The Hegemony of the Local
Taiwanese Multiculturalism and Indigenous Identity Politics

P. Kerim Friedman 傅可恩
Associate Professor, Dept. of Ethnic Relations and Cultures,
Nat'l Dong Hwa University, Hualian, Taiwan
kerim.friedman@oxus.net
http://kerim.oxus.net

Introduction[1]

Taiwan's adoption of multicultural eduction policies in the early nineties opened up new opportunities for Taiwan's indigenous population to explore their own identities. Despite the benefits of these policies for indigenous cultural revitalization, I argue that indigenous people were never intended to be the primary beneficiaries of these policies. Moreover, the development of indigenous culture in this predominantly Han Chinese nation continues to be hampered by the manner in which these policies have been implemented. This is because the embrace of multiculturalism by Taiwan's elites was in fact, as this paper argues, a strategic move aimed at heading off the threat posed by the rise of Taiwanese nationalism. For much of Taiwan's post-war history, the country was run by recent immigrants from China who legitimated their rule by appealing to Chinese nationalism, defining Taiwan as part of China. After the United States recognized the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1979, Martial Law, first established in 1949, continued for nearly another decade, protecting the government from the looming legitimation crisis. In 1987, however, the lifting of Martial Law and the holding of open elections forced the ruling party (the Kuomintang, or KMT) to find new sources of legitimacy; multiculturalism was part of an effective strategy of localization which allowed the KMT to stay in power even after the transition to multiparty democracy. This argument raises some important questions: What does Taiwanese multiculturalism look like? How does the uncertain status of Taiwanese sovereignty shape local identity politics? And what are the effects of these policies on indigenous groups? Central to my answers is a focus on the concept of "the local" in contemporary Taiwanese identity politics and the ways in which local identities are related to larger-scale identities such as "nation" or "tribe."

An English-speaking visitor to Taiwan might be forgiven for thinking that the phrases "native Taiwanese" and "indigenous Taiwanese" refer to the same people. In fact, in the Taiwanese context the terms "native" (*benshengren*) and "indigenous"[2] (*yuanzhumin*) have very

[2] Following Scott Simon (2012: 227), who points out that the term "indigenous" (*autochtone*) is more of a "legal classification" (*classification juridique*) than an ethnic category, I have chosen to use the lowercase form throughout. It is common to see *yuanzhumin* translated as as "Aborigines" but that usage has recently fallen out of favor among indigenous activists eager to shift the focus from primordialism to human rights.

different meanings. "Native" marks an opposition between those southern Chinese (both Hoklo and Hakka) who began settling in Taiwan over four hundred years ago and the "mainlanders" (*waishengren*) who came over with the Kuomintang (KMT) in the late 1940s, at the end of the Chinese Civil War. The term "indigenous," on the other hand, marks off the descendants of the Austronesian speaking inhabitants who came to Taiwan some eight thousand years ago from the entire Han population, natives and mainlanders alike.[3] The movement to reclassify the plains indigenous peoples (*pingpuzu*) as indigenous rather than native highlights just how important these distinctions are. As a result of living on the West Coast, where Chinese settlers first arrived, the *pingpuzu* underwent a long period of cohabitation and intermarriage with native Taiwanese. For this reason they were classified separately from other indigenous peoples during the Qing dynasty, which poses an obstacle to their reclassification today (Hsieh 2006; Brown 2004; Loa 2014).

Although the confusion between native and indigenous might seem to be a byproduct of translation (the terms *benshengren* and *yuanzhumin* literally mean "people of this province" and "first inhabitants," respectively), the competing claims to local authenticity are just as fraught in Chinese. When the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines (ATA, Taiwan yuanzhumin minzu quanli cujin hui, abbreviated as Yuanquanhui) sought to register their official publication *Yuanzhumin* in 1985, their application was rejected for having an "inappropriate title" (Stainton 1999: 38). It was inappropriate because, by suggesting that indigenous people are autochthonous to Taiwan, it questioned the legitimacy of the claim that Taiwan is part of China (1999: 39). It was also considered inappropriate because, for the thirty-eight years that Taiwan was under Martial Law (1949–1987), the KMT claimed to be the true government of all of China and spoke of the Taiwanese (indigenous and native alike) as being "Chinese" (Chun 1996). The stubborn persistence of this attitude was exposed when the New Party (Xindang) recently proposed taking indigenous youth on a trip to China where they would "attend an ancestral worship ceremony at the tomb of the Yellow Emperor, a legendary entity considered the ancestor of all Han Chinese" (Loa 2015; see also: Simon 2011; Liu 1999). Even if such attitudes still linger, the outrage and ridicule provoked by this proposal made clear just how far things have changed since 1985.

