⁸⁸ Estimates from the Chinese Academy of Military Science cited in Perdue, 1005.

⁸⁹ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 69.

imperial states of France, Great Britain, and the U.S. into the late tianxia territorial assemblage. The translation of Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* (1836) is especially important for understanding how 19th century Anglo-European capacities for managing populations, territories, and later citizens continues to shape contemporary Chinese foreign relations. Finally, this chapter contextualizes Deng Xiaoping's "One Country, Two Systems" proposal for the reunification of Taiwan and Hong Kong by showing how it incorporates capabilities from earlier Chinese territorial assemblages and late additions like the "one diplomacy, two systems" (*yige waijiao liangzhong tizhi*) developed under the Qing.⁹⁰ By exploring the development and circulation of territorial governance capacities through ancient and modern China, this chapter provides an alternative analysis of traditional Chinese foreign relations and the conditions necessary for the emergence of contemporary China's "one country, two systems" territorial assemblage.

Tianxia Capabilities for "Cherishing Men from Afar"

Like the Roman Empire and Christendom of Middle Ages Europe, Chinese tianxia territoriality did not recognize any boundaries or make any distinction between foreign and domestic except in terms of their proximity to the central plains of China. Fairbank summarizes Chinese foreign relations from the first to the last dynasty as a concentric hierarchy of zones with nearby tributaries like Korea, Vietnam, and the Ryukyu Islands (and sometimes Japan) placed higher in the hierarchy than nomadic and ethnically non-Chinese people living at the fringe of Chinese culture like the tribes which sometimes pushed in on the Great Wall or Russian peoples

⁹⁰ Quan, "晚清对外关系中的'一个外交两种体制'局面初探 (A Study of One Diplomacy Two Systems in Late Qing Dynasty's Foreign Relations)."

of Siberia. The remaining lands and non-Chinese “outer barbarians” (*wai yi*) were not understood to be foreigners but peoples ordered lower in the tianxia hierarchy by their cultural distance from the emperor. Inner and outer barbarians were expected to observe Chinese rituals and pay regular tribute to the emperor, usually in the form of local products and rare gifts. The emperor, in return, sent a greater amount of tribute back to “vassal” states and granted feudal lords heritable titles. Members of the Qing court, including the emperor, liked to call these events of exchange the ritual of “cherishing men from afar.”⁹¹ Political organizations posing less physical threat and more cultural affinity with the Chinese core were ranked higher in the vassal hierarchy than other groups regardless of their physical distance from the central plains.

Tianxia tended to treat foreign relations as an external expression of the same principles of political and social order within Chinese society and the state. Philosophical texts from the Warring States period like the *Mencius*, *Xunzi*, and *Han Feizi* describe tianxia as a form of cultural unity superseding the political disunity of the feudal states (*guo*) with their separate rulers, government bureaucracies, and armies. The Qin transformation of tianxia into an imperial and territorial expansionist concept was paradoxical from the beginning. Shihuang, for example, proclaimed himself the Son of Heaven and ruler of all under heaven while simultaneously connecting a series of walls into the Great Wall to keep Huns, Xiongnu, Turks, Oirat, Tartar, and the Jurchen peoples out of the Yellow River Plain. The tianxia understanding of territoriality also helps explain why Chinese governance, culture, and language could continue to hold the empire together even after barbarians like the Mongol Kublai Khan or former Manchurian vassals like Hong Taiji overthrew a sitting Han Chinese emperor and claimed the Mandate of Heaven for themselves. It did not matter much who was emperor or where they came from, only that the

⁹¹ Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*.

imperial influence (*te*) was maintained by subjects performing the proper ceremonies (*li*), even where the emperor lacked power to enforce his regulations or laws (*fa*).⁹²

The Qin held Chinese territories together by developing several territorial governance capabilities that disappeared during the ROC but became relogged within the PRC's administrative hierarchy. The centralized bureaucracy of the Qin facilitated counting and taxation by organizing farmland into rectilinear grids, subdivided into fields demarcated by roads and footpaths with acreage determined by the amount of land one family could cultivate. This reorganization of land broke down villages from closed communities with strong family loyalties and replaced kingship relations with five and ten family squads modelled on the organization of the Qin army.⁹³ The Qin also divided its newly conquered territories into 36 administrative units each managed by a military commander, a civil governor, and an inspector. Shihuang introduced a strict legal code which standardized everything from currency and weights to the length of chariot axles.⁹⁴ Shihuang abolished the remaining privileges of feudal lords by replacing their governors with professional bureaucrats, outlawed serfdom, discouraged local coalitions by resettling elites away from their traditional homelands, and prevented separatism by heavily regulating literacy. The Qin standardized the size and shapes of written Chinese characters and ordered most existing books, except utilitarian texts on agriculture and medicine or histories of the State of Qin, to be burned. According to the official records, Shihuang further standardized written Chinese by burying 460 scholars alive for owning forbidden books in local scripts by Confucius and his students.⁹⁵ The meritocratic administrative bureaucracy of the Qin shattered

⁹² Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order*, 8.

⁹³ Portal, *The First Emperor*, 21.

⁹⁴ Portal, 33.

⁹⁵ Neininger, "Burying the Scholars Alive: On the Origin of a Confucian Martyrs' Legend."

competing feudal, clan, and regional identities by making the emperor the sole arbiter of a government officials' success in life. The Qin governed China using two types of administrative structures, retaining the ancient system controlled by personal relationships to the emperor that might broadly be called an aristocracy and a professional bureaucracy given fixed salaries, territorial jurisdictions, and controlled by written correspondence.

After the Qin dynasty disintegrated, the capabilities of centralized government run by a professional class of bureaucrats became reloaded in the Han administrative hierarchy with some important differences. The Han used the Confucian texts which Shihuang had banned to highlight the ethical and religious power of the emperor granted by the “mandate of heaven.” The Han also used these texts to ensure their administrators would share a common language, moral code, and textual community regardless of which territories or level of government they were sent to administer. The imperial examination system developed by the Han tested candidates once a year for government office on their ability to recite from memory and debate key texts of Confucian philosophy. Where the Qin imposed its centralized bureaucracy and strict literacy controls on local elites to keep them from competing over traditional feudal claims, the Han divided and conquered by encouraging elites to compete for scholastic authority and rank within the administrative hierarchy. Among other things, candidates for government office were tested on their ability to compose an “eight-legged essay” applying concepts like “harmonizing tianxia” drawn from the “Four Books” and “Five Classics” of Confucianism like the *Analects*, the *Great Learning*, the *Mencius*, and later the pragmatic commentaries of Zhu Xi.

Even after the Xinhai Revolution and Communist Revolution in the 20th century, institutional capabilities developed by the Qin and Han dynasties to govern territories continued to circulate in contemporary Chinese assemblages. Modifying the Qin and Han institutional

processes slightly, the PRC today organizes territories into an administrative hierarchy according to population size, geographic conditions, historical traditions, political governance, and economic strength. Under the Central Government in Beijing, the levels are ranked with the provincial level (*shengji xingzheng qu*) at the top, followed by the prefectural-level (*diji xingzheng qu*), county-level (*xianji xingzheng qu*), township-level (*xiangji xingzheng qu*), at the bottom the village-level (*cunji xingzheng qu*). Each level is administered by a dual administrative structure similar to the Qin, but with party elites instead of an aristocracy working alongside the professional class of state bureaucrats empowered to exercise economic power, political autonomy, and legal jurisdiction over a fixed territory.⁹⁶ The last dynasty abolished the imperial examinations, but the Republic of China created the Ministry of Examination and Ministry of Civil Service to test potential government officials in China after overthrowing the Qing. The ROC continues its examination system under those administrative bureaucracies today in Taiwan. Students in mainland China spend 12 years preparing to take the two-day and nine-hour *Gaokao* college entrance exam. After graduating from college, candidates for government positions take the yearly administered five-hour Civil Service Exam which consists of 135 multiple-choice questions on mathematics, language, and law followed by three-hours of answering essay questions on topics like the application of ancient Chinese water metaphors to modern governance or the effects of the National Development and Reform Commission's economic policies on rural healthcare.⁹⁷ Members of the civil service and party officials in China today share the experience of spending years to prepare for the official examination and belong

⁹⁶ Chung, "State Regulation and China's Administrative System."

⁹⁷ "2017年国家公务员考试申论真题及答案 (2017 National Examination for Admission to the Civil Service)."

to a textual community based on exam preparation textbooks, Xi Jinping's *The Governance of China Vol. I*⁹⁸ & *Vol. II*,⁹⁹ and the People's Daily.

Unlike the “one country, two systems” expression of Chinese territoriality in the late 20th century, tianxia foreign relations depended on vassal states regularly sending tribute and delegates to perform the *kowtow* ceremony of three bows and nine prostrations before the emperor. The exchange of tribute began with the exchange of hostages as Emperor Wu of Han began expanding the territories unified by the Qin. Wu exchanged hostages and gifts with the Nanyue kingdom to form an alliance against the Minyue kingdom. After defeating and resettling the Nanyue people to lands between the Yangtze and Huai rivers, Wu exchanged hostages and gifts with the Yelang kingdom in alliance against his former Nanyue allies to expand the Han empire further south. Wu also exchanged hostages and entered into marriage alliances with the Xiongnu people of the northern steppe, before expanding the empire across the Gobi Desert and pushing the Xiongnu into Siberia. Another territorial strategy Wu developed to control a newly conquered kingdom like the Dian in eastern Yunnan was to leave local kings their traditional authority and titles but require them to send regular tributary payments and ritually abase themselves before the emperor at court. Later dynasties would use similar strategies to expand Chinese control and manage the territories of Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet.¹⁰⁰

The Han dynasty also began temporarily occupying the capital of a neighboring kingdoms to extract regular tributary payments or establish the emperor's authority over Chinese trade. Paying tribute usually required the vassal state to present local products or tribute

⁹⁸ Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume One*.

⁹⁹ Jinping, *The Governance of China Volume Two*.

¹⁰⁰ Vohra, *China's Path to Modernization*, 23.

memorials to the emperor and perform the *kowtow* ceremony. The emperor sent tribute missions back with gifts, often of greater value than those offered by the vassal, and symbols of office like heritable titles, official calendars to ensure future tribute would be sent on time, and imperial grants of trade privileges with the capitol and frontiers. Korea has become the “model vassal state” for scholars calling this arrangement the tributary system¹⁰¹ because of its long history of regularly sending tribute to the Chinese emperor. The Ryukyu islands, Vietnam, Siam, Burma, and Nepal regularly performed the part of vassals in the tianxia assemblage, but Feng and Perdue have recently shown that these relationships were far more complex than subservient kings paying a form of taxes or subordinating their sovereignty to the Chinese emperor. After forcibly seizing power from the Yuan dynasty, for example, in 1369 the new Ming emperor Hongwu sent an envoy to Korea for tribute. This envoy, Feng argues, shows that “Hongwu’s main concern, therefore, was to extract overt symbolic acknowledgement from foreign rulers of China’s cosmological centrality and affirmation of the legitimacy of his succession to the dynastic authority.”¹⁰² This tributary mission did not extend Chinese control over Korea but tried to establish the primacy of Chinese interests in trade relations with Korea and gave the king of Korea some authority over the legitimacy of the new Chinese emperor. In return, the Chinese emperors offered investiture for Korean rulers and feudal lords. This arrangement mirrors some of the ways imperial Rome managed captured territories, but submission to the Chinese emperor did not necessarily extend China’s territorial control. Contrary to Zhang and Buzan’s assertion that Chinese tributary relations constituted a prototype of contemporary “international society,” the tianxia territorial assemblage was not based on the mutual respect of borders between states or held together by Chinese “institutions that help to define norms of acceptable and legitimate

¹⁰¹ Feng, “Rethinking the ‘Tribute System,’” 559–60.

¹⁰² Feng, 563.

state behavior.”¹⁰³ For example, when the Chinese government sent an official to install a new king in the state of Champa in 1474, the official was blocked by the Vietnamese who had invaded and conducted a genocidal campaign since 1471. The emperor did nothing except send the official to Malacca for tribute instead. A decade later, the Malacca informed the emperor that their tributary mission to China was attacked on the way home by the Vietnamese but had not retaliated because they feared punishment from the emperor for using their military without his permission. The emperor responded by berating the Malacca and ordered them to attack Vietnam.¹⁰⁴ The Champa, Malacca, and Vietnamese were all Chinese vassals that maintained consistent tributary relations within the tianxia territorial assemblage.

Even exemplary vassals like Korea did not spontaneously submit to the cultural and political authority of the Chinese emperor. Emperor Hongwu tried to curry favor by reducing the frequency of Korean tributary missions to once every three years and, alternatively, refused to invest the Chosen dynasty founder King T’aejo until Korea promised to reinforce Ming security in the northeast of China. Feng argues that events like this resemble “blackmail” more than any formal tributary system.¹⁰⁵ In the 1590s, the Ming dynasty helped drive Japanese and Manchu occupation armies out of Korea. After the Manchus toppled the Ming in China, Korean continued sending tribute but also continued using the Ming calendar and secretly expressed contempt for the new Qing rulers by refusing to call them by the Ming titles of nobility the Qing tried to adopt.¹⁰⁶ Later, the Qing emperor Kangxi appealed to Mongolia for support by citing the common heritage of Mongols and Manchus. Kangxi also set aside Chinese Confucian hierarchy

¹⁰³ Zhang and Buzan, “The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice,” 6.

¹⁰⁴ Tsai, *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty*, 15.

¹⁰⁵ Feng, “Rethinking the ‘Tribute System,’” 564.

¹⁰⁶ Perdue, “The Tenacious Tributary System,” 1009–10.

for Mongolian Buddhist beliefs in universal benevolence to better ingratiate himself with the Khan. On several occasions, the Qing also supplied Mongols with grain, livestock, supervision over legal disputes, and feudal titles which seems to reverse the supposed superiority of the Chinese emperor by paying the tribute a vassal would usually send to the Mongols. However, this was not necessarily unusual as Perdue notes “the techniques used by the Ming and Qing to legitimize their rule over their subjects and to claim superiority over rival empires did not differ radically from those of other early modern empires”¹⁰⁷ and gift exchange has been a major part of Asian social life for centuries. If this complex series of relationships constitutes a tributary system, these events show that the relationship was not unilateral and did not always give Chinese administrators much control over distant territories or barbarian vassals.

However, the Qing also developed significant capabilities for accommodating and managing autonomous regions that the administrative hierarchy could reassemble into a new method for governing heterogenous territories. For example, the Qing recognized the autonomy of Kokand and used its relationship with the Central Asian Khanate as a model for negotiations later with the British in Canton.¹⁰⁸ The early Qing administrative hierarchy managed its relations with Korea, Japan, Burma, Thailand, and all other “interior” territories by establishing the Ministry of Rituals. A subsidiary bureaucracy organized of the Ministry of Rituals named the Office of Border Affairs managed the “exterior” territories occupied by Mongols, Zungars, and Russians. The Office of Border Affairs arranged travel accommodations for tributaries and paid tribute, or bribes, from the emperor to tribes on the northwest crescent of Chinese territories to keep them from forming an alliance with each other against the empire.¹⁰⁹ Before the Opium

¹⁰⁷ Perdue, 1010.

¹⁰⁸ Perdue, 1006.

¹⁰⁹ Tok, *Managing China's Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, 38.

Wars, the tianxia territorial assemblage made no hard and clear distinctions between domestic and foreign zones of influence. Generally, “exterior” territories were understood to be regions that would eventually become “interior” as they had with the Han expansion south and north. When European colonial powers began encroaching on the Chinese sphere of influence, the Ming and Qing administrative hierarchy treated them much as they would the distant vassals of India and Russia, managing relations with the Office of Border Affairs, exchanging gifts and tributary missions, and placing Anglo-European powers into the tianxia assemblage as distant potential tributary states that could be played off one against another.

The development of territorial capabilities like a meritocratic bureaucracy to prevent feudal and local challenges to Qin rule were dislodged by the Han and later relogged in the territorial administrative hierarchy of later dynasties. For example, following the disastrous collectivization of agriculture of Mao’s Great Leap Forward, farmland was divided up and assigned to families using the same subdividing techniques employed by the Qin to break up village and regional solidarities. The tianxia assemblage and administrative hierarchy was also able to manage a wide array of complex territorial relationships from the emperor’s court and surrounding regions to the autonomous zones of Kokand and tributary Ryukyu islands. However, 19th century conflicts like the Taiping Rebellion and Opium Wars forced China to reassemble itself as a modern nation-state and develop new relations to the suddenly foreign Chinese people living in Macao, Hong Kong island, the Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories, and Taiwan. The administrative hierarchy also had to develop new ways to accommodate the “extraterritoriality” of Anglo-European foreign diplomats, traders, and merchants.

Foreign and “Overseas” Chinese Relations

Chinese and European historians have long agreed that the hierarchical and China-centric *tianxia* world disintegrated after it came into violent contact with the Western world order in the late Qing dynasty. Earl Macarney’s famous refusal to perform the traditional *kowtow* ceremony in 1793 and the Qianlong Emperors’ refusal to recognize King George III or Queen Victoria as equals are often cited as examples of China’s backward “closed-door policy” (*biguan suoguo*) or inability to confront the reality of being a peripheral power to the Westphalian international system. Scholars have tended to reproduce the evidence and opinions of nationalists writing after the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 who referred to this period as the beginning of the “hundred years of national humiliation” (*bainian guochi*)¹¹⁰ in which the Qing lost control over Chinese territories, peoples, currency, and the opium trade. Europe had been importing porcelain, silk, and tea from China for centuries, but by 1830 Great Britain was facing a serious trade imbalance as the consumption of its imported Chinese tea rose to 30,046,935 pounds with an average annual consumption of 1.1 pounds per head.¹¹¹ China was importing some products from Britain, but at a far smaller rate, which caused a massive flow of silver out of the British global trade network into China. To get the key monetary medium of this period back into circulation, the British East India Company began selling opium grown in its Indian colonies to China traders in exchange for silver, even though the Company knew smoking and selling opium had been illegal in China since 1729. The Qing attempted to reassert the administrative hierarchy’s control over opium circulation in China by banning the opium trade and ordering a blockade of all foreign trade with Canton. The Royal Navy used gunnery power, later called “gunboat diplomacy,” to

¹¹⁰ Callahan, “National Insecurities,” 202.

