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Ethnic Structure in Taiwan

Taiwan is a settlers' society like Canada, United States, Australia, and New Zealand where the Indigenous Peoples had resided here since time immemorial before settlers began arriving at the island four centuries ago,. From discovery, conquest, to settlement by the "others," they still had gradually retreated to remote areas or to accept cultural assimilation. The state, seeking to become a modern nation-state, is playing a two-level game (Fig. 1).

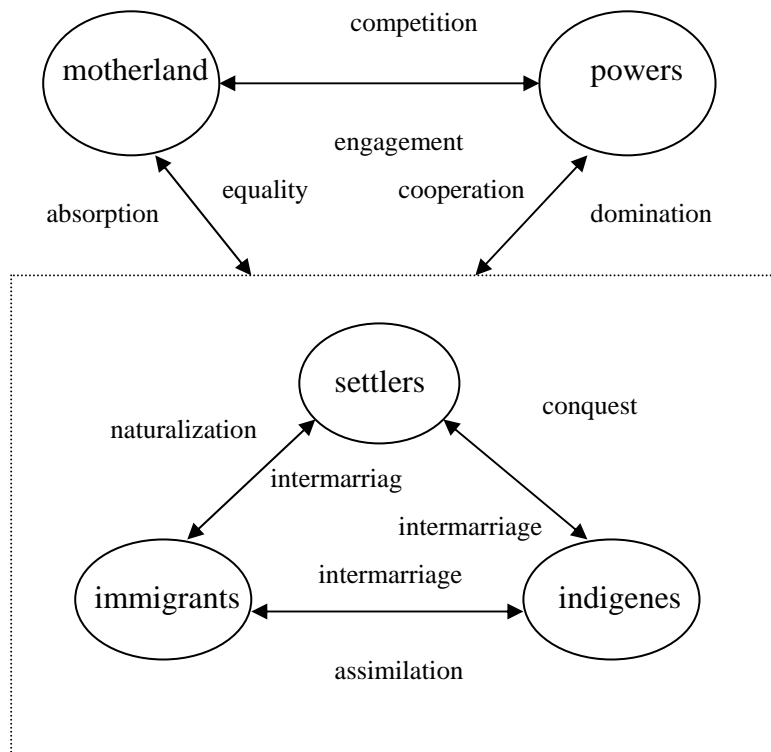


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework for a Settler Society

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On the one hand, it has to resist forceful absorption by its motherland, China, and domination by neighboring power; on the other hand, it has to strike a balance among settlers, indigenes, and later-coming immigrants. Basically, it is a three-pronged task: state-making in the sense of securing sovereignty, nation-building in terms of forging common national identity, and state-building in the process of institutional engineering.

Nowadays, it is generally agreed that there are four major ethnic groups in Taiwan (Fig. 2): Indigenous Peoples (原住民族), Mainlanders (外省人), Hakkas (客家), and Holos. While the former are of Austronesian stock, the latter three are descendants of those Han refugees-migrants-settlers of Mongolian race who sailed from China as early as 400 years ago. Ethnic competitions would be found mainly along three configurations: Indigenous Peoples vs. Hans (漢人) (Mainlanders + Hakkas + Holos), Hakkas vs. Holos, and Mainlanders vs. Natives (本地人) (Indigenous Peoples + Hakkas + Holos).

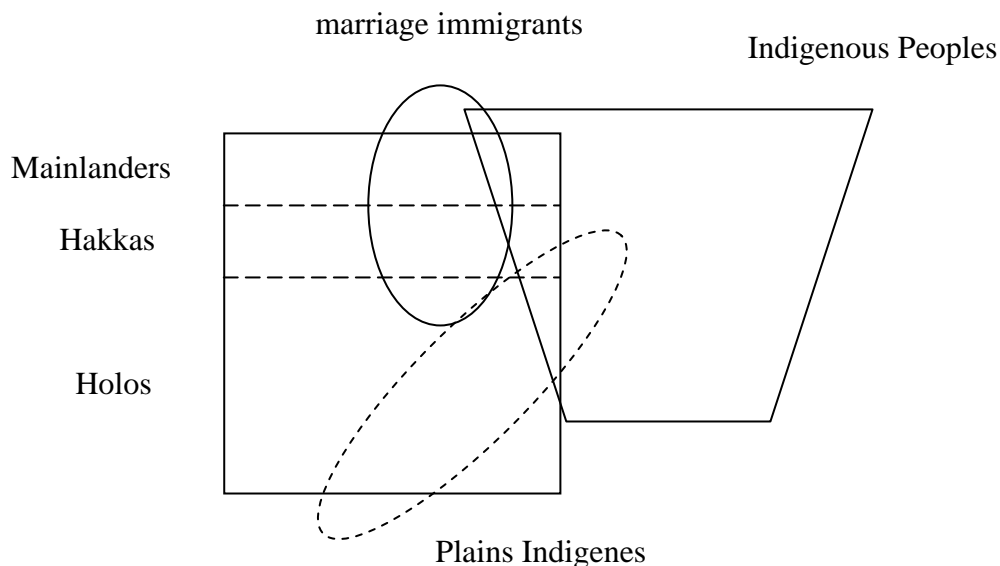


Fig. 2: Ethnic Structure of Taiwan

For the past two decades, the number of marriage immigrants from Southeast Asian countries and China has surpassed that of the Indigenous Peoples: yet, it is not

clear whether they would constitute a new ethnic group against the Natives. Finally, there is a reclaiming collective identity of Plains Indigenes (平埔族), who had almost lost their indigenous characteristics in the 1930s. In the old days, they had chosen to Sincize themselves and become “human beings” in order to avoid systemic discrimination from the Han society. In essence, these peoples, most of whom most of them are not officially recognized as indigenes by the government, are actually *Mestizos* who have so far disguised themselves as *Creoles*.

Protecting Indigenous Rights

As of 2010 May, the Indigenous population of Taiwan is 507,690, constituting roughly 2.2% of the total population of Taiwan. These Taiwanese Indigenes belong to 14 officially recognized “Indigenous Peoples,” including Amis, Atayal, Bunun, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saisiyat, Sakizaya, Sediq, Thao, Truku, Tsou, and Yami.

In the past two decades, the Indigenous Movement in Taiwan, based on the idea of inherent indigenous rights (Fig. 3), has focused on three interlocked goals: the right to be indigenes, self-rule, and land rights. First of all, being the Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan, they claim that they are not merely ethnic minorities but indigenes who deserve their rights enshrined in international laws. Secondly, while arguing that Indigenous Peoples have never renounced their sovereignty seized by the aliens, Indigenous elites insist that indigenous lands dispossessed a century ago be returned to the Indigenous Peoples. Finally, buttressed by the idea of self-determination, they demand the establishment of ethnic/national self-governments in place of the present-day local administrative units. It is believed that only self-rule without being patronized can lead to true autonomy where the Indigenous Peoples can decide what the best is for themselves. To certain degree, the government seems to realize that

protecting indigenous rights is a gesture of reconciliation.