The terms "Chinese," "indigenous," and "native" can be usefully thought of as *chronotopes*, a term used by Mikhail Bakhtin to capture how "spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole" (Bakhtin 1982: 84). Each term having its own unique indexical relationship to space and time (Silverstein 2005: 6-7; Bemong and Borghart 2010). Although each chronotope is unique, they are also interdiscursively related since the usage of a chronotope in one particular situation has the ability to affect the use of other

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[3] Han account for approximately 95 percent of the total population, while indigenous people, with a population of roughly half a million, stand at a little over 2 percent (Department of Information Services Executive Yuan 2014: 48–49). Recent scholarship has problematized the concept of Han as an ethnicity (Mullaney et al. 2012), but it is useful here as a catch-all term for the entire Chinese settler population in Taiwan.

chronotopes in other situations (Silverstein 2005: 8). It was precisely because the government understood the potential power of such interdiscursivity that it sought to restrict the use of the word "*yuanzhumin*" back in 1985. The actions it took resulted in the promotion of yet another chronotope, that of "community" (*shequ*), in order to diffuse the threat posed by the other two. But if "community" served to undermine the power of indigeneity and nativism, its interdiscursive effects were different in each case. The relationship of a native to her home "village" (*cunluo*) is not the same as that of an indigenous person to her "community" (*buluo*). That is because *buluo* indexes ethnic identity in ways that have no parallel among the various terms native Taiwanese use for "the local."[4]

Because of the centrality of the distinctions between "village," "tribe," "*shequ*," and "*buluo*" to this paper, it is necessary to take a moment to understand them more fully. Glossed here as "community," *buluo* is frequently translated as "tribe." Indeed, the official English translation of the Indigenous Basic Law (*Yuanzhumin jibenfa*) translates it that way (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2005). According to this law it refers to "a group of indigenous persons who form a community by living together in specific areas of the indigenous peoples' regions and following the traditional norms with the approval of the central indigenous authority" (2005). As such it is distinct from the larger ethnic grouping of sixteen officially recognized "indigenous peoples," each of which is also referred to as a "tribe" (for example, the "Amis tribe") and for which that term is usually reserved in English texts (Simon 2010: 738 n. 3). Analogous to the anthropological term "band" (Lewellen 2003: 23), the gloss "community" is provided here because it emphasizes the link to government interventions in local communities (discussed below); however, I use the Chinese *buluo* to avoid confusion with other terms for community (for example, "*shequ*") used in this paper. Although an indigenous *buluo* might be geographically identical to a village, in practice a village can encompass multiple *buluo*, or a *buluo* can encompass multiple villages. (It is also worth pointing out the irony in defining *buluo* as based on "traditional norms" while simultaneously stating that they require approval of a central authority.)

Despite the distinct meanings accorded to each of these terms, it is common to see these differences elided in how Taiwanese talk about locality, depending on whether they are indexing the postcolonial predicament in which both native and indigenous Taiwanese find themselves, or whether they are referring to the cultural logic of authenticity. In George Orwell's book *Animal Farm,* after the animals take over, it is declared that "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" (2014: 118). Similarly, if all identities are local in today's multicultural Taiwan, some identities are more local than others. Indigeneity is always held to a higher

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[4] The relative homogeneity of native Taiwanese identity is itself a fairly modern phenomenon. For much of Taiwanese history settlers had strong affective ties to their village of origin in China (Wachman 1994: 15–16). These ties only began to weaken under Japanese rule when newly chosen Japanese surnames were not allowed to reflect settlers' place of origin (Chou 1991: 123–124; Friedman 2010: 27 n. 10).

(perhaps even impossible) standard of authenticity than the native. As Elizabeth Povinelli (2002: 6) puts it: "multicultural domination seems to work . . . by inspiring subaltern and minority subjects to identify with the impossible object of an authentic self-identity." It could be said that while the imagined indigenous Taiwanese is always more authentically local than the native Taiwanese, the actual living indigenous Taiwanese is never authentically local enough.

The sublimation of these differences in the context of Taiwanese nationalism is well illustrated by one native activist's reaction to an online campaign staged on October 25, 2014. In Taiwan, October 25th is also known as "Retrocession Day" (Guangfu jie) a holiday commemorating the "liberation" of Taiwan from the Japanese and the "return" of Taiwan to Chinese rule in 1945. The terms "liberation" and "return" are highly contested, as is the holiday itself. In fact, since 1998 it has ceased to be an official work holiday although it is still commemorated in various ways. On this particular October 25th, a group of indigenous activists calling themselves the Indigenous Peoples Action Coalition of Taiwan (IPACT, Taiwan yuanzhuminzu buluo xingdong lianmeng) staged an online protest, asking "Have you been liberated?", and encouraging supporters to post Facebook photos highlighting the difference between the original indigenous name of their villages and the Chinese name imposed after the KMT took over.

The IPACT protest could be seen just as much a rebuke of Han domination over Taiwan's indigenous peoples as a criticism of the form of Chinese colonialism promoted by the KMT, but some supporters of the protest interpreted it in a way that emphasized the shared oppression of all local cultures under KMT rule. An activist who, despite not being indigenous herself, blogs under the Paiwan name "Snayian"[5] wrote a post expressing solidarity with IPACT. In it she pointed to Sanchong District in New Taipei City, which is commonly referred to as *Saⁿ-tēng-po·* in Hoklo (using the character for "wharf" rather than "district"), as an example of how Chinese colonialism has erased local names in native Taiwanese communities as well. She argued that the difference "may just be one character when written down, but that there is a world of difference between the two pronunciations" (Snayian 2014).

Her post eloquently appeals to a solidarity predicated on both a shared history of "linguistic imperialism" (Phillipson 1992) and a shared sense that identity is grounded in one's local community. In doing so, Snayian articulated a view of decolonization as a shared project that affects Taiwan's native and indigenous population alike. While other native activists share Snayian's support of indigenous rights, a true alliance between native and indigenous Taiwanese needs to take into account the different ways in which native and indigenous people experience locality. To understand this, we must explore the historical roots of Taiwanese multiculturalism, and the reason why Taiwan stopped having an official holiday on Retrocession Day in the first

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[5] Although she prefers to remain anonymous, Snayian is a research assistant at my university and I was able to contact her on Facebook while preparing this paper. The Paiwan are one of Taiwan's sixteen officially recognized indigenous tribes.

place.

