

# **Continuing Academic Colonialism and the Resistance from Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Taiwan\***

**Cheng-Feng Shih**

**Professor, Department of Indigenous Development and Social Work  
National Dong Hwa University, Shou-Feng, Hualien, Taiwan**

**Pei-Ing Wu**

**Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics  
National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan**

.....Are we really so unconfident as to believe that whatever imported are good? All my efforts these years, despised though, have been intended for the benefits of our students. The academics here have long shares a myth: "If you are really that good, get your fame abroad first. Otherwise, only those who lack international perspective are apt to boast that their work is aimed for building the academic base domestically."

Pei-Ing Wu (2009)

If Eastern social scientists had not read the latest articles on mathematical modelling in Western journals, Western social scientists assumed that their Eastern counterparts were too primitive to understand the techniques. Had the Westerners understood the conditions of research in the region, they might have drawn the more sensible conclusion that Eastern library budgets could not permit the purchase of the huge range of journals at Western prices, and it would be hard without such library facilities keep up with the literature in the West. And if the Easterners had managed to reinvent from scratch a technique available in the West, such research accomplishments were looked down upon for failing to be original. If East European social scientists could not run fancy models on their personal computers at home to keep up with their Western counterparts, the Westerners assumed that the Easterners could not do the work, instead of concluding that perhaps computers with such power and software were not widely available to cash-strapped researchers of the East. If East European social scientists claimed original ideas in the research processes, particularly if the ideas emphasized the differences or historical peculiarities of particular countries in the region. Westerners assumed that the Easterners did not understand Western models that require generalizing about all these "small countries." If Easterners revealed their generally superior knowledge of the history of social and political thought, the history of the region, or the markers of contemporary culture. Westerners wondered where their hypotheses were.

György Csepeli, Antal Örkény, and Kim Lane Scheppele (1996: 497-98)

## **Academic Colonialism**

If we agree the cliché that "knowledge is power," knowledge has been enlisted as instrument for domination, control, and even oppression both within and across the borders. This pattern of academic configurations is especially recognizable in those distributions of knowledge where hierarchic relations are embedded.

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According to the classification by Iris Marion Young (1990: 48-63), there are five facets of oppression, including exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. In this context, imperialism signifies how colonist states<sup>1</sup> employed political, economic, and cultural means to reach the goal of accumulating capital, or to dominate colonies (Summer, 2008: 80-83; Smith, 1999: 20-25). In formality, it is true that the operation of imperialism may not necessarily entail the formation of colonies. In other others, imperialism embodies colonialism.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, in actual pursuit of substantive domination, both tangible and intangible carrots and sticks can be summoned. We may therefore say that imperialism and colonialism are synonyms. As a result, we would like to treat academic colonialism, variously known as academic imperialism or intellectual colonialism,<sup>3</sup> as nothing but one chain of cultural imperialism.

Academic colonialism stands for how states occupying the center, in unfair academic division-of-labor at the global level where knowledge is produced, transmitted, and ordered, have successfully coerced scholars located in the peripheral states to accept their dominated relations in thoughts and ideas by standardizing, institutionalizing, and socializing academic disciplines (Alatas, 2003; Heilbron, et al., 2008; Lander, 2000; Friedman, 1965). In the past, the empires would utilize colonization for waging direct control. Nowadays, when most former colonies have obtain their formal independence, the former can still resort to academic dependency implanted on the minds of the academics in the latter so that indirect control is no less useful. Right now, colonists/ex-colonists wield whips or ropes since these tamed, if not intimidated, scholars are used to those master-and-slave associations. Some most internalized ones have gone so far as to enjoy the imposed relations. Accordingly, Alatas

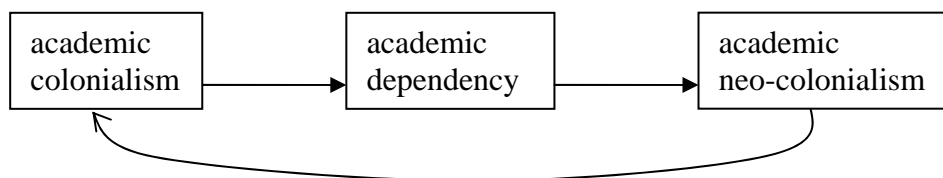
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<sup>1</sup> We are reluctant to use “advanced states” or confine it to “Western states.”

<sup>2</sup> According to Smith (1999: 21), colonialism is nothing but one expression of imperialism.

<sup>3</sup> Gosovic (2000) would rather calls it “intellectual hegemony.”

(2003: 602) terms it academic neo-imperialism or academic neo-colonialism. We may this vicious circle in Figure 1:



**Figure 1: The Formation of Academic Colonialism**

Within this academic colonialism, scholars in the center of knowledge, such as the United State, the United Kingdom, or France,<sup>4</sup> may enjoy the following advantages: (1) producing enormous mounts of research outputs in the forms of journal articles, academic books, or research reports, (2) transmitting thoughts and information through these media, (3) influencing scholars in other countries by promoting academic consumption, and (4) enjoying over-proportionally prestigious status domestically and internationally (Alatas, 2003: 602).