¹¹¹ Simmonds, “The Progress of the Tea Trade,” 770.

inflict a series of decisive defeats on the Qing Empire. However, even after China's defeat in the Opium Wars and the British forced the Emperor to open ports to foreign traders with the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing, it took 20 years for Korea, Vietnam, and Thailand to end their tributary missions to the Qing court and another 20 years for China to replace its remaining tributary relationships with treaties.¹¹² Fairbank points out that "Westernization was not the only response available" to China and it was not until the late 1880s that "Western barbarians" had "the capacity to dominate the Chinese continental land mass."¹¹³ Even after losing the first Opium War, from the Chinese perspective it was the Western system that was slow to adapt to China's well-functioning tianxia institutions and the treaty system which seemed so new to modern Westphalian nation-states was little more than a redecoration of tributary relations.

However, the loss of territories like Hong Kong to Great Britain and Macau to Portugal required some innovative reassembling of tianxia, and preparing territorial capabilities and technologies developed by other states for incorporation into the Qing administrative hierarchy. The "Self-Strengthening" movement (*zhiqiang yundong*) during the 1860s led by the influential reformer Zeng Guofan to fend off foreign powers and prevent domestic unrest by adopting Western technologies is one notable reassemblage. The Qing incorporated Western technologies of war by buying guns and retrofitting ships with European cannons. They also studied and adapted Western technologies of statecraft, elevating their treatment of Westerners from people existing outside the Chinese cultural sphere (*fan*) to subjects of a tributary state (*guo*). Before the Self-Strengthening movement, the Qing court managed its territories and tributary relations with two bureaucracies, the Ministry of Rituals and the Office of Border Affairs. Zeng created a new

¹¹² Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order*, 258.

¹¹³ Fairbank, 259.

bureaucracy to deal with the peculiar Western expectations for recognition as members of their international community and diplomacy called the Office of Management of the Affairs of All Foreign Countries or *Zongli Yamen* for short. This new office competed with the Ministry of Rituals and Office of Border Affairs, creating what bureaucrats in the Qing administrative hierarchy derisively described as “one diplomacy, two systems” (*yige waijiao liangzhong tizhi*).¹¹⁴ However, the *Zongli Yamen* was a significant attempt to incorporate Anglo-European institutional capabilities, language, and diplomatic practices into the *tianxia* territorial assemblage. The *Zongli Yamen* implicitly recognized the sovereignty of foreign nations and helped transform the Chinese Emperor from a dynastic ruler with the Mandate of Heaven to the temporary occupant of China’s seat of power or head of state. The 1842 Treaty of Nanjing, for example, was signed between the “Great Qing Emperor” (*Da Qing Huangdi*) and the “King of the British Empire” (*Da Ying Guo Junzhu*), but by the 1860s the *Zongli Yamen* was requiring diplomats to draft treaties in the Western manner between the “Great Qing Empire-State”¹¹⁵ (*Da Qing Guo*) and the governments of France, England, Russia, and Japan.

The *Zongli Yamen* also contributed to the Self-Strengthening movement’s reassembling of Chinese territoriality by sponsoring the translation and circulation of Anglo-European texts on modern nation-state methods of governance. After the invasion of Chinese territories by European powers in the 1840s, geographically and culturally close countries like Vietnam, Korea, and the Ryukyu islands ended their tributary relationship with China to become colonies of Japan and France. When distant countries like Thailand and Burma began citing international law to justify ending their tributary payments to the Chinese Emperor, the *Zongli Yamen* hired

¹¹⁴ Quan, “晚清对外关系中的‘一个外交两种体制’局面初探 (A Study of One Diplomacy Two Systems in Late Qing Dynasty’s Foreign Relations).”

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Tok, *Managing China’s Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, 39.

an American missionary, William A. P. Martin, to translate Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* (1836). Many China scholars credit Wheaton's book with introducing China to Anglo-European concepts like sovereignty and rights. Tok, for example, provides a linguistic analysis of the Martin translation to "lay down the fact that sovereignty is a non-native concept to Chinese political thinking."¹¹⁶ Comparative legal scholars like Stephen C. Angle have instead argued that Martin's translation served to make sovereignty and rights "part of an existing discourse almost as much as they begin a new one" for Chinese governmentality.¹¹⁷

Alternatively, Wheaton's book can also be understood as a bundle of legal, international, and linguistic capabilities developed by modern European and American states to govern their own territories that circulated among a handful of elite Qing administrators until portions became lodged in the late Qing territorial assemblage. The emperor's uncle and head of the diplomatic agency, Prince Gong, used a pre-publication draft of Martin's translation to force Prussia into releasing Dutch merchant ships anchored in a Chinese port and pay China a \$1,500 penalty for infringing upon China's territorial waters.¹¹⁸ Courses for the first generation of Chinese diplomats were structured around Martin's translation and civil service exams included questions on Wheaton's discussion of jurisdiction, human rights, and territorial sovereignty.¹¹⁹ The influence of discourse on practice in these examples is clear, but treating Wheaton's book as a bundle of modern or Westphalian state capacities also helps explain differences between Chinese policy statements and actions. I-cheng Loh, for example, dismisses China's insistence that the Taiwanese delegation to the World Health Organization be referred to as "Chinese Taipei" or the

¹¹⁶ Tok, 24.

¹¹⁷ Angle, *Human Rights in Chinese Thought*, 101.

¹¹⁸ Angle, 107.

¹¹⁹ Svarverud, *International Law as World Order in Late Imperial China*, 95.

Hongkongese Olympic teams be officially listed as “Hong Kong, China” as a “Battle of Commas.”¹²⁰ Tok also sees China’s interest in correct naming as a discursive attempt to claim *de jure* territorial sovereignty over Hong Kong, Taiwan, or the South China Sea because China cannot exercise *de facto* direct or coercive control over a territory.

However, these discourse analyses leave open the possibility that Chinese academics and administrators use the language of sovereignty and territoriality but express those concepts in different ways from their Anglo-European counterparts. At least some of China’s popular image as an aggressively expansionist state can be attributed to the official use of words like *quan* which Martin introduced to the Chinese lexicon as a translation, and sometimes conflation, of the terms “rights” and “authority” exercised by colonial Great Britain in the 19th century.¹²¹ Similarly, members of the Self-Strengthening movement often had to translate Western concepts and international capacities in ways that would appeal to established Chinese practices. Article 1 of the Treaty of Nanjing, for instance, required “peace and friendship between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and His Majesty the Emperor of China” and the extraterritoriality of “their respective subjects, who shall enjoy full security and protection for their persons and property within the dominions of the other.”¹²² The extraterritorial arrangement of jurisdiction based on identity rather than geography was not new in China. After the Jurchen Aisin Gioro clan of Manchuria toppled the Ming dynasty and installed the first Qing Emperor, the Qing dynasty placed the Manchu elite outside the jurisdiction of Han Chinese administrators. In the 1830s, the Qing granted extraterritoriality to

¹²⁰ Quoted in Tok, *Managing China’s Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, 149.

¹²¹ Angle, *Human Rights in Chinese Thought*, 108.

¹²² “Treaty of Nanking Nanking, August 29, 1842 Peace Treaty between the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Emperor of China Ratifications Exchanged at Hongkong, 26th June 1843.”

traders from the Uzbek khanate of Khoqand.¹²³ However, as the Zongli Yamen and other members of the Self-Strengthening movement attempted to reassemble Qing territoriality from tianxia to a modern nation-state, they also had to reconstitute people of the middle kingdom as “subjects” of “His Majesty the Emperor of China” and later “citizens” of the Republic of China. The reformer Qinchao Liang did this by fitting the Victorian-era concept of subjects into the Confucian tradition of renewal as “new people” (*xinmin*) and the citizenry as “state people” (*guomin*) “defined not through individual rights but through their political membership.”¹²⁴ Article 1 of the Treaty of Nanjing could be plugged into the Qing territorial assemblage by redefining the territorial arrangement China made with Manchu elite and Khoqand traders as a jurisdictional arrangement under international law for British state people within the small territory of treaty ports. Initially, the new people of China who committed a crime within the boundaries of a treaty port like Shanghai were remanded to the Qing government, but later Chinese and British state people were both tried by the local Mixed Court in the International Settlement and the British Supreme Court for China where Qing officials were often ignored.¹²⁵ This arrangement continued until the Xinhai Revolution in 1911 overthrew the Qing dynasty and reconstituted Chinese territoriality and citizenship again as a “democratic republic of the people.”¹²⁶

In addition to losing jurisdiction over foreigners, and the circulation of silver and the regulation of opium in China, the Treaty of Nanjing forced the Qing to cede “the island of

¹²³ Cassel, *Grounds of Judgment*, 47.

¹²⁴ Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution, 1895-1949*, 63.

¹²⁵ Cassel, *Grounds of Judgment*, 76.

¹²⁶ Article 1 of the “Constitution of the Republic of China”; The ROC did not have a single constitution document until 1947, but when it was established in 1912 the ROC cited Sun Yat-sen’s “Three Principles of the People” as its primary founding document. See Cohen, “China’s Changing Constitution.”

Hongkong” from the province of Guandong “in perpetuity” to Great Britain.¹²⁷ Immediately after ratifying the treaty, the Daoguang Emperor instructed the Chinese administrative hierarchy to move the headquarters of Guandong government from Xin’an County to a new sub-district on the Kowloon Peninsula of mainland China across from Hong Kong island.¹²⁸ The Qing also began building fortifications that would later become the famous Kowloon Walled City in case British military forces attempted to invade mainland China. In 1860, the British army did indeed invade Kowloon in the Second Opium War. After losing again, the Qing emperor was forced to cede Kowloon and later “lease” the surrounding “New Territories” to Great Britain for 99 years rent-free. British military commanders, diplomats, and generations of historians have called Hong Kong island before 1840 a “barren rock,” but Hong Kong has a long history in China. Hong Kong had been one of the territories unified by the first dynasty of China and, as the historian and former colonial official James Hayes points out, the island had “several villages of some size, as well as hamlets, and a few larger coastal villages...[with] established institutions of the kind that is usual in Chinese communities, including the shrines and temples that were the object of periodic and special rites through the calendar year.”¹²⁹ China had colonized Hong Kong several times before the British, but in 1840 the Chinese living in Hong Kong suddenly became the subjects of distant imperial states. Qing subjects and Chinese vassals became the *xinmin* new people citizens or *guomin* state people of Great Britain, Russia, France, and Japan. Many of China’s major political figures from the 20th century lived in these “lost territories” and among the foreign or “overseas Chinese” including Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Zhou Enlai,

¹²⁷ “Treaty of Nanking Nanking, August 29, 1842 Peace Treaty between the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Emperor of China Ratifications Exchanged at Hongkong, 26th June 1843.”

¹²⁸ Liu, *An Outline History of Hong Kong*, 40.

¹²⁹ Hayes, “HONG KONG ISLAND BEFORE 1841,” 106, 114, 128.

and Deng Xiaoping—the architect of China’s “one country, two systems” territorial arrangement for Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The “One Country, N Systems” Territorial Arrangement

Recovering the territories and Chinese people lost to European powers by the Qing became an overt goal of the ROC and PRC as they tried to reconstitute China as a modern nation-state to overcome the 19th “century of humiliation.” For the territorial nationalists, the Chinese nation was not based on civic or ethnic affiliation but historical claims to particular territories. Sun Yat-sen and the Nationalists defined those territories as the regions controlled by the Qing at their time of maximum expansion, and Chiang Kai-shek went further to insist that all Qing territories had historically been “permeated by our culture.”¹³⁰ Even the internationalist Liang advocated for Chinese state-building, though he would later criticize Western nationalism as jingoistic and argue that “The Chinese people have never taken the state as the highest entity; they believed there must be an entity higher than the state and exercising control over all states. That was tianxia.”¹³¹ After Republic of China withdrew to Taiwan led by Chiang’s Kuomintang army, creating another lost territory populated by hostile overseas Chinese, the PRC had little interest reclaiming territories or nation-building. Instead, the PRC focused on building the Communist International and liberating the subjects, now “comrades,” of capitalist imperialism. However, during their alliance with the CCP in 1933 the Soviet Union had recognized the “Uyghur people” as a distinct ethnic group and, following Soviet ethnic policy, had helped organize a revolution against the Kuomintang for Xinjiang’s territorialized autonomy.

¹³⁰ Quoted in Perdue, “The Tenacious Tributary System,” 1012.

¹³¹ Quoted in Luo, “From ‘Tianxia’ (All under Heaven) to ‘the World,’” 96.

Kuomintang rule over Xinjiang was replaced by the PRC with the understanding that China would become another Soviet republic, but when 60,000 ethnic Uyghurs emigrated to USSR territory in Kazakhstan in May 1962¹³² the PRC began demanding the return of Outer Manchuria territories ceded by the Qing to Tsarist Russia during the century of humiliation.

China's break with the Soviet Union, the Korean War, and civil unrest in minority regions encouraged the PRC to adopt stronger border controls and launch a series of nation-building projects. The 1954 Constitution of the People's Republic of China made no mention of lost territories, but the 1978 constitution was among the first official assertions by the PRC that "Taiwan is the sacred territory of China. We must liberate Taiwan, to accomplish the great task of reunifying the motherland."¹³³ Ten months after the constitution was ratified, Deng announced the reform and opening-up policies meant to reintegrate China with the global economic system and opened Shenzhen, on the border with Hong Kong, to foreign investment as a "special economic zone." This change in policy signaled an end to any official plans to liberate Hong Kong from British capitalist imperialism. Instead, the PRC planned to use Shenzhen to learn from the British how to develop a similarly successful industrial and commercial territory on mainland China. According to the official history of the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deng also offered Taiwan reunification with China as a special autonomous economic and administrative zone as part of what he later called the "one country, two systems" territorial arrangement.¹³⁴ Shortly after the ROC refused, Deng invited the Governor of Hong Kong to

¹³² Bellér-Hann, Cesàro, and Finley, *Situating the Uyghurs Between China and Central Asia*, 38–41.

¹³³ "File," 6.

¹³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "A Policy of 'One Country, Two Systems' on Taiwan."

Beijing and unofficially signaled the PRC's intent to reclaim all of the Hong Kong territories after Great Britain's 99 year lease on the New Territories expired in 1997.¹³⁵

In official documents, the PRC maintains that the “concept of ‘one country, two systems’” originated with Chairman Mao's statement in 1960 “that provided Taiwan is returned to the motherland, with the exception of foreign affairs which must be handled by the national authorities, all the military and political power and the power of appointing officials may be delegated to the Taiwan authorities.”¹³⁶ Mao had actually consistently argued until his death that Taiwan and Hong Kong could not be reunited with China without first converting them to socialism, but during his time in power Mao showed little interest in these lost territories. When asked about Hong Kong by Western journalists, Mao reportedly said that “China has enough trouble in her hands to try and clean up the mess in her own country, leave alone trying to rule Formosa [Taiwan], for us to clamour for the return of Hong Kong. I am not interested in Hong Kong; It has never been the subject of any discussion amongst us.”¹³⁷ Despite Mao's numerous statements to the contrary, Deng promoted Mao as the original architect of reunification to make “one country, two systems” palatable to conservatives within the PRC who feared that reintegrating a capitalist Taiwan or Hong Kong would lead to a capitalist takeover of China.

The question of Mao and Deng's willingness to grant Taiwanese military autonomy after reunification with China has confused many scholars who agree with Max Weber that modern states are defined as having a “monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given

¹³⁵ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 177.

¹³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, “A Policy of ‘One Country, Two Systems’ on Taiwan.”

¹³⁷ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 153.

territory.”¹³⁸ Even scholars interested in presenting a non-Western view of Chinese politics like Tok have tended to see China’s guarantee of military autonomy for Taiwan as evidence that China’s only interest in “one country, two systems” is naming rights. Their assumption that China would have to conform to Webster’s model of a modern state seemed to have to have been confirmed after the 1997 Transfer of Sovereignty when the PRC garrisoned troops from the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) in Hong Kong, but the PLA has since remained largely confined to its camps and is rarely visible except during public relations events like the handover anniversaries or PLA Day. Aside from some uniform insignia changes and renaming of bureaucratic offices, the Hong Kong Police Force and Judiciary of Hong Kong operate with little interference from Beijing. The “one country, two systems” territorial arrangement also gives Hong Kong an autonomous legal system and police forces.

