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Taiwanese Indigenous Cultural Heritage and Revitalization: Community Practices and Local Development

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Abstract: The continuing interest and progress in indigenous communities and local economies based on traditional, cultural, and ecological knowledge contributes to indigenous resilience. Here we report on an ongoing collaborative project investigating the process of renewal of cultural heritage through strengthening the roots of indigenous cultural traditions of knowledge and practice, and the changing concepts of tradition. The project investigates the various mechanisms for conserving indigenous culture: How the heritage of indigenous culture is reconstructed; how this heritage is related to the social frame and practice of everyday life; how power intervention affects the contestation of heritage; and in the context of heritage contestation, how cultural heritage turns into economic capital in the tourism economy of the community. The project explores the process of cultural heritagization of indigenous traditional knowledge through six individual projects in the areas of food and edible heritage, ethnic revival, weaving, solidarity economy, cultural ecotourism, and indigenous agro-products. In addition, the project examines the establishment of a constructive dialogue between the “traditional future”, cultural heritage literature and local practice in the interest of the consolidation of alternative development.

Keywords: Taiwanese indigenous studies; cultural heritage; heritagization; ecotourism; indigenous food culture; weaving; solidarity economy; alternative development

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1. Introduction

Cultural heritage is a cornerstone of local and indigenous identity. The heritagization process is based on place and local culture characterized by traditions, according to some scholars, in order to promote cultural identity and to establish political control over the acculturation process [1]. The concept of heritagization has often been used in relation to cultural tourism. However, it has also been used in other cultural areas, such as music, in discussing how lived culture can be transformed into heritage to be safeguarded [2]. Here we use the concept to refer to the renewal of cultural heritage by strengthening and promoting the roots of indigenous traditions of knowledge and practice (which are themselves changing), towards social and economic development options that are culturally appropriate. Many indigenous societies around the world are involved in various kinds of cultural renewal efforts, identified by terms such as revival, revitalization, and restoration.

In Hawaii, for example, scholars have called it cultural renaissance [3] and biocultural restoration [4].

Indigenous peoples in Taiwan face a double problem. The first one is that development, especially culturally appropriate development, is a priority. However, as with other indigenous peoples of the world, achieving such development is a challenge. Indigenous communities often seem destined to play the roles scripted by others. In some scripts, they are heroic people resisting development; in others, they are the victims of progress [5]. Part of the dynamic is that culture is never static but changing all the time. Traditional practices are modified and enriched by outside technologies and knowledge, resulting in cultural adjustments and changes in the local economy. A promising development strategy is to deal with these changes from a position of strength based on the “roots” of cultural heritage. Such renewal of cultural heritage may shape and control the development process, conferring a kind of indigenous resilience. “Opting in” to the regional, national, and global economy makes more sense than resisting development, and often involves local cultural roots and social enterprises [6]. Such social enterprises are based on an economic model that provides for broad goals—economic, social, cultural, and political—providing multiple benefits such as self-determination, cultural revitalization, capacity development, as well as employment and cash income [7,8].

The second problem is that Taiwan has a disaster-prone geography. In addition to frequent earthquakes, Taiwan is increasingly vulnerable to typhoons, in part due to climate change. In particular, the Typhoon Morakot of 2009 resulted in a spate of studies dealing with disaster risk reduction and post-disaster recovery over the past decade (see the introduction paper to this Special Issue). These natural disasters, combined with colonial administration policies to relocate traditional communities, have resulted in social disasters from institutional violence and injustice. Much of Taiwanese indigenous peoples’ community revitalization efforts can be characterized as a reaction to the colonial legacy of an unjust past. However, the “native point of view” from indigenous livelihood and its related historical trajectory has been absent in the conventional framework of cultural heritage studies. Note that indigenous peoples only obtained name rectification in 1994 from the condescending term of “mountain compatriots/barbarians.” Such exoticizing and othering views meant that the indigenous peoples were usually presented as objects or cultural specimens, rather than as subjects in their own right. The six projects in this paper are examples of contemporary efforts to connect indigenous subjects and the idea of “traditional futures”. With a future that remembers cultural meaning from the past, these projects reflect on an alternative economy against neoliberal forces of governmentality, and make cultural heritage a living tradition.