On the other hand, native scholars in knowledge-dependent states have to ask for endorsement by “foreign monks” no mater in research agenda-settings, definitions of research problems, applications of methods, or selections of scientific indicators. Psychologically, these scholars are not only passive or inactive. More fundamental is their deep complex of inferiority, which makes them refrain from exercising any autonomous thinking. For those who are relatively more aggressive, the best strategy is to edge themselves closer to the inner circle of the academic network (Alatas, 2003: 603).

In contrast to natural sciences, social sciences have their common origin in solving relationships among human beings. Therefore, there are by nature sensitive to cultural

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<sup>4</sup> Alatas (2003: 606) would list social sciences in Australia, Japan, the Netherland, and Germany as semi-peripheral states since academic dependency there may not be so severe while they may not so far have significant academic contribution. In other words, compared t the former, they may not have shown scholarly originality. And yet, in terms of providing for generous research grants, post-doctoral research positions, and organizing international conferences, they have made headway over those in the Third World.

differences between states. To a no less degree, cultural sensitivity is demanded in handling researches on scientific problems pertaining to different ethnic groups within any single country. Similarly, since there are inescapably paramount differences in norms resulting from cultural boundaries between indigenous and non-indigenous societies, much more imaginary tolerance is required in order to create multicultural spaces within the academic community domestically. If those senior professors in social sciences, who control the access to tenure and promotion, fail to possess any minimum cultural sensitivity and insist on employ one-size-fits-all indicators while impatient and reluctant to listen to those seemingly heretic views uphold by junior indigenous scholars, academic seeds can never be rooted within the indigenous community. As a result, those few indigenous scholars, as stranded in the time machine, are destined to be caught in the middle of well-established traditional fields of studies, such as anthropology and sociology, and an interdisciplinary area of indigenous studies.

As Jack D. Forbes (1998: 14) puts it: Enslaved minds won't operate effectively. If human minds are designed for only accepting whatever the colonists have decreed, no intelligentsia is about to come to existence. In their forever struggle for spiritual decolonization, indigenous scholars, knowing that they are run the risk of being rejected, marginalized, or silenced, are reluctant to yield their own personal identity to professional acceptance. They thus put forward the idea of "intellectual sovereignty,"<sup>5</sup> in the hope that they may reclaim their own lead in knowledge interpretations, including agenda-setting, problem definitions, framework constructions, theory makings, method selections and paradigm adoptions. The goal is quite unmistakable: the development of an indigenous intelligentsia within a hostile non-indigenous academic society (Warrior, 1992; Forbes, 1998;

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<sup>5</sup> Forbes (1998: 14) has such similar terms as "intellectual self-determination" and "intellectual autonomy." Deloria (1998) also treats "intellectual self-determination" and "intellectual sovereignty" as synonyms.

Deloria, 1998; Smith, 1999; Rigney, 2001).

## Academic Brokerage in Taiwan<sup>6</sup>

Essentially, academic dependency is a type of encircling academic territories resembling to vertical division of labor, where the states in the center attempt to assure their knowledge domination by framing the thoughts, controlling publishing,<sup>7</sup> awarding degrees,<sup>8</sup> aiding researches,<sup>9</sup> investing in education, and transferring technologies. By forcefully dichotomizing the model of knowledge production into theorization vs. empiricism,<sup>10</sup> other states vs. natives,<sup>11</sup> and cross-national comparisons vs. case studies,<sup>12</sup> they have completed the subservience of those states in the periphery (Gareau, 1998; Alatas, 2003: 604-607).

In order to guarantee that original ideas must come from the center, measures to domesticate, if not, control the thoughts<sup>13</sup> of peripheral scholars are necessary. First of all, a board paradigmatic and theoretic circle is firmly drawn, so that those peripheral scholars know only how to mimic whatever originated from the center. Then, to entrench their eventually voluntary submission, various institutional mechanisms have to be constructed, such as acceptance of papers at international conferences or articles on journal. The very

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<sup>6</sup> Regarding similar dilemmas that social scientists have faced since the inception of democratization, Csepeliet al. (1996) use “acquired immune deficiency syndrome” (AIDS) to describe them. See also In (2006) for self-reflections of the Korean political scientist on their dependency.

<sup>7</sup> Include the publications of academic journals, books, and conference proceedings.

<sup>8</sup> In reality, the native graduate students may have advisers who received Ph.D. degrees overseas. Indirectly, they may be considered as having academic connections with the academic center. Consequently, when they meet the advisers of their advisers, they may likewise boast of their own prestige (Sumner, 2008: 84; Smith, 2008: 237). See Parmar (2002) on how American think tanks have constructed their knowledge networks internationally.

