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You Can’t Build a Canoe Online: Activism and Identity in Indigenous Taiwan
你不能在线建造独木舟：原住民台湾的行动主义和身份

by Adam Hinden
何亚当

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Senior Independent Study Thesis

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Abstract|摘要

The Republic of China is the current government occupying the island of Taiwan — a multiethnic land that has been populated by diverse groups for thousands of years. Today, these groups continue to face a range of adversities on behalf of the colonial government. Further, the island's internet is dominated by Western social media platforms that exclude native modes of communication. Through ethnographic surveys and interviews, this study explores how indigenous Taiwanese activists understand their own identities, strategies of activism, and relationships to social media platforms to interrogate dominant postcolonial frameworks. It comes to two separate yet linked conclusions regarding the insufficiency of Western categories on one hand, and social media platforms on the other.

中华民国是占领台湾岛的现任政府。台湾岛是一个多民族的地方，被原住民住了几千年来。今天，台湾的原住民遭受政府代表的诸多逆境。另外，西方社交媒体主导台湾的互联网。那些社交媒体不允许原住民用自己的方式表达自己。这个研究用调查和访谈考察台湾原住民活动家如何理解他们自己的身份、活动的策略以及与社交媒体平台的关系，以此来审视主流的后殖民主义框架。这个论文有两个独立且相关的结论来探讨西方类别标签类和西方社交媒体平台的局限性。

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This research was made possible by the immense generosity and kindness of many individuals from all over the world and Beall Avenue.

I am so grateful that my interlocutors trusted me with their unique stories and life experiences. Their enthusiasm about my project and willingness to provide me insight into the ongoing struggles of their communities made this experience personally meaningful and compels me to continue down this road. 非常谢谢您们的帮助!

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Chapter 1: Introduction|介绍

章节摘要：这个章节的目的是介绍我的研究项目。开始，我提到 Thiong’o 与 Achebe 之间的一个有名的辩论。他们都是非洲作家，可是他们有不一样的关于殖民语言的看法。Thiong’o 觉得非洲作家应该用他们自己的母语，所以他的看法是反对殖民语言。另一方面，Achebe 认为非洲作家可以用殖民语言来反对殖民政府。我的独立研究项目考虑了辩论内的问题：原住民可不可以用殖民的系统来真实地表达他们的文化？这个章节讨论这个主题。

> “The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people’s definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe” (Thiong'o 1986, 4)

This quote, from Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, emphasizes the primacy of language to the human process of self-identification. It comes from the scholar’s 1986 book *Decolonizing the Mind*, which outlines his position on an ongoing debate regarding the potential for colonial languages to be appropriated for African indigenous means. Thiong'o — who writes primarily in Gikuyu — strongly advocated for African authors to discard the languages that colonialism had forced on them and instead write in their mother tongues. He believed that in the colonial project, “the bullet was the means for physical subjugation,” and “language was the means of spiritual subjugation” (Thiong’o 1986, 9). This point was notably contested by Chinua Achebe, who contended that the English language could be weaponized towards decolonial ends. To him, such an endeavor amounted to “infiltrating the ranks of the enemy and destroying him from within.” (Gallagher 1997, 260). Although this discourse took place within cultural contexts of postcolonial Africa, a broadly relevant inquiry sits at its core: can colonial systems be utilized by indigenous peoples for decolonized self-expression?

This study examines the above question with regard to the roles of Western social media platforms — particularly Facebook and Instagram — within indigenous activist movements in Taiwan. The Republic of China is the current government occupying the territory of Taiwan — a small island off the southeastern coast of mainland China. Speakers of over 20 Austronesian languages have lived in Taiwan for millennia prior to outside conquest. Early populations of such groups became the progenitors for indigenous groups including the Maori, Samoan, and Tongan peoples (Ryan 2007, 191). The term "indigenous" itself originated much later, however, and in a setting far removed from Taiwan. Its first use dates back to 1640, where it was applied to cultures that European colonists encountered in the new world (Peters 2017, 1239). The concept is thus distinct from the settler-colonial contexts of Taiwan, which are influenced on one hand by Han understandings of ethnicity and nationhood, and on the other by the unique self-identifications and activist strategies of Taiwan's diverse tribes (Li 2003, 236). I chose to focus this study on Taiwan both because of its distinctness from the contexts in which the "indigenous" analytic originated, as well as my personal ties to the island informed by teaching experiences in the indigenous village of Nanao. An initial investigation into online indigenous activism led to a deeper interrogation of the soundness of anthropological analytics themselves.

A broad range of anthropological studies have been conducted regarding online and indigenous activism, as well as their more specific intersections. Moreover, indigeneity in Taiwan has been heavily theorized for the past several decades. However, as I show in this study, such scholarship has the (sometimes) unintended consequence of reifying categories including "indigenous," "activism," and "indigenous activism" that may not hold meaning to the peoples on which they are applied, and in Taiwan's case, essentialize populations of irreducibly diverse backgrounds. This study recognizes such disjunctures, and advocates for the further situation of

analytical categories within local understandings of identity and resilience. It does so by amplifying the anthropological theory of indigenous scholars and utilizing a two-stage ethnographic methodology. This approach allows for the salience of certain concepts and terms to be gauged before they are centered in further research — thereby reducing my own ethnocentric assumptions of the universality of categories. Finally, it must be noted that this study does not attempt to make a political statement on the sovereignty of the Republic of China or its relationship to the People's Republic of China. My discussions of Taiwan as a "state" explicitly reference the Republic of China's status as a settler-colonial government built on the subjugation of its indigenous peoples. This dynamic exists independently of the island's contested relationship with mainland China.

In this paper, I begin with a broad overview of extant literature surrounding the topics of indigeneity, activism, the online sphere, and Taiwan. In doing so, I make the case for the uniqueness of my project while simultaneously highlighting the problematic categories that underlie others'. I next outline a theoretical framework through which this study can be understood — introducing the notion of "cybercolonialism" as a tool for critically interrogating the cultural biases embedded in Western social media platforms. My two-staged methodology is subsequently discussed, before the results of such are analyzed in depth. My thesis ultimately comes to two distinct yet fundamentally linked conclusions regarding the culturally-charged nature of specific social media platforms on one hand, and the problematic reductionism of the term "indigenous activism" on the other. Namely, Taiwan's "indigenous" population includes a vast array of tribal identities that understand themselves differently, engage in different traditions of sociality, and face different adversities on behalf of the colonial government — all resulting in a range of activisms indescribable by a unitary category of "indigenous activism." Web 2.0

social media, in turn, channels any such construction through architectures of individual authorship and written communication. The platforms thus do not provide the “plural sites of creativity” that Thiong'o argues is central to liberation from colonialism (Bidwell 2016, 51).

Chapter 2: Literature Review|文献评论

章节摘要：我的文献评论考察现存的关于以下各主题的人类学研究文献，比如原住民的问题、原住民的行动主义、在线行动、和台湾原住民的情况。我的项目专注于这三个主题的交叉。所以，这个论文提供一个独特的分析。通过这个调查，我们可以认识到学者通常物化“原住民”和“原住民行动”的观念，可是那些词不一定对原住民有意义。

The topic of indigeneity has been central to anthropology since its birth as a discipline. However, as anthropology continues to reckon with its own colonial history and related methodological inconsistencies, its relationship to indigenous communities has changed significantly. Namely, anthropology has advanced from a salvage project intended to systematically observe and categorize indigeneity to a discipline that aims to draw its core inquiries from decolonized knowledge. Anthropologist Paul Sillitoe (1998) summarizes this evolved ethic in his article "The Development of Indigenous Knowledge":

> The difference between indigenous-knowledge research and anthropology is one of emphasis. It is less an intellectual pursuit than an applied one, its objective being to introduce a locally informed perspective into development - some would argue long overdue - of a more explicit anthropological perspective. (Sillitoe 1998, 223-224)

Despite this discursive recentering, anthropological understandings of an indigenous category still essentialize diverse groups of people, and cultivate a "disjuncture in representation where stereotypes, images, and ideological structures do not match local perceptions of indigeneity" (Tseng 2017, 53). Moreover, the category is rooted in Western historical contexts that do not necessarily correspond with non-European, let alone Han, colonialisms. Scholarship regarding indigeneity in Taiwan thus requires new theoretical and methodological frameworks that do not impose traditional, eurocentric categories. Such angles have been thoroughly explored in regards to Taiwanese social institutions, but less frequently have indigenous self-conceptions been

centered at the core of studies. Moreover, although the interface between indigeneity and modernity - especially the internet - has been theorized heavily by social scientists, it has seldom been done so in the specific case of Taiwan, and almost never with regards to contentious activism. This study thus lies at the unexplored intersection of three broad topics: indigenous activism, the internet, and Taiwan. This chapter outlines current understandings of the three topics, with special attention paid to overlaps between them. Namely, I begin by discussing anthropological understandings of activism in regards to indigeneity, the internet, and the intersections between them. Next, such frameworks are situated in the Taiwanese context with reference to both the ongoing colonialism of its social institutions and the activism taking place to contest them. Finally, I use these reviews to justify the uniqueness and importance of my own study, and in doing so, make a case for a further decolonized anthropology.

Indigenous Activism

Anthropologists have both studied and participated in what they deemed indigenous activism for decades. Namely, anthropologists witnessed “the ‘renewed’ push by national governments to exploit natural resources and colonize in remote frontier regions” and corresponding indigenous responses during the 1970s (Wali 2011, 4). Such activism compelled anthropologists to both participate in indigenous institution building and establish nongovernmental organizations. Notable examples of anthropologist-led organizations include the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), Cultural Survival, and INDÍGENA (Wali 2011, 4). This early marriage of anthropology and indigenous activism has furnished a broad body of scholarship from all over the world. This section highlights this body - placing specific emphasis on scholarly debates surrounding binaries of resistance, the “authenticity trap,” and the indigenization of modernity.