When President Lee Teng-hui made the change in the late 1990s, it was ostensibly for nonpolitical reasons, as part of a wider shift to a five-day workweek (Hui and Storrar 2013). Two-day weekends allowed more time for domestic tourism and dovetailed nicely with the recently introduced Integrated Community-Making Program (Shequ Yingzao), which had spurred the commodification of local culture (Lu 2002). If one of the pillars of neoliberalism is the liberation of human potential and entrepreneurship by creating markets where none had previously existed (Harvey 2005: 2) then the commodification of culture can be said to be one of the central neoliberal strategies adopted by Taiwan as part of a wider shift from an import-substitution to a service-based economy (Cheng 2001: 35). But it was more than just an economic strategy. The Integrated Community-Making Program also promoted a new form of multiculturalism that shifted focus from local as a form of anti-colonial legitimacy to the local as source of commodified nostalgia (Lin 2010). It also shifted the scale of the local from an ethnic category (whether native or indigenous), which could span the entire nation, to a geographic one that was circumscribed by the village or neighborhood.

Whether it was intentional or otherwise, the cumulative effect of this uniquely Taiwanese form of local multiculturalism was to obscure questions of nationhood, ethnicity, and colonial legacies. John Durham Peters (Peters 1997: 88), citing a story by Kafka, argues that the Great Wall of China was a project that turned villagers into Chinese: they constructed a structure so vast that ordinary citizens could never see the project as a whole, thus securing for the state "monopoly rights in the representation of unseeable totalities." I wish to argue that, in embracing the politics of locality, Lee Teng-hui sought to do the opposite: to make villagers out of the Taiwanese. To the extent that he succeeded, the nation collectively stopped seeing the forest of the nation for the trees of local communities. While these policies did not completely wipe away the differences between natives and mainlanders, or quell the politics of anticolonial nationalism, they were nonetheless successful enough that the KMT was able to weather the transition to democracy without losing its grip on power. For a minority-run political party, which had held on to power via a military dictatorship for so many years, to be able to retain power under an electoral democracy is a truly a notable achievement, especially when compared to other minority-ruled countries, such as South Africa where the former ruling party did not fare so well after instituting open elections (Chun 2000: 18). But if this new form of multiculturalism supplanted both the native and the indigenous with the local, the construction of the local was not the same for everybody.

The hegemony of the local over the chronotopes indexing locality and indigeneity flattens space and time, subordinating the logic of decolonization to that of the market. However, this flattening had the unintended effect of accentuating already-existing hierarchical differences. When all communities must compete equally in the marketplace, poor and remote indigenous communities are frequently at a disadvantage (Friedman 2005: 209). And as Michael Rudolph (Rudolph 2008: 194) has shown, community-making programs can sometimes exacerbate

inequality within indigenous communities as well, through the monopolization of government resources by indigenous elites. But elite competition for state resources (Rudolph: 19–21) doesn't sufficiently explain how the "capture" of such resources by elites is accepted as legitimate by the indigenous communities they serve. One suggestion offered by Rudolph (16) is that the indigenous "retraditionalizing rituals" he studies might serve "either as a psychological valve or as a tool to challenge the Han's legitimacy and authority." No doubt psychological mechanisms and resistance play an important part in such rituals, but the efficacy of these mechanisms is insufficient to explain their legitimacy. Such an explanation requires that we understand the wider ideological context within which these rituals take place. In her discussion of ritual and ideology, Catherine Bell (1992: 191) points out that "ideologies exist only in concrete historical forms and in specific relations to other ideologies." An initial account of such concrete forms and interrelationships in the Taiwanese context is what this article hopes to provide.

The Hegemony of the Local

The huge shadow cast over Taiwan studies by the uncertain status of Taiwanese sovereignty has been an obstacle for the study of local ideological formations, which are often seen as a mere epiphenomenon of Taiwan's relationship with the PRC. In this context it is useful to turn to Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which he worked out while trying to understand the unique challenges faced by Italian Communism under the shadow of events taking place in Russia. Gramsci created a whole host of concepts aimed at differentiating the goals of revolutionary struggle in Western and Eastern Europe, but the one that interests us here is that of the "historical bloc" (Gramsci 1972: 108) which refers to the particular ways in which ideologies are given historical form in each nation-state. I wish to argue for a theory of Taiwanese identity politics which is grounded in the development of a uniquely Taiwanese historical bloc, one that is strongly influenced by the question of sovereignty, but which is not reducible to Taiwan's relationship with China.