<sup>9</sup> For those peripheral states that emphasize quick utilitarian payoffs, especial economic development in the shortest run, financial endowments to humanities or social sciences are less desirable than to natural sciences and engineering, where instant contributions to national products (GNPs) are obviously warranted.

<sup>10</sup> At the first glance, it seems that works on theorization is much difficult and thus superior and “noble” than empirical ones. Devoted experts in the latter areas may give the evaluation differently, if not in the opposite. In terms of the adjustments of pure theories borrowed abroad, selections of operational indicators suitable for the local context, and collections of data domestically, it would be unfair to say that their contributions are less important.

<sup>11</sup> In other words, scholars from the center are capable of conducting researches in peripheral countries in addition to their own “advanced” one. On the other hand, scholars in the peripheries are only allowed to study their own societies. Basically, this is an one-way flow of knowledge.

<sup>12</sup> The masters in the center can rely on their disciples in the peripheries to collect data and carry out cross-national studies. On the other hand, the latter, being designated an instrumental role, are confined, at best, to the studies of their mother country.

<sup>13</sup> Include concepts, theories, models, and methods. See Alatas (2003: 608).

object is to make sure that no single dissent exit is allowed to exist. Finally, by accepting the few selective incentives provided for, these trapped in the imposed tall walls of knowledge would willingly and habitually accept whatever offered. In the words, Smith (2006: 65), this amounts to “paralyzing fatalism.”

Since this is basically a kind of patronage, the patrons will look after the clients while the latter has to show their loyalty to the former. As academic territories are considered “private reserves” (Gareau, 1998: 172), both the imports and the exports of knowledge have to be regulated by the latter, who are in essence cheap brokers of the first order in academia (Mignolo, 1993: 130). While they may be dignified as scholars par excellence domestically, these humble “intellectual other,” to borrow the words of Mignolo (1993: 123), turn pale and secondary when turning around and facing those supposedly polite and yet snobbish masters.<sup>14</sup>

Just as Taiwan has long been playing the role of manufacturing agents in world economics after World War II, so has the Taiwanese academia been unabashedly enjoying the status as academic solders of fortune in the production of knowledge. Since knowledge is deemed as precious imported goods, in order to solicit approval and endorsement from international masters, Taiwanese scholars have learned how to curry their favor in their efforts at indiscriminate implantations of knowledge. For some, it appears that getting hooked to international networks is imperative. Some tenured full professors would dwarf themselves as research assistants as they were in graduate schools decades ago, in the hope that they may be awarded exclusive franchise, for instance, some econometric models developed elsewhere.

For the native doctors, natively trained or awarded abroad, the fast track toward

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<sup>14</sup> If there are native scholars are dare to speak out their own voices, that is, with the so-called “subjectivity,” it would face the fate of being judged as too “subjective” (Mignolo, 1993: 123, 127).

successfully establishing international connections would be to attend the annual convention of traditional disciplines. In recent years, as some conferences have become the outlets for doctoral candidates and conference papers are accessible on-line, academic socialization tends to prevail over mutual academic enlightenments.

Generally speaking, international academic encounters would take the form of inviting masters in the field to deliver speeches, to offer a short course, or take a sabbatical leave in Taiwan. Step by step, one minimal goal envisioned by native scholars is to be listed, at least, as one co-author of articles on international journals. Becoming correspondent authors or first authors would be the next anxious goal. If possible, it would be delightful to be invited to sit on the editorial board of an international journal.

After frequent visits to the periphery, scholars from the center would automatically become experts on certain countries. It doesn't matter whether they understand native languages in terms of listening comprehension, speaking, reading or writing since there are abundant of local scholars, who are eager to claim exclusive knowledge representative, ready to serve as informants. For those internationally renowned masters, whose academic interpretations are considered free from any flaws, whatever native scholars have contributed can at best deserve a footnote. Usually, the latter's perspectives may just be neglected or, to the worst, silenced, perhaps in the convenient excuse that they are not written in English or simply denounced as inaccessible to those in the mainstream.

For the native scholars, it would be nice if are invited as visiting or exchanges scholars, so that there would be one more entry on the list of their current curriculum vitae. Especially for those who are locally trained, this credential may be highly helpful in their career planning. Academic dependency is thus gradually consolidated in this asymmetrical exchange of academic knowledge.



## **The Myth about SCI, SSCI, and A&HCI**

What are SCI (Science Citation Index), SSCI (Social Science Citation Index), and A&HCI (Art and Humanity Citation Index)? Those are three data banks developed by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), located in the United States under the auspice of the Thomson Scientific Corporate, to provide convenient indexes for the academic community. According to the latest listing, 7,922 journals are included in the SCI, 2,642 in the SSCI, and 1,414 in the A&HCI (Thomson Reuters, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). A great majority of the journals appearing on these indexes come from natural sciences, particularly medicines and sciences as they seem to share much more universal commonalities.