Indigenous activism manifests in a multitude of innovative forms that arise from specific cultural contexts. It can be understood as a simultaneous reassertion and reconnection with decolonial lifeways that cannot be neatly mapped by traditional conceptions of resistance. Veber (1998) argues that analysis of indigenous activism from the dominant/dominated binary "positions the native in the role of the perpetual object of projects conceived by the dominant other and presents the indigenous peoples as deprived of the capacity of agency" (Veber 1998, 385). On the other hand, Ranger (1994) maintains that the decolonized cultural practices that indigenous activists seek to reconnect with are inherently reactions to, and therefore products of Western hegemony. In the same vein, "authentic" indigeneity has been theorized by many scholars to lie in diametric opposition to forces of globalization and neoliberalism (Hall & Fenelon 2015, Kunitz 2000, Moahi 2007). Indigenous activism is thus here construed as a dualistic, contentious avoidance of Western modernity (Lauderdale 2008). Anthropologists such as Marshall Sahlins (1999) and Mark Goodale (2008) resist this dualism, instead positing that indigenous peoples innovatively situate hegemonic impositions into their own understandings and, by doing so, indigenize modernity itself. According to this perspective, "the world is being re-diversified by indigenous adaptations to the global juggernaut" (Sahlins 1999, ix). Numerous studies regarding transformative, hi-tech indigenous activism have been conducted with this principle in mind (Feliciano-Santos 2017, Huarcaya 2015, Noelani 2017). Although the body of anthropological scholarship on indigenous activism comes to different conclusions about its characteristics and goals, it all ends up reifying "indigenous activism" as a meaningful category itself. This category is treated as valid for the sake of analyzing and situating extant literature, but later will be interrogated as the actual perspectives of indigenous Taiwanese are brought to the forefront.

Online Activism

Before investigating the intersections of indigenous activism and the internet, I first discuss current understandings of online activism. Due to its fluidity and diversity of purpose and outcome, online activism itself has been defined in many ways by different scholars.

Sandor Vegh (2003) defined online activism as any "politically motivated movement relying on the Internet" (Vegh 2003, 71). Yang Guobin, on the other hand, more broadly constructed it as "any form of Internet based collective action that promotes, contests, or resists change" (Yang 2009, 3). The latter definition is especially important to the subject of indigeneity, as it does not limit the scope of online activism to that which operates within the realm of political institutions. Either way, scholars generally agree that the internet has fundamentally transformed the qualities, tactics, and structures of such movements (Fileborn 2014, Mallapragada 2014). This is partly due to the fact that social media has allowed for a level of participatory inclusivity that was previously unachievable. Ning Zhang (2014) argues that web communities "constitute a fluid and open-ended social body that primarily relies on voluntary participation, collaboration, mobility and flexibility" (Zhang 2014, 277). In other words, the internet allows for discourses to be spontaneously created and deliberated upon by a wide body of netizens largely unimpeded by strict barriers of membership or affiliation. Further logistics associated with offline mobilization such as centralized leadership, defined motives, material distribution, and meeting location selection are no longer prerequisites for activism to take place. Participation in online

movements is also limited to a far lesser extent by factors of geography, language, and physical ability - allowing for "unprecedented opportunities for information flow, affective expression, social influence, and even democratic revolution" (Lewis 2014, 1). The extent to which these qualities can be exclusively credited to digitization of dissent, however, remains a point of contention within the literature.

The functional relationship between online and offline activism is a subject that remains highly debated by scholars. On one hand, the internet is conceptualized as a tool used by activists in broader, preexisting offline movements. This "supplemental" point of view often describes the role of the internet in activism as solely disseminative, community forming, and performative, but not outwardly contentious. Ning Zhang (2014) writes:

> ...citizens and activists use the Internet mainly for forming communities, sharing information, instilling democratic values and solving immediate social problems. They do not call for cyberwar, acts of hacktivism or other sorts of offensive online and offline actions, but seek to bring social justice and improve well-being within their sphere of influence, sometimes even soliciting support from the government to achieve these goals (Zhang 2014, 277).

Lewis et. Al. similarly found an "inverse relationship between broad online social movement mobilization and deep participation" (Lewis et. al. 2014, 7). Their study conceptualized online activism as an illusory endeavor that made individuals feel as if they were contributing to salient change, but never actually doing so. On the other hand, scholars posit that online activism is a separate, legitimate endeavor that has functionally diverged from its offline roots - and thus must be considered in its own right. Yang Guobin (2009) importantly argued that even in the authoritarian context of China, the internet can be used to meaningfully contest state power and

that its users are “skilled actors, not captive audiences” (Yang 2009, 40-41). Alison Powell (2013) similarly argues for the legitimacy of online activism, claiming that “contemporary social movements connect with and are defined by media,” and thus that ordinary netizens hold unprecedented degrees of agency and influence through their internet use. In sum, this second perspective holds that online activism is more than just a tool for otherwise offline dissidents, and that it itself can result in meaningful change beyond just the spreading of awareness. This study synthesizes both perspectives in acknowledging the promotional utility, yet decolonial limitations of social media platforms - as explicitly defined by indigenous interlocutors.

Online Indigenous Activism

As mentioned previously, indigeneity is often theorized as existing in diametric opposition to globalization, including the communicative technologies that accompany it. However, many scholars have analyzed online activism as a decolonizable endeavor that can result in meaningful change. For example, the Canadian First Nations “Idle No More” protest, orchestrated largely through online means, was described by Adam Barker as a successful movement that “challenged Canadian sovereignty and Settler identity in multiple and creative ways” (Barker 2014, 1). Among certain Australian aboriginal groups, the use of social media in tandem with traditional practices of yarning similarly “brought about new knowledges and practices in the movement against colonial power relations” (Carlson 2018, 51). Moreover, Soriano (2012) found that indigenous activists in the Philippines successfully used social media to “build credibility through professionalization” and resist “dominant stereotypes of indigenous communities as backwards and passive” (Soriano 2012, 42). These examples demonstrate the trend in recent scholarship to resist the conceptual dichotomy between indigeneity and social media. However, in doing so, scholars overlook the colonialism embedded within the

functionalities and design choices of such media. My study similarly avoids positioning indigeneity in opposition to modern technology, but simultaneously evaluates the inconsistencies between online and indigenous activism - especially with regards to the ethnocentrism of online platforms. When using social media to achieve their goals, indigenous Taiwanese activists operate under parameters that are colonial to the second degree. That is, not only is the Taiwanese internet facilitated by the colonial Han government, but this internet is in turn dominated by platforms designed and administered by Western corporations. The extent to which such foreign media can be localized to fit Taiwanese indigenous means will be explored throughout the rest of this study. Before doing so, however, the topics of indigenous and online activism are situated in the Taiwanese context.

Indigeneity in Taiwan

Taiwan has been subject to numerous waves of colonization throughout history, allowing for unique interactions of diverse global influences. Within the last millennium, Taiwan has been colonized by Spain, The Netherlands, the Han Chinese Ming dynasty, the Manchu Qing dynasty, and Japan - with each power influencing the island's cultures in their own ways. Most recently, the conclusion of the Chinese civil war in 1949 brought about the exodus of Kuomintang nationalists from mainland China to Taiwan, and the subsequent establishment of the Republic of China as Taiwan's ruling government. However, the People's Republic of China (mainland China) does not recognize Taiwan's independence, but rather claims the island as a province - a controversial distinction that has led to complex and ambiguous contexts of international diplomacy surrounding Taiwan's sovereignty (Cotton 1989, 213).

No colonial power ever encountered Taiwan as a previously uninhabited land. Taiwan is currently home to 800,000 Austronesian indigenous people from 29 different groups. The

Republic of China currently only recognizes 16 of these groups, therefore officially tallying their indigenous population at 500,000 (Ryan 2007, 191). The indigenous population of Taiwan has been continually subjugated by colonizing powers by means of land displacement, forced assimilation, and military conflict. This has led to a drastic diminishment of distinct indigenous cultural and linguistic identity. Despite recent calls from the Tsai Ingwen administration for indigenous autonomy and cross-cultural understanding, including the ROC's first official apology to indigenous peoples (Office of the President of Taiwan, 2016), the island's social institutions continue to uphold Han hegemony.

Scholars have conducted substantial anthropological research on the repressive nature of Taiwan's social institutions. For example, Yulia Nesterova (2019) conducted a study in which 23 indigenous Taiwanese were interviewed about their own experiences with the state-run education system, as well as those of their children or relatives. She found that despite nominal moves towards inclusiveness and understanding, mainstream educational policies "are not fair or sufficient to address the barriers placed on the path towards Indigenous people's sustainable development" (Nesterova 2019, 160). Simon Scott (2010) researched political organization among local indigenous communities in Taiwan in order to understand the inconsistencies between Han and indigenous systems of self governance. He found not only that the electoral systems set in place by the ROC represented a "a radical departure from past political forms," but also that because "the democratic process requires negotiation with nonindigenous political actors, for whom indigenous issues are a small subset of many issues," such issues are not prioritized (Scott 2010, 737). In other words, the Taiwanese electoral system functions under a similar arrangement of nominal inclusivity that ultimately serves to uphold Han hegemony. John Upton (2020) came to yet another similar conclusion in his study about the indigenous courts in

Taiwan. In a recent attempt to protect indigenous lifeways and lands, the Taiwanese government set up a system of indigenous courts designed to be “more respectful of indigenous peoples’ cultural differences and to help secure their judicial rights in Taiwan courtrooms” (Upton 2020, vii). However, after seventeen months of ethnographic research, Upton ultimately found that “the present legal framework protecting Taiwan’s indigenous nations reflects the persistence of imperial and colonial systems and categories of administration” (Upton 2020, 85). Other studies, such as William Hunter’s 2020 investigation into indigenous cultural tourism and Wei-Cheng Chiu’s analysis of indigenous identity in Taiwanese baseball found the same colonial dynamics.

It is clear that Taiwanese social institutions are still inherently colonial, and do not provide the indigenous sovereignty that they purport to. However, as mentioned by Upton, such sovereignty is not a privilege conferrable by a settler colonial state, but rather a latent condition that already exists, “ever waiting to surface, intermittently and opportunistically, in spaces of ambiguous power, government inaction, or bald assertion” (Upton 2020, 335). The above discussed scholarship evidences the fact that Taiwanese social institutions cannot be relied upon as venues for the reassertion of this sovereignty, despite their characterization as decolonized spaces. Even if Taiwan’s institutions did allow for more decolonized agency, their centering as focal points of analysis ultimately reduces indigeneity to expression through colonial mediums. My study instead strives to center indigenous perspectives and, in doing so, consider agency, activism, and change with regard to indigenous goals. Few studies with such decolonized analytical frameworks have been conducted - particularly in regards to indigenous activism in Taiwan. The following, final section will discuss current works in this category.

Indigenous Activism in Taiwan

Since the beginning of Taiwan's occupation by the Republic of China in 1945, the island's indigenous peoples have experienced waves of political repression and liberalization. For the first fifteen years after the departure of Japanese colonists, the Kuomintang (KMT) - the nationalist party of China (and later Taiwan) - imposed martial law on the island. This consolidation of power included "suppressing the native revolt in the February 28 Incident (ererba shijian) of 1947" (Ho 2010, 3). Gradual economic change, catalyzed by the establishment of the Kaohsiung Export-processing Zone in 1965, ushered in an era of urbanization, liberalization, and developmentalism (Ho 2010, 4). However, this trend was not without setbacks, such as the suppression of a significant human rights movement in 1979. Taiwan's subsequent democratization has allowed for grassroots indigenous movements, such as the Taiwan Association for Promoting Aborigines' Rights, to gain traction.

