Judith Butler has explained that “identities are formed within contemporary political arrangements in relation to certain requirements of the liberal state.” Within this framework, Butler argues, “the assertion of rights and claims to entitlement can only be made on the basis of a singular and injured identity.” (Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 100).

Identity, in other words, is invariably a demand for inclusion addressed to the state that solidifies subjects of victimization. When identity claims are moved to an international, interstate context, one might ask, to whom are they addressed? Is victim nationalism the only possible form of identity available in an international arena? When Taiwanese identity is disambiguated from Chinese identity, to what state(s) is this demand addressed?

If “identity” is a part of real, lived experience, it is equally true that “identity” itself is an abstraction, one that hides and, in a sense, fetishizes the social relations that constitute it – just like the state and capital. This is why Wendy Brown argues that, “what we have come to call identity politics is partly dependent upon the demise of a critique of capitalism and of bourgeois cultural and economic values.” (Wendy Brown, “Wounded Attachments,” *Political Theory*, Vol. 21, No. 3, August 1993, p. 394). How can we think social relations beyond the theological abstractions of identity, capital, and the state?

To pose this question is also to interrogate the conditions that sustain an “ongoing ‘deep colonizing’ in Taiwanese political discourse” (Yayut Yi-Shiuan Chen, Da-Wei Kuan, Sandie Suchet-Pearson, and Richard Howitt, “Decolonizing property in Taiwan: Challenging hegemonic constructions of property,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 0:0, 2018, p. 2) based on the historical expropriation of indigenous land and the on-going, contemporary negation of indigenous free title in the name of the protection of private property enshrined in the ROC constitution.

Within Taiwan, Taiwanese identity often functions today in the way that Stuart Hall described populism in 1988: “By ‘populism’ I mean something more than the ability to secure electoral support for a political programme, a quality all politicians must possess. I mean the project, central to the politics of Thatcherism, to ground neo-liberal policies directly in an appeal to ‘the people’; to root them in the essentialist categories of commonsense experience and practical moralism—and thus to construct, not simply awaken, classes, groups and interests into a particular definition of ‘the people’.” (Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal*, London: Verso, 1981, p. 71).

Following Jose Esteban Muñoz, we might inquire into the way that individuals and groups within this populist construction practice *disidentification*. “Disidentification is meant to be descriptive
of the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship.” (José Esteban Munoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, Minneapolis & London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1999, 4).

Another avenue of approach might be to explain how disidentification works not in relation to minority populations but in relation to those communities normally assumed to be part of the majority. In the sense described by Sergei Prozorov, it is one’s subtraction from one’s identity or ‘place in the world’ that enables one to discern the wrongs of the world in question and venture to set them right via a complex negotiation of singularity and universalism. (Sergei Prozorov, *Theory of the Political Subject*, London & New York: Routledge, 2013).

Throughout the period after the end of the Pacific War, Taiwan was a place where the identity as a general concept was largely suspended. Following democratization after 1987, identity quickly assumed a place as an ethical imperative and the history of Taiwanese identity was written around a logic of historical continuity, homogeneity, and predetermined ethnic categories. While the previous forms of suspended identity certainly could be seen as an effect of political repression under martial law, the resolution of suspension suppressed in turn the potential for experimentation and freedom against the biopolitical constraints of identity conceived of as property.

We would like to open up the discussion about Taiwanese identity to something that is less normative and more experimental. Contributions from young scholars are particularly welcome. For those who would like to contribute but cannot write productively in English, the guest editors may extend translational assistance.

**HOW TO SUBMIT**

Please send abstracts to:  
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Deadlines:  
Abstract submission: **November 1, 2020.**  
Full paper submission: March 31, 2021.  
Final revision: June 30, 2021.

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