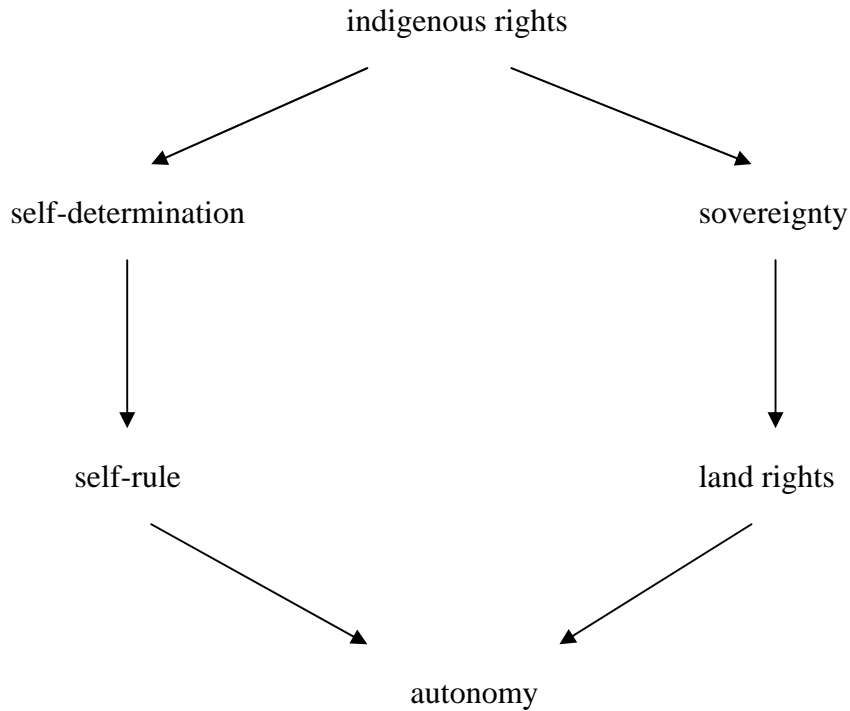


Fig. 3: From Indigenous Rights to Autonomy

Logically, there are three plausible options when Indigenous Peoples exercise their rights to self-determination: to accept assimilation, to maintain self-government, and to seek independence. As a series of alien rulers had in the past sought at all costs to assimilate Plains Indigenes in western Taiwan, only those Indigenous Peoples who have been geographically segregated in central mountain areas and eastern Taiwan are lucky enough to retain their cultural identities. Enlightened by the spirit of multiculturalism, more and more Indigenous Peoples are proud to express their distinguished characteristics. Nonetheless, they are still divided over the rationality of upholding self-governments (Fig. 4).

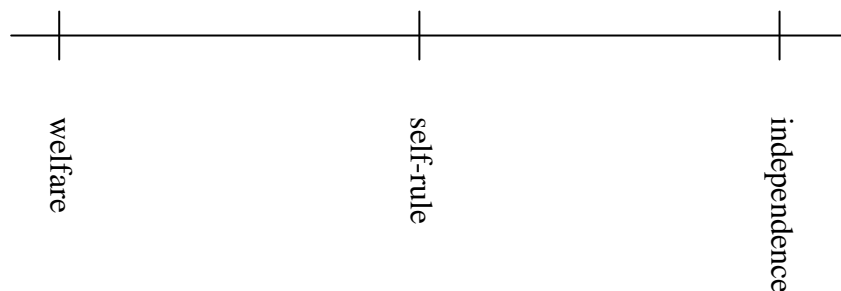


Fig. 4: Options for Self-determination

While some, for fear of being discriminated against, suspect the wisdom to resist further assimilation, some more, judging from the fact that non-indigenous peoples have only exploitation on their minds, both economic development and social welfare assured by the government are the only guarantee for collective progress. In the latter's view, therefore, the abstract principle of self-determination and the remote goal of self-rule are nothing but futile illusions. On the extreme of the spectrum, few indigenous elites have claimed that only political independence can lead to genuine salvation, even though no serious effort has been made to promote its materialization. As a result, self-government turns out to be a pragmatic compromise: while reserving their right for claiming independence, indigenous leaders would see how the government is willing to prevent indigenous governments from being empty shells.

So far, several versions of the *Indigenous Self-Government Bill* have been drafted. Bill A, while excessively detailed in light of Continental Laws, was drafted by experts on local government and fashioned after the *Local Institution Law*, in the spirit that the authority of the indigenous government is delegated by the central government. It was later replaced by Bill B after been stalled during the process of cross-ministry reviews, in the hope that this simplified version would be a model of procedural law for future drafting of a separate autonomous statute, read "treaty," between each indigenous people and the central government. Tactically speaking, it was purposefully calculated that this reduced bill would ease the painstaking process of lawmaking. However, after some heated deliberations in the Legislative Yuan, the DPP (Democratic Progressive Party, 民主進步黨) government was forced to withdraw the bill as indigenous legislators complained that no adequate indigenous rights had been guaranteed in the bill. It was forcefully insisted that some itemized list of substantive indigenous rights, especially financial support in certain proportions

to the annual national budget, be specifically designated in the bill. Otherwise, it was contested that the bill-in-principle was nothing but an undisguised hoax to deprive the Indigenous Peoples of their dues.

The most fundamental issue raised is whether the idea of indigenous sovereignty is compatible with the existing state's indivisible sovereignty. In other words, it is suspected that how sovereignty is to be shared by the Indigenous Peoples and the state. It is also doubted whether it would challenge the territorial integrity of the state if the Indigenous Peoples choose to exercise their right to self-determination and declare outright independence. Some even argue that the Indigenous Peoples have never possessed any right to the lands except the right to exploitation. Others have gone so far so to dismiss the whole notion of indigenous rights. Strongest resistances come from the Bureau of Forest Services, the National Park Services, and the Bureau of Water Resources, whose jurisdictions largely overlap with the designated areas for indigenous self-governments, particularly the former two. While daring not to speak out openly, some DPP politicians even suggested that the emperor's new clothes be thrown into closet as a responsible ruling party, implying that those promises to court indigenous voters are nothing but empty electoral rhetoric during presidential campaigns.

Engulfed in the disillusioned clouds, an *Indigenous Fundamental Law* was unexpectedly passed by the outgoing legislators in 2005. Praised as the Indigenous Constitution, the law may be considered as a *de facto* treaty between the Indigenous People and the state. Essentially a synthesis of abstract principles and concrete protections of indigenous rights, the law requires concerned ministries and agencies to revise their relevant laws and statutes in its conformity in three years. Last but not least, it attaches a sting that there shall be a separate chapter for the Indigenous Peoples in the intended *Bill of Rights*. So far, nothing has materialized owing to

resistance from other agencies within the government.