For the past decade, scholars and doctoral students in Taiwan have been besieged by a version of “publish or perish”: junior professors are encouraged to accumulate a certain number of articles in one of the three above mentioned indexes before they can move upwards, and graduate students are required submit papers to journals that are listed in any of the indexes before they may be awarded the doctoral degree. For those employed in government-run research institutes, performance is invariably evaluated on merits indicators largely composed of these magic I’s. It is not surprising that members on the reviewing board of the National Science Council would award grants to those who have successfully published their research outputs on journals crowned with the I.

These worship practices may seem ridiculous since those indexes are originally intended for easy access to articles located in the sea of knowledge. Now that they have become one the most important, if not the only, criterion for degree awarding, employment, and promotion, academic researches are frequently designed to expect quick harvests in terms of the number of the I’s. Of course, the aggregated I’s obtained by universities each year would be the *raison d’etre* for their existence. While scholars may boast of their trophies

and universities may have the luxury to play the “I-game,” research institutes, founded by the government to facilitate policy-making, should be blamed if they are fond of this amusement.

As a result, some drawbacks have shown up in these years. First of all, natural sciences, including engineering and medicines, have become the “authentic” fields of studies and the most favorite son of the government because of their high productivities in the shortest possible time while humanities and social sciences have been de facto proscribed to the status of pariah. This bias of selection is due to the fact that fields on natural phenomena or human bodies tend to share common languages, including research questions, concepts, and theories. On the other hand, humanities and social sciences are much more contingent upon national boundaries, where countries may find their own urgent problems to solve.

A related handicap is that scholars would tactically select sites that may their focuses of studies may look interesting to the editors and reviewers of the journals sought. For the latter, papers on the conservations of farms owned by the Faulkner Land & Livestock Co. Inc. at Gooding County, Idaho, for instance, would appear worthy of studies than those on soil pollutions at Shen-Kung, Changhua County, or those on agricultural economics at Shou-Feng, Hualien County, Taiwan. The location at the political center would decide its academic and publishing values while that at the peripheries means and parochialism and thus worthlessness. Smart scholars would tailor their research programs to look comparative cross-nationally. If two-case comparative studies are not attractive enough, the safest way is to design a truly globally cross-national one, where the case of Taiwan may at best find its humble space. At the extreme of the spectrum, they may just skip the local concerns and find their research interests elsewhere, in the hope that they may turn their academic extraterritorialities on the soil into native ones eventually.

Thirdly, since those articles published on the I-class journals are predominantly written in English, it would privilege those who have their doctoral degrees in the United States and the United Kingdom over those in Japan, France, and Germany. Not to mention those who are trained domestically and have difficulty reporting their research fruits in foreign languages. Fortunately, so far, measures have been made to translate these academic products into English so that they can be published “internationally.” Nonetheless, non-English articles published in local journals are still generally treated as second-rate.

Assuming that articles appearing on those journals accredited with I’s are worthy of further studies, we would like to look into how they are really cited. Taking National Taiwan University, the most eminent university in Taiwan, for example, we can see from Table 1 and Figure 2 that except for the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Law, two neglected areas, articles published in the journals with I’s icon have impressively been on the rise from 2003 to 2008. Their performance reached the zenith in 2008, when the aggregated numbers of articles produced are largely twice of those in 2003.

However, if we further examine Table 1 and Figure 3, it is alarming that the averages of articles cited for all colleges have been strikingly decreasing during the same period. The message is quite straightforward: many scholars are producing tons of articles that are of little value in their own trades. If we take one further step and scrutinize those colleges that have enjoyed acclaims in recent years, particularly colleges of Medicine, Public Health, Dentistry, Life Sciences, Science, and Bio-resources and Agriculture,<sup>15</sup> the averages of articles cited have shrunk from 10 in 2003 to below 1 in 2008.

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<sup>15</sup> Exclude the departments of Agricultural Economics and Bio-Industry Communication and Development.