In order to fully understand how Gramsci understood the relationship between hegemony and a particular historical bloc it is useful to compare hegemony to "false consciousness." In a false consciousness argument the masses are seen as having been tricked into believing something against their own self-interests. Hegemony does not work in this way for Gramsci. Rather, ruling classes gain hegemony by articulating an ideology that incorporates "at least some of the interests of subordinate classes" rather than just those of the elite, allowing them to claim to "represent the interests of society as a whole" (Crehan 2002: 96; see also Mouffe 2002: 295; Friedman 2009: 362). Hegemonic ideology is thus a mechanism for forging and maintaining cross-class alliances—what Gramsci referred to as a historical bloc. This approach focuses attention on the historical process by which hegemony is established. In a classic "divide-and-rule" strategy, only some subaltern groups are incorporated into the bloc, thus preventing potentially counter-hegemonic horizontal alliances among subaltern groups. The

resulting ideology forever bears the sedimented traces of this process, which is unique for each nation-state.[6]

In his writings on the "Southern question," Gramsci argued that the Italian elite had formed a tripartite alliance between Northern capitalists, Northern unions, and the Southern aristocracy, effectively marginalizing Southern peasants (Gramsci 2015). A more familiar example to many readers might be the alliance formed between America's largely coastal industrial elite and its rural working-class whites. Racism was (and is) cynically used as a tool to divide the American working classes, in much the same way that Gramsci argues regional differences were used against workers in early modern Italy. As Gran (1996: 288) argues, "white workers are not predictably racist"; racism must be explained historically. While race has always played an important role in American society, the construction of the current racial hegemony can be traced to the Reconstruction period after the Civil War (Du Bois 1999; Gran 1996: 288). Despite claims to the contrary (for example, that we now live in a "post-racial" era) these racialized power structures have continued to the present time, albeit with various shifts (Wacquant 2002). One important shift was the realignment of political parties after Richard Nixon's "Southern strategy," which brought disaffected Southern whites into the Republican fold after they had been alienated by the Civil Rights movement (Phillips 2014; Krugman 2007). This highlights that historical blocs are not reducible to mere party politics. An underlying hegemonic ideology can easily survive changes in party allegiance without fundamentally altering its structure. Nor can hegemony be equated to a set of policy positions. Rather, hegemony works at the level of the underlying categories of thought, or "doxa" (Bourdieu 1977: 164), within which political debates are framed.

Taiwan's transition to democracy with the end of Martial Law in 1987 meant that the KMT had to forge new alliances in order to secure their long-term legitimacy and mitigate the threat posed by the nationalist rhetoric of the newly formed opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, Minzhu jinbu dang, abbreviated as Minjindang). The DPP was pushing for Taiwan-centric cultural and education reforms that threatened the China-centric status-quo. Following a strategy of "appropriating most of the [DPP's] central platforms" (Wu 2002: 204), Lee Teng-hui engineered what Wu Rwei-Ren (2002: 198) has rightly called a "passive revolution," in the Gramscian sense of a "revolution from above" that "bypasses the masses" (see Friedman 2005: 28–29). Place-based multiculturalism in the form of the Integrated Community-Making Program was central to Lee's efforts. As Lu Hsin-Yi (2002: 42) argues, this program shared many features with the *Furusato-zukuri* (homeland-making) movement in Japan and was considered useful by both the DPP and KMT because it was "the means by which a

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[6] Peter Gran (1996) makes a strong case that only a limited number of hegemonic strategies are deployed in most modern nation-states (he lists four). In emphasizing the uniqueness of each hegemony I am not taking issue with Gran's model, which he wields to make deft historical comparisons, so much as focusing attention on the unique processes by which each historical bloc is formed and the importance of these processes for understanding each resulting hegemony.

consensual version of the past vis-a-vis the present, and the future vis-a-vis the past, [would be] established" (Coombe 1997; in Lu 2002: 42–43). It served the DPP's interests because "[t]he prosperity of local cultures would verify Taiwan's 'Special historical and geographical factors'; and ensure the necessary diversity of the de-facto Taiwanese nation" while simultaneously serving the KMT's interests by depoliticizing the question of nationalism – by using local culture as "a metonym for 'nation'" (Lu 2002: 43).

This approach was first articulated with reference to educational reforms at the 1990 National Affairs Conference (NAC). After these meetings the elementary school curriculum would see a shift from the old conception of ethnicity, in which all local differences were subordinated to a greater Chinese identity, to a more pluralistic conception of identity as a series of nested "concentric circles" (Corcuff 2002: 87), like a Russian *matryoshka* doll. This "ideology of scale" (Tsing 2000: 347) was best articulated by Kuo Wei-fan, a Taiwan-born KMT leader, during an "inner meeting" of the KMT in 1996:

> If we look at things from the point of view of the textbook structure, a student book must start learning from the immediate environment, then extend the scope step by step to local culture and the main ethnic groups of the society, extending it then to the knowledge of the culture of all ethnic groups that compose the territory and the nation. Only then can one understand the world's culture. Consequently, primary and secondary programs are being reformed following a strategy consisting of *standing on Taiwan, having consideration for China, opening eyes on the world*. (quoted in Corcuff 2002: 87 emphasis added)

While this version clearly places Taiwan within the Chinese sphere, it also emphasizes the primacy of the local scale. Previously, school textbooks had shown maps of China with Taiwan in the bottom-right portion of the map; but later editions zoomed in on Taiwan (or, in some cases, on one of Taiwan's many cities or counties) without including China at all. Thus pro-independence advocates can view the map of Taiwan as being fully zoomed out to the level of the nation, while pro-unificationists can imagine it as just a map of one of China's many provinces.

It would be easy to see discourses of locality simply as a kind false consciousness, as little more than clever framing (Lakoff 2014) which dupes those who are not trained to notice its effects. Anna Tsing's (2000: 347) notion of scale-making as a "project" helps avoid this trap by highlighting the political agency involved in promoting some chronotopic relationships over others. The concept of scale-making as a project suggests the possibility of counter-hegemony by drawing attention to the existence of multiple, overlapping scale-making projects that not only "articulate with each other, creating moments of fabled stability and power," but "also rub up against each other awkwardly, creating messiness and new possibilities" (2000: 347). If the hegemony of the local works by hiding the forest for the trees, the concept of indigeneity has the potential to exploit this form of "misrecognition" (Bourdieu 1977: 164) by hiding a whole new forest among those very same trees.