Yi Ling Tseng (2017) conducted an important study on indigenous activism in Taiwan that explored the disjunctures between Han and indigenous conceptions of indigeneity. They found that recent intensive land development projects on behalf of the Taiwanese government have "exacerbated processes of land dispossession, especially on 'indigenous traditional territories,'" and consequently garnered "increasing commitment from young majority Han to support indigenous land rights movements" (Tseng 2017, 57). However, it was concluded that Han allies tended to perceive indigeneity through "authentic indigenous representations" strategically employed to promote their own interests, whereas indigenous activists sought to reject the "authenticity trap" altogether (Tseng 2017, 58). Part of Taiwanese indigenous activism thus involves decolonization from the hegemonic category of "indigenous" itself - as further

evidenced by the 2017 “No One is an Outsider” movement that arose in reaction to Tsai Ingwen’s apology to indigenous peoples.

Mei-Fang Fan (2021) carried out a similar study on activism among the indigenous Tao people of Taiwan’s Orchid island. She found that deliberative “hybrid forums” participated in by both indigenous and nonindigenous experts and laypeople allowed Tao activists to assert indigenous subjectivities into social and environmental issues, while simultaneously contributing to “wider national politics of indigeneity in Taiwan” (Fan 2021, 1507). Here too, however, Fan argues that Han participants, albeit well intentioned, understood “possession and property in ways which are not just inconsistent with Tao law and culture, but are directly antagonistic to the Tao ideas of rights, relationships and responsibilities” (Fan 2021, 1493). Yayut Chen (2018) also investigated the problematic discrepancies between indigenous and colonial conceptions of land ownership, as well as the mainstream media’s portrayal of related indigenous activism as “without any reference to historical injustices” (Chen 2018, 1001). The limited body of scholarship centers around indigenous activism evidence the fact that it is not just social institutions that stifle decolonized agency, but also hegemonic understandings of indigeneity itself - as manifested in the thoughts and actions of Han allies.

My study focuses on online indigenous activism in Taiwan. By doing so, it fills the discursive gap between indigenous activism, online activism, and the unique Taiwanese context. It also expands on anthropological understandings of indigeneity by considering the internet as what Upton (2020) deemed a “space of ambiguous power” in which latent indigenous sovereignty can potentially be reasserted. Social media in this study are nevertheless not assumed to be liberatory spaces, or vehicles that can wholly accommodate indigenous expression. At the end of the day, the architectures of the internet’s most penetrating platforms are primarily

constructed based on Western constructions of sociality and communication (Albirini 2008, 50). This is particularly true of Facebook - by far the most widely used social media platform in Taiwan (Thomala 2020). Social media, like Taiwan's social institutions, land ownership laws, and even fundamental understandings of identity, may also be imbued with deep-seated colonial presuppositions that do not necessarily correspond with indigenous lifeways. They thus suffer from the same underlying bias that Thiong'o believed afflicted the English language. The analysis that follows is thus primarily informed by the perspectives of indigenous activists themselves, with pre-existing literature serving merely to contextualize and discursively situate such findings. Finally, it additionally serves to push back against primarily exogenous anthropological terms that are constructed, reified, and reproduced through their uses as analytical categories - as outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework|理论框架

章节摘要：这个章节提供重要理论的描述，有三部分。第一部分描述 Faye Ginsburg 对数字时代的观念的批判。第二部分介绍我的关于西方社交媒体的文化偏见的理论，这个观念叫“网络殖民主义”。第三部分谈论陳怡萱关于原住民行动的方法的看法。

This study primarily draws on theoretical underpinnings from scholars Faye Ginsburg, Yayut Chen, and Yang Guobin in understanding both the colonial implications of social media and its relationship to Taiwanese indigenous activism. More specifically, Ginsburg's analysis of the "Digital Age" provides a critical lens through which liberatory conceptions of social media can be interrogated. This interpretation of the online sphere from the critical neocolonial perspective pushes back against previous theorizations thereof, including Marshall Sahlins' notion of the "Indigenization of Modernity." This theory only goes so far, however, and benefits from further decolonization and contextualization informed by indigenous Taiwanese knowledge. Yayut Chen's conceptions of situated resilience and decolonized methodology help supply this perspective. These are used to construct this study's understanding of meaningful agency, and thus, activism. Additionally, Yang Guobin's writings regarding the relationship between power and online contention are applied to further justify the coloniality embedded in online indigenous activism. It must be noted that these theoretical perspectives are not positioned as prescriptive maps for hypothesizing or categorizing lived experiences. Rather, relevant points from the above-mentioned theorists are dialectically identified and synthesized in order to produce an ethnographically-informed framework through which Taiwanese indigenous activism can be investigated and supported. This chapter begins with a critique of the "Digital Age" narrative with reference to Faye Ginsburg's "allochronic chronopolitics." Drawing from this critical perspective, I then use the term "cybercolonialism" to highlight the ethnocentric

architectures of social media that render them culturally charged, and thus not neutral spaces. I examine cybercolonialism both in terms of the individualist social logics and graphocentric linguistic biases that underpin the Western, profile-based platforms that dominate the Taiwanese internet. Next, I apply Yang Guobin's framework regarding the relationship between power and contention in online activism to the Taiwanese neocolonial context. In doing so, I further substantiate the argument that Taiwan's most prominent social media platforms inhibit decolonized activism by presupposing Westernized social logics. If online activism through such media is thus fundamentally colonized, however, what might true decolonized activism look like? I employ Yayut Chen's concept of situated resilience to address this question and conclude that "indigenous activism" in Taiwan is a prescriptive, essentialized category that is incompatible with local perspectives. Investigation of true decolonized agency instead begins with radical contextualization that allows for the divergent self-understandings of Taiwan's indigenous peoples to be understood in their own right and on their own terms. This once again ties into Thiong'o's fundamental argument regarding the embedded coloniality in hegemonic systems of communication, as well as the primacy of language to human self-construction.

Interrogating the Digital Age

The internet has revolutionized the means by which culture is produced, disseminated, and consumed around the world. However, both the equal distribution of online platforms and the applicability of their designs and functions to multicultural norms of communication remain limited. In her 2008 piece "Rethinking the Digital Age," anthropologist Faye Ginsburg problematizes dominant discourses that conflate progress with digitization. More specifically, she argues that the new "Digital Age" narrative carries with it an "unexamined ethnocentrism"

that perpetuates an allochronic, or non-contemporaneous stereotype of indigenous peoples (Ginsburg 2008, 291, 302). She holds that the narrative of the arrival of the Digital Age has "taken on a sense of evolutionary inevitability" that positions digerati as inherently more advanced than those who do not enjoy unimpeded internet access (Ginsburg 2008, 300). According to internet researcher Joseph Johnson, the global internet penetration rate in 2021 is 59.5% (Johnson, 2022). In other words, 59.5% of the global population has some capacity to access the internet. Although significantly higher than the 12% of the time that Ginsburg's chapter was published, today's global internet accessibility rate is still strikingly low - especially for an age of humanity characterized as "Digital." Among indigenous communities, internet penetration percentages run much lower. Accurate rates for total indigenous internet usage around the world are nearly impossible to determine due to both inaccessibility of information and the question of who is considered indigenous. Nevertheless, recent demographic reports have estimated the indigenous internet penetration rate at under 50% in the United States (Jacobsen, 2022), and under 24% in Canada (Greenfield, 2022). In Australia, only 13% of very remote aboriginal populations enjoy internet access, compared to the 62% of nonindigenous people living in the same areas (Korff, 2022). The seeming ubiquity of the internet embedded in the digital age narrative thus perpetuates a stratified, Western-centered worldview that "appears as a facade of First World illusions" (Wilson 2008, 289). At the same time, by centering the Western-originated internet system as the marker for the progression of human history, "Digital Age" discourses establish barriers of entry into modernity at "cost, language (English), and technological literacy required to manipulate digital information" (Agosto 2019, 106). This nomenclature not only results in the exclusion of the disproportionate amount of indigenous people who remain unable to access the internet, but also intrinsically links indigeneity with an

unevolved past. Ginsburg borrows the term “allochronic chronopolitics” to describe how this technocentrism ends up “restratifying the world along lines of a late modernity, despite the utopian promises by the digerati of the possibilities of a twenty-first-century, McLuhanesque global village” (Wilson 2008, 291). This framework provides a useful lens through which discourses of modernity can be interrogated, but it leaves the embedded ethnocentrism in the internet’s primary platforms unexamined. My study builds on Ginsburg’s critique by arguing that the design and functions of online platforms themselves reproduce Western modes of sociality and expression. In other words, social media is problematically colonial not only when conflated with chronological eras of modernity, but also in terms of the culturally biased social logics that underpin them and render them incompatible with local lifeways. In order to further investigate such ethnocentric underpinnings, I consider the cybercolonialism embedded in social media in terms of its ability to inhibit decolonized activism.

Cybercolonialism

In this work, I introduce the term “cybercolonialism” as a lens for understanding the ethnocentrism that lies latent in the structures, functionalities, and actions allowed by Web 2.0 social media platforms. I explore the social logics and linguistic dimensions of cybercolonialism in this section. More specifically, such platforms both presuppose Western social logics in their user interfaces and operate using algorithms that structurally exclude indigenous languages -- especially those of Taiwan. Cybercolonialism can thus be understood as a dynamic in which hegemonic ideologies are focalized and reinforced through the architectures of online platforms. It is not that platforms completely preclude assertions of indigeneity or counterhegemonic discourse, but rather that they impel such expressions to occur within Western social parameters

emphasizing individual personhood and sole authorship (Bidwell 2016, 52). Further, my two-pronged approach is by no means exhaustive, as inconsistencies between social media-provided agency and indigenized agency will differ from group to group and location to location, including within Taiwan. My emphasis on these two particular poles is informed specifically by the perspectives of my interlocutors. Finally, the extent to which cybercolonialism applies to nonindigenous Taiwanese and Han people generally is an entirely separate inquiry that may shed light on Taiwan's second-degree colonialism. This study, however, focuses specifically on the relationship between Taiwanese indigenous activists and the island's most prominent social media platforms. With these considerations in mind, the concept of cybercolonialism in the Taiwanese indigenous case will be explored.