Eventually, the final battleground is found in the appropriation of lands for indigenous self-governments. Under Article 2 of the *Indigenous Basic Law*, two relevant terms are defined: “Indigenous Areas” means those ancestral areas traditionally occupied by Indigenous Peoples and sanctioned by the government; and “Indigenous Lands” stands for traditional lands occupied by the Indigenous Peoples and current lands nominally reserved for them. Since these two are conceptually distinct, we may thus delineate three possible relationships in terms of Venn Diagrams (Fig. 5).

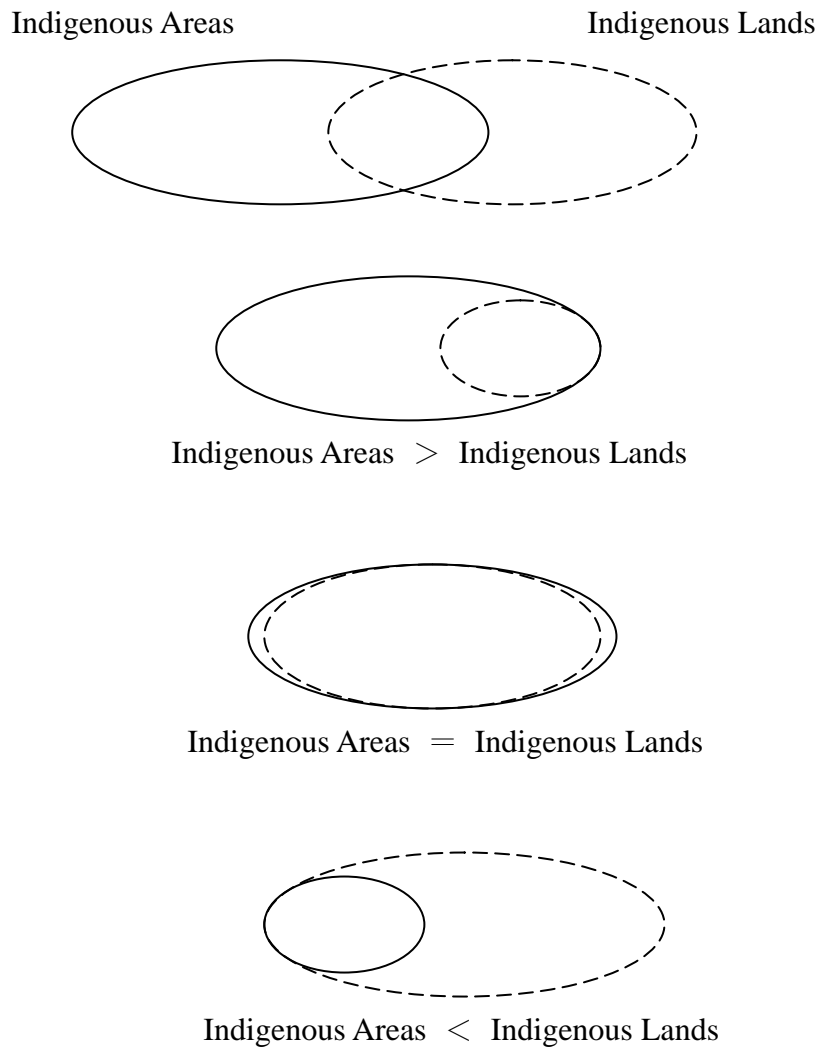


Fig. 5: Competing Domains for Indigenous Autonomy

Since the end of World War II, the government has confined the so-called “Indigenous Areas” into 55 townships, among which 30 are designated as “Mountain Indigenous Townships,” and 25 “Plains Indigenous Townships.” For most ministries and agencies concerned, especially the Bureau of Forest Services and, to a less degree, the National Park Services, this administrative arrangement is definite without any doubt. In other words, the “Indigenous Lands” lie within the limits of the “Indigenous Areas.” This defensive interpretation makes them anxiously calculate how many lands they would be forced to release to Indigenous Peoples in case any self-governments come into existence. In their contemplation, the best strategy is to retain the ongoing system of token monetary compensation without their jurisdictions over indigenous land being taken away. In the meantime, they also keep close eyes on the proposed mechanisms for co-management on indigenous lands confiscated for public utilities.

However, for the Council for Indigenous Peoples (CIP), which is currently undertaking to survey traditional lands that had once been utilized by the Indigenous Peoples in the past, there is no reason why the boundaries of these old administrative units cannot be subject to any adjustments. According to the maps of traditional territories drawn according to oral narratives so far, some Indigenous Peoples have claimed that their tribal lands extend beyond the highly restricted “Indigenous Areas.” Therefore, even though the so-called “Indigenous Lands” stipulated in the *Indigenous Basic Law* have not been designated, they are expected to cover the whole “Indigenous Areas.”

For an indigenous self-government to work effectively with an eye to protect indigenous rights, three aspects are crucial for meaningful institutional designs: authority, efficiency, and representativeness (Fig. 6). First of all, to be truly autonomous, political authority of the indigenous government must find its place in

the Constitution. Otherwise, its uniqueness as a manifestation of inherent indigenous rights would run the risk of being compromised, if not nullified, by a legislature dominated by non-indigenes. Secondly, there are also debates over whether there shall be one indigenous government only, one self-government for each Indigenous People, or as many tribal governments as possible. Since not all Indigenous Peoples are opt for self-rule, at least in the short run, a pan-indigenous self-government, even a confederation in the loosest sense, seems impractical. While tribal governments appear to be the best model to express grassroots participation for direct democracy, caution should be made against possible low economy of scale.

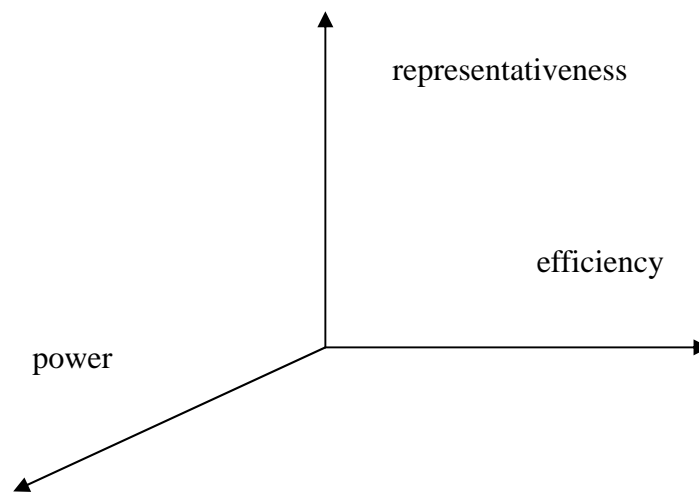


Fig. 6: Three Dimensions of Indigenous Self-rule Bodies

Finally, there have been conflicting views over what institutional arrangements to represent the Indigenous Peoples (Fig. 7). It appears that the goal of sufficient representation may at times contradict that of efficiency. Ideally, there would be one tribal council for each tribe with and without self-government. As a result, depending on the definition of tribe, it is estimated that there would be roughly 250 tribal councils. While retaining their autonomy, these tribal councils are expected to forge some forms of coalition along cultural lines in order to bargain with the

government. Depending on different patterns of tribal organizations, whether scattered or concentrated, these processes of internal integration warrant some cautious procedures. Thirdly, there have some suggestions that a second chamber be established in the national legislative body. This amounts to bestow a right of minority veto to the Indigenous Peoples. It is not clear if the ‘mainstream’ of society is ready to embrace this Lijphartian consociational mechanism. Finally, indigenous leaders have persistently put forward to the formation of a pan-indigenous assembly fashioned after the Assembly of First Nations in Canada. It is hoped that this representative body may select a grand chief who is co-equal with the President so that the idea of “nation to nation” relation may be formally embodied.