Because the hegemony of the local masks whether Taiwan is a nation or a province, it can also allow a new ideology of scale to emerge in which Taiwan is not part of the Chinese sphere at all. The rise of Austronesian consciousness in Taiwan has such a potential. By viewing Taiwan as the homeland of Austronesian migration (Blundell 2011), stretching out into Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean, the indigeneity chronotope can thrive precisely because the hegemony of the local serves to mask what happens when you zoom out from the village level. And because the local remains the relevant scale, both the KMT and the DPP can invoke the chronotope of indigeneity (when it is convenient for them to do so) without fundamentally challenging or altering their respective positions with regard to national sovereignty. For the DPP the chronotope of indigeneity is useful to challenge the narrative of Taiwan as part of China (Stainton 1999). Historian Edwin Yang (Yang Tsung-Rong) made this view explicit when he said that "developing a Pacific identity and a worldview of diversity could help raise awareness of the Taiwan independence movement because it highlights an 'island mentality'" (quoted in Wang 2013). The KMT find it useful to portray themselves as the party of ethnic harmony while hinting that the DPP are the party of "Hoklo chauvinism" (Simon 2011: 21). Ku Kun-hui (2012: 104) recounts how a Paiwan KMT legislator used his indigenous identity to undermine the legitimacy of Hoklo Taiwanese nationalists, saying "We aborigines are the real Taiwanese," thus pitting indigenous against native. And both parties find the Austronesian chronotope useful when promoting neoliberal "free trade" agreements with other countries in the Pacific Rim. As of December 1, 2013, Taiwan and New Zealand entered into a free trade pact, the first one established between Taiwan and a "nondiplomatic ally" (Taipei Economic and Cultural Office 2013). With the emergence of a new multicultural Taiwan, grounded in the primacy of local culture, it seems that these kinds of claims and counterclaims (while still made in various contexts) have become less threatening for the state, which is now able to use and manipulate various ideologies of scale on purely pragmatic grounds.

Indigeneity in the Age of Locality

In the early days of the Republic of China (ROC), while it was still based in Nanjing, Taiwan was seen as little more than a "border area." But when the KMT government lost the civil war they found it necessary to redefine Taiwan as the center of "free China" and the true home of Confucian culture (Chiu 2000: 118; see also: Chun 1994). The "Republic of China" is itself a chronotope with its own explicitly stated ideology of scale. The imagined community of the ROC encompasses all of China, despite the fact that after 1949 the KMT-ruled state was confined to Formosa and the surrounding islands. Until several years after the end of Martial Law, Taiwan's history textbooks were still "overwhelmingly China centered" and focused on "Chinese history and geography" at the expense of that of Taiwan (Liu and Hung 2002: 573).

Under this China-centric formula, indigenous Taiwanese were doubly marginalized. Not only were they seen as the furthest away from the Chinese cultural norms to which the nation aspired, but their perceived ties to the land also made them peripheral to the geographic center of

the imagined nation. Early KMT policies towards indigenous people were shaped by articles in the ROC constitution, which had originally been written for China's "border nationalities" (Ku 2012: 107 n. 25; Chiu 2000: 118). Textbooks in use as late as 1975 asserted that "the people of Taiwan all belong to the same 'Chinese' ethnic group," and that indigenous peoples had acquired this ethnicity as a result of "5000 years of 'assimilation'" (Liu and Hung 2002: 582). But a major transformation had already taken place by the late 1990s, with many Taiwanese proudly citing studies showing that most Han Taiwanese have some indigenous DNA (Stainton 1999: 40; Munsterhjelm 2014: 113). This served the purpose of those who sought to challenge the previously hegemonic notion that Taiwan is on the periphery of the Chinese cultural sphere (Corcuff 2002; Harrell 1999; Hughes and Stone 1999), but it did so within the newly hegemonic framework of local multiculturalism. With this shift in the dominant ideology of scale, indigenous people were no longer on the periphery but had, by virtue of their unique claim to the local, come to have symbolic importance, even if that did not always translate into real political power. Drawing on Peircian semiotics we can say that indigeneity underwent a process of "iconization" (Irvine and Gal 2000: 37) by which indigenous people (in the abstract) came to stand for the very idea of the local.

While indigenous authenticity derives from the local, indigenous political power largely derives from the global—from the international network of government agencies and human rights groups that support them. Indeed, one of the central contradictions of indigeneity is the way in which its sources of social power are simultaneously both local and cosmopolitan (Chiu 2013). One could argue that indigeneity itself is a scale-making project, binding together a network of diverse (mostly minority) ethnic groups into an alliance based on shared experiences as victims of resource appropriation and ethnic assimilation (Niezen 2003: 2, 87, 90). But if Taiwanese indigeneity is a scale-making project, it often remains unclear whose project it is. Taiwan's government has frequently made instrumental use of the global ties afforded to it via indigenous groups, such as when it established a presence at the United Nations. It did this not as a state (which China would never allow), but through the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) (Simon 2007: 226).[7]