The Social Logics of Cybercolonialism

The centrality of user-created content and inter-user communication characterizes what Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty famously termed "Web 2.0" - the ecosystem of social platforms that represented the next stage of evolution past the passive, informational websites of "Web 1.0" (Chakraborty, 2022). In other words, the platforms that constitute Web 2.0 are more so networks than websites - as they are dynamically modeled by the content disseminated by their users. However, the ways in which such content *can* be disseminated and interacted with are governed by specific social logics. Van Dijck (2013) identified four primary elements that underpin the logics of social media: programmability, popularity, connectivity, and datafication. He defines programmability as "the ability of a social media platform to trigger and steer users' creative or communicative contributions, while users, through their interaction with these coded environments, may in turn influence the flow of communication and information activated by such a platform." (van Dijck 2013, 5) This mechanism, he argues, functions within a popularity-

oriented "like-economy" that privileges and further boosts the content of users that receive a greater number of likes (or platform-specific equivalents) (van Dijck 2013, 7). These two principles, along with the interpersonal connectivity that arises from them, are understood to be "grounded in the condition of datafication" (van Dijck 2013, 9). By enshrining all user interactions, physical locations, proximities to other users, personal tastes, browsing habits, demographic identities and countless other points of data in a legible, sellable set of information, social media companies effectively orient the functionalities of their platforms towards consumer capitalism. If we take renowned historian Joyce Appleby's characterization of capitalism as a "cultural system" into account, social media's cultural biases become even more apparent (Appleby 2011).

While these considerations help support the notion that Western social media impede decolonized agency, my conception of the social-logical dimension of cybercolonialism aims to explore the embedded assumptions in even deeper levels of their structures. Namely, the primacy of user profile on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter reflects certain cultural constructions of the individual self that may not correspond with local self understandings. Online spaces such as group chats and discussion boards allow for mediated audiences to express, consume, and share in specific knowledge, but still from the individualized focal point of a private profile. Although platforms such as TikTok partially redirect focus to a central flow of content, the publication and consumption of such content still takes place from the vantage point of private profiles. Such media allow for the dissemination of diverse indigenous content, but they do so exclusively from the individualized loci of user profiles. This system fundamentally separates individuals from communities by mandating individual authorship for user content, and by doing so, privileges "an individualist logic where personhood exists prior to

interpersonal relationships" (Bidwell 2016, 52). To tribes living in Taiwan such as the Bunun, whose traditional concepts of sociality revolve around communal ritual gatherings that engender a sense of togetherness (Yang 2011, 320), or the Atayal, whose unique culture places emphasis on collective ownership and expression based on the ritual system of gaga (Chen 2018, 998), the embedded individualism of dominant platforms may seem somewhat incompatible with local logics. Regardless, this is not an argument for the static authenticity of indigenous cultures or a reinforcement of the modernity/indigeneity binary. The extent to which indigenous peoples creatively reappropriate and rediversify modernity is a topic that has been considered broadly by anthropologists for decades (Goodale 2008, Sahlins 1999). However, liberatory theorizations of social media tend to dangerously overlook the logical presuppositions ingrained in online platforms that limit agency to specific cultural, and thus, colonial expressions. My conceptualization thus serves to push back against such discourses by framing dominant social media as culturally charged spaces that require critical interrogation and subsequent decolonization.

It is also imperative that the capacity for the internet to sustain decolonized spaces be recognized. The world's dominant social media may be laden with ethnocentric user interface design sensibilities, but this does not mean that the internet as a whole cannot be creatively reappropriated towards indigenous needs. University of Namibia computer scientist Nicola Bidwell employed a similar framework when analyzing the discrepancies between social media-propagated modes of communication and those of indigenous African peoples. She comparably found that dominant social media's "individualist logic about self" differed from the "collective ethic pervading communitarian philosophies attributed to many African societies" (Bidwell 2016, 52). "Audio Repository," an innovative social media developed for local communication

in Mankosi, South Africa, was accordingly structured around local logics of collective orality. This example not only demonstrates the internet's capacity for decolonization, but also the explicit discrepancies between Western social media logic and indigenous social logic. It is not just cultural constructs of communication that are imposed by Western platforms, however. The next section will discuss the linguistic aspect of cybercolonialism that results in the algorithmic exclusion of indigenous languages from online platforms - thus further inhibiting decolonized agency.

Linguistic Cybercolonialism

It is evident, from both existing anthropological works on indigeneity and the perspectives of my interlocutors, that understanding and preservation of indigenous languages is paramount to decolonization (Galla 2009, Hermes 2012, Pawan 2009, Sterk 2020). Thus, the capacity for Western social media to include and reproduce such languages is crucial to their facility for sustaining decolonized online spaces. Facebook and Instagram are by far the top two most prominent social media platforms in Taiwan (Lopez, 2021). A quick check on Facebook will reveal that although some indigenous languages are available, such as Bisaya and Iñupiaq, none from the island of Taiwan are supported. Instagram (now owned by Facebook/Meta), on the other hand, does not support a single indigenous language. Even Google Translate - the world's leading translation app - does not offer its services in most indigenous languages, including widely spoken North American languages such as Cree and Diné. This exclusion stems chiefly from the technological limitations of the websites' translative algorithms, which require a certain number of written documents to train its AIs. Indigenous languages with few or no written texts are thus dubbed "low resource," and cannot be cheaply incorporated into such social media (Hilleary 2022). This dynamic perpetuates a graphocentrism that inherently precludes Taiwanese

indigenous languages - all unwritten - from the island's most popular social media. This of course does not prevent indigenous users from posting in their own languages, but a knowledge of Chinese, English or another colonial tongue will be necessary to navigate to the stage where such can be done. Cybercolonialism is thus linguistic to the extent that it reproduces colonial requirements for oracy and literacy and forces indigenous expression, in whatever dialect, to occur within spaces fundamentally governed by colonial language.

Cybercolonialism, in both its social-logical and linguistic dimensions, is not a justification for a passive, non-agentive stereotype of indigenous peoples, or an all-out rejection of the internet's decolonial potential. Rather, it is an analytical framework through which the embedded ethnocentrism of the world's most ubiquitous social platforms can be interrogated. Such social media have been dangerously characterized as culturally neutral and decolonizable in a wide body of anthropological scholarship. This trend results in the reification of Western sociocultural logics of the self as universal and axiomatic - a testament to both the blinding immersiveness of social media and the subtle ethnocentrism that accompanies it.

Analysis of the dominant social media platforms in Taiwan through the cybercolonial lens also sheds light on new impediments to indigenous activism. When investigating the nature of online activism on the Chinese internet, sociologist Yang Guobin held that "power shapes contention" (Yang 2009, 13). This causal framework can be reworked to suit cybercolonial contexts in Taiwan and around the world. Namely, ethnocentric social media platforms, as infrastructures mediated by the state (power), shape the agency, let alone contentious activism that can occur through them. Therefore, online indigenous activism, no matter how anticolonial in purpose, is practically molded by the architectures of the platforms it takes place on. My analysis up to this point, however, has focused almost exclusively on the inhibition of

decolonized agency, with little attention being paid to how indigenous activism itself is conceptualized. Yayut Chen's conception of "situated resilience" will next be explored in order to understand decolonized activism in the specific contexts of Taiwan.

Situated Resilience

In her article "Decolonizing Methodologies, Situated Resilience, and Country: Insights from Tayal Country, Taiwan," scholar Yayut Chen advocates for the notion of "situated resilience" as a framework centering "the specific temporal-spatial context in which the concept and practice of resilience are generated, defined, and exercised" (Chen 2020, 3). In doing so, she adopts a perspective of radical contextualism that rejects universalist conceptions of agency, contention, and activism - instead emphasizing the ontological pluralities between cultures that engender divergent understandings of resilience. This perspective critiques the anthropological focus on abstract concepts such as agency and activism - elements that, to indigenous peoples including the Atayal, are nonseperate from and "inherently situated in a relational web of connections across time and space" (Chen 2020, 3). Through this framework, it can be reasoned that any blanket model of "indigenous activism" is an essentialist construct that exists only to the observing anthropologist but is meaningless to the indigenous populations to which it is applied. There is no indigenous activism, but rather a vast multitude of spatially and culturally situated indigenous activisms - at least one per self-defined group. In the case of Taiwan, tribal distinctions remain rooted in Japanese colonial schemes, and are continuously contested and reshaped by indigenous activists (Chen 2020, 10). In-depth ethnographic research would thus have to be conducted to discern autochthonous group boundaries before any situated resiliences could be identified.

What unites Taiwan's diverse groups is their common colonizer, and what unites their online modes of resilience is their common encounter with cybercolonialism. The Western social media that dominate Taiwan's internet is, as discussed above, underpinned by social logics and linguistic biases that hinder indigenous resilience. They channel and reshape meaningful indigenous expression towards individualist, capitalist schema without regard for specific spatial and cultural contexts. The concept of situated resilience thus supports the cybercolonialism perspective by demonstrating the fundamental essentialism of social media. If the diverse modes of indigenous resilience cannot be neatly mapped to a concise category of "indigenous activism," they surely cannot be meaningfully represented by a rigid colonial system of communication.

To summarize, the "Digital Age" discourse carries with it an exclusionary rhetoric that paints indigenous groups as premodern, unevolved, and left behind in the great progression of human history. However, even if all people had equal access to the internet, they would find that the platforms that dominate it require individuals to operate within culturally incongruent parameters of sociality and language. Tension between this dominant system and the myriad of contextualized modes of resilience and agency belonging to each autochthonous group is inevitable, and makes clear the need for alternative, culturally situated media. Echoing the words of Thiong'o: true decolonization will not be possible without "pluralism of languages as legitimate vehicles of human imagination" (Thiong'o 1993, 28).

Chapter 4: Methodology|方法

章节摘要：这个章节的目的是描述这个独立研究项目的方法。我先谈论调查的方法，然后描述访谈的过程。我在这个章节包括了我问的每一个问题和问这些问题的理由。

This project strives to center indigenous knowledge both in its theoretical and methodological frameworks and in its core inquiries. As such, my methodology is not simply oriented towards the justification of premade hypotheses, but rather employed to discern the fundamental assumptions that underpin the study. Such questions are in turn addressed through further ethnographic research. This two-pronged methodological approach involves preliminary surveys with indigenous Taiwanese - particularly members of the Atayal tribe - followed by more in-depth interviews with indigenous Taiwanese activists. It must be noted that the particular focus on the Atayal tribe in the surveys was not intentional, but rather a coincidental result of my pre-existing connections within Taiwan. Regardless, by allowing ethnographic research to give rise to, not just retroactively support the study's inquiries, ethnocentric assumptions about indigenous Taiwanese contexts as a whole are reduced. This section describes in detail the two poles of the study's methodology.