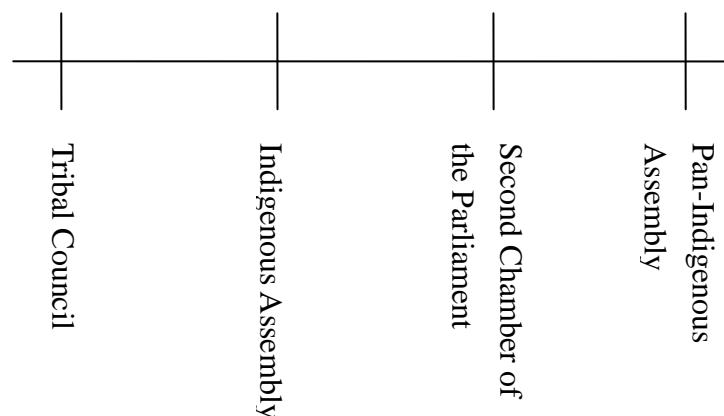


Fig. 7: Forms of Indigenous Assembly

After the KMT (Kuomintang, literally Chinese Nationalist Party, 中國國民黨) was returned to power in the 2008 presidential elections, indigenous policy has changed gears from the framework of protecting indigenous rights to that of offering welfare, and from partnership to tutelage. During the Presidential campaigns in 2008, Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), with unknown reservations, promised to experiment with indigenous self-rule. So far, the Truku (Taroko) People have pressed for the establishment most enthusiastically.

Under direct order from the Premier’s office, the *Indigenous Self-Government*

Bill has been drastically revised by the Council for Indigenous Peoples in order to appease other branches of the government. Basically, the would-be indigenous governments would be administrative units under the CIP within the framework of the *Local Institution Act* rather than autonomous ones with quipped with executive, legislative, and judicial powers. Neither is revenue-sharing capacity at the county level provided for as envisioned by indigenous elites. Most disappointing of all, there is no land reserved for indigenous governments. Finally, some articles are smuggled in to sabotage the *Indigenous Fundamental law*, including the requirement of indigenous consents for developing indigenous lands and resources, and that of co-management. Last but not least important, rampant verbal abuses against Indigenous Peoples by officials are not uncommonly found, including President Ma himself, who once asked them to behave as human being.

Linguistic Feuds between the Holo and the Hakkas

Owing to the official proscription by the Ching Court, the waves of Hakka immigrations had been less than those of the Holo. As later-comers to the island, they had fought fiercely with the Holo over lands and resources and had been forced to migrate to the fringe hills until the 19th century. Over the years, those Hakkas who had survived in enclaves in Holo-dominated areas had inescapably been assimilated and known as the Holonized Hakkas (福佬客). In the past century, the Hakka language was further devastated by the Official Language Policy imposed by the Japanese colonial and the Nationalist authoritarian governments. Even though formal restrictions have largely been relaxed during the course of democratization in the past two decades, the Hakkas still have to face the encroachment by both Mandarin and Holo hegemonies.

Nowadays, in addition to the urban areas, where job opportunities in the

government are much abundant, the Hakkas are mainly found in their homeland in the current Taoyuan (桃園), Hsinchu (新竹), and Miaoli (苗栗) Counties and Liodue (六堆) in the south. Manifested as Mandarin or Holo speakers, those urban Hakkas have to carefully conceal their won cultural expressions, particularly the use of Hakka in public. Since languages are not only instruments of communication but also carriers of cultures, the Hakkas, imagined collectively as an ethnic minority, have been threatened by the horrible inevitability of eventual linguistic and cultural genocide. Concurrent with the rise of the Indigenous Movement in the wake of political liberalization, the alienated Hakka elites, long concerned with the gradual demise of their mother tongue, started the Hakka Movement in the 1980s. A “New Hakka Identity” was been espoused for cultural and political mobilizations. Taking to the streets, they forged a convenient alliance with the DDP then in the opposition.

Immediately after the DPP won the presidential election in 2000, a *Law Pertaining to Equal Protection of Languages in Mass Transportation* was promulgated, stipulating that both announcements in Holo and Hakka be made in addition to that in Mandarin, and thus heralded the acceptance of the Hakka in public spheres. The inauguration of the cabinet-level Council for the Hakkas in 2001 further testified to the official recognition of the existence of the Hakkas by the state. A *Language Equality Bill*, pushed back and forth between the Ministry of Education and the Council for Cultural Affairs, finally found its way to the Legislative Yuan. This Hakka aspiration was eventually thwarted by the then opposition parties under the awkward divided government. Meanwhile, their effort to have a special chapter reserved for the Hakkas in the intended New Taiwan Constitution proved to be illusive after the KMT retook the regime.

Under the pressure of Hakka voters, the current KMT government, with suspicious eyes, allowed a *Hakka Fundamental Law* passed in 2010. Since the law

has been deprived of its substantive components originally formulated in the DPP rein and thus appears declaratory in essence, it has been criticized as an empty shell. For instance, the mandatory annual Hakka administrative conference can be organized without any legal stipulation. Similarly, the promise to promote Hakka as the “Official Affairs Language” in Hakka areas only demands the civil servants at the local levels to improve their Hakka proficiency. No official enforcement seems forthcoming. The only fresh introduction is to add a Hakka affairs category in National Civil Servant Examinations. Nonetheless, the practice is not resumed after its pilot examination in 2011, probably due to the reluctance of governments, from the center, through the county, to the local, to release their vacant positions.

The linguistic feuds between the Hakkas and the Holos, their significant other, turn out to remain in the political arena. While no ethnic groups dare to speak against the spirit of multiculturalism contained in the Constitutional Amendments, no consensus has been reached as to how this goal is to be attained. While the former DPP government would recognize the use of mother tongue as a fundamental human right and support some forms of bilingualism, the KMT appears resolute to keep the domination of Mandarin with native languages relegated as mosaic decorations. In concrete terms, the DPP would support a landscape with multiple national languages, token or not, the KMT prefers a Mandarin-only one. Nevertheless, it is noted that not all Hakkas welcome the prospect of a multi-linguistic scheme. Some have gone so far as to suspect that beneath its surface is the conspiracy of the Holos to eliminate the Hakka language in the guise of multilingualism. In their view, it may be a better strategy to protect themselves by retaining Mandarin as the lingua franca. Also, some elites have expressed the disapproval of the idea of the Hakkas being an ethnic minority in order to claim their rights protection.