Taiwan’s 16 officially recognized indigenous tribes with a total population of nearly 400,000 are considered to be the northernmost representatives of Austronesian culture. Geographically, the majority of Taiwan’s indigenous tribes are located in the mountainous interior, on the east coast, and offshore on Orchid Island. In response to the environmental devastation from natural disasters, cultural heritage development has emerged as an important economic diversification strategy. Indigenous cultural festivals, food, ecotourism, historical commemorations, and performances are all seen as effective means of attracting tourists to reach goals of economic diversification. Indigenous peoples are aware of the popularity of their attractive and distinctive cultural and natural resources and heritage. They use these as resources in exhibitions and performances to reconnect and recall the significance of local places and regions. However, what do we mean by cultural heritage in the context of sustainable development?

This paper focuses on how heritage for development is negotiated through various processes. It demonstrates that revitalization is dynamic, diverse, and sometimes contested, and always socially and culturally embedded. As a research focus, this integrated project involves connecting various indigenous communities (Figure 1) that are transforming cultural heritage into local economic forms that draw upon traditional knowledge and practice. The project also seeks the origins of these developments from a wider political and

economic perspective. Community practices and local development involve negotiation between communities and external agents of change. Clifford [9,10] points out that the revival of tradition involves the pragmatic selection and critical reconfiguration of “roots”. Is the renewal of cultural heritage necessary to connect to the capitalist market? What are the best mechanisms for facilitating the conservation and appreciation of indigenous culture toward development? As Cajete [11] puts it, “Western notions of development and its paradigm of ‘progress’ with little regard for social, cultural, and ecological consequences is an extension of colonialism”. Many indigenous peoples throughout the world have been searching for alternatives, “new paradigms of ‘development’ . . . more in line with [indigenous] cultural and spiritual ethos.”. Our paper is part of the search for an “Indigenized conceptual framework of sustainable community development” toward revitalization and renewal [11].