China controls the flow of goods and foreign capital in mainland China, but it also plugs into the global financial system by allowing Hong Kong banks to set interest rates, run an independent Stock Exchange, and print a separate currency from the Renminbi. China regulates the flow of people between Hong Kong and the mainland using “Immigration Checkpoints” and capabilities developed by the Zhou and Qin administrative hierarchies like the Hukou system of household registration. Hong Kong is allowed to control the flow of humans and goods between the territory and the rest of the world using institutional capabilities developed by the British to regulate commerce between Crown colonies. For example, Hong Kong continues the relatively “open border” with Hong Kong maintained by the British colonial government to facilitate the “coolie trade” of Chinese chattel labor after Great Britain outlawed the African slave trade and later institutions which ensured Hong Kong firms would have access to cheap labor. Hong Kong

¹³⁸ Weber et al., *The Vocation Lectures*, 27.

allows citizens from 170 countries to enter Hong Kong visa-free but requires travelers from mainland China to obtain a “re-entry permit” to enter Hong Kong for a limited period and limited number of times. These border controls provide Hong Kong with ready access to mainland China’s cheap labor market and the systematic exploitation of more than 320,000 foreign domestic workers, primarily women from the Philippines and Indonesia, who are legally required to live in their employer’s residence.¹³⁹ China also allows Hong Kong to issue its own passports for residents travelling abroad. Extending Weber, John Torpey describes passports and identity cards as products of modern states trying “to monopolize the legitimate means of movement.” Given China’s willingness to reunify with “lost territories” without insisting on a state monopoly over the legitimate use of violence or means of movement, it is easy to see why so many international relations and Chinese studies scholars have tended to view China’s policies towards Hong Kong and Taiwan as a mere discursive “Battle of Commas.”¹⁴⁰

However, this chapter has shown that Chinese politics has long accommodated a wide array of divergent territorial arrangements that has not conformed to Webster’s definition of nation-states or the Westphalian state model based on the mutual respect of borders. Since the Qing first unified China as a tianxia territorial assemblage, the administrative hierarchy has governed by accommodating other systems of local administration, traditional ethnic practices, and open systems of foreign trade and tribute exchange between vassal states with independent (even at times antagonistic) military forces. Similarly, the practice of incorporating autonomous regions with separate legal, economic, and administrative systems from those governing the capitol was a common feature of Chinese politics long before Deng declared that Hong Kong,

¹³⁹ Kuo, “How Hong Kong’s ‘Maid Trade’ Is Making Life Worse for Domestic Workers throughout Asia.”

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in Tok, *Managing China’s Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, 149.

Macau, and Taiwan could be integrated into China as “Special Autonomous Regions.” The republican government, for example, created four “Special Administrative Regions” for the Jehol, Suiyan, Shaha, and Sikang provinces to bring former Manchu territories and other minority regions into the administrative hierarchy of the Nationalist Government.¹⁴¹

Rather than describe China’s management of Hong Kong and Taiwan as unique compared to its other territories, Tok points out that it is more appropriate to formulate contemporary Chinese territoriality as “one country, *n* systems”¹⁴² where *n* represents a potentially unlimited variability of territories and peoples, economic and political systems, and foreign relations that can be plugged into China’s administrative hierarchy. Despite the tendency of discursive analyses to conclude that China’s management of Hong Kong and Taiwan is little more than a contest over the right of naming, Deng often liked to say that “It doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice.”¹⁴³ Whether we call these arrangements a new tributary system,¹⁴⁴ a tianxia revival,¹⁴⁵ or the Chinese world view,¹⁴⁶ the “one country, two systems” territorial assemblage expresses “a spatial strategy to affect, influence, or control resources and people, by controlling area.”¹⁴⁷ Several of the institutional capabilities colonial Britain and China later developed to control Hong Kong have been useful for extending China’s territoriality over Taiwan and the South China Sea. The mobilization of resentment Chinese nationalists used to regain control over European colonies, for example, is now being turned towards overseas Chinese and former tributary. President Jiang Zemin, after

¹⁴¹ Fitzgerald, “The Province in History,” 19.

¹⁴² Tok, *Managing China’s Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, 20.

¹⁴³ Li, “邓小平同志‘黑猫白猫论’背后的故事 (The Story behind Deng Xiaoping’s Black Cat, White Cat Theory).”

¹⁴⁴ Zhang and Buzan, “The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice.”

¹⁴⁵ Tingyang, “Can This Ancient Chinese Philosophy Save Us from Global Chaos?”

¹⁴⁶ Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order*.

¹⁴⁷ Sack, *Human Territoriality*, 2.

overseeing the Hong Kong Transfer of Sovereignty, described the possible return of Taiwan as “using snow to clean up the blood of the hundred years of national humiliation.”¹⁴⁸ Similarly, an academic study of Chinese foreign policy published immediately after the Transfer of Sovereignty argues for continuing to expand into the South China Sea by asserting that “The history of the century of humiliation of the Chinese race continually tells us: foreign races invade us via the sea. Experience repeatedly reminds us: gunboats emerge from the Pacific Ocean; the motherland is not yet completely unified; the struggle over sovereignty of the Spratlys, Diaoyudao and the Sino-Indian boundary still continues.”¹⁴⁹ As the CCP moves to “derevolutionise” Chinese politics in favor of “renationalization,”¹⁵⁰ the coercive military and economic aspects of traditional Chinese territorial governance are being augmented by what Shapiro calls “progressively intense cultural governance, a management of the dispositions and meanings of citizen bodies, aimed at making territorial and national/cultural boundaries coextensive.”¹⁵¹

This chapter began by tracing the development of administration capabilities used by the late Qing, ROC, and PRC to govern its relationships with foreign governments and foreign “overseas” Chinese. In contrast to the literature on ancient and modern China’s international “tributary system,” I argued that capabilities developed by the Qin, Han, and Ming administrative hierarchies like the creation of a meritocratic bureaucracy, standardized Chinese writing, territorial divisions, and the ritual exchange of gifts and titles with vassal states constituted China as tianxia territorial assemblage. This chapter also explored the historical

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Tok, *Managing China's Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, 111.

¹⁴⁹ Chunguang Wu, *Taipingyangshangde Jiaoliang: Dangdai Zhongguo de Yaiyang Zhanlue Wenti (The Fighting in Pacific: Contemporary China's Maritime Strategy)* (Beijing: China Welfare Press, 1998), 128.

¹⁵⁰ Wang, “Pragmatic Nationalism: China Seeks a New Role in World Affairs.”

¹⁵¹ Shapiro, *Methods and Nations*, 31.

conditions necessary for the contemporary emergence of a “one country, n systems” Chinese territorial assemblage which employs capabilities developed by modern nation states, especially the colonial states of Great Britain and France, to manage Hong Kong and attempt to control Taiwan.

Many IR scholars and democratic activists predicted before 1997 that China would be unable to successfully manage Hong Kong without forcing it to conform with the PRC’s autocratic system of government and planned socialist economy. During the countdown to 1997, Western media often depicted Hong Kong as a bastion of democracy and Milton Friedman famously lamented the Transfer of Sovereignty as a premature end to the world’s greatest experiment in laissez-faire capitalism.¹⁵² However, these predictions failed to account for the deep imprint British colonialism has left on the territory of Hong Kong. The colonial government of Hong Kong had a long history of creating monopolies in industries from banking to the telephone company which favored British firms. The colonial government also introduced democratic elections for a handful of government offices and universal suffrage only after China announced its intent to reclaim the territory. Hong Kong has been organized for the benefit of distant masters since the British began colonization in 1842. As a former colony, Hong Kong may be easier to plug into the “one country, n systems” territorial assemblage than territories that resulted from civil war like Taiwan or the new islands China is building in the international waters of the South China Sea. Paradoxically, because Hong Kong’s territorial status is no longer in question, China has done little to restrict Hong Kong’s independent participation in international relations. China has even encouraged the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices

¹⁵² Friedman, “Milton Friedman on Hong Kong’s Future.”

to open branches outside the territory in Beijing, Shanghai, Taipei, London, Geneva, Washington D.C. and thirteen other major financial centers.

China manages Taiwan in exactly the opposite way, openly challenging its international autonomy while exercising no control over Taiwan's domestic sphere. Hong Kong is unique as the last and most economically successful colony to leave the British Empire and the only territory to be decolonized without also gaining independence. China's attempts to prevent Taiwanese autonomy in international relations and its recolonization of Hong Kong has inspired many challenges to China's national authority. China has responded by performing its commitment to building a "harmonious society" and multicultural modern nation-state. The Opening Ceremony of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, for example, began with a multiethnic presentation of children (later revealed to all be Han) carrying the Chinese national flag and dressed in the traditional costumes worn by China's 56 ethnic groups. Similarly, academics like Zhou emphasize the cultural and cosmopolitan components of the tianxia territorial assemblage over its coercive military and economic to present "Greater China" or Chinese hegemony as an unproblematic expression of contemporary international relations.¹⁵³ The process of preparing Hong Kong for Chinese reterritorialization, China's continual deterritorialization of Taiwan in international relations, and the reformation of tianxia as an object of Chinese cultural governance is where I turn next.

¹⁵³ Zhao, *天下体系：世界制度哲学导论* (*The Tianxia System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of World Institution*).

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Chapter 2

Reassembling Hong Kong and Taiwan:

Prophylactic Independence and Tianxia Cultural Governance

An old woman wanted to sell her 200-year-old Yinxing Zisha teapot in the marketplace. A traveler came by and at her invitation drank tea she poured from the teapot. It was the best tea he had ever tasted, and he offered to buy the teapot for a large sum. While he went away to get cash to pay her, she became conscious of the used appearance of the teapot and, because he offered her so much money for it, she scrubbed the teapot until it shone. When the traveler returned and saw that the tea stains had been washed clean, he told the old woman that the teapot was worthless. The old woman had destroyed the accumulated sediment of years and years of tea leaves that had made every cup from the teapot taste wonderful.

—Politburo member Li Ruihuan, March 1995¹⁵⁴

Li Ruihuan famously responded to questions about how communist China would govern capitalist Hong Kong after the 1997 Transfer of Sovereignty by telling the old Chinese story above. By telling this allegory, Li was implying that the CCP did not understand the conditions that made Hong Kong economically successful. Li went on to warn the China's administrative hierarchy that "if you don't understand something, you are unaware of what makes it valuable and it will be difficult to keep it intact."¹⁵⁵ Like other members at the head of the Communist Party of China following the death of Mao, Li could only describe China's interest in Hong Kong's capitalist economy using euphemisms and allegory. Ever since Deng announced the reform and opening up policies, IR and China studies scholars have debated whether China

¹⁵⁴ Chang, "李瑞环的演讲故事 (Li Ruihuan's Speech Stories)."

¹⁵⁵ Chang.

represents a continuing threat to international capitalism or proves that there is no real alternative to capitalism. Callahan, for example, argues that China “is best understood as a right-wing authoritarian party-state that gains legitimacy from a harsh form of capitalism and a primordial style of patriarchal nationalism.”¹⁵⁶

However, even those scholars in agreement with Callahan often have difficulty placing China and Hong Kong within the spatial dimensions of capitalism. The geographer David Harvey argues that capitalism survives by producing new spaces of accumulation and exporting capital to devalue currency or what he calls capitalism’s constant search for a “spatial fix.”¹⁵⁷ Hong Kong complicates Harvey’s argument about capitalism in several ways. First, the territory has a long history of devaluing the cost of labor by importing Chinese workers from the mainland and facilitating China’s global labor exports as a major node in the coolie trade. Second, during long periods of the Cold War, half of the hard currency earned by the PRC came from selling food and water to Hong Kong.¹⁵⁸ The first major trouble China had controlling Hong Kong came the day after the Transfer of Sovereignty when Thailand’s currency devaluation sparked the 1997 Asian financial crisis. The non-convertibility of Chinese renminbi and foreign investments in physical assets like factories insulated mainland China from most of the financial shocks, but the PRC hierarchy had to collaborate with the new Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to address the crisis. China was forced to spend \$1 billion to keep the Hong Kong dollar from devaluating and the HKSAR bought HK\$120 billion worth of shares in various Hong Kong companies to keep them from going bankrupt and the

¹⁵⁶ Callahan, *China*, 204.

¹⁵⁷ Harvey, *The Limits to Capital*, 413.

¹⁵⁸ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 176.

Hong Kong Stock Exchange from crashing.¹⁵⁹ Taken together, these events call Harvey's strictly "economistic" approach to globalization and the economic value of Hong Kong to China into question.

In contrast to Harvey, You-tien Hsing describes contemporary Chinese spatial production as the "territorialization of capital," especially "industrial, financial, and symbolic capital."¹⁶⁰ Hsing also notes that "spatial planning has superseded economic planning as the primary tool of accumulation" in China since 1978 and calls for further study of "how different types of capital are territorialized in different types of spaces."¹⁶¹ Sassen's work considers the ways in which "state-centered border regimes" like China are not always territorial. However, she also argues that the durability of state territoriality shows its compatibility with ongoing processes of "debordering," "rebordering," and the formation of new rival territorialities at the local and global scales.¹⁶² Both Hsing and Sassen creatively employ Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory to describe contemporary state territoriality and China's territorialization of capital. This chapter follows their lead, but focuses more attention to the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and what Marshall Johnson and Fred Chui call the "sub-imperial relations between the dominant of the dominated and their periphery."¹⁶³ In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the territoriality of early capitalism in England began as a process which took peasants off the land (deterritorialization) and then put them into factories (reterritorialization).¹⁶⁴ They revisit these concepts in *A Thousand Plateaus* but, in relation to assemblages, describe territorialization as a "double-becoming" in which every act of

¹⁵⁹ Heng and Lim, *Destructive Creativity of Wall Street and the East Asian Response*, 105.

¹⁶⁰ Hsing, "Territoriality and Space Production in China," 5.

¹⁶¹ Hsing, 5.

¹⁶² Sassen, "When National Territory Is Home to the Global," 530.

¹⁶³ Johnson and Chiu, "Guest Editors' Introduction," 1.

¹⁶⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*; Holland, "Deterritorializing 'Deterritorialization,'" 57.

deterritorialization creates new forms of reterritorialization.¹⁶⁵ More recently, critical globalization scholars like Ó Tuathail and Waleed Hazbun have argued that every act of deterritorialization is accompanied by simultaneous reterritorialization or, in Raffestin's shorthand, "TDR," for "territorialization, deterritorialization, reterritorialization."¹⁶⁶

This chapter takes a similar approach to the double-becoming of the Chinese territorial assemblage and the spatial dimensions of capitalism in Hong Kong. In the last chapter, I argued that the PRC reorganized Shenzhen as a "special economic zone" in 1978 to learn from the British in nearby Hong Kong how to develop a successful industrial and commercial territory on mainland China. I also pointed out that Hong Kong was the last and most economically successful colony to leave the British Empire, and unique as the only territory to decolonize without gaining independence. In this chapter, I explore the strategies China uses at the international scale to prevent Hong Kong and Taiwan from exercising independent self-rule. Against the popular narratives of Deng's cunning manipulation of internal law or a naturally declining British Empire, I argue that the initial territorialization of Hong Kong was accidental and began with bureaucratic misjudgment and mistranslation. The next section explores the limits of the "one country, *n* systems" arrangement by examining the deterritorialization of the Kowloon Walled City, a densely populated settlement that British colonial administrators tore down just before the transferring control of Hong Kong to China. I argue that despite being a microcosm of British colonial rule, the sub-imperial Kowloon Walled City threatened China's successful reterritorialization of Hong Kong as its new colonial and capitalist administrator. Finally, the chapter considers how China's replacement of the Walled City with a traditional

¹⁶⁵ Holland, "Deterritorializing 'Deterritorialization'"; Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

¹⁶⁶ Raffestin, "Space, Territory, and Territoriality," 129; Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*, 230; Hazbun, *Beaches, Ruins, Resorts: The Politics of Tourism in the Arab World*.

Qing dynasty garden works to “overcode” alternative productions of territory and culture. These examples show that the value of Hong Kong, which Lin alluded to in his teapot allegory, is less industrial or financial and more the accumulation of British colonial governance capacities which the PRC now hopes to incorporate into the Chinese territorial assemblage.

Developing Collaborative Colonial Capacities

Chinese and European historians have tended to describe Chinese politics end of the 19th century as a clash between the archaic and isolationist Qing dynasty and European competition for new territorial holdings. In Harvey’s language, Chinese politics was a Chinese “spatial fix” to industrial capitalism’s insatiable need for new consumer markets. In recent years, however, critical historians and cultural theorists have begun challenging this narrative by highlighting the active collaboration between the Qing, European imperialists, and Chinese traders. John M. Carroll has argued that Hong Kong was created by two flows of migrants from Europe and China in the space between the British and Qing empires, and points out that Hong Kong has always been heavily dependent on mainland China for labor, water, and food.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Law Wing Sang has carefully recovered the history of what he calls “collaborative colonialism” in Hong Kong between British colonial administrators and local Chinese elites who had established European trade relations in tea, silk, and porcelain long before Hong Kong became the key node for the opium and coolie trade networks.¹⁶⁸ In addition to these interdependent relationships and flows, the idea that the tianxia world order or the Qing dynasty collapsed when it came into contact with Western imperialists is further complicated by the role played by Europeans in the

¹⁶⁷ Carroll, *Edge of Empires*.

¹⁶⁸ Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*.

several domestic “rebellions” in China following the 1841 Treaty of Nanking and the tendency for those uprisings to spill over into Hong Kong.

The Zongli Yamen tried to incorporate Western military technologies and governance methods into the Qing administrative hierarchy as a means of increasing China’s capacity to resist further European colonization. The Zongli Yamen’s translation of foreign language texts, as noted in the last chapter, incorporated Westphalian capacities of international law and modern European warfare into the Chinese territorial assemblage which helped the Qing administrative hierarchy keep Prussian and other foreign ships out of China’s territorial waters. Despite having some success limiting European colonization, the Zongli Yamen’s reforms proved less useful for holding China’s domestic territories together under the Qing. A decade after losing Hong Kong to the British in 1841, the Qing lost control of several southern territories along the Yangtze River, including most of Guangxi and Jiangxi provinces, for nearly 13 years during the Taiping Rebellion. The Qing also lost the northern provinces of Jiangsu and Hunan for almost 17 years during the Nian Rebellion. Unable to guarantee the safety of tributary missions through territories held by the Taiping, or perhaps fearing the Nguyen Emperor would pay tribute to the self-proclaimed Taiping “King of Heaven” Hong Xiuquan instead, the Qing also suspended tributary missions from Vietnam and Thailand.¹⁶⁹ The Taiping and separatist movement of Muslim Hui in western Yunnan were only defeated after the two most prominent administrators of the Self-Strengthening movement, Zeng Guofan and his student Li Hongzhang, purchased guns and cannon from Europeans at an exorbitant price and trained a New Army (*yongying*). Zeng and Li also recruited Western military experts to train and lead the New Army like the American officer Frederick Townsend Ward and later British commander Charles George

¹⁶⁹ Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order*, 269.