Finally, the historical animosity between the Hakkas and the Holos has taken its

modern form in terms of how their groups and languages are termed. While the Hakkas would call themselves and their language as Hakka, the Holos are used to those as Taiwanese (Taiwanese people and Taiwanese language respectively). In Hakka’s eyes, this appropriation is tantamount to Holo monopoly of the term Taiwanese, and thus symbolizes the intolerable Holo arrogance, if not chauvinism. However, on the part of the Holos, they have naturally called themselves as such for a long time without any hesitation among themselves or protest from others until recently. Moreover, as the Hakkas would not generally name themselves Taiwanese in everyday life, it seems unfair for them to forbid the Holos to retain the term.

In general, the Hakkas have a long history of hailing their neighbors as Holojin (福佬, Foolau in Mandarin), pejoratively meaning “those guys from the Province of Fujian.” It is thus not welcome by the Holos. Secondly, the Nationalist government has quasi-officially designated the term “Min-nan” (閩南) in order to remind the Holos of their origins in southern parts of the Province of Fujian and to dilute and undermine their attachment to Taiwan. This practice also serves to relegate Taiwanese to the status of dialect rather than that of language. To the extreme, some would embrace the fantastic name “Her-luo” (河洛), so that they may trace their distant origins even in the Yellow River in China proper and thus prove their authentic Han-Chinese lineage. We may thus arrive at a spectrum of the Hakkas’ preference over the Holos and their language (Fig. 8).

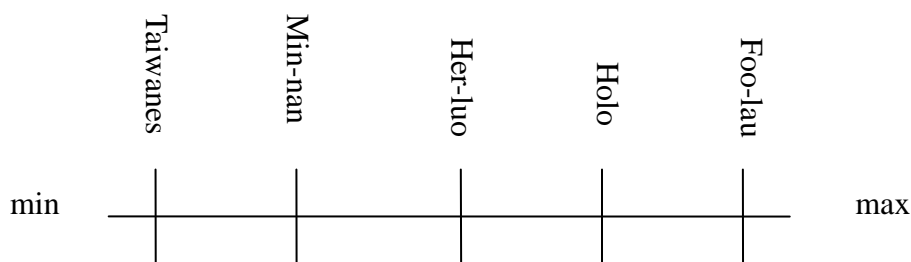


Fig. 8: : Preference of the Hakkas over the Holos’ Name

During the process of drafting the *Language Equality Bill* under the auspice of the Ministry of Education, members within the Board of National Language Promotion disputed over the official naming for the Holo and their language. First of all, they distasted the idea of an imagined purebred Han-Chinese under the newly coined term “Her-luo.” Further, the politically correct and yet bizarre “Min-nan” was likewise discarded given the fact that there exist some Mainlanders in Taiwan and numerous overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia who also speak the similar language but have disparate national identities. In addition, since “Foolau” in Mandarin carries some negative ethnic connotations, it is equally unacceptable. Apparently, “Taiwanese” would be the most preferred one if not for the opposition from the Hakkas. Finally, the Romanized “Holo” turned out to be the second best compromise (Fig. 9).

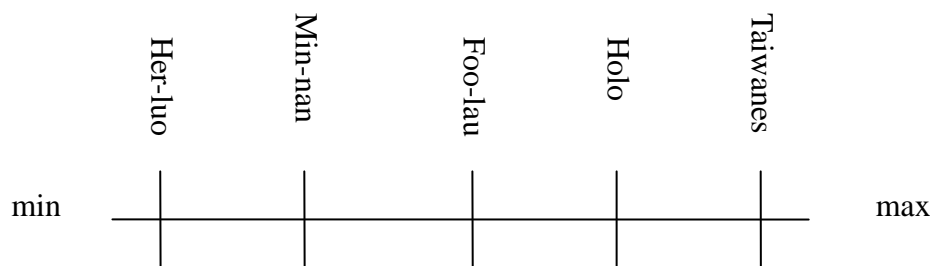


Fig. 9: Preference of the Holo’s Self-naming

If we aggregate the two preferences, we may have the following continuum: Holo = Foo-lau > Taiwanese > Min-nan = Her-luo. Further, if we honor the preference of the Holo, that is Holo > Foo-lau, and Min-nan > Her-luo, we have the optimal preference: Holo > Foo-lau > Taiwanese > Min-nan > Her-luo. In pursuit of ethnic harmony, some Holo activists have exhibited willingness to renounce the group name Taiwanese and substitute it with Holo. However, if this reconciliation is continuously ridiculed by other groups, linguistic disputes are here to stay.

Contending National Identities

On the one hand, the Mainlanders are mainly descendents of those followers of the late Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石), KMT expatriates, and political refugees who fled to Taiwan after their defeat by the Chinese Communists (CCP, 中國共產黨) in 1949. Furthermore, caught in the middle of the protracted disputes between Taiwan and China (People's Republic of China, PRC, 中華人民共和國) over the sovereignty of this island state, these two ethnic groups have thus far expressed different degrees of sentimental attachment to Taiwan and to China. On the other hand, the Natives are to a large degree descendents of earlier voluntary Han settlers, and have in the main considered themselves Native Taiwanese and recognized Taiwan as their motherland. A collective Natives identity had developed gradually in the process of land settlement and in the common experience of subordination to discrimination imposed by subsequent waves of alien rulers. For the Natives, the island is their homeland, where their ancestors, determined to settle their home there, had fought with the Indigenous Peoples, and resisted waves of alien rulers. If they were forced back to Mainland China, their near relatives would not be located.

Politically, ethnic cleavages between the Natives and the Mainlanders have been mainly represented in their disparate national identities. While the Natives would identify themselves as Taiwanese but not Chinese, and are more sympathetic to the cause of Taiwan Independence, the Mainlanders tend to self-style themselves as Chinese rather than Taiwanese and are inclined to rally behind a pro-unification stance. Nonetheless, the majority of Taiwanese residents would consider themselves either as “Taiwanese and Chinese as well” or “Chinese and Taiwanese as well” (Figure 10). Of course, it may be claimed that most residents of Taiwan consider themselves as Taiwanese, even though in different degrees.