**Table 1: Total ISI Articles from National Taiwan University Cited,  
2003-2008**

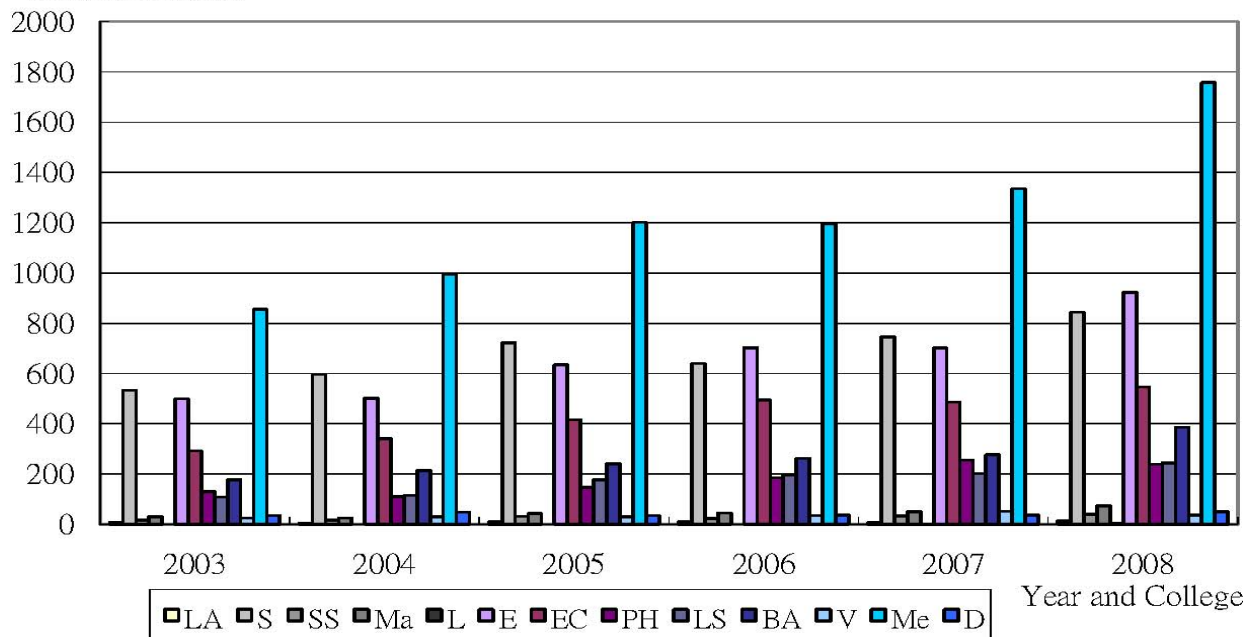
<b>Colleges</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>total</b>
Liberal Arts(LA)								
Total		8	5	9	9	7	14	52
Cited		6	22	12	5	3	0	48
average cited		0.75	4.40	1.33	0.56	0.43	0.00	0.92
Science(S)								
Total		533	596	722	640	746	844	4,081
Cited		5,973	6,836	6,241	3,905	2,595	592	26,142
average cited		11.21	11.47	8.64	6.10	3.48	0.70	6.41
Social Science(SS)								
Total		17	17	32	23	34	39	162
Cited		118	69	71	28	34	7	327
average cited		6.94	4.06	2.22	1.22	1.00	0.18	2.02
Management(Ma)								
Total		30	25	43	45	51	73	267
Cited		136	145	148	78	45	2	554
average cited		4.53	5.80	3.44	1.73	0.88	0.03	2.07
Law(L)								
Total		0	0	0	0	1	3	4
Cited		0	0	0	0	1	0	1
average cited		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.25
Engineering(E)								
Total		500	502	634	703	701	923	3,963
Cited		3,501	3,039	3,314	2,282	1,193	259	13,588
average cited		7.00	6.05	5.23	3.25	1.70	0.28	3.43
Electric Engineering & Computer Science(EE)								
Total		293	340	416	495	486	546	2,576
Cited		2,541	2,431	2,190	1,989	903	137	10,191
average cited		8.67	7.15	5.26	4.02	1.86	0.25	3.96
Public Health(PH)								
Total		130	110	148	186	256	239	1,069
Cited		1,788	985	1,032	1,190	539	83	5,617
average cited		13.75	8.95	6.97	6.40	2.11	0.35	5.25
Life Science(LS)								
Total		109	115	177	196	202	245	1,044
cited		1,165	1,013	1,173	908	417	145	4,821
average cited		10.69	8.81	6.63	4.63	2.06	0.59	4.62