Gordon.¹⁷⁰ Zeng and Li defeated the Taiping, but the Qing were never able to reestablish the control they once had over the southern territories.

The late Chinese historian Luo Ergang and China scholar Franz Michael have argued that Zeng and Li's organization of the New Army conditioned the possibility for the private armies of the 20th-century warlords.¹⁷¹ More recent historians have discounted the direct line from the New Armies to the later warlords drawn by Luo and Michael.¹⁷² However, Zeng and Li's organization of the New Army in their home regions, their personalization of military power by appointing generals to govern former Taiping territories, and their financing of the New Army by taxing the regions they occupied do show that Zeng and Li had created what Michael calls "regional armies" which "provided their leaders with bases of autonomous power."¹⁷³ European powers, high-level members of the Chinese administrative hierarchy like Zeng and Li, local governors, and China traders personally benefitted from this arrangement and collaborated to prop up the Qing dynasty rather than undermine it. Their collaborations lasted on the mainland until prominent members of the Chinese administrative hierarchy, including the Empress Dowager Cixi at the top, lent their support to the Boxer Rebellion. The anti-European and anti-colonial Boxer Rebellion also spilled over into Hong Kong, inspiring the nationalist texts by Sun Yat-sen which stirred members the New Army in Wuchang to attack their Governor-General and launch the Xinhai Revolution, finally dissolving what was left of the Qing territorial assemblage.

¹⁷⁰ McCord, *The Power of the Gun: The Emergence of Modern Chinese Warlordism*, 26.

¹⁷¹ Luo, "清际兵为将有的起源 (The Origins of the Personal Army of the Late Qing Period)"; Luo, *湘军新政 (A New Record of the Xiang Army)*; Michael, "Military Organization and Power Structure of China during the Taiping Rebellion."

¹⁷² McCord, *The Power of the Gun: The Emergence of Modern Chinese Warlordism*, 26; Liu, "The Limits of Regional Power in the Late Ch'ing Period: A Reappraisal"; Wang, *淮军志 (Treatise on the Huai Army)*.

¹⁷³ "Regionalism in Nineteenth-Century China," xl-xli.

Hong Kong Chinese were excited by the overthrow of the Qing and installation of Sun Yat-sen as the first president of the new Republic of China, but the Xinhai Revolution did not spread to an overthrow the British or move the colony towards a more representative form of government. The Boxer Rebellion sparked a wave of peasant emigration from the mainland but, immediately after the Xinhai Revolution, it was former Qing officials who left the mainland for Hong Kong as refugees. Colonial police discovered factories for making bombs and a young Chinese man tried in 1912 to assassinate the new Hong Kong governor, but civil unrest was confined to the lower classes in Hong Kong and the failed assassin did not seem to have political motivations.¹⁷⁴ Chinese elites supported the revolution but collaborated with colonial officials to make sure political unrest did not jeopardize Hong Kong's economy by, for example, helping enforce the Seditious Publications Ordinance of 1914 against the spread of publications that might threaten the stability of Hong Kong and China.¹⁷⁵

Most Chinese in Hong Kong quickly lost their enthusiasm for the revolution as it became increasingly clear that the young republic could not hold China together as a durable territorial assemblage. The former commander of the 1st New Army, Yuan Shikai, deposed President Sun in 1912, disbanded the provincial assemblies, and assassinated the Nationalist Party leader to prevent a second republican revolution. An American political scientist in China serving as a constitutional adviser for the ROC, Frank Johnson Goodnow, persuaded Yuan that the Chinese people were not mature enough for democracy and convinced Yuan to declare himself the new Emperor of China.¹⁷⁶ Yuan only lived another year after his 1915 declaration, but by then Yuan

¹⁷⁴ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 82.

¹⁷⁵ Carroll, 82.

¹⁷⁶ Goodnow wrote two Chinese constitutions, one making Yuan president for life and the second would have made Yuan emperor. Goodnow left China to become president of Johns Hopkins University and Yuan died before Goodnow's second constitution would have made Yuan emperor. See Pugach, "Embarrassed Monarchist"; Goodnow, "Dr. Goodnow's Memorandum to the President."

was only one of many warlords trying to reassemble a politically and territorially fragmented China. Hong Kong Chinese were annoyed by the constant migration of poor refugees escaping the mainland's political turmoil, but the most sustained moment of anti-British social unrest only came after the colonial government responded to the depreciation of Chinese currency flowing into Hong Kong from Guangdong by banning the circulation of Chinese coins. The shortage of Hong Kong coins meant that many Chinese were suddenly unable to pay ferry or tramway fares in the territory and a colony-wide boycott broke out. The colony's new governor, Francis Henry May, encouraged prominent members of the Chinese community to help end the boycott citing the harm it would do to British and Chinese capital investments in the tram companies but was annoyed at how little influence these elites had over Hong Kong Chinese.¹⁷⁷

May's complaint was common among governors accustomed to the dual administration of other Crown Colonies like those in India. In the British Raj, for example, the governor, assisted by an executive and legislative council, controlled colonial territories by assimilating the existing class of local elites into the machinery of colonial administration and forming subsidiary alliances with vassal rulers of the Princely States. This arrangement might have worked in Hong Kong considering that in rural China the elite or gentry traditionally served as intermediaries between government and local people. As mentioned in the last chapter, the Qin and Han dynasties assimilated local elites into the administrative hierarchy through the meritocratic imperial examination systems. When the British first occupied Hong Kong, however, the natives and the few gentry living on the island refused to cooperate with the colonial administration and lodged a joint petition to the Qing provincial governor asking for protection from the barbarian

¹⁷⁷ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 84.

invaders.¹⁷⁸ The British planned to colonize Hong Kong as they had other recently acquired territories but soon discovered that most of Chinese on the island were male immigrants with no attachments to local villages and there were too few village elders for the British to coopt a base of authority. The farmers in Hong Kong had produced no scholars for the imperial examinations and the local fisherman did not have kin ties to the gentry class in the administrative hierarchy of nearby Xin'an County.¹⁷⁹ The typical British approach to colonization by collaborating with local elites was further complicated when the native villages were overrun by a large wave of immigrants from the mainland at the end of the First Opium War.

The British search for local elites to coopt was also complicated by the Qing's policies towards any Chinese willing to emigrate and live under foreign colonial rule in a territory that had been taken from China. The Qing barred emigres from routes to social advancement like the civil service examinations and treated overseas Chinese as pirates, criminals, traitors, and deserters. In the early 1800s, for example the island was headquarters of an infamous pirate, Zhang Baozi, who controlled what would later be named Victoria Peak as a useful lookout point for spotting ships to raid.¹⁸⁰ According to Carroll, these policies are not just another example of Qing xenophobia, but a strategy to "prevent links between merchants and overseas Chinese that might lead to anti-Manchu factions, and to prevent collusion between seditious native and foreigners."¹⁸¹ The British could not, therefore, build relationships with Hong Kong Chinese by co-opting members of an established gentry class as they had done in other colonial territories. Instead, the "colonial government kept almost autocratic power in the hands of the governor;

¹⁷⁸ Liu, *An Outline History of Hong Kong*, 169.

¹⁷⁹ Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 20.

¹⁸⁰ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 9.

¹⁸¹ Carroll, "Colonial Hong Kong as a Cultural-Historical Place," 524.

Chinese residents were subjected to crude coercive measures such as nightly curfew, elaborate registration schemes, and other surveillance and policing practices.”¹⁸² As a result, Hong Kong became organized under a mutually practiced racial-spatial segregation of the territory. The colonial government, like the Qing, assumed Chinese in Hong Kong were criminals and surveilled their movements with laws like the 1888 Light and Pass Ordinance which required Chinese to carry a lamp when traveling at night.¹⁸³ The Hong Kong government also passed zoning regulations to reserve prime waterfront properties and later Victoria Peak or “Little England” for European residents and concentrated Chinese in the exclusive “Chinatown” zone near Tai Ping Shan. This segregation of Chinese and Europeans and the lack of traditional elites that could be co-opted by the British conditioned the possibility of a new form of colonial governance for Hong Kong.

Europeans had long depended on Chinese business networks in Asia and after the Qing outlawed the sale of opium, the British became even more dependent on Chinese merchants and smugglers. Many of these merchants, declared criminals by the Qing, collaborated with the British during the Opium Wars by supplying the Royal Navy and acting as spies. The British relied so heavily on these Chinese merchants that the British superintendent of trade, Captain Charles Elliot, defended the colonization of Hong Kong in 1841 by calling it “an act of justice and protection to the native population upon whom we have been so long dependent for assistance and supply.”¹⁸⁴ As the population of Hong Kong increased, the colony became even more dependent on these merchants to supply Hong Kong with a reliable flow of food and water from the mainland. This small group of Chinese war collaborators became wealthy by supplying

¹⁸² Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 20.

¹⁸³ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 84.

¹⁸⁴ Quoted in Carroll, “Chinese Collaboration in the Making of British Hong Kong.”

the colony with food and water, intermediating the opium and later coolie trades, and from land grants on Hong Kong awarded to them by the British. The concentration of Chinese in Chinatown allowed this new class of merchant elites to establish themselves as local leaders independent of British colonial administration. British colonial administrators encouraged the development of these elites and their unofficial governing institutions like the Tung Wah Hospital and Po Leung Kuk Society for the Protection of Women and Children to address “Chinese” matters in the “Chinese” way.¹⁸⁵

Officially the territory was managed by a governor, Executive Council (ExCo), Legislative Council (LegCo), and colonial civil servants who were largely drawn from the British middle class.¹⁸⁶ The merchants co-opted to help govern Hong Kong Chinese and the Chinatown territory were, by contrast, wealthy permanent residents with long-term business and social investment in the success of the colony. These “unofficials” maintained closer relationships with local Chinese than their British LegCo counterparts, but they had few links to underprivileged Chinese or recent immigrants and tended to represent the interests of the business and professional classes from which they were drawn.¹⁸⁷ The territory was ostensibly organized around the principle of “laissez-faire” with minimal government interference in the “free trade” of Hong Kong’s “free port.” However, British colonial control over the territory depended on discriminatory monopolies which favored British firms like the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, the Swire Group, and Jardine and Matheson by granting their executives seats on the ExCo and LegCo.¹⁸⁸ Since the state owned all of the land, British colonial administrators also

¹⁸⁵ Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 25.

¹⁸⁶ Preston, *The Politics of China-Hong Kong Relations*, 41.

¹⁸⁷ Ure, *Governors, Politics and the Colonial Office: Public Policy in Hong Kong, 1918-58*, 25.

¹⁸⁸ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 229.

maintained the elite status and authority of Chinese unofficials by overrepresenting their interests in property sales, land leases, and the local housing market.¹⁸⁹ Underprivileged and recent Chinese immigrants did not passively accept their strategic exclusion from governmental representation and discriminatory racial-spatial segregation by colonial administrators in Hong Kong. Recent immigrants also drew on their own relationships in mainland China to resist British colonial rule.

A decade after the 1912 tramway boycott mentioned earlier, for example, Chinese seamen went on strike against British and Chinese businessmen who paid them less than Europeans for the same work. Backed and organized by Sun's Nationalist Party on the mainland, strikers left Hong Kong for Canton (now Guangzhou) and were soon followed by a stream of domestic servants, engineers, and coolies who joined the strike for the same reason. The Hong Kong colonial government tried to prevent the flow of labor out of the territory and interruptions to the flow to trade through Hong Kong ports by declaring the strike illegal and sent police and troops to block further emigration. Indian colonial troops opened fire on a large crowd and killed five Chinese workers, intensifying the movement and finally forcing the colonial government and shipping companies to meet the workers' demands.¹⁹⁰ Another strike a few years later led by the new Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai turned into an anti-imperialist demonstration that quickly spread to Hong Kong when workers employed by foreign firms joined the mainland strikers to organize a boycott of all British goods and shipments. The 1925 Guangzhou–Hong Kong general strike paralyzed Hong Kong's economy, but dissolved when Sun suddenly died, Chiang Kai-shek confiscated the strikers' weapons, and arrested the strike leaders.¹⁹¹ As these

¹⁸⁹ Preston, *The Politics of China-Hong Kong Relations*, 94–95.

¹⁹⁰ Flowerdew, *The Final Years of British Hong Kong*, 20.

¹⁹¹ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 103.

incidents demonstrate, Hong Kong could only be called *laissez-faire* by ignoring this history of British colonial domination and Chinese resistance.

The United Kingdom's strategy of territorial management in Hong Kong was therefore spatially segregated by race and undemocratically governed by a British class of career civil servants and local Chinese elites. Law provides an abundance of evidence to support his conclusion that the British and local Chinese elites engaged in a collaborative form of colonization, but they were also instrumental in bringing Chinese capacities of territorial governance into the British colonial administration. During the same period the Qing were losing control of Chinese territories, the British were sponsoring the development of a new gentry class in Hong Kong who modeled themselves on the Qing administrative hierarchy. Elite Hong Kong Chinese began wearing the costume of Qing Mandarin administrators and invited the British governor to social events to reinforce, as Law puts it, "the perception of the continuity of sheer *imperial* power, whether British or Qing."¹⁹² Some of these new Hong Kong elites also received Qing titles and official recognition from the emperor after raising money for flood and famine relief in China. The British organized Hong Kong into a Crown Colony that was clearly and geographically centered on London, but local Chinese elites subverted the *tianxia* territorial strategy of controlling local gentry through meritocratic competition over mastery of the Chinese classics. Instead, local Chinese elites in Hong Kong gained social status with the Qing and unofficial administrative authority through the imperial power of the British monarchy. Later, as Gavin Ure points out, these unofficials gained nearly autonomous power in the colonial government over appropriations when Governor Stubb appointed them to the Finance Committee

¹⁹² Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*.

in 1920.¹⁹³ British administrators and local Chinese elites developed institutional capacities that contributed to a durable colonial assemblage that was easy to reassemble after the WWII Japanese occupation of Hong Kong.

The PRC's interest in Hong Kong has not been just about winning a patriotic debate over the right of territorial naming as Tok concludes.¹⁹⁴ Carroll also rejects the assertion that China was eager to acquire Hong Kong for its industrial and financial institutions by pointing out that British investment in Hong Kong in the 1960s was less than half what it had been in the 1930s and the British Treasury calculated in 1976 that Hong Kong was no longer an economic asset for Great Britain.¹⁹⁵ Instead, following Law, the patriotic value of Hong Kong lies in the territory's "ability to teach its coming ruler all about Hong Kong's colonial rule"¹⁹⁶ or in other words the collaborative and institutional capacities holding Hong Kong together as a durable colonial assemblage. The tianxia territorial assemblage made China the central empire, but the modern nation-state international system relegated China to the periphery and the efforts to modernize China through Self-Strengthening or Mao's Great Leap Forward had ended in disaster. Li's teapot allegory was a warning to hardline nationalists against reproducing the PRC institutions of economic and urban planning institutions in Hong Kong. Ever since the Sino-Soviet split, and especially after the U.S.-led embargo of China in 1950, Hong Kong had served as China's connection to Western modernity as it struggled to develop under socialist principles. For reformers like Li and Deng, cleansing Hong Kong of its accumulated colonial capacities would destroy the possibility of modernizing China through Western-style colonization that had, for the

¹⁹³ Ure, *Governors, Politics and the Colonial Office: Public Policy in Hong Kong, 1918-58*, 25.

¹⁹⁴ Tok, *Managing China's Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, 172.

¹⁹⁵ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 179.

¹⁹⁶ Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 175.

most part, been recognized as legitimate by the post-WWII international community. However, before China could learn from Hong Kong how to assemble successful colonial territories, it had to prevent Hong Kong from decolonizing and gaining independence as most other former British colonies had done. China's acquisition of Hong Kong was far from inevitable and might never have happened if it were not for a series of accidents.

Territorializing and Reterritorializing Hong Kong

The majority of articles and books written about the 1997 Transfer of Sovereignty are focused on whether China could successfully manage Hong Kong after the British or would China respect the liberal rights Hong Kong residents had enjoyed under colonial rule. A large portion of the existing literature has therefore focused on what Chinese, British, and Hong Kong government officials have said about their policy decisions and intentions. Most of this literature begins by recounting the death of Mao and Deng's subsequent consolidation of power before inviting the Governor of Hong Kong to Beijing for the first time to discuss the territory's future. At this meeting, Deng is supposed to have signaled that he expected Hong Kong to be returned to China in 1997 when the 99-year lease to Great Britain expired and reassured Governor MacLehose that the PRC would allow capitalism to continue in the territory. The day after his return from Beijing, MacLehose told the press Deng requested he "ask investors in Hong Kong to put their hearts at ease" and later emphasized the "moral obligations" of Great Britain to honor the lease 1898 Second Convention of Peking as responsible participants in the international community.¹⁹⁷ Chinese and Western news media has since described Deng as a "political wizard"

¹⁹⁷ Quoted in Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 215.

for his skillful application of international legal norms and his willingness to accommodate capitalism in Hong Kong and the new special economic zones on mainland China.¹⁹⁸ However, by relying on the official statements and press releases, IR and China scholars have missed the important role of mistranslations, accidents, and predictions made after the fact in these apparently rational processes of political negotiation.

In the last chapter, I noted that few government or high-ranking Party officials in China before 1978 expressed any interest in gaining control over Hong Kong. Neither the PRC or ROC had made any overt moves to block Britain's resumption of control over Hong Kong after the Japanese withdrew following WWII. In fact, in 1972 the PRC asked the United Nations to remove Hong Kong from its list of colonial territories and in 1976 the PRC declined Portugal's offer to return Macau.¹⁹⁹ In 1977, the senior PRC official responsible for Hong Kong affairs also made it clear that China was not interested in changing Hong Kong's status until after the question of Taiwan control was resolved.²⁰⁰ British diplomats, overseas Chinese, and many IR scholars and practitioners believed these statements signaled that China would also decline to make future claims on Hong Kong.