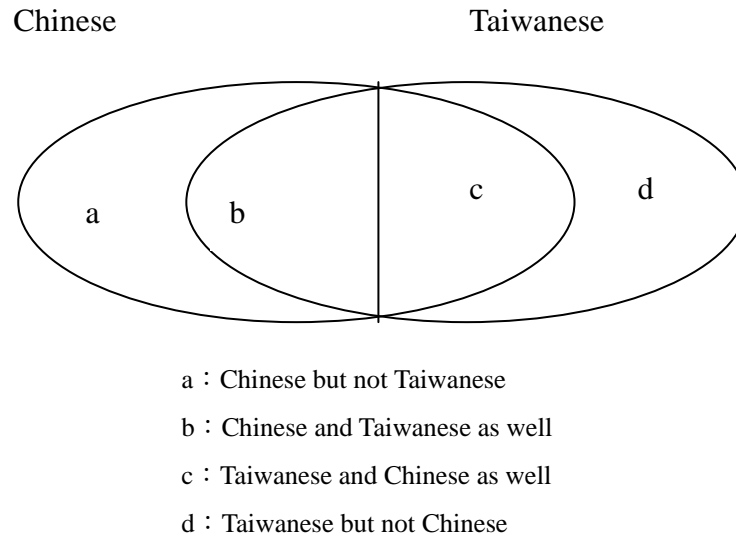


Figure 10: Taiwanese Identities

It is noted that both of the terms “Chinese” and “Taiwanese” are not only vague but ambiguous also. In everyday life, Chinese may connote racial Han people, cultural *Hua-zen* (華人), or political *Chong-guo-zen* (中國人). Even though it is generally recognized that political Chinese means nationals/citizens of the People’s Republic of China, the government of Taiwan, under the official state name of the “Republic of China,” would indoctrinate the Taiwanese to deem themselves as *Chong-guo-zen* without offering any confirming definition. It is no wonder that the passport of Taiwan only prints “Republic of China” on its cover.

While the term Taiwanese has long been intentionally relegated as a regional one, it is traditionally reserved for the Holo. Only recently have some Mainlanders begun to call themselves Taiwanese, especially after they uncomfortably discovered that they had been treated as “Taiwanese compatriots” (*Tai-bau/Tai-wan-tong-bau*, 台胞/台灣同胞) by the Chinese. In ambivalence, they seem determined to retain the identity of “Chinese from Taiwan” as the government appears satisfied with the quasi-official state name “Republic of China on Taiwan.”

Leaving aside internal security threats resulting from uncertain national identity, the Taiwanese have yet to face the choice of eventual relations with China in short of

its military threats from time to time. Between the extreme of outright independence and that of full unification under a unitary system, a whole spectrum of political integration has been proposed (Fig. 11).

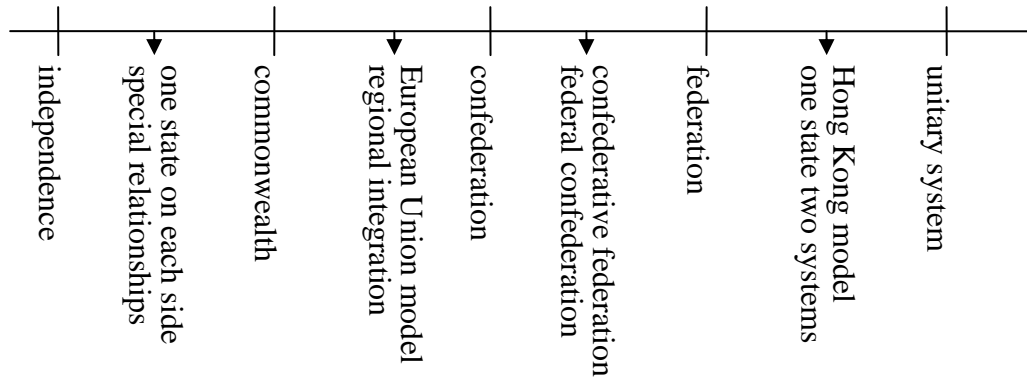


Figure 11: Political Formulas with China

After the 1995-96 missile crises, more and more Taiwanese would welcome a *de jure* independent Republic of Taiwan free from China’s labyrinth if China promises to hand off Taiwan. Close to this position is former President Lee Teng-hui’s (李登輝) “Two States Discourse” (兩國論) which claims that “cross-strait relations as a state-to-state relationship or at least a special [*sui generis*] state-to-state relationship.”

Next to this posture is former DPP President Chen Shui-bian’s (陳水扁) purposefully vague “New Center Line” (新中間路線). At one occasion when speaking to a pro-independence audience through satellite transmission, the seemingly undaunted president proclaimed that there is “One State on Each Side” of the Strait of Taiwan (一邊一國論), probably to protect the base of his most staunch supporters. However, at another point, in order to appease China, he went so far as to pledged to embark on economic and cultural integrations with China, and to seek for a framework for perpetual peace and eventual political integration across the Strait of Taiwan; and hence the so-called “Integration Discourse” (統合論). It would be fair to state that what Chen has in mind is a kind of Chinese Commonweal made up of

two “Two Chinese States” (兩個華人國家), opting for institutionalized separation.

On the other end of the continuum, only those few true believers of Chinese irredentism would embrace outright union with China, whether under “One State-Two System formula (一國兩制, or Hong Kong model) or unitary system. Even though federation, confederative federation, and federal confederation have been proposed by pro-China politicians and scholars, the nearest stand is “Two States in One Chinese Nation/Cultural China” espoused by some Chinese loyalists in the KMT. What they envision is eventual unification between Taiwan and China, generally known as “Germany Model”. However, sensible policy strategists in the KMT would only venture out the *idée* of a confederation composed of the PRC and the ROC. Finally, James Soong (宋楚瑜) of the People First Party (PFP, 親民黨) imitating the experience of the European Union, has so far cautiously proposed a “Roof Discourse” (屋頂論). While literally preaching an image of two families under one roof, it is not clear whether he suggest an eventual federation, confederation, or simply commonwealth. What they share is a desire to design certain *modus operandi* in order to obtain eventual association of China and Taiwan in whatever formulas.

If military threat is too provocative and national appeal is too latent to provide Chinese any immediate satisfaction in the direction toward political association between China and Taiwan, meanwhile, a more discursive and yet effective approach has been launched lunched on Taiwanese businessmen in China, that is, “Bullying Officials with Civilians” (以民逼官), “Pressing Politicians with Businessmen” (以商逼政), and “Promoting Unification with Three Links” (以通促統).

On this economic front, Idealism/Neo-Liberalism has its say on policy recommendations. A related preference is “Westward Policy [to China]” (大膽西進) in the spirit of functionalism, understood as a ramification of the Idealism/Liberalism camp. Inspired by the development of integration in West Europe, its proponents

have preached that trade and economic cooperation with China may eventually be conducive to the ease of political rivalry and military conflict between Taiwan and its Chinese adversary. Nonetheless, the cleavages between the two are not confined to territorial disputes only. Underneath Chinese hostility toward Taiwan is its violent opposition toward Taiwan's legitimate existence in the international society, which is not going to pass into oblivion because of economic exchanges. In addition, as there have existed enormous socio-economic disparities and disproportion in territorial size between Taiwan and China, disparate from those between France and Germany, any vulgar analogy is bound to shut one's eyes to the issue of vulnerability resulting from Taiwan's economic dependency on China.