**Table 1 (continued)**

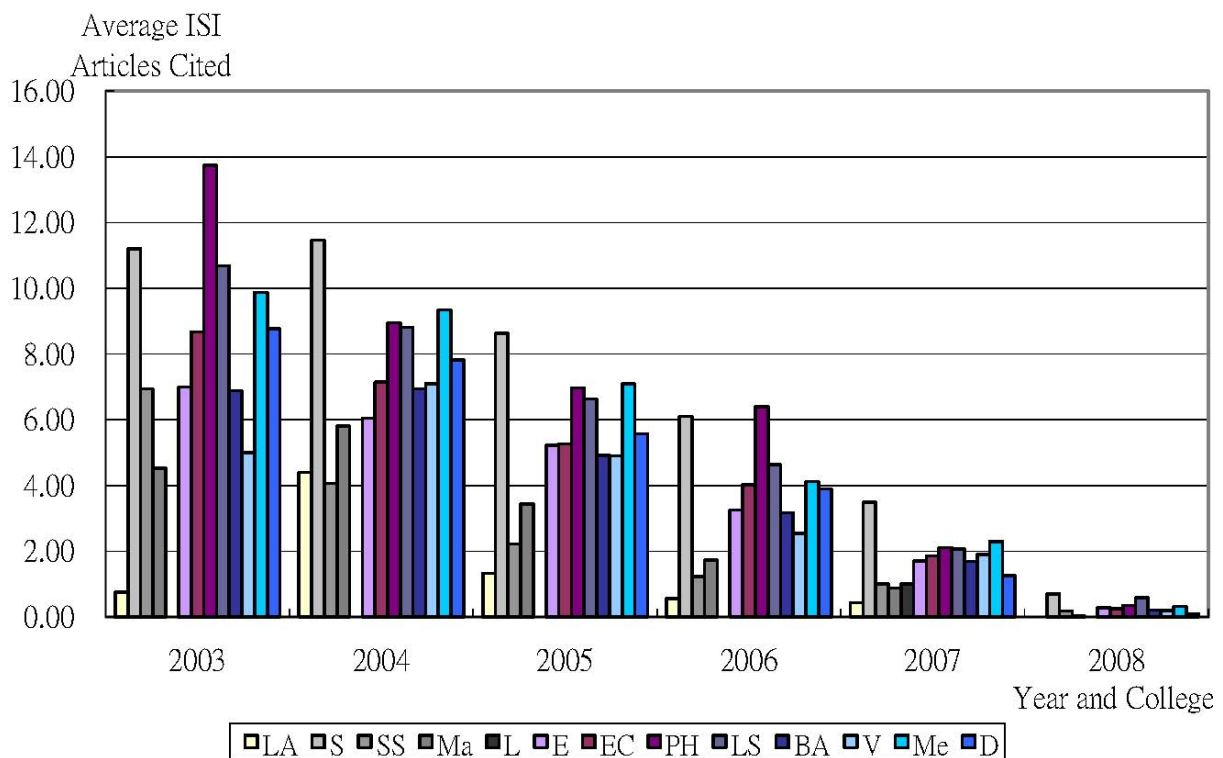
Bio-resources and Agriculture							
Total(BA)	178	214	240	263	277	386	1,558
Cited	1,224	1,485	1,180	835	469	80	5,273
average cited	6.88	6.94	4.92	3.17	1.69	0.21	3.38
Veterinary(V)							
Total	25	30	30	35	52	36	208
Cited	125	213	147	89	99	7	680
average cited	5.00	7.10	4.90	2.54	1.90	0.19	3.27
Medicine(Me)							
Total	855	995	1,201	1,197	1,335	1,758	7,341
Cited	8,449	9,293	8,511	4,931	3,073	571	34,828
average cited	9.88	9.34	7.09	4.12	2.30	0.32	4.74
Dentistry(D)							
Total	35	48	35	37	36	51	242
Cited	307	376	195	144	45	5	1,072
Average cited	8.77	7.83	5.57	3.89	1.25	0.10	4.43
University Total							
Total	2,713	2,997	3,687	3,829	4,184	5,157	22,567
Cited	25,333	25,907	24,214	16,384	9,416	1,888	103,142
Average cited	9.3376	8.6443	6.5674	4.2789	2.2505	0.3661	4.5705

Sources: "total" and "cited" from Huang (2009); "average cited" calculated by the authors.

Total ISI Articles



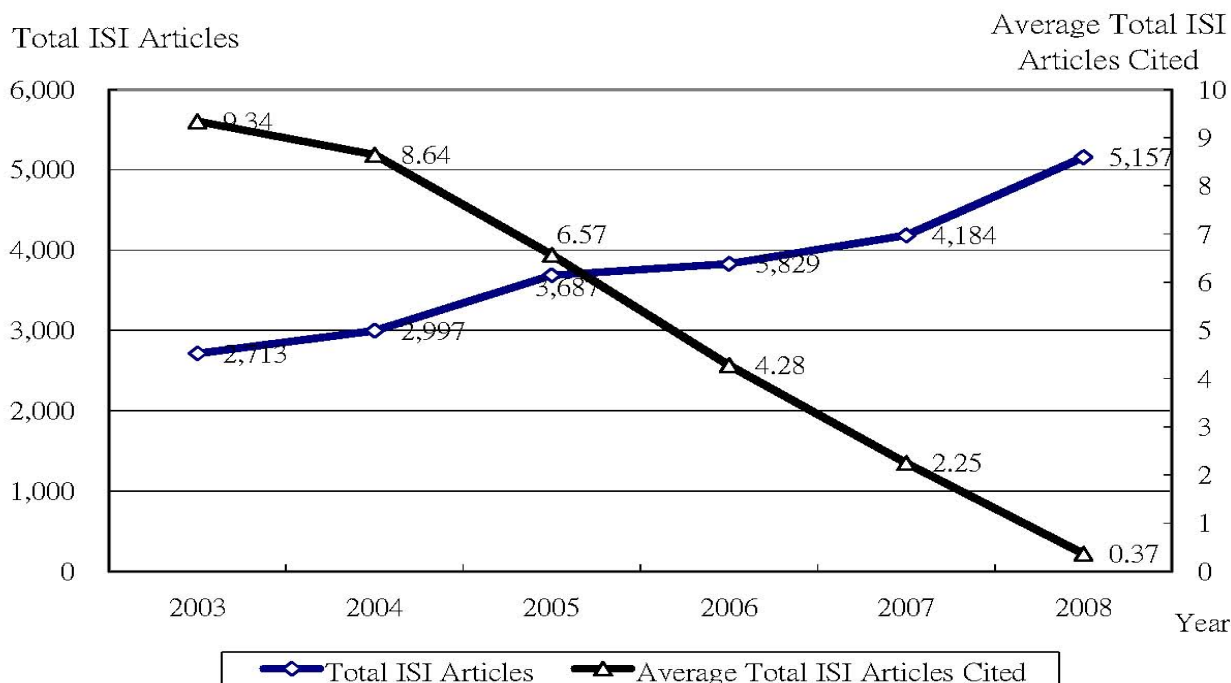
**Figure 2: Total ISI articles by National Taiwan University, 2003-2008**