Anonymous Surveys

A preliminary anonymous survey was designed in order to garner indigenous perspectives on meaningful agency and self-expression. English and Chinese-language versions were created using Google Forms, and included seven brief, open-ended questions:

- What ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (您是什麼少數民族？)
- What languages do you speak? (您講什麼語言？)

- How is your culture performed in modern society? (在今天的社會，您的少數民族人民怎麼表演您的傳統文化？)
- Has your ability to engage with your culture changed? If so, how? (在今天的社會，展演傳統的文化有沒有改變？如果有，请描述那個改變。)
- How would you describe the relationship between your ethnic group(s) and the government of Taiwan? (您的少數民族和台灣的政府有什麼關系？)
- Do you believe that this relationship needs to be changed? If so, how? (您覺得那個關系應不應該改變？如果應該，请描述那個改變。)
- From your perspective, what constitutes meaningful indigenous agency? (有意義的原住民獨立是什麼意思？)

These questions were composed with two interpretive inquiries in mind. Namely, on one level, the literal semantic meanings of the responses - as intentionally constructed by the contributors - provide important insight into contemporary contexts surrounding indigeneity in Taiwan from indigenous vantage points. On another level, I interpret commonalities across answers, including similar disagreements with questions, length and detail of discussions about specific topics, and word choice as indicating the salience (or irrelevance) of certain ideas to indigenous individuals. It must be recognized that there are countless unaccounted factors that could influence individuals' responses to certain questions, and thus that assumptions based on the limited information surveys provide cannot be treated as concrete conclusions. Striking patterns within the answers can nevertheless be valuable to future research, as they shed light on the extent to which my ethnocentric conceptions of indigeneity resonate with local understandings.

Facebook and Instagram - two media used widely in Taiwan - were the primary platforms used to recruit contributors for the survey. I first used Facebook to introduce my research frameworks to existing connections in Taiwan, as well as share my surveys with them. One particular connection - a former Chinese teacher and close friend - proved particularly instrumental in helping with recruitment, as she was able to share my survey with an Atayal schoolteacher from her village. My next step was to find indigenous communities and pages

within these platforms to which I could share my surveys. Through this, I came to join several private and public Facebook groups dedicated to the education, dissemination, and discussion of indigenous culture and issues. These consisted of both broader educative pages run by individuals from diverse backgrounds as well as indigenous (particularly Atayal) run groups used specifically to share and discuss culture from indigenous standpoints. After explaining my research goals and surveys, I was thankfully admitted into several groups of both categories. My next step after admission in these Facebook groups was to post a brief explanation of my research and a link to the survey. However, only I did so in the larger, education-oriented groups so as to not interrupt the indigenous discourse (or violate the rules) of the indigenous-run pages. Careful action was taken to address potential shortcomings with using Facebook for survey distribution, inspired by recommendations from Saleh and Bista (2017) and Evans and Mathur (2005). Namely, I used a free URL shortener to create concise links for my surveys, constructed semi-personalized recruitment messages, ensured that the survey's functionality was easy to use and straightforward, and allowed for unlimited answer space. My activity in such Facebook groups drew the attention of several indigenous rights activists, scholars, and even the founder of an Atayal non-governmental organization. Through direct communication with them, I was eventually able to disseminate my survey to a broader scope of Atayal communities and learn about different Taiwanese platforms. I was also referred to potential contributors that I otherwise would not have met. Finally, I reached out directly to many indigenous individuals whose contributions I encountered frequently among different Facebook groups.

Instagram, by virtue of its individual page-oriented structure, proved less helpful in terms of survey dissemination. Unlike Facebook, Instagram does not have a group function, making it significantly more difficult to find dedicated indigenous communities. On the other hand,

because likes, comments, and "tagged in" information is readily available to users, Instagram made it easier to gauge who was interacting with which posts and for which reasons. Given this transparency, I was able to find users who interacted with posts from indigenous culture pages, and cross reference them with users of #taiwanindigenous, #taiwanindigenouspeoples, or #原住民. Individuals who met both criteria and had non-private accounts were direct-messaged a brief introduction of my research and a link to the survey. This method was far less effective than my Facebook outreach, as direct messages on Instagram from an account one does not follow appear in a separate, not immediately-accessible inbox. Nevertheless, I was still able to use the platform to connect with indigenous-identifying individuals and potential contributors. I received nine responses in total (eight to the Mandarin form, one to the English form).

Upon receipt of survey responses, I conducted content analyses on two levels. I first analyzed each individual's set of responses for apparent themes. Next, I compared these themes to the responses of others in order to identify overarching similarities. This way, I was able to identify broad agreements about issues and concepts while not sacrificing the uniqueness of the contributors' positionalities.

Online surveys are effective tools that can be used to gauge perspectives while maintaining anonymity. However, the specific questions included in surveys may reflect the positionality of the researcher, including their corresponding ethnocentric presumptions. In this case, although I gained invaluable insight into native conceptions of indigeneity through online surveys, I was still limited by the partiality of my inquiries, as well as my inability to follow up on further points. These preliminary inquiries nevertheless provided the foundation upon which my more in-depth research could be conducted. More specifically, they shed light on the ongoing colonialisms faced by a range of indigenous individuals - particularly online. This

ethnographically-derived point, as will be discussed below, became the basis for the second tier of the study's methodology.

Interviews

In-depth interviews with indigenous activists were conducted to both supplement the limited information garnered from the surveys and expand on the colonial roles of the online sphere. A set of questions was devised for such conversations, but was rarely adhered to strictly, and instead adjusted to the unique perspectives and positionalities of my interlocutors:

- In your opinion, what is the current relationship between the Taiwanese government and the island's indigenous peoples? / 對您的看法來說，台灣政府跟原住民部落有什麼關係？
- What meaningful action can be done to change this relationship? / 為了改變這種關係，人們可以採取哪些有意義的行動？
- How can social media be used to realize indigenous goals? /原住民活動家如何可以利用互聯網實現他們的目標？
- In your opinion, can social media act as a decolonized space for indigenous self-expression? 在您看來，互聯網可以作為原住民自我表達的非殖民化空間嗎？
- Do indigenous understandings of indigeneity differ from anthropological and academic conceptions? If so, how? 學術界對土著的看法跟台灣原住民的自我理解有不同嗎？如果有，不同是什麼？
- What are the consequences of this discrepancy? 這個差異有什麼結果？
- In your opinion, what is the state of Taiwan's mainstream indigenous movement? / 對您的看法來說，台灣的原住民主流運動狀況如何？
- In your opinion, how effective are the government's "inclusive processes" in realizing indigenous goals? / 在您的看法來說，台灣 政府的包容性進程在實現原住民目標方面的效果如何？
- Is there anything you would like to share that I did not ask about? 你有什麼想分享的，我沒有問過嗎？

Each interview lasted over 40 minutes, with a majority of them being dominated by lengthy conversations about a specific question or point. The interviews were conducted remotely using end-to-end encrypted Zoom calls. Consent was solicited twice to each contributor - once for participation itself, and once for permission to audio-record the conversations. Each interview

recording was securely stored on a password-protected hard drive prior to transcription. After all audio was completely transcribed, the files were permanently deleted. Throughout the entire process, no video recordings were made. Finally, during the transcription process, all names and organizations were redacted in order to maximize the safety of the individuals they belong to.

The process of interlocutor outreach was far easier after my initial networking for the preliminary surveys. Namely, one individual that I had come into contact with during my preliminary research agreed to participate in an interview. Through them, I was introduced to two other indigenous activists willing to share their perspectives regarding online agency with me. Each of them in turn was able to recommend at least one potential contributor. This snowball method was not only more effective than my previous random outreach, but it also significantly minimized the potential for my ethnocentric assumptions about peoples' activist roles to intervene in my research. In other words, instead of indiscriminately asking indigenous Taiwanese users to act as spokespersons for their communities in my study, and in doing so, assuming that they held somewhat activist perspectives, I let my interlocutors introduce me to individuals who *were* self-defined and communally-recognized activists. In total, I met with 7 indigenous Taiwanese activists who willingly shared their insights on both offline and online colonialism through their own stories.

This two-staged methodological approach may not lend itself to a hypothesis-centered research chronology, but this should not be the concern of a decolonized anthropology. Rather, it is imperative that ethnographically informed, and in this case, indigenous, perspectives be centered as the inspiration for a study's core questions. After all, the selection of a topic itself can reflect the ethnocentric assumptions or academic predispositions of the researcher. As such, I strove to minimize such interference by allowing indigenous voices to guide me to a locally-

salient topic to the greatest extent possible. This salience is evidenced by the passionate willingness of my interlocutors to share their stories with me and contribute to the continuation of my research. It must lastly be noted that this methodology was not my original plan, and has largely been shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic. Namely, my original goal had been to travel to Taiwan in person to conduct interviews and participant observation with indigenous activists. However, Taiwanese governmental policies prevented my entry into Taiwan for any sort of short-term linguistic exchange or research. Hence, I was forced to redesign my study based on the online means available to me. This methodological shift, however, proved fruitful, as it allowed me to hone in on social media as a focal point of analysis. A certain level of cyber literacy is required for participation on social media alone, so the indigenous activists that I got in touch with naturally already had some insight into cybercolonial contexts. In person ethnographic research would have undoubtedly yielded more in depth and holistic insights, but my online-based methodology lent itself to my online-focused study.

Chapter 5: Analysis|分析

章节摘要：分析章节的目的是解释我的对话者的回答。我先讨论调查的回答，关注台湾原住民如何定义自己。重要的是他们都觉得具体的部落比“原住民”是一个更有意义的类别。另外，我的访谈揭示对土著的表达来说，西方社交媒体有很多的局限性。每个贡献者都有不同的看法，所以人类学的类别可能减少台湾原住民的多样性。

This study, as mentioned previously, is founded upon a two-pronged methodological approach designed to center the perspectives of interlocutors and minimize ethnocentric impositions. More specifically, I conducted ethnographic surveys in order to gauge broad perspectives on indigenous issues in Taiwan and identify conceptions of meaningful indigenous agency. I subsequently designed and conducted in depth ethnographic interviews based on insights from the first method. Thus, the topic of online indigenous activism in Taiwan was not only explored using this methodological approach, but it was also wholly introduced to me by it. This section highlights, contrasts, and situates the experiences and attitudes of indigenous Taiwanese activists, scholars, and organizers. In doing so, it fills in a specific yet obvious gap in the extant academic literature between indigeneity, social media, and activism.