In tracing the history of Taiwan's indigenous rights movement, Ku Kun-hui (2012: 99) states: "from the outset . . . the relationship between the indigenous rights movement and Taiwan nationalism has always been and remains ambiguous." Formed in 1984, three years before the end of Martial Law, the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines (ATA) "can be seen as part of a larger opposition movement to KMT rule that grew in the 1970s," however, the ATA soon came to see their interests and autonomy as compromised by their subordination to the democracy movement and they quickly split off as an independent organization (2012: 99). Despite the split, some Taiwanese nationalists continued to support the indigenous rights movement—or at least give

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[7] Although even that was not without controversy, as in 2010 "indigenous persons holding a Taiwan passport were excluded from the Forum because of Chinese pressure" (Ku 2012: 103).

lip-service to it in the interest of bolstering their own nativist claims. The choice of Mandopop sensation A-mei (Chang Hui-mei), in 2000, to sing the national anthem at the inauguration of Taiwan's first opposition party president, Chen Shui-bian, was shaped as much by her indigenous Pinuyumayan (Beinanzu) ethnicity as by her star power (Ku 2012: 121; Moskowitz 2009: 83).

For her performance A-mei was banned from performing in China for a few years (Moskowitz 2009: 83), but by 2013 she was working as a judge on one of China's top talent game shows, "The Voice of China." A young indigenous Taiwanese singer named Uni (Ye Weiting) caused a brief media furor when she got mixed up introducing herself and said she was came from "China, Taipei, Pingtung District" (Wu 2013), seemingly placing the southern county of Pingtung within the northern city of Taipei, and Taipei within the People's Republic of China (PRC). The mistake is understandable because China and Taiwan have used the same strategy of localization in international relations that the KMT has used in Taiwan as a tool to avoid the thorny question of national sovereignty. For instance, China only allows Taiwan to compete at international sporting events under the name "Chinese Taipei." But what was so revealing about the media storm in Taiwan after this incident was the extent to which Uni's indigeneity was a central issue. One online commentator asked her if, as an indigenous person, she had shown proper respect to her ancestors. As an indigenous Taiwanese, Uni was supposed to be more local and more pro-Taiwan than other Taiwanese contestants. Commenting on the impossible position that this puts indigenous people in, one editorial ironically suggested that Uni (who is Paiwan) should have said she was from "Paiwan Province, in the Republic of Indigenous Peoples" (Yuanzhuminzu gongheguo Paiwan zhou)(Shih 2013).

The Fractal Geobody

There is an advertisement for an early tablet-style computer called the TravelMate (made by the Taiwanese company Acer) which one can find on YouTube (Acer Incorporated 2006). It shows a white man walking through the mountains of Taiwan, when he comes upon an indigenous village. He meets a young Aborigine maiden and you think there might be some romance between them, but then you discover that the village is gearing up for her marriage ceremony. The video is replete with images of dancing, singing, cooking, etc., all drawn from an orientalist pastiche of indigenous life as it might have existed before colonization. By the end of the ad the foreigner has made friends with a young child and draws her picture on his TravelMate. Since 2006 I have been showing this video to my students at National Dong Hwa University's College of Indigenous Studies on a regular basis. Our student body is approximately 56 percent indigenous (96 out of 172 undergraduates in 2014) and so I'm always curious how they will respond to the advertisement. Year after year their reactions are the same: when I ask them if there is anything they find strange about the ad, they point out that the houses look like they belong to the Rukai or Paiwan tribes, but the clothing looks like that of the Tsou (except for

the headdresses which are Bunun), while the dances are Amis (Pangcah[8]), etc. Why don't they find it strange that the Western man has a laptop and modern clothes, while the indigenous village is seemingly caught in a pre-modern time warp? It is possible that they simply skip over this because it is obvious, but I think it is more likely that they respond as they do because they have been taught to be sensitive to that which is inauthentically local, while having come to accept as normal depictions of indigenous people as living in the past. Many scholars have discussed how the denial of coevalness is the norm for textbooks, tourist materials, and mainstream cultural depictions of indigenous peoples (Sterk 2014; Prins 2002; Fabian 2014), but instead of talking about what my students don't notice, I'd like to focus on what they do. Ideology works by drawing attention to and focusing on certain features, investing them with emotional and symbolic power, as much as it does by covering up and obscuring others.

What students notice is a violation of the authentically iconicized association between place and a homogenous, bound, indigenous culture. Paul Barclay (2013: 11), drawing on works by Nicholas Thomas (1994) and Thongchai Winichakul (1997), refers to this as the "geobody," and he traces the construction of the contemporary indigenous Taiwanese geobody back to the Japanese era, when the first maps of indigenous territory were made by Japanese anthropologists:

> The construction of ethnic geobodies within the geobody of Taiwan made it possible for one settlement or group of Indigenous Peoples (or even a single person) to "represent" territories beyond the reach of ethnologists at a time when access to the interior was extremely restricted. Moreover, the imputation of cultural uniformity over the surface of these geobodies, painted in a particular local color, made it possible for an artifact, wordlist, or performance to stand in for a larger gestalt of traits constituting a "culture."

As Barclay shows, the geobody was already being deconstructed by Japanese anthropologists by the end of the colonial era. During the Martial Law era, the geobody didn't disappear, but it was deemphasized in favor of policies of assimilation into Chinese culture. Local languages, rituals, and other practices associated with the geobody were banned. As we have seen however, after the transition to democracy, the geobody made a resurgence with the rise of the Integrated Community-Making Program and other forms of local multiculturalism.