**Figure 3: Average ISI Cited for Colleges of National Taiwan University 2003-2008**

If we collapsed all articles supplied by all colleges and juxtapose them to the total averages of articles cited in this period, an unmistakable death cross is ascertained (Figure 4). The cutting point is located in the year 2005, when the government started the project of “Reaching Research Excellence” by pledging to provide NT\$ 50 million to selected so-called “supreme research universities” in five years, so that it is hoped at one university from Taiwan may become one of the top 100 universities in this time frame. In 2006, National Taiwan University was certified as one of “supreme universities” and awarded NT\$ three billion that year. Thereafter, it received the same amount of financial support of the Ministry of Education in the following three years. Although not all the grants from the government to National Taiwan University have been transmitted to individual scholars, it is expected that these generous supports would make the goal reachable in the short run.

Unexpectedly, according to the rating computed by *The Times*, the National Taiwan University fell from 104 in 2007 to 124 in 2008.



**Figure 4: Total ISI Articles and Average ISI Articles Cited National Taiwan University, 2003-2008**

How do we explain this unblessed outcome? The data bank Scopus employed by *The Times* is provided by the Dutch company Elsevier, including 16,500 journals published by 4,000 publishers, much more than those adopted by the ISI. What is more significant is the fact that the Scopus index would include articles in non-English languages.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, National Taiwan University should have met a better fate this year. It turns out, unfortunately, that research outputs, however evaluated, only account for 20% of the total performance of universities. It is pity that Taiwanese scholars have followed the suit of OEM (original equipment manufacturer) adopted by their industrial counterparts after the war. Since the criteria are made elsewhere, they are perpetually chasing shadow as Sisyphus did.

<sup>16</sup> Since 1999, the National Science Council has developed a Taiwan Social Science Citation Index (TSSCI).

## **The Struggle of Indigenous Scholars in Taiwan**

At the domestic scene, Indigenous scholars in Taiwan would take a much more winding path than non-Indigenous ones do. If Indigenous scholars are positioned at the peripheries of the center, those in Taiwan are relegated to the periphery of the knowledge periphery. Facing the destiny of double marginalization, the only hopeful resurrection is to seek practical illuminations from international experiences. Nonetheless, they still have to defy suspicious eyes from their non-Indigenous colleagues.

If Indigenous people around the world, having managed to escape such structural violence as poverty or discrimination, decide to enter into the business of academic researching for career life, the most critical challenge would be what appropriate disciplines are allowed for them. While natural sciences may seem neutral and draw little attention to their Indigenous background, the choice of humanities or social sciences is further determined by the availability of scholarships in addition to affirmative action plans in any form. Except for the emerging interdisciplinary area of Indigenous Studies, the most popular fields of studies, in recent years, would be anthropology,<sup>17</sup> sociology, linguistics, law, and political science.

For non-Indigenous scholars coming from the mainstream society, Indigenous Peoples are better conveniently preserved as “object” for the purpose of “scientific” observations.<sup>18</sup> Within this grandiose and impartial context, indigenous tribes are considered living museums while they are presumed to live in historical sojourns. For the future advisers, particularly anthropologists and linguists, prospective Indigenous graduate students happen to be the most perfect candidates as research assistants for on-site interpretations or data collection. From

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<sup>17</sup> For Indigenous Peoples’ ambivalent evaluations toward anthropology, see Biolsi and Zimmerman (1997), Lewis (1973), Sanjek (1993), and Schutte (1999).