There was also serious question as to whether Hong Kong and Kowloon should be included in any potential return to China. The 1842 Treaty of Nanking and 1860 Treaty of Peking had ceded Hong Kong island and Kowloon to Great Britain "in perpetuity." The 1989 Second Convention of Peking had only named the New Territories as the land leased for 99-years to Great Britain. Furthermore, the treaty signed after the Second Convention of Peking was

¹⁹⁸ Tyler, "Deng Xiaoping"; Yu, "凝聚三代领导人的大智慧 香港回归的风风雨雨 (The Stories of the Returning of Hong Kong)."

¹⁹⁹ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 177.

²⁰⁰ Carroll, 178.

made between “The United Kingdom and China” or “the Governments of Great Britain and China.” In the 1970s, Great Britain, the UN, and most countries recognized the ROC, not the PRC, as the sole legitimate government of China.²⁰¹ Any “retrocession” after the 99-year lease should, therefore, have returned the New Territories to the ROC government in Taiwan.

The motivation for a reunification with China seems to have originated in Hong Kong, not in China or with Deng, as the financial sector administered by elite Chinese unofficials began raising concerns about their future returns on property investments in the New Territories.²⁰² Their individual land leases, or “Crown Leases,” were due to expire three days before the New Territories lease to Great Britain. Hong Kong banks, for example, offered residents a standard fifteen-year mortgage package and by 1978 were beginning to panic about making new loans if the Crown Leases were not going to be renewed after 1997.²⁰³ Deng invited Governor MacLehose to meet with him in Beijing to discuss the future of Hong Kong, but not its return to China. Deng wanted to discuss how China and Great Britain might work together to control the massive flow of legal and illegal immigrants to Hong Kong by improving the conditions in Guangdong with foreign investments.²⁰⁴ Steve Tsang’s careful reconstruction of events using recently declassified records shows that Governor MacLehose secretly took it upon himself to discuss the financial investors’ concerns over the Crown Leases with Deng at this meeting without consulting London, any of his staff except for one aid, or any of the people in the New Territories whose futures he was deciding.²⁰⁵ MacLehose and British policymakers took the

²⁰¹ “Convention between the United Kingdom and China, Respecting an Extension of Hong Kong Territory.”

²⁰² Meyer, *Hong Kong as a Global Metropolis*, 220.

²⁰³ Mathews, Lü, and Ma, *Hong Kong, China*, 40.

²⁰⁴ Cheung, “Deng Kept His HK Options Open in 1979.”

²⁰⁵ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 214.

stated lack of interest in recovering Hong Kong from PRC leaders to mean that Deng was planning to extend the 99-year New Territories lease in exchange for other concessions.

China had never recognized the legitimacy of the “unequal treaties” ceding Hong Kong island, Kowloon, and the New Territories to Great Britain. When the discussion between Deng and MacLehose turned to Hong Kong, Deng repeated China’s familiar general claim to sovereignty over the “lost territories.” The Chinese Foreign Ministry had asked MacLehose not to bring up the Crown Leases, and Deng had not been briefed on them, and neither the British nor Chinese diplomats had prepared to discuss any leases. MacLehose, however, took Deng’s general statement of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong as an opening to raise the question of the Crown Leases, surprising and confusing the translator who mistakenly told Deng that MacLehose wanted to discuss the New Territories lease. MacLehose’s diplomatic aid tried to correct the translator, but a visibly surprised and annoyed Deng simply repeated his statement that China had sovereignty over Hong Kong.²⁰⁶ Following PRC conventions, “once the most senior leader has spoken, no one contradicts him”²⁰⁷ and the Chinese territorialization of Hong Kong became official policy. The incorporation of Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories into the Chinese territorial assemblage was not inevitable or the result of strategic manipulations of international legal norms by clever politicians. Institutional capacities and diplomatic negotiations would be called upon later to prepare Hong Kong for the Transfer of Sovereignty, but the initial territorialization of Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories by China was the result of a mistranslation and PRC diplomatic conventions.

²⁰⁶ Tsang, 214.

²⁰⁷ Tsang, 215.

In 1982, Prime Minister Thatcher visited Beijing to probe whether there was any change in the PRC's decision, but the Chinese diplomats only repeated Deng's earlier statement and the meeting turned from the question of whether China would take control of Hong Kong to questions of how and when it would happen. Thatcher's visit resulted in the Sino-British Joint Declaration which began by declaring that the desire "to recover the Hong Kong area (including Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, hereinafter referred to as Hong Kong) is the common aspiration of the entire Chinese people."²⁰⁸ This "common aspiration," Deng's clever political maneuverings, and the British commitment to honoring international agreements were invented after the fact to naturalize the inevitable territorialization of Hong Kong by the PRC. Had MacLehose had not misjudged the situation, the translator not made a mistake, and Deng been prepared then Hong Kong might have remained under British control or followed all the other Crown Colonies after WWII and become independent.

Once China was committed to taking control over the Hong Kong territories, it began collaborating with London, the Hong Kong colonial government, and the Hong Kong Chinese unofficials. China quickly began co-opting the support of business leaders, trade unions, professional associations, and foreign investors. PRC leaders invited them to Beijing and promised that in return for the patriotic support of PRC control over Hong Kong they would have greater access to the formal machinery of government and make more money than they had under the British.²⁰⁹ The National People's Congress went so far as to put several Hong Kong unofficials on the committee tasked with drafting a new constitution that would govern the territory after 1997. The Drafting Committee included PRC and Hong Kong government

²⁰⁸ "Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong."

²⁰⁹ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 222–23.

officials, but it was dominated by Hong Kong businessmen.²¹⁰ The similarity of the new constitutional government they drafted to the Hong Kong colonial government and the continuity of everyday life for Hong Kong residents after 1997 has since been the subject of numerous commentaries. Gregory Chu, for example, asserted that “one thing has been altered: all the red mailboxes on the streets have been painted green just as a symbol to remind people that the Chinese are now in charge!”²¹¹ However, less attention has been paid to the processes of British deterritorialization and Chinese reterritorialization the Joint Declaration and Basic Law anticipated.

In his study of contemporary territoriality in the Middle East, Hazbun cites numerous examples of decolonization being followed with an immediate recolonization by local elites, foreign business interests, and foreign state institutions. Hazbun uses Deleuze and Guattari to avoid the reductive rise and fall account of a territory and argues for an active understanding of territoriality as a continual process by which every act of deterritorialization is accompanied by new acts of reterritorialization. Hazbun describes reterritorialization as the “processes or policies that decrease the saliency of boundaries, distance, and territorial specificities as means of regulations, control, and identification.”²¹² In the case of Hong Kong, China reterritorialized British citizens, putting them into circulation the way Deleuze and Guattari explained peasants’ labor power and capitalism, by making it impossible for them to work in Hong Kong without a visa and encouraging British (now foreigners) to leave. China replaced all the flags flown at public offices with flags of the PRC and Hong Kong SAR, replaced all references to the “Crown” in laws and ordinances with the “State,” renamed the “Supreme Court” with the “High

²¹⁰ Loh, *Underground Front*, 157.

²¹¹ Chu, “Hong Kong: Transition Back to China.”

²¹² Hazbun, *Beaches, Ruins, Resorts: The Politics of Tourism in the Arab World*, xxvii.

Court,” replaced the office of the Governor with the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, and repainted Royal Mail pillar boxes with green Hong Kong Post. Uniformed officers kept their British uniforms but were required to change their cap badges and all other British insignia.²¹³ The new Chinese order, as Stephen Vines argues, was “so keen to remove symbols of the past, has been equally keen to restore the past in the shape of recreating an abandoned form of colonial government.”²¹⁴ China reterritorialized Hong Kong’s social capital as well.

PRC leaders have frequently referred to the return of Hong Kong as an end to China’s “century of humiliation” and argued that the lack of serious resistance to the handover shows that the PRC has entered a new era of improved international relations, commitment to rapid economic growth, and less economic or social control. According to Carroll, the reterritorialization of Hong Kong was a “chance to prove to the world, especially to Taiwan, that China was sincere about the one country, two systems” territorial arrangement.²¹⁵ However, more recent events like the “Occupy Central” and “Umbrella Movement” opposing the CCP’s pre-selection of Chief Executive candidates before general elections show that China’s reterritorialization of Hong Kong has also generated resistance.²¹⁶ However, the British and their elite Chinese collaborators actively worked to suppress democratic movements during the colonial period and only began opening a handful of government offices to elections when it became clear in 1984 that Hong Kong would soon be under China’s control. Since 1997, China has done its best to continue the British tactics of delaying democratic reforms and ensuring that the interests of the PRC and their elite Hong Kong Chinese collaborators are well represented.

²¹³ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 372.

²¹⁴ Vines, *Hong Kong*, 124.

²¹⁵ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 214.

²¹⁶ Zheng and Tok, “Democratisation in Hong Kong: A Crisis Brewing for Beijing.”

China has also been willing to employ more violent tactics to suppress democratic reforms and reassert its exclusive territorial control in Hong Kong. The last chapter takes up Tok's formulation of contemporary Chinese territoriality as "one country, n systems"²¹⁷ where n represents the potentially unlimited variability of territorial arrangements China can successfully accommodate. However, the deterritorialization of Taiwan and the collaborative destruction of the Kowloon Walled City expose limits to the Chinese territorial assemblage's flexibility.

Chinese Deterritorializations and Tianxia Cultural Governance

Hong Kong and Taiwan both developed separately from communist China and have their own international relations, but now that Hong Kong's territorial status is no longer in question, China has shown little interest in controlling its participation in international organizations and has even encouraged the HKSAR to form new relations independent of the PRC. The PRC's battle with the ROC began as a civil war over the control of Chinese territory, but the contest has been transformed into a dispute over Taiwan's independence from mainland China in international politics. During the Cold War, Taiwan was useful to the U.S. policy of communist containment in Asia as it was the only country to rapidly industrialize while also peacefully transitioning from a military dictatorship into a liberal democratic state. However, after Richard Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972 and the subsequent normalization of U.S.-China relations in 1979, the ROC has had to bargain with the PRC for participation in formal international associations like the World Health Organization and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Tok, *Managing China's Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, 20.

²¹⁸ Tok gives a detailed overview of the various interventions China has made since 1979 to remove, demote, or exclude Taiwanese representation in the UN and international trade agreements. See Tok, 132.

The accidental decision to acquire Hong Kong gave the PRC an opportunity to plug British collaborative colonial capacities into the Chinese territorial assemblage and prove that Taiwan does not need independence to continue under China's control as a liberal democracy with a capitalist economy.

China also prevents Taiwanese independence by deploying a “fleet in being” strategy or what Deleuze and Guattari, quoting Paul Virilio, call a “vector of deterritorialization” to control the ROC's international relationships.²¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari describe this strategy as developing from Western naval tactics in which “the sea became the place *of fleet in being*, where one no longer goes from one point to another, but rather holds space beginning from any point: instead of striating space, one occupies it with a vector of deterritorialization in perpetual motion.”²²⁰ China rarely attempts to influence Taiwan's domestic affairs, but continually deterritorializes Taiwan's international spaces to prevent the “renegade province”²²¹ from managing its international relations as an independent nation-state. The PRC offers Taiwan greater domestic autonomy than Hong Kong in its “one country, two systems” arrangement and presents unification with China as Taiwan's only means of autonomously controlling its international spaces.

China's deterritorialization of the Kowloon Walled City shows that China's “one country, two systems” territorial arrangement does not always scale down. After the British took Hong Kong, the Qing began building the Walled City by fortifying a small Song dynasty customs

²¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 387.

²²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, 387.

²²¹ The PRC never explicitly refers to the ROC or Taiwan as a “renegade province,” but it does encourage the international news media to use the expression in its reporting. The PRC does this to setting the terms of the debate ROC officials like former President Lee Teng-hui have been forced to constantly dispute. See Lee, “Understanding Taiwan.”

station in the northeast corner of the Kowloon peninsula. The Qing administrative hierarchy transferred the chief military officer of Xin'an County seat to the fort, increased the garrison by 150 additional troops, and constructed a wall with mounted cannon around the fort's six acres.²²² The new Walled City was primarily a garrison town with a small civilian population of 200 military dependents. The residents built a small school and a modern provincial customs station inside the walls and a marketplace sprang up outside to keep the city supplied.²²³ The first invaders of the Walled City came from colonial Hong Kong island but were, ironically, Chinese members of the Taiping uprising and Kowloon officials escaped the Taiping by fleeing to Hong Kong. The Qing eventually retook the fort and it became something of a tourist attraction for European visitors, first as a place to take photos of "a little bit of Old China" and later for gambling and prostitution after the British prohibited both activities on Hong Kong island.²²⁴ When the British invaded Kowloon and forced the Qing to cede the peninsula to them in 1860, the Anglo-Chinese boundary was set a few hundred yards from the fort to keep it within Chinese territorial control. The Second Convention of Peking in 1898 engulfed the Walled City with British controlled New Territories surrounding the small plot of land. Qing administrators negotiating the 99-year lease insisted that the Walled City not be counted as part of the New Territories but, a year after agreeing, the British expelled all Chinese officials from the fort and declared it part of their colony. Some of the original civilian population continued living in the decaying Walled City as the surrounding areas in Kowloon began developing into an urban city. Both the Qing and the British colonial administrations claimed jurisdiction over the Walled City, but neither wanted to take responsibility for its residents or open the possibility for diplomatic

²²² Sinn, "Kowloon Walled City: Its Origin and Early History," 31.

²²³ Sinn, 33.

²²⁴ Harter, "Hong Kong's Dirty Little Secret," 96.

incidents by exercising institutional control over the territory. The result, as historian Elizabeth Sinn describes, “was a near vacuum of administrative function and authority” within the Walled City.²²⁵

The British made several attempts to raze the Walled City between 1933 and 1948, but the ROC continued claiming the territory and helped its Chinese residents and squatters to organize against eviction.²²⁶ When the Japanese occupied Hong Kong, they tore down the City’s wall and used it to extend the nearby Kai Tak Airport. After WWII, refugees from mainland China flowed into the City and replaced the old squatters’ huts with concrete high-rise buildings. The British made several more unsuccessful attempts to evacuate and knock down the settlement citing hygiene and criminal threats the City posed to the surrounding territory. Seth Harter points out that the “vice discourse” used by the Hong Kong colonial administration:

focused on the prostitutes who lived in the city rather than their clients and the pimps who usually came from the outside; they focused on the addicts who slept in the city’s alleys, while masking the suppliers who brought drugs into the city; and they focused on the employees who ran the gambling operations in the city rather than on the punters who brought their stakes in from the surrounding neighborhoods or the triad bosses who took the profits back out of the city.²²⁷

In other words, Hong Kong colonial administrators defined the Walled City as an isolated territory characterized by crime in contrast to the law and order of British colonial rule. In actuality, crime rates were no higher within the Walled City than in the rest of Hong Kong and the New Territories.²²⁸ The 33,000 people living on a six-acre plot of land with factories, schools, food courts, brothels, opium dens, casinos, and many unlicensed dentists made the Walled City

²²⁵ Sinn, “Kowloon Walled City: Its Origin and Early History,” 38.

²²⁶ Harter, “Hong Kong’s Dirty Little Secret,” 96.

²²⁷ Harter, 98.

²²⁸ Wilkinson, “A Chinese Magistrate’s Fort,” 71.

the most densely populated territory on Earth.²²⁹ The seven to fifteen story buildings of the City evaded the ten-story limit enforced by Hong Kong's building codes and landlords did not pay property taxes, making an apartment in the City one third to one half below the cost of rent in neighborhoods nearby with easy access to public transportation.²³⁰ Western and Chinese researchers seem to determine whether the Kowloon Walled City was an extreme space of laissez-faire capitalism where anything could be bought and sold without state regulation or a haven for recent immigrants from communist China and the working poor against the brutal capitalist competition of Hong Kong's real estate market and currency speculation.

In many ways, the Walled City might better be described as a small-scale version of British collaborative colonization in the Hong Kong territories. The Walled City, which no longer had a wall, was far from isolated or self-sufficient. Like Hong Kong, it depended on a continual flow of food, water, capital, people, and goods into and out of the territory. Many residents worked in Hong Kong and many who lived in Hong Kong worked in one of the Walled City's fishball and noodle factories or metalworking shops and textile mills. However, China and Hong Kong regularly disrupted these flows as tensions over territorial control prevented the colonial government from plugging the Walled City into Hong Kong's water mains. The Hong Kong Urban Service entered the City several times a day to sterilize public water wells and Triad organized crime rings tapped into the surrounding water mains to run hoses or pipes illegally into the City.²³¹ Eventually, longtime residents, business owners, and Triad bosses organized a neighborhood welfare association (*Kaifong*) to negotiate for improvements to the water and drainage situation. The *Kaifong* collaborated with the Hong Kong city police and other British

²²⁹ Girard, "The Clearance," 208.

²³⁰ Ho, "Redevelopment of Kowloon Walled City," 65.

²³¹ Harter, "Hong Kong's Dirty Little Secret," 99.

administrators just as the Hong Kong unofficials did in the surrounding colony. As described earlier, local Chinese elites in Hong Kong developed their social capital and recognition from the Qing emperor by raising money for famine relief in China. In 1984, the Walled City business leaders also organized a fund for famine victims in Ethiopia, similarly transforming themselves from criminals to respectable businessmen with international recognition.²³² However, when it came time to begin preparing Hong Kong for the Transfer of Sovereignty to China, the collaborative colonial capacities of the Kowloon Walled City were not incorporated into the “one country, two systems” territorial arrangement.