This chapter begins with a broad discussion of indigenous viewpoints surrounding self-identification. Next, the relationship between such identities and the colonial government, prevalent issues facing indigenous communities, and meaningful strategies of activism will be analyzed in reference to the validity of the “indigenous activism” concept itself. Finally, the inadequacy of social media in addressing ongoing indigenous issues and allowing for decolonized expression will be examined. A common thread of dissensus underlies all three sections - illustrating the pluralities of viewpoints held by Taiwan’s indigenous activist community, and the primacy of tribal, not “indigenous” self-identification. Exploration of this

dissensus allows for interrogation of reductive categories including indigeneity and activism - shedding light on the discontinuities between them and the diverse experiences of the peoples upon which they are imposed. At the same time, however, this analysis reveals a prevalent sense of indigenous disenfranchisement with social media platforms. More specifically, my interlocutors generally agreed that Taiwan's most prominent social media sites did not play a significant role in their activism. Naturally, an unconcise, tribe-specific array of rationales were provided to support this sentiment, as will be discussed below, but a major underlying theme among them was the platforms' inability to accommodate tribal forms of expression and agency - particularly in linguistic terms. This investigation thus comes to two distinct yet linked conclusions regarding the colonial reductionism of, on one hand, the concise "indigenous activism" category, and, on the other, Web 2.0 social media. These points are intrinsically related in that vastly diverse tribal modes of expression, activism, and self-conceptualization cannot all be reflected in the unitary, individualist architectures of Web 2.0 social media platforms.

Indigenous Self-Understandings in Taiwan

This first section of the analysis chapter serves to provide a backdrop upon which divergent attitudes towards activism and social media can be understood. It begins with an overview of the survey responses, which illustrate a variety of salient indigenous issues and perspectives on indigeneity. I also highlight how the topic of internet activism was derived from this preliminary method. Next, I discuss my interviewees' perspectives on self-identification - paying particular attention to the differences between tribal and broad "indigenous" affiliation. My interlocutor's viewpoints on tribal-state relations, as well as specific issues facing their communities, are also examined. It is concluded that the sheer dissensus among such

understandings, coupled with the preference towards tribal, not "indigenous" identification, make any concise investigation of "indigenous activism" near impossible.

My initial survey, which targeted any Taiwanese indigenous individuals, focused primarily on broad understandings of indigeneity, agency, and indigenous-colonial relations. Out of the nine responses I received, eight were written in Mandarin Chinese (punctuated with Atayal-language terms and phrases), and one was in English. All nine contributors identified themselves as Atayal, and seven out of the nine respondents indicated that they spoke Atayal. Unanimity among the contributors' answers, however, largely disappeared after these preliminary demographic questions. With the exception of a few longer explanations, each answer consisted of only one or two words (or characters). Further, many of such responses overlapped with one another, allowing for them to be grouped together into broad categories. Content analyses were performed in order to identify both these categories themselves and any outliers that transcended them. Responses the third question (在今天的社會，您的少數民族人民怎麼表演您的傳統文化 / How is your culture performed in modern society?) fell into six categories, including traditional knowledge dissemination (4), language usage (2), handicrafts (1), music (7), food (1), and clothing (3) (the total count adds up to more than 9 as most contributors provided a list of overlapping aspects in their responses). One individual simply indicated that Atayal culture was not meaningfully performed at all in modern society. Responses to the fourth question (在今天的社會，展演傳統的文化有沒有改變？如果有，请描述那個改變 / Has your ability to engage with your culture changed? If so, how?) fell into four categories, including no change (2), syncretism/blending of indigenous and Han cultures (1), change for the better/more prevalence (4), and negative change (1). Here, it is evident that the contributors largely maintained neutral to optimistic attitudes regarding their ability to engage

with their cultures (in the ways described in question 3). One contributor specifically attributed their increased ability to engage with their indigenous culture to President Tsai Yingwen's election: "蔡英文就任總統後，原住民文化在社會上愈發盛行。[After Tsai Yingwen became President, indigenous culture became more prevalent in society]" Responses to the fifth question (您的少數民族和台灣的政府有什麼關系/ How would you describe the relationship between your ethnic group(s) and the government of Taiwan?) can be organized into three categories: positive relationship (1), negative relationship (5), and no relationship (3). This overwhelmingly negative outlook towards the state of indigenous-colonial relations lies at odds with the more optimistic responses provided to the previous question. However, the ability to engage with one's indigenous culture and the relationship between one's tribe to the colonial state are two different inquiries that, as evidenced by the responses of my contributors, are not necessarily positively linked. In other words, this increase in cultural engagement may be the result of increasing indigenous consciousness, increased activism, an increase in extra-institutional venues for cultural performance, or any number of factors not related to or provided by the colonial government. On the other hand, this disjuncture indicates a dissensus in indigenous self-understandings - a major theme that resists reductive categorization and appears elsewhere in my data. For instance, responses to the sixth question (您覺得那個關系應不應該改變？如果應該，请描述那個改變 / Do you believe that this relationship needs to be changed? If so, how?) can be grouped into two broad categories, and several subcategories. Namely, 7 contributors believed there should be a change regarding land issues (2), language issues (1), and indigenous autonomy (2), although such a vision is unrealistic (1). On the other hand, 2 contributors answered that there should not be a change in tribal-government relations. Once again, even among the very small pool of individuals that responded to my survey, there was little consensus

in attitude towards relations with the colonial state. Interestingly, whereas 2 contributors did not see the need for a change in tribal-governmental relations, only one described the relationship as positive in the previous question. This may speak to the perceived futility of pursuing such a change - another theme that emerged in this question's responses. Finally, responses to the last question (有意義的原住民獨立是什麼意思？ From your perspective, what constitutes meaningful indigenous agency?) fall into five categories, including self-governance (3), autonomy (4), land (4), hunting and gathering (1), and the fact that change is meaningless (2) (it must be noted that the characters used for "agency" can also be interpreted as "independence" or "autonomy").[1] Responses to this question prove that the contributor's dissensus did not only apply to their relationships with the government, but also to their own understandings of meaningful agency. One particular answer struck me as especially interesting: "是離線，不在線 / [meaningful indigenous agency] is offline, not online." It was based on that sentence that I derived my subsequent internet-focused interviews, as well as the framework for this entire project. Having previously only read positive descriptions of the role of the internet in indigenous activism, I wanted to delve deeper into the rationales behind this contributor's response. Therefore, when conducting more in-depth research through interviews, I made sure to inquire about the role of the internet in decolonial endeavors.

Insights into indigenous self-understandings in Taiwan were also garnered from my interviews. Categorical content analysis as conducted above was not possible for this section of my methodology, as my fluid, highly tangential interviews rarely shared the same lines or orders

[1] Concepts such as autonomy and agency do not neatly translate into Chinese. In this case, one contributor responded that "autonomy" constituted "autonomy" using slightly different characters - perhaps referencing the fact that the semantic distinctions between such words in Chinese is not as salient as it is to English-speaking anthropologists.

of questioning. In fact, there was not a single conversation that stuck to the exact order or number of questions as delineated in the previous chapter. My seven (English speaking) interlocutors nevertheless taught me a great deal about contemporary offline indigenous movements around the island, as well as their own (often divergent) perspectives on what constituted meaningful resistance. Something that particularly stood out in these descriptions were the intentional self-identifications of my interlocutors with the specific tribes they come from, and not just with the "indigenous" category. For example, one activist clarified that they "could not speak for all of Taiwan's aborigines, only for the Tao tribe, my tribe." Another individual noted that all of their insights came "only from my Bunun perspective." This common disclaimer evidences a sense of alienation from the exogenous categories of "indigenous," "native," or "aboriginal" that my interlocutors have been expected to identify with. One contributor describes this disjunction in more detail:

> There [are] sixteen recognized tribes in Taiwan today, but also more that are… unrecognized. Every tribe has its own unique culture, unique language, unique arts tradition, unique view of the world. [The] only…thing they really actually share together… is their home, Taiwan. And because [of this], they are all put together with these words 'indigenous' or 'aboriginal'. But…that only refers to one *tiny* thing we all share, why should I see myself as that? I am always Atayal before indigenous.

This understanding clearly sheds light on the limitations and embedded colonial essentialism of the indigenous category. Another interviewee held a similar stance on this matter, and considered "indigenous" to be a confusing term that carried little actual weight:

> I talk about Tao traditions, I can talk about Paiwan traditions, or Lukai (Rukai) traditions, but I don't know… what is *indigenous* traditions. Sometimes I feel that this word is confusing because there is no *indigenous* custom, or language. I can't learn to speak *indigenous*. [laughs]

This theme of tribal, not simply indigenous, affiliation was more or less present in each of my interviews. However, and perhaps because of this commonality, my interlocutors' perspectives

regarding tribal-governmental relations or issues were widely divergent. In this way, these understandings resembled the dissensus in the responses to similar questions in my surveys. The aim of this analysis is not to retextualize indigenous self-identification and governmental relations in Taiwan into concise constructions, but rather to critique the concise construction that is the indigenous category itself. The experiences and perspectives of my interlocutors - who in the eyes of the Taiwanese government are all part of one large "indigenous" population - are diverse and often mutually contradictory (Taiwan Government, 2022). What's more, a concurrent theme throughout all of my conversations was that tribal identity preceded indigenous identity - indicating the alienating nature of the exogenous designation. With this in mind, it is very hard to conceive of how a definable system of "indigenous activism" could possibly exist. In order to further illustrate the unfoundedness of the term in the Taiwanese context, I next discuss the competing activist strategies my interlocutors shared with me.

What is "Indigenous Activism"?

Analysis of activist modes themselves cannot take place before the issues they aim to respond to are discerned. When I asked my contributors to describe their opinions on indigenous-government relations or issues facing indigenous communities, each one provided a slightly different perspective. Given the emphasis on tribally-situated identity as described previously, this diversity was largely to be expected, but nevertheless made the prospect of any unified schema of activism very unlikely. Once again, my interlocutors approached the subjects of activism and indigenous issues from the standpoints of their own tribes, instead of from the perspective of the "island's indigenous peoples" - to use the actual language of my question. One contributor from the Tao tribe of Lanyu (Orchid Island) provided such a tribally-contextualized response:

> President Tsai Yingwen has brought [a] lot of attention to…native issues in Taiwan, but [we] are still facing a lot of problems. For example, in Lanyu, we…we protest because the government puts their nuclear waste on [the] island. They don't do this in places where many *Han* Chinese live, but have no problem putting it where we [the Tao tribe] live. So I think it is… [a] really negative relationship.

This response provides a glimpse into governmental policies towards an indigenous people in Taiwan, as well as reactions thereto. However, it does not describe a universal experience of Taiwan's first peoples, or a unanimous attitude towards ongoing colonial policies. It instead illustrates a specific injustice faced by a specific tribe that will undoubtedly be unrelatable to those of other tribes - despite their conflation as "indigenous." This pattern followed throughout all of my responses, as interlocutors carefully situated their answers within the contexts of their own tribal backgrounds and experiences. For example, another interviewee of the Bunun tribe elucidated their perspectives on tribal-governmental relations:

> Earlier this year the… Judicial Yuan decided that [a] Bunun man shouldn't hunt a protected species, but this subsistence hunting is our tribe's…traditional way of life. [The government] wants to protect our rights to…live the Bunun lifestyle, but…still punishes us for breaking their rules. They still have colonial policies [that] control our lives [to] make it more like Han's style. So…right *now*, hunting rights is *particularly* important for us.