<sup>18</sup> It is no wonder Australian Aboriginal scholar Rigney (2001: 7) should scorn that Indigenous Peoples are the most thoroughly researched people in human history!



time to time, Indigenous students, pending their degrees and future careers, have to turn a deaf ear to such a confrontation as who are qualified to speak as experts between the advisers and Indigenous elders,

Having eventually employed as college teachers, Indigenous scholars, for the sake of career development, need to resolve whether to take up an “orthodox” discipline or Indigenous Studies as their focus of research. For cautious ones, sticking to a “traditional” area of study may be the safest approach to receive their tenure. For most of them, no energy should be wasted on such miscellaneous errands as Indigenous Studies before they become full professors or, at least, they are awarded associate professorship. With this pragmatic priority in mind, Indigenous issues will not appear on the top of their research agendas.

On the other hand, if some avowed Indigenous scholars are determined to pursue Indigenous Studies as their dedicated academic end and concentrate their professional training on such issues as how to protect Indigenous rights and how to promote Indigenous welfare, they are immediately bound to meet the charge of being “too practical,” read as “lacking theoretical contributions.” Even if they may be summoned by government agencies to tackle urgent Indigenous issues,<sup>19</sup> before long, another pivotal question is waiting on the line for a prudent answer: in order to be recognized professionally, what is the discipline designated for evaluating their teaching, research, and service works? A similar question is begging for answer: what kind of academic journals, disciplinary or interdisciplinary, are targeted for submitting research papers? If the former are chosen, should they tactically disguise their Indigenous identities and tone down their Indigenous positions while appeasing the dominant paradigm and values in each area?

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<sup>19</sup> For instance, how to protect Indigenous languages or how to add Indigenous articles to the current constitution.

## **Redemption by Indigenous Knowledge Sovereignty**

In the contemporary process of knowledge receiving, academic cutting, copying, and saving seem avoidable. In the face of benign neglect by the general, non-indigenous, society, how Indigenous scholars are to break away from the inevitability of being patronized<sup>20</sup>? Starting with the idea of Indigenous knowledge sovereignty, we envision a determination to make Indigenous Peoples as the “subject,” rather than “object,” of Indigenous research and education. Solemn pledge must be made to embark on the momentous task of indigenization<sup>21</sup> of thoughts.

Rigney (2001: 10) considers Indigenous knowledge sovereignty a procedural concept, which is process-centered rather than outcome oriented. Likewise, Summer (2008) lays emphasis on the importance of institutional power, especially the control of educational institutions. Alatas (2003, 2000) would proceed with both substantive and structural dimensions. Firstly, in terms of substance, even though professional knowledge, including theories, methods, and philosophies of science, may be borrowed from without, the operation of agenda-setting needs to be dictated from within. Secondly, in terms of structure, existent academic boundaries, if not barriers, including degree awarding, educational investment, research ranting, technical transferring, and output publishing, need to be overrun.

In the wake of the pass of *the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in 2007, never have Indigenous Peoples had such amicable circumstances to promote their inherent rights as enshrined in the this international document. Within this favorable context, Indigenous scholars have the exact opportunity to uphold their knowledge sovereignty. For them, in order to be caught in the iron cages of traditional disciplines, their

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<sup>20</sup> In academia, patronization often means joining the hegemonic factions and accepting the dominant paradigm without being banished and isolated. For courageously freelancers, academic life is for sure solitary.

<sup>21</sup> Regarding scientific indigenization, see Church and Katogbak (2002), and Hiller (1980).

first priority would be the development of an interdisciplinary Indigenous Studies.

Nut then, what is Indigenous Studies? According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 172-75), the nature of Indigenous Studies ought to be of, for, and by Indigenous scholars.<sup>22</sup> While sticking to these requirements, all efforts must be made for transformation, decolonization, healing, and mobilization, so that the goals of survival, recovery of traditional territories, economic development, and national self-determination may eventually be sought (pp. 116-17).

Institutionally, the College of Indigenous Studies at National Dong Hwa University, probably unique in the world, was established in 1991 to show the government's commitment to enhance Indigenous education as well as research. Born under the unpleasant pressure of Indigenous legislators and the bumpy collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Council of Indigenous Peoples, it is making modest and yet promising progress toward teaching, researching, and servicing excellence. Right now, the *Taiwan Journal of Indigenous Studies* is entering its second year, and the Don Hwa Series on Indigenous Studies has published eight books since its inception in 2008.

Whether in the form of Mignolo's idea of "de-center" (1993: 124) or that of Smith's "voice from the margin" (2006: 66), the college, we hope to become a hub for Indigenous intelligentsia, a consortium of Indigenous Studies, and a think tank on Indigenous policy. In the immediate future, we expect that a few young Indigenous scholars who are finishing their doctoral programs are to join our team soon. In the median and long terms, plans need to be made to train, in the minimum, dozens of Indigenous scholars, perhaps through the help from our Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues all around the world.

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<sup>22</sup> Whether non-Indigenous scholars are appropriate to study Indigenous Peoples, see the discussions by Smith (2000), and Hereniko (2000).

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