The Joint Declaration made it clear that Great Britain would turn over control of Hong Kong to China in 1997 and that China would not object to the British exercising control over the Walled City before then. According to Harter, “Equally clear, if unspoken, was the understanding that China found it embarrassing to have to come to the defense of the Walled City in the name of patriotism and would be happy if the colonial authorities were able to eradicate it before the retrocession.”²³³ The Walled City also presented a problem for China because the PRC had long used the City as a prime example of the squalor and brutal conditions capitalism and foreign colonial rule had forced upon Hong Kong.²³⁴ China had failed to defend Hong Kong against Great Britain during the Opium Wars, and then the ROC and PRC failed to liberate the territory from the violence of colonization and capitalism. As China began preparing to incorporate the British capacities of collaborative colonization and a globalized capitalist economy into the Chinese territorial assemblage, China could not accommodate the ability of immigrants and City residents to produce territory along what Deleuze and Guattari called the

²³² Harter, 100.

²³³ Harter, 102.

²³⁴ Ho, “Redevelopment of Kowloon Walled City,” 23.

smooth “nomadic trajectory” to distribute “people (or animals) in open space.”²³⁵ Furthermore, opposition to earlier attempts by the British to demolish the Walled City had generated a shared identity and strong sense of loyalty among residents. China discovered that its deterritorialization of Hong Kong as a foreign colony was generating a similar shared Hongkongese identity and sense of loyalty to the city. After the PRC’s brutal repression in 1989 of student protesters in Tiananmen Square, Hongkongers became even more assertive in claiming a hybrid East-West identity and began threatening China’s reterritorialization of Hong Kong as an integral part of the Chinese motherland and Chinese nation. The Walled City was a problem for China.

British and Chinese administrators collaborated in secret talks to solve the problem of the Kowloon Walled City for two years. At 9:00am on January 14, 1987 the PRC and Hong Kong colonial government simultaneously announced that the Walled City would be torn down. At the exact same moment, 1,200 bureaucrats from the Hong Kong government’s Survey and Mapping Department accompanied by policemen swept through the City to count the occupants, owners, and size of all property.²³⁶ The Hong Kong government began evicting the City’s residents and allocated HK\$2.7 billion in compensation for their property, territorializing the City’s industrial and social capital before resettling the City’s residents and deterritorializing the city space with bulldozers in April 1993.²³⁷ Only two years before the handover, the colonial Hong Kong administration began building an urban garden where the Walled City had been that was modeled on Beijing public parks where the former private alters of the Qing ruling family had stood. By turning the Walled City space into an early Qing garden, the Chinese and British administrators collaborated to reject any suggestion of an East-West hybridity. In contrast to the

²³⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 380.

²³⁶ Harter, “Hong Kong’s Dirty Little Secret,” 101–2.

²³⁷ Kwan, “The Walled City: Our Place,” 167.

detritorialization of Taiwan, China and its British colonial collaborators replaced the immigrant and working poor's production of territory with a striated state space regulating human flows along easily surveilled walkways and invented "Hong Kong's first authentic Chinese garden."²³⁸

A year before the Transfer of Sovereignty, the colonial British government and Chinese administrative hierarchy collaborated to transform the Walled City into a planned urban space where the possibility of alternative identities and colonial capabilities was reduced to a homogenous experience of China's "rejuvenation" (*fixing*). The goal of rejuvenation projects like the Kowloon Walled City Park, according to Yan Xuetong, is not to simply refer to the ancient past but "to restore China's power status to the prosperity enjoyed during the prime of the Han, Tang and early Qing Dynasties."²³⁹ If the park was only meant to refer back to the Qing dynasty or China before the "century of humiliation," however, its designers should have modeled it on the Lingnan style of southern China and the gardens in nearby Guangdong. Instead, the Chinese and British collaborated to replace the Walled City with a lower Yangtze River style garden which, as Harter points out, signals that Hong Kong was being returned to "the People's Republic at large" rather than just its traditional place in China's administrative hierarchy under Guangdong Province.²⁴⁰ The Kowloon Walled City Park reminds visitors of Hong Kong before Western colonization and China at the height of its empire, and rejuvenates the tianxia territorial organization of the world culturally below and geographically centered on the Central Plains of China. Put another way following Shapiro's reading of Deleuze and

²³⁸ Chu, "Walled City Foundation Uncovered," 8; Qu, "九龙寨城公园 (Kowloon Walled City Park)."

²³⁹ Yan, "The Rise of China and Its Power Status," 13.

²⁴⁰ Harter, "Hong Kong's Dirty Little Secret," 104.

Guattari, the Park is a project of tianxia cultural governance which “overcodes” alternative encodings of territories and flows of people, things, and capital.²⁴¹

Like the larger projects of cultural governance aimed at replacing Hongkongese identity with a Chinese national identity, China’s attempt to overcode the shared identity of Kowloon Walled City inhabitants has generated resistance. Former Walled City residents and their children frequently meet at the Park to loudly complain about their resettlement packages, their prospects in the surrounding territory, and the loss of their community.²⁴² Alternative experiences of the Walled City have also found their way into a large number of Hong Kong, Chinese, and Western films, television programs, and videogames. Versions of the City appear in popular films co-produced by the Beijing Film Studio and Hong Kong’s Star Overseas like Steven Chow’s *Kung Fu Hustle* (2004) and Hollywood films like Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* (1982) and Christopher Nolan’s *Batman Begins* (2005).²⁴³ Recent first-person shooter and role-playing videogames like *Call of Duty* (2010) and *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* (2011) allow players to explore what the City might look like today if it had not been torn down.²⁴⁴ In Japanese popular culture, the City has inspired so many anime films and videogames that the Kawasaki Warehouse amusement arcade in Tokyo reconstructed a large section of the City. The reconstruction includes Chinese rowhouses and intersecting walkways along with minutely detailed posters and signs reproduced from photographs taken by survey teams on the day China and British administrators announced their plan to demolish the City.²⁴⁵ As Shapiro notes, “at a historical moment when a government is seeking support from the arts to extend its sphere of

²⁴¹ Shapiro, *Methods and Nations*, 37.

²⁴² Harter, “Hong Kong’s Dirty Little Secret,” 108.

²⁴³ Scott, *Blade Runner*; Nolan, *Batman Begins*; Chow, *Kung Fu Hustle*.

²⁴⁴ Treyarch, *Call of Duty*; Eidos-Montreal, *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.

²⁴⁵ For a detailed account of all the various ways the Kowloon Walled City has been portrayed and reproduced in popular culture, see Fraser and Li, “The Second Life of Kowloon Walled City,” 225–26.

imperial violence...the arts can be mobilized to resist. Its archives remain open to a process in which memory can never be constructed as definitive history.”²⁴⁶ China may have dissolved the buildings and institutions of the Kowloon Walled City, but its features continue to be reassembled in popular media and international spaces far from the Qing garden that replaced it.

This chapter began by describing the colonial capacities British administrators devised to control the Hong Kong territories, focusing especially on the development of collaborative colonialism and the cooption of local elites. I argue that these capacities, in combination with the radical contingencies of misjudgment and mistranslation, created the conditions of possibility for China’s territorialization of Hong Kong and the prevention of continued British colonial rule or independence. The chapter then explored the processes of Hong Kong’s reterritorialization and incorporation of British colonial capacities into the Chinese territorial assemblage, which I argue were more valuable to China than Hong Kong’s industrial or financial institutions. The chapter then contrasted China’s *fleet in being* deterritorialization of Taiwan’s international spaces with its deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the Kowloon Walled City. Despite the similarities between Hong Kong and the Walled City territories, I find that China could not accommodate the City with a “one country, *n* systems” arrangement without drawing attention to its past failure to defend Hong against British colonization and capitalism, and its plan to replace Britain as Hong Kong’s new colonizer and warden of its capitalist economy. This case study of Chinese territoriality ended by considering how the replacement of the Walled City with an early Qing dynasty garden in the Yangtze River style reorients the territory’s flow of people towards Chinese culture and a rejuvenation of the tianxia world order. The next chapter explores how the tianxia territorial capacities and Hong Kong colonial capacities described in the last two chapters

²⁴⁶ Shapiro, *Methods and Nations*, 189.

are being reconfigured to build new lands, establish new cities, and control the volumetric spaces of the South China Sea as a territory of “Greater China.”

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Chapter 3

Tacky Territorial Assemblages:

Building Sansha City in the South China Sea for a “Greater China”

Certain islands and reefs that do not need a military presence will be developed into key sites on a Maritime Silk Road. We will develop some islands and reefs to accommodate a select number of tourists. It will be an orderly and gradual procedure. It is not an easy trip, but many people with a patriotic spirit want to try. The arrival of tourists will nourish the need for divers and windsurfers.

—Xiao Jie, Sansha City Mayor²⁴⁷

On July 23, 2012, a small group of Chinese government officials, party members, and high-ranking officers of the People’s Liberation Army met on the tiny Yongxing Island in the Xisha archipelago for a short ceremony. At 10:40 am, a PLA officer planted the Five-star Red Flag and the military band played the “March of the Volunteers” Chinese national anthem. A few moments later, the PRC Vice Minister of Civil Affairs, Sun Shaochi, announced the State Council’s approval to establish Sansha City on the island and unveiled signboards of the Sansha Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Sansha Municipal Government.²⁴⁸ That afternoon, forty-five deputies of the new Municipal CCP elected Xiao Jie as the new mayor of a prefecture-level city with no population and almost no land. Sansha, which literally translates as “the three islands,” had the day before been a county-level territory in the Chinese administrative hierarchy. Yongxing is the largest island of the Xisha archipelago, but a

²⁴⁷ Li and Liu, “Sansha Seeks to Become Major Tourist Attraction.”

²⁴⁸ Ji, “创造三沙奇迹 三沙市成立筹备工作纪实 (Creating the Sansha Miracle: Documenting the Establishment of Sansha City).”

few months before it only had enough room for a few radio antennas and short airplane runway that had been built in the 1990s on top of imported sand that construction crews had dumped on a large offshore rock. Today, the Island is big enough to accommodate a PRC administration building, a branch of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, a post office, a hospital, two museums, two WWII monuments, a department store, a supermarket, a China National Radio broadcasting station, a primary schoolhouse, a barber's shop, the movie theater referenced in the quote above, and a HQ-9 Surface to Air Missile system.²⁴⁹

Many IR scholars and practitioners have correctly deduced that China's "reclamation" project to expand Xisha Island and build twenty other artificial islands in the South China Sea serves military purposes, but some have gone further to assume those are China's only intentions. One of the most prominent IR scholars, John Mearsheimer, describes China's island-building project by asserting that power is the ultimate source of security in an anarchic world and predicting that China's commitment to a "peaceful rise" is only a temporary ruse. According to Mearsheimer, China will inevitably model itself on previous empires and acquire future territory by armed conflict and economic coercion.²⁵⁰ IR practitioners from the U.S. seem to be especially suspicious of China's actions in the South China Sea. For example, the political scientist and China Strategist in the Strategic Studies Group at the Pentagon, Oriana Skylar Mastro, argues the establishment of Sansha city "shows that the Chinese leadership is deliberately escalating its coercive diplomacy" towards the other countries claiming jurisdiction over the Xisha Islands, Spratly Islands, Macclesfield Bank, and Scarborough Shoal.²⁵¹ Rather

²⁴⁹ Gibbons-Neff, "New Satellite Images Show Reinforced Chinese Surface-to-Air Missile Sites near Disputed Islands."

²⁵⁰ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

²⁵¹ Mastro, "Bulletin 5," 6.

than take territory by force, according to Mastro, “China has been moderating its policies toward the South China Sea in the past after recognizing that its actions escalated tensions too much.”²⁵² Chinese scholars have tended to advance the dubious claim that Xisha and other South China Sea islands have been part of China since ancient times. They often describe the huge gas and oil reserves a few hundred miles off Xisha shore, which account for a third of China’s total energy reserves, as “China’s Persian Gulf” and argue that access to these resources is necessary for China’s future industrial and economic development.²⁵³

China’s military and economic interest in the South China Sea are clear but do not fully account for the reasons why China’s administrative hierarchy found it useful to make Sansha a prefecture-level city or go to such great lengths to construct buildings for civilian use. The primary school, for example, cost approximately USD\$5.6 million to build a schoolhouse that can only accommodate 40 children, which comes out to \$140,000 per child.²⁵⁴ The PRC claims that, not including military personnel, approximately 2,500 people live in Sansha City today.²⁵⁵ Additionally, China has recently announced plans to build tourist facilities in Sansha and has already begun arranging cruises for patriotic Chinese tourists. The explanation that is only interested in expanding the reach of its military or extracting hydrocarbons in the South China Sea does not account for why, as Sansha City’s new mayor Xiao puts it, “The arrival of tourists will nourish the need for divers and windsurfers.”²⁵⁶ What needs would the military or offshore oil drilling platforms have nourished by windsurfers?

²⁵² Mastro, 3.

²⁵³ Yang, “论中国在南海问题上的国家利益 (On China’s National Interests in the South China Sea Dispute).”

²⁵⁴ “China’s Sansha City Starts Building First School.”

²⁵⁵ Cheng, “探秘中国领土最南端地级市三沙：面积最大人口最少 (Explore Sansha: The Southernmost and Smallest Prefecture-Level City in China with the Largest Population).”

²⁵⁶ Li and Liu, “Sansha Seeks to Become Major Tourist Attraction.”

The last chapter considered how the Chinese territorial assemblage incorporated British colonial capacities into its “one country, two systems” governance arrangement with Hong Kong and deployed a *fleet in being* strategy to manage Taiwan’s autonomy in the international sphere. In those cases, China is reterritorializing established colonial governing practices and reterritorializing international institutions but, in the case of Sansha, China’s exercise of power is creating new territories and building new land on top of sunken atolls and coral reefs. Deleuze and Guattari point out that the “smooth space” of oceans presents a problem for states since “the task of occupying an open space with a vortical movement that can rise up at any point”²⁵⁷ against “the walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures” which characterize the “striated space” or “grid” of territorial governance.²⁵⁸ Making Sansha into a prefecture-level city is more than just an attempt to colonize the Island or increase the legitimacy of China’s territorial claim over the South China Sea, though it is both of those things. China’s construction of buildings like a school, a barber’s shop, and a movie theater in the South China Sea show that China is also attending to those territorial arrangements of everyday life that interested Sack and Raffestin as much as the territoriality of formal international politics. There were no local elites in Sansha for China’s colonial administration to assimilate into government or land to accommodate even the six acres of the Kowloon Walled City on Yongxing Island. However, China’s control over the South China Sea bears a strong resemblance to the British organization of “Chinatown” on Hong Kong island and the PRC’s management of mainland territories by the administrative hierarchy.

In previous chapters, I traced important moments in the development of the administrative hierarchy and its remarkably stable system of territorial divisions. The last chapter

²⁵⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 363.

²⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, 381.

described the administrative hierarchy incorporating the capacities of Anglo-European states through the Self-Strengthening movement and acquisition of Hong Kong from colonial Britain. However, following Sack, if we grant that the administrative hierarchy “is dynamic, that modern society has complex hierarchical organizations with particular characteristics which Weber calls bureaucratic, and that traditional societies possess traditional though often complex hierarchies with few modern bureaucratic characteristics, how can this be linked to territoriality?” This chapter begins answering that question by considering why the State Council had recently decided to promote or demote a province, prefecture-level city, county, or township and what changes for a territory when its status changes in the administrative hierarchy. Next, I trace the international effects of China’s decision to promote Sansha as a means of territorializing ocean spaces to control access to resources and surveil the nearby international shipping lanes. The final section of this chapter picks up the thread of tianxia cultural governance started in the last chapter by exploring the ways films like Zhang Yimou’s *Hero* (2002) attempt to destroy what Rey Chow calls the “Third Space” of Chinese identity between two colonizers by territorializing “Greater China.”²⁵⁹ The reform and opening up policies have done much to shift Chinese governance away from CCP economic planning towards PRC urban planning in the last several of China’s Five-Year Plans, but the administrative hierarchy has remained relatively untouched by the reforms. The promotion of Sansha, however, shows that the Chinese territorial assemblage has responded to this swing away from economic planning by developing new capacities for strengthening the urban disciplining power of the administrative hierarchy and expanding territorial control over people, capital, and volumetric spaces of international waters.

²⁵⁹ Chow, “Between Colonizers.”

City-Power in the Chinese Administrative Hierarchy

For all the changes China has undergone since the end of the Qing dynasty through the ROC, PRC, and the reform and opening up policies, the administrative hierarchy's system of territorial divisions has proven to be the most durable capacity of the Chinese territorial assemblage. The lowest levels of territorial administration have been renamed from time to time as circuits (*dao*), sub-prefectures (*ting*), districts (*qu*), departments (*zhou*), and prefectures (*fu*) but their boundaries and placement within the administrative hierarchy have changed little since the Qin established them over 2,000 years ago.²⁶⁰ Contemporary China has replaced the Qin installation of a military commander, civil governor, and inspector with dual CCP and PRC government offices in the Civil Service at each level within the administrative hierarchy, but even rebels and revolutionaries have not tinkered with its division of territories into provinces, prefectures, counties, townships, and villages.

These divisions are typically designed to facilitate central administration over a fixed territorial size or population. The province as a territorial unit, for example, is designed to mediate relations between the central government and the county by representing a fraction between 1:10 and 1:30 of China's total population.²⁶¹ The promotion and demotion of territories within these administrative divisions (*xingzheng quhua*) vary historically, are often provisional, and only rarely apply to all territories of the same rank. Decisions to promote or demote territories in the administrative hierarchy are made during conferences and negotiations between national level PRC and CCP members and Civil Service officials at the level of the territory in question. However, the final decision regarding a territory is subject to the central government

²⁶⁰ Fitzgerald, *Rethinking China's Provinces*, 11.