Although hunting rights may be culturally important to several tribes in Taiwan, the notorious case of (now imprisoned) Bunun hunter Tama Talum clearly makes the issue resonate particularly within Bunun communities. Again, this shows how specific contexts across time and space determine which issues are salient to which tribe. On a different note, language loss was an important issue cited by several interviewees as pertinent to their communities. One interlocutor described the increasing struggles associated with generational transmission of their indigenous tongue:

> To understand Atayal culture you *have* to…you know, know the Atayal language, because they actually are the same thing! Our stories, customs, history are all seen *in* our language. Today less and less young people are learning [the language], because they live

> in cities and have to work in jobs that speak Chinese or English or Japanese. They can still connect with traditions in some ways, but it is *definitely* not the same as learning the language.

This point was echoed by three other contributors:

> Our language is how we can *describe* our unique cultural characteristics, and when we have to use…Chinese every day, it is easy to feel distant from it.

> The government tried to…put indigenous languages in more spaces but it is always second to Chinese, obviously, so it kind of becomes like an interesting…*advert* or cultural fact but … [they are] not taken seriously like Chinese or English, by the Han people, I mean. I…I have never actually *learned* my own language in [a] formal setting, so…I kind of…I only know the few bits and pieces that the government include[s].

> I think the relationship [between the government and the indigenous tribes] can be seen in how languages are treated, with putonghua (Mandarin) being dominant and [indigenous] languages treated like second languages. It is a very, very negative relationship, does not promote equality for indigenous and Han people.

Language loss was a common theme among my contributors, but Taiwan's indigenous languages suffer from varying degrees of endangerment that may influence the issue's importance in the minds of members of different tribes. One interlocutor, for example, did not mention language at all, and held a contrastingly positive view on tribal-governmental relations in Taiwan as a whole:

> Compared to other nations around the world, Taiwan is *much* more progressive towards indigenous issues. I still think [there] is…work to be done, but it is much better than before. The tribe I come from has experienced some…modernization, but I think it is kind of a better life.

When asked to describe the actual activist strategies themselves used to address the above-described issues, my interlocutors naturally provided an irreducible breadth of responses informed by their unique situations. These were not only distinct in their purposes and methods, but also in that they reflected a span of decolonized understandings of meaningful agency, communication, and resilience. To begin, my Tao interlocutor described the activism that he engaged with against the ROC's nuclear waste program on his home island of Lanyu:

> We try to use traditional culture expressions to achieve our goals. For example…we dress in traditional clothing in protests, sometimes carry traditional weapons. We also try to use traditional language [to] encourage the government to learn some of it and have better communication [with us]. When Taiwan Dianli Gongsi (Taipower - Taiwan's state owned power company) put nuclear storage in Lanyu, communication with the Tao tribe was bad due to…[the] language barrier. But also they *never* tried to…learn our language, so we want to emphasize it more.

When asked more specifically about the structures of such protests, my contributor elaborated:

> Traditional Tao tribe has *no* hierarchy, I don't know about in the USA or in China…but there is no…leader in Tao protests, we all contribute together. It is *our* shared land, shared customs, they are polluting it with nuclear waste and tourism industry…so we share our protest.

The emphasis on collective responsibility and non-hierarchical organization that my interviewee demonstrated stood out to me as a major theme that would appear elsewhere in my conversations. My Atayal-American interlocutor discussed their experience with decolonized activism:

> Many young activists have tattooed their faces…just like Atayal people did in ancient times. This is a traditional element of [our] culture that is sometimes looked *down* on…by Han people or Westerners like…in business settings or professional settings. They [Atayal activists] do it to stand out and to kind of normalize our culture. We also try to…incorporate our indigenous language in places where [it] would have been *suppressed*. Because…Atayal knowledge belongs to all Atayal people, not just the person who maybe shares it, so we take responsibility for our actions, even if they are not always the best!

Once again, the means in which indigenous activism was constructed in this response were specific to the interviewee's own tribe. An activist of Tao heritage, for example, may likely not conceive of facial tattooing as a meaningful form of activism - even though both are seen in the eyes of the colonizer as occupying the same contestory category. Furthermore, the theme of shared resilience through collective knowledge is again emphasized in this response. This point, along with the limitations of the term "indigenous activism" itself is similarly highlighted in the response of my Bunun contributor:

> It is really hard to explain or give [the] right answer about what indigenous activism really is. For Bunun people…is very important that we keep using our indigenous language and keep *teaching* the language to our *children*. I think…all our…activism begins with using our language. [It] is not…like indigenous activism of the Maoli (Maori) people, because there they have…like just one group with one language [and they] can all understand each other. But in Taiwan we have more than 16 groups, so…more than 16 different issues…[and] languages, so it is not just indigenous activism like in New Zealand…but more than 16 different kinds of activism! Bunun language speaking helps us connect with all…society past and present, helps us [be] unique from Han…and also…other tribe[s]. Like…for example we demand to use our Bunun names even in the city and workplace[s] because [it] is our way of…understanding *ourselves*, is not given to us by the Han people…so using our Bunun language name means helping restore Bunun culture, not just ourselves.

This response both problematizes the term "indigenous activism" and provides an example of it that only works in the specific Bunun context. After all, many of Taiwan's tribes have lost traditional naming customs altogether as a result of colonial language policies (Huang 2010, 30). This interlocutor also importantly distinguishes the indigenous contexts of Taiwan from those in other settler-colonial island nations such as New Zealand - where concise categories of indigenous activism may be more feasibly identified.

Other interviewees spent less time discussing the details of their activism, but nevertheless emphasized the "protection [of] unique indigenous languages" and the "many different issues facing many tribes result[ing] in different movements." One scholar that I interviewed similarly emphasized the need for situating understandings of activism within the specific contexts of tribes. However, when it came to their own activism, this contributor held a unique perspective:

> I do not participate…*directly* in the grassroots movements, maybe because like…I kind of enjoy modern Taiwan life! [laughs] Sometimes people don't want to…like…admit that - that they have become more accustomed to modern life…than old customs. I think some people in…[the] tribes deserve their rights to…their customs. *But*, not everyone is the same…and I just…[laughs] wouldn't assume that everyone in my tribe wants to *leave* modern society. So that's…that's why I am not so *activist*. I think living in today's society, and…adapting…even learning English can *also* be activism.

A singular, static attitude towards activism among Taiwan's “indigenous community” clearly does not exist. This section has laid out several of such competing viewpoints, including those surrounding tribal-governmental relations. Several themes are visible in the above excerpts, including the primacy of tribal identification, the collective responsibilities and goals of activism, and the importance of linguistic revitalization. However, above all, these insights demonstrate the wideness and artificiality of “indigenous activism” - a category reified through continued academic scholarship and colonial politics. Finally, the activism discussed up until this point was exclusively offline. This characteristic- yet another commonality among the answers - is no coincidence. In the next section, the inadequacy of Western social media as a tool for tribal activism is discussed with references to my contributors’ common perceptions thereof.

Social Media as Exclusionary Space

No two of my interviews followed exactly the same line of questioning, but all of them began with a broader discussion of offline indigeneity and activism before any specific mention of social media was made. Although not planned explicitly for this purpose, this ordering of topics allowed space for the subject of online activism to be voluntarily brought up by my interlocutors. Tellingly, none of my interviewees mentioned social media when prompted about their initial perspectives on activism. It was only after my questioning that the common theme of social media incompatibility with offline movements (or “cybercolonialism,” to use the term elaborated in my theoretical framework) emerged. In the words of one activist, “...using those social media to…do…participate in activism means you have to…express yourself like [a] Westerner. [laughs] It is not the same as using our *own* unique culture.” This statement struck me as especially interesting, as it conflated social media activism with “Western” expression. Albeit essentializing itself, this quote justifies the notion that modes of activism are cultural, and that

Western social media privileges one of such modes. In the following section, I present the perspectives of my interlocutors that engender the framework of cybercolonialism. I first discuss the exclusionary linguistic biases that preclude indigenous language use on social media, and next outline the platforms' incompatibilities in terms of social logics. This analysis integrates my previously elaborated theory, and provides an important critique on the capabilities of Web 2.0 as a whole.

The previous section demonstrated the importance of indigenous language use as a precursor to, and itself a manifestation of meaningful activism. However, several of my interlocutors explain that the most prominent social media platforms in Taiwan - including Facebook, Instagram, Line, and Twitter did not allow for the linguistic expression needed for decolonized activism. My Bunun interlocutor provided me with significant insight into this issue:

> To be honest…I feel like websites like Facebook, Instagram are…not made for Bunun language. You can automatic[ally] translate English to Chinese, or French…or whatever you want! But it is impossible to do it to Bunun. I [have] seen some Facebook group[s] for Bunun people, but most …most of them have Chinese. Sometimes it is written in Bunun language, but they use English letters. [A] big issue is that many Bunun people don't know how to…actually *write* in Bunun language, because they weren't taught Bunun language in school. So…they know how to speak the language…maybe a little bit [laughs] because they hear it at the home…but can't write it. Actually, we traditionally only… *speak* Bunun language. But you can see how Facebook is kind of…useless! [It] is more helpful to have a phone call with someone - actually *speaking* Bunun language than to try and figure out how to write it. And then *even* if…if you *can* write on Facebook, only the people who read [and] write Bunun language will understand, because you can't Google translate it! [laughs] I said before…our activism begins with *using* Bunun language…and it's hard to *do* that on Facebook for many people.

This response sheds insight into an important point: the disjuncture between writing and speech acquisition in indigenous language learning. As explained above, with historically little representation in Taiwanese schools, indigenous language learning took place largely informally - resulting in a (now older) population who can speak but, perhaps not to the same degree, write in their own (romanized) mother tongues. Oral expression and transmission outside of colonial

linguistic systems may be more in line with decolonized activism, but makes such an endeavor fundamentally incompatible with Facebook's graphocentric UI. This point was closely echoed by another interviewee:

> Most of…maybe like 90% of social media in Taiwan use American social media website[s]. There are also…like, some Japanese or Chinese social medias, like…Line or WeChat. But if you go on…[the] app store, you can't find any Paiwan…or Atayal social medias. So… these popular social medias are…kind of *foreign*, they are not *optimized* for indigenous languages.