Diametrically different are the prescriptions offered by Realists/Neo-Realists. Wary of economic security on Taiwan's part, former President Lee Ten-hui (李登輝) espouses a Neo-mercantilist economic policy toward China, "Restraining Hasty Investment [in China]" (戒急用忍). Given the fact that China the only country in the world that has openly waged military threat against Taiwan, Lee's purposeful selection of trade restraints is understandable. Nevertheless, the DPP government finally adjusted its thus far protective economic stance toward China from "Moving Westwards [to China] While Strengthening the [economic] Base [in Taiwan]" (強本西進) to "Actively Liberalizing [economic interactions with China]" (積極開放) in the name of adjustments to globalization, probably under the ceaseless pressure from Taiwanese businessmen who expect to gain from direct links with China. While denouncing the *Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement* (ECFA) between Taiwan and China, it is not clear how the opposition DPP's stance on economic integration is different from the ruling KMT. Of course, some, apprehended by the conception of Neo-functionalism, have gone so far as to expect the eventual goal of political unification with China as a result of deepened economic integration.

To be fair, what seems to strike the Mainlanders most is the fear that their group identity may be suppressed rather than any negative impacts that might result from an independent Republic of Taiwan. Still, few proponents of Taiwanese Independence have persistently resorted to ethnic nationalism and thus marginalized the Mainlanders as a group. By conflating national and ethnic identity, vulgar Taiwanese nationalism would take the form of racial or/and linguistic exclusiveness and render disentangling overlapping cleavages unmanageable.

In balance, the residents of Taiwan, whether the Natives or the Mainlanders, have been engulfed in the intersection of a culturally and racially defined Chinese national identity and a politically defined Taiwanese state identity. These differences are unfortunately intertwined and reinforced with ethnic distinctions and thus competitions, especially during elections. It seems intractable to disentangle the two recursive causal links between ethnic and national identities.

Resurging Plains Indigenes

There are some eight “Plains Indigenous Peoples” (Pin-Pu Tribes), who have lost their indigenous status after the War: the Babuza, the Hoanya, the Ketagalan, the Makattao, the Pazeh, the Papora, the Siraya, and the Taokas. While the Siraya and the Makattao, along with the above mentioned Kavalan, may be found in the east coast, the rest scatter around the great plains of the west.

At the first glance, the Plains Indigenes seem to have enjoyed both the identity of the Han People and that of the Indigenous ones as they stand strategically between these two peoples (Fig. 12). While only very few Plains Indigenes are lucky enough to be accorded indigenous status, the great majority of them have lost their ones. In reality, they are neither Han nor Indigenous enough to be accepted and trusted as bats are nothing but mammals that can fly.

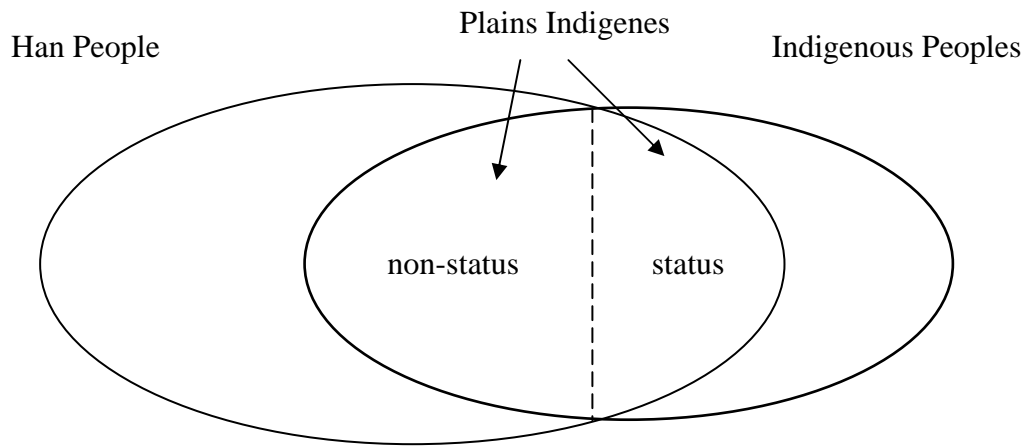


Fig. 12: Status of the Plains Indigenes

Recognized or not recognized by the government, all of these peoples share the same Austronesian stock both ethnically and linguistically. Nonetheless, the Taiwanese government has so far adamantly refused to accept the latter's attempts to register themselves as Indigenous Peoples. While the sympathetic Tainan County government has been enthusiastic to undertake the registration for the Siraya People under its jurisdiction, the cabinet-level Council for Indigenous Peoples has collaborated with the Ministry of Internal Affairs to block the efforts, which has prompted the former to sue the latter for administrative negligence. Meanwhile, the frustrated Taiwan Association for Rights Advancement of Pingpu Plain Aborigine Peoples (TARA-Pingpu), led by the Pazeh, recently filed a complaint to Professor James Anaya, the United Nations Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People, who is said to have accepted the case.

Whether politically motivated or not, the Tainan County government seems determined to help the Siraya recovering their Indigenous status deprived by the Nationalist Government. In 2006, it established the Siraya Indigenous Affairs Commission. Efforts have been made to encourage the tribesmen to be enrolled. Before the war, the Japanese would mark either "cooked" (熟, civilized) or "plains"

(埔) on the racial category of the residential records. Similar practice was made by census-takers. According to the Civil Affairs Bureau of the county government, there were 20,248 residents with the racial marks with 5,788 still alive.

As a famous native legend goes “There is only Han grandfather but no Han grandmother, the folk wisdom expresses the fact that most of the earlier Han settlers must have come to Taiwan along and thus had no choice but to take the Plains Indigenous women as wife. As a result, except those who himself migrated to Taiwan after the war and their offspring, that is, the Mainlanders, most citizens of Taiwan must have at least some Plains Indigenous blood.

Originally, this matriarchal assertion is intended to distance the Taiwanese from the Chinese by resorting to seemingly biological reasoning. However, it becomes alarming to some at the CIP as they have to guard against the prospect of competition over limited resources available to those who enjoy the status of being indigenous. It is thus legitimate for them to suspect how “authentic” those Plains Indigenes’ “indigenous” identities are and how “sincere” those kinsmen want to become indigenous, especially if the Plains Indigenes outnumber the status-Indigenes. More bluntly, the status of being indigenous, conferred by the government, stands for welfares as well as indigenous rights. In other words, it is strongly suspected that Plains Indigenes may have had a hidden agenda to grab political power and/or economic interests disguised as reclaiming cultural identity and social status.

In order to enlist sufficient support in their cause so that the CIP would provide for a new legal definition with flexible indicators to embrace them, the Plains Indigenes need to represent their own collective identity to those already enrolled. In other words, they need to make their own self-identity, the recognition by others, and the legal definition converged (Fig. 13).