²⁶¹ Fitzgerald, *Rethinking China's Provinces*, 12.

and its current economic development plan, its security interests or the need to consolidate the modern state system.²⁶² The decision to create the Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions (not depicted in Figure 1.) at the same level as provinces and direct-controlled municipalities was made at the national level by the CCP General Secretary and Politburo in negotiation with PRC Premier of the State Council, Chairman of the National People's Congress, and Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Like all other changes to the territorial divisions, the Ministry of Civil Affairs makes an official announcement about the result of closed-door negotiations without advanced notice to lower-level CCP and PRC officers or consultation to the territory's affected residents.

The addition, elimination, adjustments, and merger of territorial units have almost always been part of a strategy designed by the state to cope with changing political and economic circumstances nationally or locally.²⁶³ For example, China has established hundreds of new cities (over 650) and has made many changes to the territorial organization of regions in the administrative system. The most important change was in 1997, when the Central Government removed the historical city of Chongqing and surrounding areas from Sichuan province and reclassified region, moving it from a prefectural-level up the administrative hierarchy to provincial-level status. Carolyn Cartier has argued that these changes are a demonstration of power where "Chinese space economy is an actively scaled territorial mosaic whose dialectical interrelations the state seeks to manage in order to spur economic development while simultaneously maintaining political control."²⁶⁴ The creation of these hundreds of new cities and

²⁶² Chen and Zhang, "建国60年来中国地方行政区划和府际关系的变革和展望 (Changes and Prospects of China Administrative Division and Relationships between Levels of Government over the Past 60 Years)."

²⁶³ Ma, "Urban Administrative Restructuring, Changing Scale Relations and Local Economic Development in China."

²⁶⁴ Cartier, "City-Space: Scale Relations and China's Spatial Administrative Hierarchy," 22.

regions has greatly impacted the county-level, where territory has been changed to smooth the progress of real estate development since only urban land can be legally leased for development. In 1979 there were 2009 counties, but today there are only 1464 counties in China.²⁶⁵ At the same time, many new institutions were founded at township-levels to formalize procedures in those areas formerly under loose regulation. A recent study has concluded that township bureaucracies have been growing at an annual rate of 7% since 1988.²⁶⁶

The provinces and counties do not conform to geographic barriers and their boundaries usually result from arbitrary lines drawn by bureaucrats hundreds of years ago, making it difficult to study changing flows of human migration or the PRC's territorial distribution of resources over long periods of time. However, the historical promotion and demotion of territories within the administrative hierarchy does show some of the ways the Chinese territorial assemblage has responded to the effects of economic development and the discovery of hydrocarbon resources in the South China Sea. Governments at the county level, for instance, typically have 28 to 30 departments to govern populations between 30,000 and 1.5 million and a territory between 800km square and 3,000km square.²⁶⁷ When the Ministry of Civil Affairs announces that PRC and CCP officials have promoted a county to a county-level city, that does not necessarily mean an increase in the territory's population, but the administrative hierarchy allows the existing departments to exercise more economic control over the allocation of land and price of materials within the territory, and creates 20 to 30 new departments for urban planning and construction, industrial and commercial planning, and city infrastructure development. If the county-level city is promoted again to the prefecture-level, the administrative

²⁶⁵ "National Data."

²⁶⁶ Yang, *Calamity and Reform in China*.

²⁶⁷ He, *当代中国的地方政府 (Local Governments in Contemporary China)*, 33.

hierarchy creates another 10 to 20 permanent departments and substantially increases the new prefecture's territory because it now also governs several district and county-level units. When Zhaoqing city in Guangdong province, for example, was promoted to the prefecture-level in 1988, the administrative hierarchy expanded its territory from 748km square to 21,300km square and created several departments to the "new" territory, which included 10 county-level units and two urban districts.²⁶⁸

However, the promotion or demotion of territories within the administrative hierarchy has developed into a new capacity for increasing bureaucratic control over China's economy and disciplining CCP officials into conformity with capitalist market forces. The Chinese geographer Him Chung describes how the promotion of Guangzhou city, the provincial capital of Guangdong, has disciplined and nearly destroyed the county-level cities of Panyu and Huadu.²⁶⁹ The flow of foreign investment capital into Guangzhou city following the reform and opening up policies of the 1980s led PRC officials to develop two "rural districts" for the city, one located in the center of the city focused on technology research and development and the other on the outskirts organized for flower and plant cultivation. The economic success of these developments encouraged Guangzhou's PRC and CCP officials to begin negotiations with their prefectural-level and national-level counterparts for promotion within the administrative hierarchy. In 2000, the Panyu and Huadu counties were designated as urban districts, along with two new districts and a merger of two others, under Guangzhou city after its promotion to prefectural-level. Between 2000 and 2005, Guangzhou doubled its GDP by attracting foreign

²⁶⁸ Zhaoqing Gazetteer Editorial Committee, *肇庆市志 (Zhaoqing City Gazetteer)*, 121.

²⁶⁹ Chung, "State Regulation and China's Administrative System," 217–18.

investment, like new automobile factories for Toyota and Honda.²⁷⁰ However, as Him demonstrates, because Guangzhou's prefectural promotion gave it direct control over Huadu and Panyu's finances, urban planning, and industrial development, Guangzhou was able to build a new airport in Huadu and deep water shipping port in Panyu with relatively low resettlement and land costs.²⁷¹ Guangzhou's promotion also allowed its mayor, along with CCP party secretaries from the city and provincial levels, to requisition land occupied by indigenous villagers and crush Panyu's earlier agreement to develop a cultural space for local artists to cheaply build the massive new Guangzhou City University.²⁷² Zhaoqing city and Guangzhou city show the Chinese territorial assemblage moving to recover control over unplanned urban growth and conform administrative divisions more closely to economic regions. Especially in coastal and island cities, as Him puts it, "territory expansion is a powerful incentive to persuade local regimes to follow the central state's political and economic agendas."²⁷³

Given these changes to the Chinese territorial assemblage, the promotion of Sansha to a prefecture-level city in the administrative hierarchy as a means of expanding its control over South China Sea territories is no a surprise. The establishment of Sansha as a prefecture-level city is, however, strange in that it violates the State Council's criteria for promotion. The most recent amendments to the reform and opening up policies state that:

A rural township can be designated as a city (country-level) with a minimum non-agricultural population of 60,000 and GDP of 200 million Yuan. Special treatment is given to border towns, national minority areas, famous tourist spots, transport hubs and ports which do not meet the above criteria. Country-level cities could be promoted to prefecture-level cities when: (a) nonagricultural population in the urban district is over 250,000, 80% of whom are situated in a city-

²⁷⁰ China Industrial Map Editorial Committee, (*中国产业地图：汽车2004-2005*) *China Industrial Map: Automobiles 2004-2005*.

²⁷¹ Chung, "State Regulation and China's Administrative System," 221.

²⁷² Chung, 22.

²⁷³ Chung, 224.

government seat; (b) the gross value of industrial and agricultural output reaches 3 billion Yuan or more, at least 80% contributed by industrial production; (c) CDP reaches 2.5 billion Yuan, at least 35% contributed by tertiary industry; and (d) local budget income is over 200 billion Yuan.²⁷⁴

Sansha City meets none of the economic or population requirements of province, prefecture, county, or even township levels in the administrative hierarchy. According to the criteria, Sansha should be designated a village or, at best, a direct-controlled town if not a Special Administrative Region. Sansha City is also unusual because the administrative hierarchy officially expanded Sansha's territory to include roughly 85% of the South China Sea without also creating new departments as it had with other promoted prefecture-level cities in China like Zhaoqing and Guangzhou or even the other two Hainan Province prefecture-level cities of Danzhou and Haikou. Few patriotic Chinese scholars seem troubled by this discrepancy, but many interested Anglo-European IR researchers and practitioners seem to be unaware of China's territorial divisions and often conclude that the administrative hierarchy's promotion of Sansha means China is pretending its new city is equivalent to other Anglo-European island cities such as Venice, Manhattan, or Honolulu.²⁷⁵

The Tacky Territoriality of Indisputable Disputes

Sassen has argued that the “question of territoriality has generally not been central to the historiography of cities” and asserts that “When it has been emphasized; the focus has typically been on the cities themselves, conceived of as a type of territorial organization.”²⁷⁶ Sansha provides a useful alternative for studying Chinese territoriality because it has so little territory to

²⁷⁴ “State Council Approving and Forwarding the Report on Adjustment of the Criteria of Designated City by Ministry of Civil Affairs.”

²⁷⁵ For several examples, see Cartier, “The Territorial City.”

²⁷⁶ Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*, 33.

organize. In Europe, according to Sassen, the city “wormed its way into territories” that were encased in jurisdictions from “feudal, ecclesiastical, and imperial” systems and produced “urbanized” authorities to administer the territory.²⁷⁷ City-building as a capacity for controlling territory and extending spatial mechanisms of the administrative hierarchy has been a feature of the Chinese territorial assemblage since the Qin dynasty. Sansha also shows that Chinese cities and territories are thought of differently by the administrative hierarchy than European cities. According to Sassen, the territoriality of European cities arose “from the ground up, which eventually functioned as a built-in capability for the emergent territorialities of national states.”²⁷⁸ Sansha’s territoriality, by contrast, created from the top of the administrative hierarchy as a strategy for extending China’s control over the islands, shipping lanes, and resources of the South China Sea. Having people living in that city or the buildings and institutions of other cities is not necessary since the administrative hierarchy creates territories as places-to-be-governed. Put another way, where Anglo-Europeans have tended to describe Sansha as a city with some territory, the Chinese administrative hierarchy sees Sansha as a territory with a city.

Article 43 of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, ratified by China and most other countries, designates an exclusive economic zone to countries extending 200 nautical miles from their coastal baselines.²⁷⁹ One reason China promoted Sansha is clearly an effort to use this convention to claim exclusive access to the huge oil reserves discovered within 200 miles Xisha Island and monitor the flow of nearly one-third of the world’s shipping between the Karimata and Malacca Straits to the Strait of Taiwan.²⁸⁰ The territories the administrative

²⁷⁷ Sassen, 29.

²⁷⁸ Sassen, 73.

²⁷⁹ United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, 43.

²⁸⁰ Barki and Rogers, *Review of Maritime Transport 2015*, 71.

hierarchy promoted Sansha to govern includes the Xisha Islands (Paracel Islands,), Nansha Islands (Spratly Islands) and Zhongsha Islands (Macclesfield Bank), all of which are the disputed territories between China and some of its Southeast Asian neighbors. Nansha has roughly 230 maritime features such as islands, islets, and reefs.

Vietnam currently occupies the largest twenty-seven features, the Philippines occupies eight features, and China occupies seven but Vietnam and China both claim to have “indisputable sovereignty” over all these land features. In response to China’s promotion of Sansha to a prefecture-level city, Vietnam filed a formal protest declared that “the city’s establishment and related activities are against the ground rules for resolving maritime issues the countries agreed to last October and the Declaration of Conduct (DOC) signed between ASEAN and China in 2002.”²⁸¹ Zhongsha is a sunken atoll of underwater reefs and shoals, currently claimed by China and Taiwan. Although the U.S does not claim sovereignty over any of the islands in the South China Sea, Department of State officials have asserted “the freedom of navigation, including the security of the sea lines of communication that pass through these waters”²⁸² and shown special interest and involvement to South China Sea disputes. China’s decision to make Sansha a city has influenced South China Sea international relations by making the region increasingly hostile and increasing U.S. involvement.

China’s expansion of control over the South China Sea has not involved seizing disputed features from other states or forcing them to abandon their own maritime claims. Instead, Chinese territorial strategy has been to build up the land of existing islands it claims and creating new islands. In his critique of Sack and Raffestin, Anthony B. Murphy has argued that

²⁸¹ “Vietnam Continues to Protest China’s Establishment of Island City.”

²⁸² Cronin, *Cooperation from Strength: The United States, China and the South China Sea*, 35.

researchers interested in territoriality have ignored how capacities sometimes “congeal into territorial projects rooted in the formalized control of space—actual or aspirational—[as] they come to be shaped by a long-lasting, highly sticky system that, even though relationally constituted, derives much of its power from the properties of the system itself.”²⁸³ In Murphy’s terms, the Chinese territorial assemblage is relying on the administrative hierarchy’s “sticky system” of territorial divisions to create artificial territories which defy conventional understandings of territorial waters. China’s creation of artificial territories is only just beginning. In late 2017, the administrative hierarchy launched the massive “magic island maker” dredging ship, MV Tian Kun Hao, which can dig 6,000-cubic meters per hour of sand from the ocean floor for future artificial territory construction.²⁸⁴

Alongside this dramatic reconfiguration of the administrative hierarchy and the South China Sea is the subtler, but no less important, transformation of the spatial limits of Chinese territoriality. In 1949, the administrative hierarchy went from governing the two-dimensional area of land to also regulate Chinese airspace with a new institution, the General Administration of Civil Aviation, and the Central Military Commission. When Hong Kong was incorporated into the administrative hierarchy as a Special Administrative Region, the “one country, two systems” territorial arrangement gave Hong Kong autonomy over its skies as a “special domestic” airspace. However, Sansha is the first city created by the administrative hierarchy specifically for the purposes of controlling the three-dimensional volume of the South China Sea’s earth, air, and water.

²⁸³ Murphy, “Entente Territorial,” 165.

²⁸⁴ Mao, “国之重器‘天鲲号’下水 中国制造再添羽翼 (The Launch of Tian Kun Hao Is a New Win for Products Made in China).”

The disputes over China's exclusive sovereignty, the constant erosion of the artificial territories, and their likely submersion as global sea levels continue to rise make it impossible to predict whether the unusual promotion of Sansha within the administrative hierarchy will stick. Instead of Murphy's "perceptually sticky spaces,"²⁸⁵ it is better to describe Sansha and the artificial territories China is building in the South China Sea as "tacky territories" since they are both never fully dry and a crude attempt to exploit the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea. Advertisements for the recently announced leisure cruises by the state-owned Hainan Tourism International Travel Agency from Hainan Province, closed to foreigners, featuring events for Sansha tourists like a "national flag raising ceremony" and photo shoots for couples who want tropical wedding pictures on "Chinese Hawaii" also lend themselves to the description of Sansha as a tacky territory.²⁸⁶ The Chinese territorial assemblage has reconfigured the administrative hierarchy to produce new lands in the South China Sea and new cities, but China's development of patriotic tourism also depends on what Chinese military studies scholar Peter Dutton calls "the projection of the cultural consciousness of the centuries-long relationship that each coastal nation has had with its adjoining seas"²⁸⁷ or, as one patriotic tourist who was recently married in Sansha put it, Xisha Island is a special place because "These are our lands."²⁸⁸

Tianxia Cultural Governance and the "Greater China" Assemblage

Among the non-military structures recently built on Xisha Island is the Sansha Yinglong Cinema. The purpose of the cinema, according to its general manager, is so residents "can enjoy

²⁸⁵ Murphy, "Entente Territorial," 168.

²⁸⁶ Hainan Tourism International Travel Agency, "海南西沙五天游专线 (Hainan Xisha Five Day Tour Line)."

²⁸⁷ Dutton, "Three Disputes and Three Objectives: China and the South China Sea," 42.

²⁸⁸ Huang and Perlez, "中国在南海争议岛礁开发旅游业 (China Develops Tourism on the Disputed Island Reef in the South China Sea)."

the same exciting hot movies and feast on the same culture as people elsewhere in China.”²⁸⁹ In the last chapter, I noted how the Kowloon Walled City Park is a project of cultural governance which overcodes alternative encodings of official territoriality and Chinese identity, rejuvenating the tianxia organization of the world culturally below and geographically centered on the Central Plains of China. Like the Park, Sansha’s new cinema encourages residents to “feast on the same culture” as the rest of China with recently screened films like Feng Gao’s *The War of Loong* (2017) similarly rejuvenates tianxia by enthusiastically portrays one of the few victories the late Qing dynasty won against 19th-century foreign invaders.²⁹⁰

In her study of China’s transition from overtly pro-Party and pro-communist propaganda to more subtle forms of cultural governance, Elizabeth Perry has argued that the PRC and CCP leaders have begun to “devote considerable attention and energy to the exercise of symbolic power as a means to affirm its right to rule.”²⁹¹ China’s leaders are very clear to put special emphasis on culture and even include cultural initiatives on official political agendas. For example, when former Chinese President Hu Jintao made his report to the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, he spent 10 minutes talking about how important it is to develop a strong “socialist culture” in China. He argued that “Culture is the lifeblood of a nation, and it gives the people a sense of belonging,” and added that “the strength and international competitiveness of Chinese culture are an important indicator of China’s power and prosperity and the renewal of the Chinese nation.”²⁹² Later, the new Chinese President Xi Jinping continued this theme by recently saying “our responsibility now is to rally and lead the entire Party and the

²⁸⁹ Yunna, “我国最南端电影院三沙市银龙电影院首映 (Movie Theater Premier in Sansha City, China’s Southernmost Cinema).”

²⁹⁰ Gao, *The War of Loong*.

²⁹¹ Perry, “Cultural Governance in Contemporary China,” 5.

²⁹² Huang, “Full Text of Hu Jintao’s Report at 18th Party Congress.”

people of all ethnic groups in China in taking over the relay baton passed on to us by history, and in making continued efforts to achieve the great renewal of the Chinese nation.”²⁹³ Occasionally, these propagandistic messages from the PRC leadership are more explicit. During the Occupy Central protests in Hong Kong, for example, the CCP-sponsored *People’s Daily* published an op-ed under the pseudonym Guo Ping titled “Nobody cares about Hong Kong’s destiny more than all Chinese nationals” which concluded that Hong Kong could not have a revolution because “Hong Kong is not a country.”²⁹⁴ Beyond rhetoric, China’s deterritorialization of the Kowloon Walled City also shows that Hong Kong has become a major site of cultural governance initiatives which hope to solidify a shared national identity between Hongkongers and mainland Chinese.