Here, my contributor importantly highlights the absence of any dedicated Taiwanese indigenous language social media platforms, and that existing sites are not optimized for such languages. When prompted about the impact of this limitation on the potential for activism, this individual responded:

> Well…we can still *talk* about issues and…maybe come up with some…solutions or something. But, it is not actually like…the most *authentic*…you know, dialogue. This kind of conversation still needs some…foreign *communication* style, like…even spelling…it comes from somewhere else. So…well…I can say activism on social media cannot happen with the most…trib[al] habit[s].

These notions of optimization and bias towards certain "styles" of communication further support the idea that social media platforms are linguistically and culturally charged spaces. It must be clarified that these responses do not outright deny the potential for any form of activism to take place on social media - just their own tribe-specific modes. My Atayal-American interlocutor shared an anecdote illustrating yet another facet of social media's linguistic exclusion:

> Some of the…elders in [village name] can still *speak* the Atayal language, but have…some trouble with typing it. We once tried to use…what's it called…voice-to-type to help them out, but…[sighs] of course it couldn't recognize their language.

In analyzing such perspectives, it is imperative that new assumptions are not reified. Namely, it is clear that Western social media does not properly accommodate indigenous Taiwanese

languages, but, as elucidated previously, language is not a requisite component in indigenous activism - precisely because "indigenous activism" itself does not imply any specific actions. In other words, the argument that social media is bad for indigenous activism cannot be made if "indigenous activism" is itself categorically rejected. Instead, social media can be understood to limit tribe-specific activist modes insofar as they include decolonized linguistic expression. What's more, my interlocutors possess different levels of fluency in their respective indigenous tongues, and hold different attitudes about the importance of such languages in their activist missions. But regardless of language's role in activism, it is apparent that the most popular social media platforms used in Taiwan severely restrict decolonized expression. This point is further accentuated through exploration of the discontinuities between indigenized and digitized social logics.

When explaining why social media is not a principal tool in their activisms, my contributors not only cited the platforms' linguistic biases, but also the fundamental structures through which language is authored and disseminated. Most notably, several interlocutors described the user-centric nature of social media as antithetical to their collective modes of engagement. The structures of such platforms were thus antithetical to their own modes of resilience. One interviewee voiced their perspectives on this issue:

> You remember…when I talked about my activism before, I mention[ed] how it is…kind of *shared.* This is because…we have something called a…*collective* society. Our knowledge, culture…language, it all belongs to the *people*. In former times the Bunun people would gather *together* to discuss some…problems, and sing songs…tell stories. When I post on Facebook I don't *feel* the same, because it feels like…kind of, more *lonely*. [laughs] I only write my thoughts…and then read the thoughts of other Bunun…but our individual identity…is presented *too* much, like our profile photo, our commenting… history, so on. There is no way to get around the profiles on…social media.

This excerpt examples decolonized modes of sociality while simultaneously highlighting their disjunctures with the modes embedded in social media platforms. More specifically, my interlocutor explicitly mentioned the profile system as a barrier to online tribal communication, as it impels users to act as individuals. Profile pictures, bios, personal information, and individual post histories all serve to reify the individual as the primary locus of communication and engagement. This may seem intuitive to many of the billions of Facebook and Instagram users around the world, but becomes problematic when compared with the collectivist traditions of the Bunun. This point was echoed by a different interlocutor:

> I think of myself…as a *part* of my tribe when I participate in indigenous movement. I don't want to just be seen like [interlocutor's name], I want to join with my…my fellow brothers [and] sisters. I could…[laughs] I could make my profile name like…the name of my tribe, but it is….still just me writing everything! So…then you say…maybe we can all get together to talk [about] what I should…I should write, but then why should I use social media? [laughs]

Another important, and perhaps more obvious, theme that emerged from my contributor's perspectives on the "social" aspect of social media was the unrelatedness of such platforms in offline activity. As one interviewee mentioned:

> Paiwan craftsmaking and…woodwork is actually *very* important in our social life. How can…how may we do this online? [I] don't understand!

Others similarly indicated the un-digitizable importance of traditional social forms:

> [The] Tao tribe has a special type of…canoe called 'tatala'. To make tatala, and to…*race* them against each other, are *social* activities. Maybe someone can…share some…pictures of the tatala on social media, but like…[laughs] you can't make one online.

> ...Atayal activism kind of *has* to be offline. You can't…you can't really *fight* online, and you can't like…wear your traditional clothing, sing songs, anything like that.

These quotes demonstrate that sociality, in the eyes of some indigenous Taiwanese, is embedded in offline activities that cannot be meaningfully uploaded to cyberspace. Even if they could be,

the individualism embedded in Taiwan's most prominent platforms would further colonize the dissemination thereof.

Like all other points in this analysis, there was no firm consensus about the colonial qualities of social media. Several of my interlocutors did not go into detail about the subject. One interviewee, when asked about the role of social media in indigenous activism, clarified that there "is no connection." Another admitted that they "don't know…enough about *online* movements to…to talk [about it]." One activist shared their vision of a decolonized social media platform:

> When I founded [indigenous activism organization], my original…I guess mission was…to create an online space *for* Atayal *by* Atayal. This…*ideally*, would have more audio and video based elements…to try and…like account for our own…like *culture* of communication. But it quite honestly…turned out to be too tall of an order [laughs].

None of my interlocutors held any strongly positive perspectives towards online activism. More so, the responses I received were tellingly riddled with doubt, confusion, and pessimism towards the prospect. The actual reasons behind such critical attitudes, however, to re-emphasize the underlying point of this chapter, were irreducibly diverse.

The insights included in this chapter by no means furnish an exhaustive indigenous perspective on activism or the internet, but rather demonstrate the need for radical contextualization and the interrogation of analytical categories. By repeatedly emphasizing the primacy of tribal identification, my interlocutors called into question the validity of the term "indigenous" itself - a term decidedly created and imposed by non-indigenous people. They demonstrated that their connections with specific heritages always preceded identification with a category imposed only because of and through colonialism. With such an understanding in mind, the concept of Taiwanese indigenous activism falls away, revealing a myriad of competing conceptions of decolonized agency and resistance. My interviewees also shared their

perspectives on the foreign sociolinguistic biases embedded in the island's dominant social media platforms, and therefore their incompatibility with tribal activisms. This conclusion thus additionally calls into question narratives that paint social media platforms as liberatory and intuitive: whom do they free, and from what? For whom are they built, and easy? The objects of the two critiques - the "indigenous" analytic and Western social media - are inextricably linked in that both seek to impose exogenous ontologies upon a diverse range of peoples. In other words, this analysis highlights the subtle transformations of modern-day colonialism.

Chapter 6: Conclusion | 结论

章节摘要：我的结论总结我的独立研究项目。我的分析有两个最重要的观点。第一个是人类学学者应该用本土的身份类别和行动类别分析各种的部落和运动。第二个是西方社交媒体是文化的空间，建立在西方交流方式之上。未来的研究应该考虑社交媒体不是中性的空间以及“原住民”这个术语不反映各种部落的自我认同。

Investigations of the intersections between indigeneity and social media in the context of activism provide insight into a broad range of topics that carry meaningful implications. More specifically, my analysis critically questioned dominant conceptual frameworks regarding indigeneity and activism, as well as prevailing narratives of Web 2.0 social media as spaces for decolonization, liberation, and equality.

On one hand, this study allows for the interrogation of exogenous categories that are frequently recognized as such yet even more frequently reified and reproduced through academic research (as shown in chapter 2). The “indigenous” category, as evidenced through this project, can carry more weight as an analytic to outsiders than it does as an identity for its supposedly constituent populations. This is especially true on the island of Taiwan, which is inhabited by over 16 different tribes with diverse languages, cultures, and conceptions of self-identification. Even if a non-exogenous term was used to define Taiwan’s original inhabitants, as is the case of New Zealand’s Maori, the island’s sheer ethnic diversity makes any unitary categorization inherently reductive. The convenient analytic of “activism” is also fundamentally challenged through the responses of my interlocutors in this study. Not only does each tribe engage in different forms of resilience based on their unique circumstances, but the idea of resilience itself is differently situated into their specific ontological and social frameworks. It thus follows that

"indigenous activism" cannot stand on its own as a meaningful concept in the context of Taiwan, despite its continued use in the study of Taiwan's settler-colonial dynamics.

On the other hand, my interlocutors clearly demonstrate the limitations of prominent social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, in accommodating tribal conceptions of activism. Such user-based platforms, which belong to a collection of similarly-structured media constituting the Web 2.0, delimit agency based on specific understandings of ownership, expression, and sociality. Importantly, these embedded biases illustrate the culturally charged nature of Web 2.0 architectures. Such sites, which privilege inter-individual communication, sole ownership of published content, and written language, should no longer be treated as blank spaces for neutral, inclusive human interaction. This conceptualization only contributes to the subtle impositions of cybercolonialism. Furthermore, it must be noted that the internet itself is not necessarily fully incompatible with tribal communicative modes. Audio Repository, the collective orality-centered platform discussed in chapter 3, provides just one example of a website that diverges from Web 2.0 trends to meet indigenous needs. The extent to which the internet itself is governed by culturally-biased logics is the topic of an entirely different, yet increasingly necessary study. As humanity continues to persevere through the COVID-19 pandemic, online platforms continue to hold indispensable roles in our day-to-day lives. It is therefore dire that we seek to uncover disjunctures between diverse, decolonized understandings of sociality and that which social media provides.

This study is not without limitation. Notably, the conclusions that it comes to are based on ethnographic work with a very small group of interlocutors. This was not significantly detrimental to the project, as my focus was more on the unique lived experiences of each individual than a sheer amount of data. My aim was not to identify trends, but rather to critique

them based on a “multitude” of disparate perspectives. Nevertheless, a continued version of this study would ideally take into account a much broader multitude. Finally, there lies a deep-rooted irony at the heart of this study that must be recognized. That is, I use the terms “indigenous” and “activism” hundreds of times throughout this study in a manner that constitutes exactly what I am aiming to critique. I frequently refer to Taiwan’s irreducible native populations simply as “indigenous,” and their work as “activism,” despite simultaneously constructing an argument for the baselessness of such classifications. I contend that this paradox, however, only further demonstrates the desperate need for decolonization within the field of anthropology. Instead of relying on premade configurations, such as “indigenous,” anthropologists should strive to identify and utilize autochthonous demonyms and cultures of self-identification. After all, what is the application of our own meaningful categories onto others if not ethnocentrism itself? This thesis may not provide any definitive answer to the debate highlighted in its introduction, but it nevertheless expands on Thiong’o’s critical frameworks on coloniality to include seemingly ubiquitous social media spaces.

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