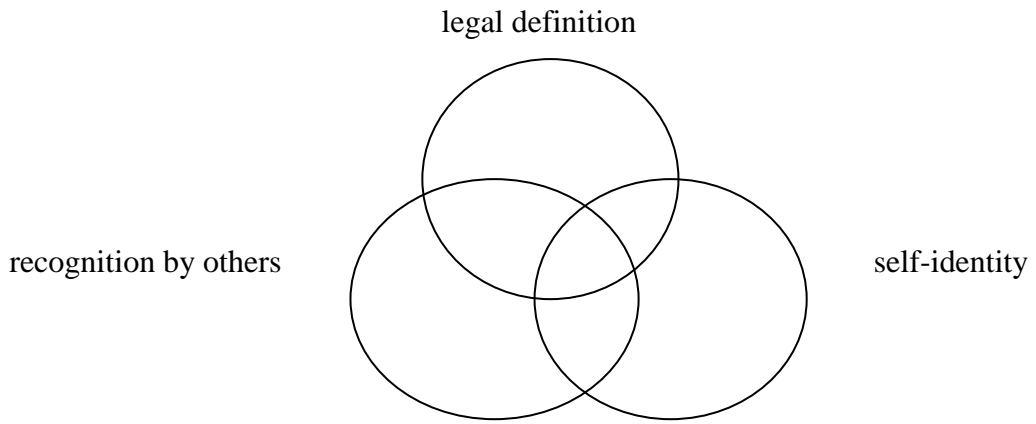


Fig. 13: Self-identity, Recognition by Others, and Legal Definition

There is no denying that Plains Indigenes have intermarried with the Han Peoples over the past four hundred years and thus are endowed with, if not diluted by, Han culture. Neither is the fact that they are Indigenes refutable. The only thing that matter is how they consider themselves. When two peoples encounter, four ideal types of collective identity may have developed: maintenance, acculturation, merger, and multiculturalism (Fig. 14).

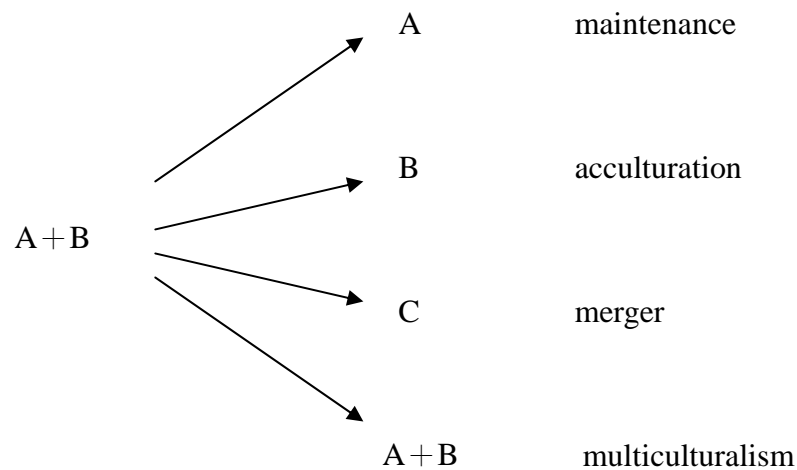


Fig. 14: Development of Identity after Encounters

While the CIP reckons that they have been converted into the Han People, the Plains Indigenes would insist that they have largely retain their subjective identity

even though they may have lost most their objective characteristics. Some may want to explore the possibility that there may have been a new conglomerate identity has come into existence as the Métis in Canada. Finally, there may be some compromised identity in need of definition and yet in a position to embrace both Indigenous and Han identities simultaneously without jeopardizing each other.

So far, only 1,218 Plains Kavalan are enrolled as indigenes in the official list. The Kavalan tribesmen in Hualien County had in the past cloaked themselves as Amis after their unsuccessful uprisings against the Ching government in the late 19th century. They have only regained their tribal name in recent years. In other words, it appears that they have possessed indigenous before their tribe is recognized by the government.

We have cumulated an array of reasons, ostensible and hidden, to explain why the Plains Indigenes have yet failed to regain their indigenous status. First of all, the CIP maintains that the Plains Indigenes need to have their tribes acknowledged by the government before they can reclaim their individual status. Secondly, The CIP would retort that the Plains Indigenes are too “un-indigenous” (too human?) to be considered as indigenous. Thirdly, the CIP disputes that since the window opportunity offered by the government in the mid-1950s was lost, the Plains Indigenes are not entitled to a second chance to make the application. The most critical test to morality is whether Plains Indigenes are condoned and entitled to indigenous status if they had dared not come out to admit indigenous identity and register their indigenous status when they were forced to accept assimilation under circumstances of negative socialization. In fact, only until recent years do status Indigenes would admit their indigenous identity to their non-indigenous neighbors or coworkers after the Constitution was amended to enshrine multiculturalism.

Marriage Immigrants as a New Ethnic Group

A word on marriage immigrants is in order here. Although there is no formal policy on immigration in Taiwan, there have been 450,000 mail order brides from Southeast Asian Countries (mainly Vietnam, Cambodia, and Indonesia) and China in the past 20 years. By and large, the recent immigrants would like to be included as soon as possible. However, the wary parents-in-law may be disturbed by the envisagement that their anxiously assimilated daughter-in-law might escape from the family and disappear into the society. Also, since the receiving families generally enjoy relatively low social-economic status, the mothers of the “New Taiwanese Sons” (新台灣之子) have yet to overcome tremendous social stigmatization. For instance, some primary school teachers are said to despise pupils with inter-racial parents, assuming that their mothers have been purchased overseas. Only white immigrant mothers, such as those from Ukraine, fare better as if light skin pigments seem to enjoy a higher standard of intelligence. Apparently, Han ethnocentrism appears to still play a significant role in everyday ethnic engagements.

Intended or unintended, racism still constitutes the invisible barrier for marriage immigrants to overcome in the process of becoming Taiwanese.

While some politicians are hasty to propose that a new ethnic group has come into existence, it is doubtful whether any such group solidarity has been merged given the fact that there have dissimilar national origins. In addition, Chinese spouses are jealous of the trust that their Southeastern counterparts has so far enjoyed. As we recall, except the Indigenous Peoples, the other three ethnic groups are all descendants of earlier waves of immigrants before and after the War. Empathy is needed. In a minimum, the protection of their human rights should be promoted by the state, including their cultural rights.

Conclusions

In the past two decades, ethnic structure in Taiwan has evolved from a bipolar competition between the Natives and the mainlanders into a multi-polar configuration. While ethnic animosity in violent forms may have lost its political attraction, at least in public, ethnic cleavages are still lingering and resisting to fade away. Clothed in the rhetoric of multiculturalism, this is basically a Han-centered society, where the Indigenous Peoples are still destined to perpetual marginalization. Among the three Han ethnic groups, only temporary political coalitions have so far been sought; and no serious efforts to construct robust frames of ethnic engagements have been made. White Taiwan is eager to seek external reconciliations with China, it is strange that no genuine endeavors for ethnic peace have been witnessed.