Shapiro’s work on cultural governance, specifically his attention on artistic productions rather than state initiatives, also provides a useful lens for considering the ways in which China has been encouraging “symbolic production aimed at forging homogenous national cultures.”²⁹⁵ In recent decades, the Ministry of Propaganda has sponsored the production of movies, music, and digital media. One of the most popular of these films is *Hero* (2002) by the prominent mainland Chinese director Zhang Yimou which, at that time, was the most expensive and highest-grossing film in Chinese history.²⁹⁶ The cast, crew, and producers of *Hero* were overtly selected to bring together mainland Chinese and Hongkongese artists to symbolize the unity of the two territories, starring famous mainland Chinese actors Jet Li, Ziyi Zhang, and Chen Daoming with Hongkongese actors Tony Leung, Maggie Cheung, and Donnie Yen. The film

²⁹³ “Xi Jinping’s Remarks to the Press.”

²⁹⁴ Ping, “没有人比全体中国人更关心香港的前途命运 (Nobody Cares about Hong Kong’s Destiny More than All Chinese Nationals).”

²⁹⁵ Shapiro, *Methods and Nations*, ix.

²⁹⁶ Zhang, *Hero*.

score was written by Tan Dun, the same composer who had written the major symphony for the Hong Kong Handover Ceremonies in 1997. *Hero* is set during the Warring States period and its plot revolves around the unification of China by the Qin Emperor. An assassin, Nameless (Jet Li), originally plans to kill the King of Qin (Chen Daoming) by defeating three other assassins to gain his trust. After presenting the three assassins' weapons to the King and recounting how he defeated each, the King figures out that the nameless assassin had only defeated the three other assassins by convincing them to sacrifice themselves so he could get close enough to use a special deadly technique on the King.

In one scene, for example, the assassin Broken Sword (Tony Leung) decides to sacrifice himself for Nameless' plan after being confronted about not killing the King when he had the chance three years earlier. Broken Sword responds by using his weapon to draw “天下,” the characters for tianxia, in the sand signaling his desire for a unified and peaceful state. After hearing this story, the King no longer fears the assassin and tosses his own sword to Nameless. Instead of killing the King, Nameless is converted from enemy to friend and realizes that individuals must sometimes sacrifice themselves for their kingdom and the greater good. The King understands that unifying the nation requires him to enforce the law, and so he reluctantly orders Nameless to be executed, but the film ends with Nameless receiving a hero's funeral. Some critics have argued that “the ulterior meaning of the film was the triumph of security and stability over liberty analogous to the ‘Asian Values’ concept that gained brief popularity in the 1990s”²⁹⁷ while others likened Zhang and *Hero* to Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* (1965).²⁹⁸ However, there is a strong resonance between *Hero*'s final scene

²⁹⁷ Ebert, “Hero.”

²⁹⁸ Hoberman, “Man With No Name Tells a Story of Heroics, Color Coordination”; Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*.

and the patriotic tourists married in Sansha. The closing text of *Hero* explains that “The King of Qin went on to conquer all six Kingdoms and unite the country... This was more than two thousand years ago. But even now when the Chinese speak of their country they call it Our Land.”²⁹⁹ By making a popular film with famous actors from both Hong Kong and China, conflating the alternative meanings of *tianxia* as “all under heaven” and “the world” with “our land,” *Hero* encourages people on the mainland, Hong Kong, the disputed territories, and Chinese diaspora communities to think of themselves as members of the nation the Qin Emperor founded and “Greater China” (*Dazhongguo*).

This chapter began with an analysis of how the Chinese territorial assemblage’s capacities of territorial division have been reconfigured by the administrative hierarchy as new capacities for increasing bureaucratic management of China’s economy and disciplining territories into conformity with the central government’s current economic development plan or security interests. I then described how the decision to promote Sansha to a prefecture-level city in the administrative hierarchy does not conform to the criteria of a city in Chinese and Anglo-European terms but is an effort by China to territorialize the South China Sea and control access to its resources. I labeled Sansha a “tacky territory” because of its continual incompleteness as China continues to build it up with sand dredged from the ocean floor and its simultaneous erosion by force of the South China Sea’s water flows, and for China’s crude attempt to use international legal conventions to claim ownership over the region as Chinese territorial waters. Finally, I argued that China’s building of the Sansha Yinglong Cinema and sponsorship of films like *Hero* contribute new capacities of cultural governance to the Chinese territorial assemblage.

²⁹⁹ Zhang, *Hero*.

The capacity of cultural products like films and tourism to hold the mainland, Hong Kong, and Sansha together as members of Greater China. Tianxia cultural governance also gives China new capacities for managing territories that are far beyond the territorial divisions of the administrative hierarchy. As the Chinese economy continues to grow and the U.S. economy continues to be hobbled by the 2008 financial crash, Chinese companies have been buying Hollywood production companies, studios, and theaters. For example, the Chinese real estate and entertainment conglomerate Dalian Wanda Group recently bought Legendary Entertainment studio, and the American theater chain AMC Entertainment and Europe's largest theater company Odeon & UCI. Hunan Television, the PRC-owned broadcaster from Mao's home province, has made massive investments in the Lionsgate Entertainment Corporation.³⁰⁰

Chinese companies have been especially interested in supporting science fiction films where China can play a prominent role in the future. China's biggest e-commerce platform and gaming company, Alibaba and Tencent, provided the funding for popular franchises like the latest *Mission: Impossible* and *Star Trek* films. The effects of tianxia cultural governance can be seen in directing and casting decisions, as well as in the content of these artistic and popular productions. *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016) was directed and starred by Jiang Wen along with *Hero's* Donnie Yen.³⁰¹ After Simon Pegg received funding for his *Star Trek: Beyond* (2016) script from Huahua Media and Alibaba Pictures, the producers hired Taiwanese director Justin Lin for the film.³⁰² When Matt Damon's character is stranded on Mars in Ridley Scott's *The Martian* (2015), he was saved only after NASA failed and the China National Space

³⁰⁰ Hamedy, "Lionsgate Finalizes Deal with China's Hunan TV."

³⁰¹ Edwards, *Rogue One*.

³⁰² Lin, *Star Trek*.

Administration took over organizing his rescue mission.³⁰³ In Zhejiang province, the Hengdian World Studios built the world's largest outdoor film studio and has a larger budget and daily shooting capacity than Paramount and Universal studios combined.³⁰⁴ The name of the studio varies between "Chinawood" for Anglo-European media³⁰⁵ and the "Great Heng Kingdom" in China,³⁰⁶ but the head of the Hengdian Group unambiguously declares that the goal of China's increasing investments in the global film industry is to "sell Chinese culture to the world."³⁰⁷ China may never incorporate Taiwan as its 23rd province or successfully control the South China Sea with artificial islands, but tianxia cultural governance film projects have only begun to reassemble mainlanders, Hongkongese, Taiwanese, and other diaspora communities into a Greater China.

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³⁰³ Scott, *The Martian*.

³⁰⁴ Yang, "中国好莱坞：横店影视城 (China's Hollywood: Hengdian Movie City)."

³⁰⁵ Montefiore, "Is 'Chinawood' the New Hollywood?"

³⁰⁶ Sun, "Dream Factory."

³⁰⁷ Xu, "Dongyang Municipal People's Political Consultative Conference of the Federation of Industry and Commerce and the 'Introduction of Hengdian Urban Integration Engine.'"

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Conclusion:

“China”

It is the shared aspiration of all Chinese people and in the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation to safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and realize China's complete reunification. In front of the great national interests and the tide of history, any actions and tricks to split China are doomed to fail. They are certain to meet with the people's condemnation and the punishment by history. The Chinese people have the resolve, the confidence, and the ability to defeat secessionist attempts in any form! The Chinese people and the Chinese nation share a common belief that it is never allowed and it is absolutely impossible to separate any inch of territory of our great country from China!

—President Xi's Reelection Speech, March 2018³⁰⁸

The effort of this dissertation was to examine the development of Chinese territoriality in ancient and modern times, and reconfigurations of Chinese territoriality following the reform and opening up era of the 1980s to the present. An organizing theme in the Chinese and Anglo-European IR literature has been that China is undergoing epochal economic and imperialist transformations which signal either a “peaceful rise”³⁰⁹ or a “new hegemony.”³¹⁰ Patriotic Chinese scholars and critical Anglo-European IR researchers trace these transformations through the official CCP slogans of PRC leaders from Deng Xiaoping's “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and Jiang Zemin's “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” to Hu Jintao's

³⁰⁸ Hongguang Lan, trans., “Speech Delivered by Xi Jinping at the First Session of the 13th NPC,” *China Daily Hong Kong*, March 21, 2018, <https://www.chinadailyhk.com/articles/184/187/127/1521628772832.html>.

³⁰⁹ Tingyang Zhao, *天下体系：世界制度哲学导论* (*The Tianxia System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of World Institution*) (Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 2011).

³¹⁰ William A. Callahan, “Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-Hegemonic or a New Hegemony?,” *International Studies Review* 10 (December 1, 2008): 749–61, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2008.00830.x>.

“harmonious society” and Xi Jinping’s “China Dream” or most recently “One Belt, One Road.” China is indeed becoming more economically powerful and increasingly imperialistic, but if the changes to China are foundational, these two processes and the PRC slogans only capture part of the transformation. As the most formalized institution of Chinese territorialization, the administrative hierarchy is undergoing radical changes in its critical components of territorial governance. A critical understanding of changes to Chinese territoriality must contend with the complexities of local identities, capacities of governance, and institutionalization of the administrative hierarchy as the units around which so much territoriality has been organized over several centuries. The Chinese state has been a major site of transformation, even when it seems to be a rigidly constructed authoritarian monolith and contradicts its commitment to Marxist-Leninist communism.

I began this project with a critique of the strong vs. weak categorizations of state power which have become their own kind of organizing logics for IR researchers and practitioners. Throughout this project, I have argued that we cannot understand Chinese territoriality by confining our study to the stated intentions of political leaders without concluding, as Tok does, that territorial disputes are simply patriotic assertions of China’s right of naming.³¹¹ Similarly, searching for evidence that policies have resulted in their stated objectives leads too many researchers like Preston into normative judgments over the success or failure of “one country, two systems”³¹² without considering how specific “failure” might succeed in preventing Hong Kong’s domestic independence and restrict Taiwan’s international autonomy. Instead, the goal of

³¹¹ Sow Keat Tok, *Managing China’s Sovereignty in Hong Kong and Taiwan*, Critical Studies of the Asia Pacific Series (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 172.

³¹² Peter W. Preston, *The Politics of China-Hong Kong Relations: Living With Distant Masters* (Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016).

this project was to apply assemblage thinking to describe China's past and current expressions of territoriality and indicate where China sees its future place in the world.

This dissertation is shot through with history, but it is not a history of the Chinese state. My analytic inroads are made into specific events when established configurations of Chinese territoriality were disturbed. Sometimes these events directly involved the formal mechanisms of state governance, like the PRC's requisitioning of administrative hierarchy capacities to promote territories as a means of territorializing the South China Sea. At other times, these events included the complex interactions between states such as the development of tributary relationships to reinforce tianxia territoriality or the collaboration with British colonial administrators to demolish the Kowloon Walled City. Other changes to Chinese territoriality might involve state representatives but were conditioned by accidents. The most notable example here is the mistranslation of "Crown Leases" as "New Territories" during the meeting between MacLehose and Deng as the trigger for China's reterritorialization of Hong Kong. The result is a series of detailed excavations of a few historical moments which are critical in revealing the processes by which Chinese territoriality gets assembled and then partly disassembled.

Exploring current transformations of Chinese territoriality through the lens of assemblage thinking allowed me to avoid privileging the new and undeniable rise of China as a global economic and political force. Even new arrangements that are an extreme instance of a novel territorial assemblage like the production of artificial island territories in the South China Sea described in Chapter 3 depend on recently invented dredging technologies and capacities derived partly from older assemblages like the territorial divisions of the Qin dynasty. Similarly, China's construction of coastal infrastructure for countries like Sri Lanka depends on capacities developed by Guangzhou to build the deep-water port in Panyu. While China's capacities to

make loans like the USD\$1.3billion it gave to Sri Lanka for the project is new, forcing Sri Lanka to sign a 99-year lease for its southern port of Hambantota shows how far some of the British colonial capacities for controlling the New Territories have been incorporated into the Chinese territorial assemblage.³¹³

The chapters of this dissertation are primarily concerning with the ways China has proven to be a remarkably durable and flexible assemblage. However, because China operates as an assemblage, its control over territories is never complete and often generates resistance. Social and geographical resistance to the Chinese territorial assemblage can be as simple as former residents defying China's attempt to erase the alternative community of the Kowloon Walled City by meeting at the Park that replaced it and offering visitors what Shapiro calls a "counter-script" to the PRC's narrative of Hong Kong's "return" to Greater China.³¹⁴ In other cases, China's management of its territorial assemblages has condition the possibility for desperate forces and institutions to congeal into new counter-assemblages. After Hong Kong residents began feeling the effects of the 2008 U.S. economic collapse, residents organized their opposition to global finance and neoliberal governance using anti-imperial strategies developed earlier against British rule. However, where earlier movements like the 1925 Guangzhou–Hong Kong general strike discussed in Chapter 2 involved boycotting British goods and companies, these new protests also incorporated capacities for resisting global finance and neoliberal governance.

³¹³ Kai Schultz, "Sri Lanka, Struggling With Debt, Hands a Major Port to China," *The New York Times*, December 12, 2017, sec. Asia Pacific, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/12/world/asia/sri-lanka-china-port.html>.

³¹⁴ Shapiro, *Methods and Nations*, 54.

Aided by new social media and mobile phone technologies, protestors assembled the “leaderless” and “horizontal” organizations of Occupy Wall Street protests, the Green Movement in Iran, and Sunflower Student Movement in Taiwan into the 2011 “Occupy Central” protests. The High Court finally issued an injunction against the protestors and police eventually cleared the protestor encampments but Occupy Central became one of the lengthiest Occupy movements in the world.³¹⁵ Then, in 2014, the CCP proposed reforming the Hong Kong’s electoral system by forming a nominating committee to replace the 1200-member Election Committee set out by the Basic Law. The reform would effectively allow the CCP to pre-select two or three candidates for Chief Executive before the election and give Beijing additional confirmation powers over the election results.³¹⁶ Activists reassembled most of the horizontal organizational and democratic capacities of Occupy Central, except this time Joshua Wong, Nathan Law, Alex Chow served as nominal leaders and spokespersons for the movement. Participants also employed umbrellas to shield themselves from the tear gas and pepper spray police had used to disperse the crowd outside the HSBC headquarters two years earlier. The incorporation of umbrellas made the anti-Chinese territorial assemblage more resilient, but the movement fell apart after Wong, Law, Chow and other leaders were finally arrested by the Hong Kong police.³¹⁷ China was eventually able to dissolve the anti-PRC Occupy movements in 2011 and 2014. However, given the continuing economic and political unrest in Hong Kong, combined with the ability of organizers to quickly reassemble these capacities of resistance, it should not be surprising to find a new, perhaps even larger and durable, Occupy Central movement in Hong Kong soon.

³¹⁵ Yuen, LCQ 21: Injunctions.

³¹⁶ Tai, “今日信報-- 公民抗命的最大殺傷力武器 (Civil Disobedience’s Deadliest Weapon).”

³¹⁷ Buckley and Wong, “3 Hong Kong Protest Leaders Turn Themselves In.”

In addition to social movements, several territories have also been organized to resist Chinese territoriality. James Scott has detailed the methods peoples living in the high altitudes of Yunan, Guizhou, Guanxi, and Sichuan provinces, in addition to the Central Highlands of Vietnam and northeastern India, have used to resist incorporation into states in general, and the Chinese state in particular.³¹⁸ Scott recounts strategies such as farmers resisting the tax collector by growing potatoes as opposed to rice or wheat so that any visiting state official interested in assessing or collecting a portion of farm yields would have to dig up the produce themselves. Scott also considered peoples choosing to live in, or actively terraform, territories that are difficult for states to govern including “low, wet places—marshes, swamps, fens, bogs, moors, deltas, mangrove coasts, and complex waterways and archipelagoes...as [well as] high mountain redoubts.”³¹⁹

This dissertation project has described Chinese territoriality as an assemblage in part to escape the state-centric approaches to international relations, but future research projects might also apply assemblage thinking methods to expand upon Scott’s analysis of these “state-resistant topographies” in China. Future research projects could similarly take my approach to assemblage thinking and uncover how the tianxia, tributary, colonial, and cultural governance capacities I have isolated in this study contribute to China’s territorial arrangements with the mainland autonomous regions. My study of the ways China has incorporated British methods like collaborating with local Hong Kong elites or China’s deterritorialization of Taiwan with a *fleet in being* strategy has only scratched the surface of the colonial and prophylactic independence capacities China has developed to manage Tibet, Xinjiang, Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, and

³¹⁸ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

³¹⁹ Scott, 169.

Ningxia. This project's analysis of Chinese and British collaboration to replace the Kowloon Walled City with a Yangtze-style Qing garden and increasing influence over the global film industry as an emerging capacity of tianxia cultural governance could also be used to make sense of China's massive \$8 trillion "One Belt and One Road Initiative" to revive the ancient Silk Road.³²⁰ Isolating the powerful capabilities present in large-scale national and geopolitical movements, as this dissertation has done, makes it possible for IR scholars to capture the unseen work and abstract processes assembling a heterogeneous array of territories into "China."

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³²⁰ Yu, "Motivation behind China's 'One Belt, One Road' Initiatives and Establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank."

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