Cheng Weining's work with the Taromak subgroup of the Rukai is but one of many recent anthropological efforts in Taiwan to call the indigenous geobody into question. In a new paper she explores the concept of authentically "traditional" clothing among the Taromak Rukai. She argues that the Rukai have long engaged in "mimetic clothing practices," in which they "adopt the designs of other ethnic groups, especially the neighboring Puyuma," and also of the Chinese population (2014: 6–7). As such, it doesn't make sense to talk about traditional clothing among the Rukai, who nonetheless are frequently told by their leaders and government officials

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[8]   There are regional differences in what Amis call themselves. "Amis" is more common in the south and "Pangcah" more common further north. For historical reasons, I use "Amis" here as it is more commonly used in the English-language literature.

that they "should wear 'traditional attire' to show that they are authentic Rukai people" (2014: 2). Citing Bruno Latour (2012), Cheng questions the mechanisms of purification[9] by which indigenous hybridity is negated, suggesting that it is partially in "response to the criteria by which indigenous groups are granted official recognition in Taiwan" (2014: 10). Irvine and Gal (2000: 38) have used the phrase "fractal recursivity" to describe the process by which authentic identities are endlessly recreated at increasingly local levels. When the KMT first took power they adopted the Japanese classification of nine tribes but, as a result of indigenous mobilization since the lifting of Martial Law, there are now sixteen officially recognized tribes, with still more agitating for recognition. Cheng (2014: 10) argues that the focus on local authenticity has led the Taromak Rukai to question why they are classified together with other Rukai in the South who "wear similar clothing styles, but don't speak the same language."

While there are certainly many legitimate reasons for indigenous groups to question the Japanese-era classifications, it is important not to essentialize the new classifications that have replaced them. Indeed, some indigenous proponents of tribal sovereignty have expressed to me their dissatisfaction with the process by which indigenous groups have recently gained recognition as separate ethnic groups. Scott Simon (2010: 728) argues that new tribal affiliations hold little sway for "most laypeople [who] identify more with their own small communities or even with the ROC" than they do with the newly formed tribes. He goes on to suggest that such "territorial-based indigenous nationalism is as foreign to the Austronesians as is the nation-state," and is largely driven by elites and viewed with suspicion by most "ordinary people" (2010: 728). While I agree with his assessment, having encountered similar sentiments in my own fieldwork, I would like to suggest that the contemporary identification of Taiwanese indigenous people with their *buluo* cannot be entirely explained in terms of traditional indigenous social structure, but must itself be understood as a product of the nation-state and its promotion of a particular kind of local authenticity.

The fractal recursivity we've seen in the case of indigenous recognition can also be seen in indigenous language policy, the two being very closely linked. The current version of the national Proficiency Test of Aboriginal Languages (Yuanzhuminzu yuyan nengli renzheng kaoshi)—used to certify students seeking indigenous status in order to be eligible for government affirmative-action policies—is offered in a total of forty-two different language varieties (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2014). This is because of a decision to offer the test in multiple regional varieties for each language, so a single language like Amis will have tests in five different regional varieties. There are good pedagogical reasons to do so. For instance, children are more likely to be encouraged to study if their homework is in the same language variety as that spoken at home (Akinnaso 1991: 83). Nonetheless, the decision has significant "washback

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[9] See Bauman and Briggs' (1999) book *Voices of Modernity* for more on the purification practices aimed at the discourses of indigenous peoples within the history of anthropology and folklore studies.

effects" (Lii-Shih 1994) on the entire native language curriculum and other efforts to preserve indigenous languages. The existence of tests in these local varieties requires the preparation of textbooks, dictionaries, and course materials for each variety. Furthermore, tribal recognition is often tied to such regional linguistic differences, leading some to fear that institutional recognition and standardization of dialectical differences threaten ethnic unity.

Until recently, the Sakizaya were considered by the Taiwanese government to be Amis. Historical records support the claim that they were once a separate ethnic group, but after living together with the Amis for generations, many of these differences had eroded over time. Nonetheless, in 2007 their appeal was approved. Linguistic evidence played an important role in the final decision despite the fact that, although clearly once separate languages, the status of contemporary Sakizaya as distinct from Amis was a matter of some dispute (Lin 2009). Because of this history, plans to use a slightly different orthography for Northern Amis (Nanshi Ameiyu 南勢阿美語)—reflecting phonetic differences between it and the four other Amis dialects—have caused particular concern. At meetings to establish a standardized version of Amis, which I attended as part of my ongoing research into the topic, people were concerned that institutionalizing these differences would undermine the cohesion of the larger ethnic group, possibly further splintering the tribe.

Multiculturalism and Tribal Sovereignty

What if, to paraphrase a popular joke among computer programmers, the tension between tribal and *buluo* sovereignty is "a feature, not a bug"? What if it is built-into the hegemony of the local? Simon (2011: 19–22) has discussed how, while Canadian multiculturalism is considered a threat to First Nations' claims to political sovereignty, in the Taiwanese case few people are aware of multiculturalism as anything other than an empty electioneering slogan. But if we shift our gaze from official discourses of "cultural pluralism" (2011: 22), to the Integrated Community-Making Program and other forms of local multiculturalism adopted in Taiwan, then we can begin to see some similarities with Canada. In a co-authored paper Simon and Awi Mona (Simon and Mona 2012: 100) wrote that a bill being drafted on indigenous self-government would likely enact "self-government institutions . . . at the larger tribal, rather than community level"; however, in the draft bill released at the end of last year (Council of Indigenous Peoples 2015) it was the reverse, with autonomy devolved to the local level, much to the chagrin of some activists (Shih 2015).

A useful point of comparison is with the Māori in New Zealand, who rejected the multiculturalist policies put in place in the 1970s and '80s, replacing them with a model whereby the Māori are viewed as semi-autonomous partners in a bicultural state (May 1999). The form of multiculturalism that existed in New Zealand prior to 1984, known as *taha Māori*, is what might be called an "'ethnic additive' approach to multicultural education," in which "an 'ethnic' component" is "tacked on to the existing monocultural curriculum" (May 1999: 286). Under such a model, Māori culture is treated no differently than any other non-*Pākehā* (New

Zealanders of European descent) culture. However, in 1984 the Waitangi Tribunal was given the power to settle claims under the framework of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, a moribund document that was given new (and retroactive) legal force (May 1999: 283). The framework was based on what Stephen May (1999: 278) refers to as "negotiated power sharing," which "extends well beyond the desultory measures of local autonomy already established for some indigenous groups." As such it does not easily fall within current liberal conceptions of the position of minorities within the nation-state. Where Taiwan's approach to indigenous cultural policy is thought of in terms of a scale-making project, in which indigeneity is a characteristic of the local, New Zealand treats the Māori as a semi-autonomous power at the state level. It is an ideology of autonomy rather than one of multiculturalism (May 1999: 290).

In the case of indigenous Taiwanese the hegemony of the local means that indigenous people's ability to function as political actors, or "leviathans" (Golub 2014), is circumscribed by the politics of multicultural domination and the impossibility of being truly authentic local subjects. In turn, the logic of authenticity under the hegemony of the local has pushed indigenous people towards a logic of fractal recursivity in a way that it has not for Taiwan's Chinese population, whose authenticity (and local-ness) has never been in doubt. This has had consequences for both the politics of indigenous sovereignty, a sovereignty that has yet to be realized in Taiwan, and for indigenous cultural policy, which is focused on local authenticity at the expense of other forms of legitimacy.

Conclusion: Civil Society and Democracy

On March 18, 2014, several hundred students occupied Taiwan's Legislative Yuan, giving birth to the "Sunflower Student Movement." The protest was in response to the rushed passing of the Cross-Strait Services Trade Agreement with China. Even though student criticism of the CSSTA mirrored criticisms voiced in opposition to other global trade agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the framing of the movement's discourse was largely in terms of procedural democracy and fear of China's growing influence over Taiwanese politics and economics. For this reason the movement failed to build ties with radical anticapitalist movements around the world that would have otherwise been natural allies in this fight. Similarly, within Taiwan, indigenous people have long been at the forefront of protests over neoliberal policies aimed at commodifying local culture and subverting local democracy through public–private "build, operate, transfer" (BOT) agreements. If Sunflower Movement leaders really wanted to push for local sovereignty as a means to resist neoliberal incursion, it would seem natural to ally with indigenous groups seeking local autonomy. Unfortunately, such arguments were largely unheeded by the leadership of the occupation (Chao and Hu 2014).

Every hegemony contains the possibility of counter-hegemony, but a progressive hegemony of the local requires a redefinition of the local, one which emphasizes both bottom-up democracy and transnational alliances. On both these counts, Taiwan still has a long way to go. In a paper tracing the origins and effects of community making, Allen Chun (2014: 9–10) argues

that even though local movements give "the impression of being implemented from the bottom up and enabling communities to govern themselves in the spirit of democracy and civil society," the policies are implemented in a "top heavy way." He then asks, "How can state directed democracy and civil society be bottom up?" (2014: 10).

Part of the problem lies in civil society itself, which often functions within the logic of the dominant hegemony, even when it appears to be "bottom up." For Gramsci who, as Joseph Buttigieg points out, was acutely aware that "the power to manufacture consent is not evenly distributed in society," civil society is not "the sphere of freedom but of hegemony" (Buttigieg 1995: 6–7). But in so saying it is important to remember that, for Gramsci, hegemony is morally neutral. He always holds out the possibility of a truly progressive hegemony, one produced by a genuine bottom-up social movement (Friedman 2009: 359).

For indigenous autonomy to live up to its counter-hegemonic potential it must be more than an escapist withdrawal from the nation state. As Arif Dirlik argues, it is "meaningless to pretend that places may reappropriate nature and society unless they also project themselves into the spaces that are presently the domains of capital and modernity" (Dirlik 1999: 179). As I have argued above, even if it is true that indigenous politics in Taiwan is frequently trapped by the hegemonic logic of local multiculturalism, the very concept of indigeneity is predicated on a politics of scale which seeks to link the local to the global. As such, it has the power to make subversive use of the same "global flows and exchanges" that serve the interests of neoliberal capitalism (Hardt and Negri 2001). In the case of Taiwan, even if Austronesian consciousness is being cynically used by the state to promote neoliberal "free trade" agreements, it has simultaneously opened up spaces whereby indigenous people can create international horizontal alliances to promote their own interests. In my fieldwork with Hualien Tribal College I have seen how they have made use of newly available government funds to foster cultural exchange visits with Austronesian counterparts in New Zealand, Fiji, Guam, and Hawaii. As a result of these visits they have learned of alternative approaches to multicultural education and language revitalization that challenge the models used in Taiwan. Thus, government programs aimed at reproducing neoliberal multiculturalism in Taiwan may inadvertently be setting the stage for an alternative politics of scale.

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