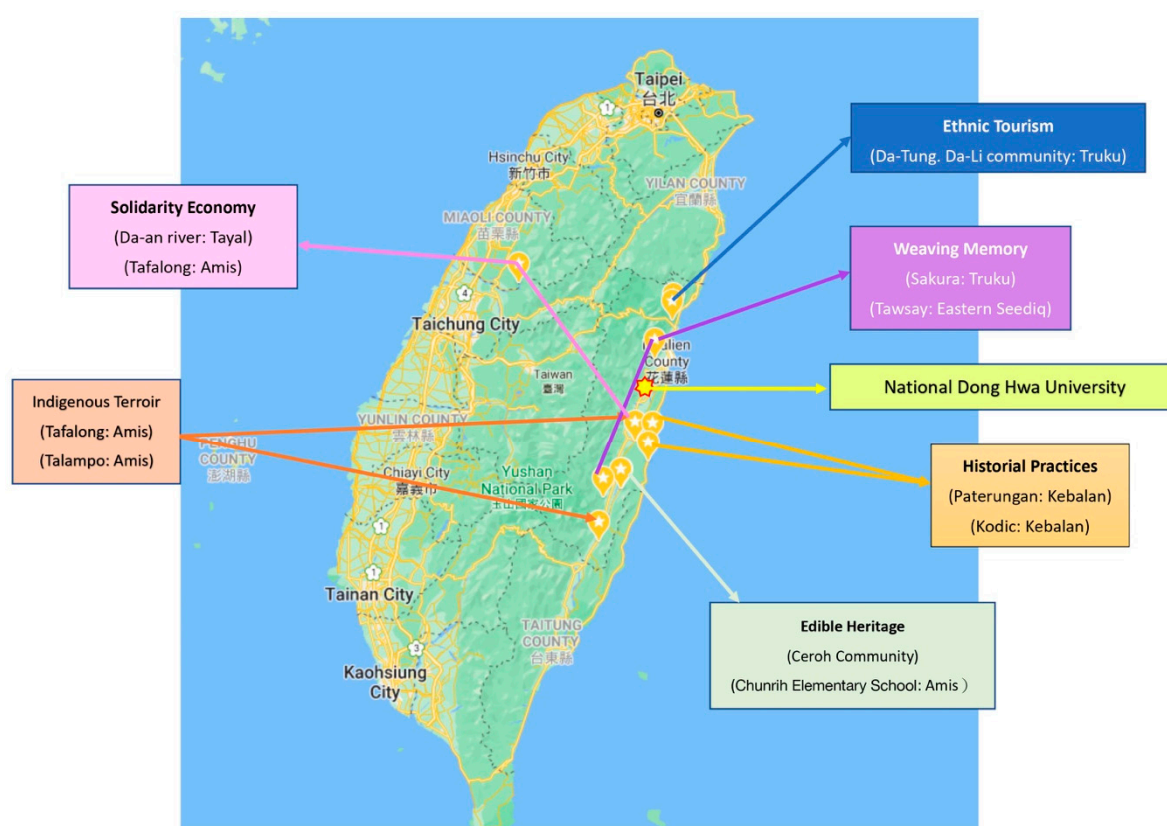


Figure 1. Map of Taiwan and locations of six research project sites.

To treat traditions as historical practices does not simply mean to return to the past. Rather, it means seeking origin stories for social transformation. Through prosperous ecotourism, indigenous culture and local knowledge are re-packaged as intangible cultural heritage and successfully create vernacular characters. These vernacular characters contain a potential path toward local subsistence economy and alternative tourism and other development. Within a development framework of indigenous community practices and local economies, the project attempts to rethink the meaning and value of indigenous agriculture and food sovereignty, legends and ceremonies, traditional artisanal techniques, community kitchens, and ecotourism. This not only strengthens the building of diverse cultural heritage, but also leads to consolidated constructions of indigenous identity. The project engages two important alternative historical perspectives. The first is Clifford’s [9] “traditional future” in which “returns” are used to re-examine and respond to diverse contemporary social development landscape and indigenous community development. The second is when “tradition” is instead viewed as an “historical practice”. This requires

paying attention to the links between physical memories and artisanal techniques and to the importance of cultural heritagization in local economic resistance strategies and indigenous community participation models. This second alternative, tradition as historical practice, is the perspective examined here.

Within the processes of globalization and neoliberalism, contemporary indigenous peoples have emphasized ethnic, cultural, and subjective representation in cultural revitalization. In Taiwan, as elsewhere in the indigenous world, more and more indigenous people are choosing to return to their communities to rediscover, acquire, and collect traditional cultural heritage. Moreover, through the activation and re-implementation of the practice of cultural heritage, as well as negotiations and collaborations with and resistance against mainstream social recognition and economic markets, new survival strategies and directions have emerged. Examples include ecotourism, ethnic handicraft markets, re-cultivation of farmland by indigenous people with the return of small farmers to their communities, repatriation of ethnic artifacts by museums, performance and exhibition of legends and ceremonies, and promotion of indigenous food culture.

The aim of this research is to investigate how indigenous people transform their traditional knowledge and create the possibility of livelihood and lifestyle renewal. The process of returning to and transforming local knowledge involves three dimensions of relations—relations to nature, object, and spirit. Taiwan's indigenous cultures were deeply rooted in these three dimensions (nature, object, and spirit) that need to be accounted for in the renewal of cultural heritage. Community practices provide the cultural mechanism to accomplish this, as shown in Figure 2. The six cases complement one another by dealing with nature (food, land, and ecology), object (weaving craft and fermentation products), and spirit (cultural revival).

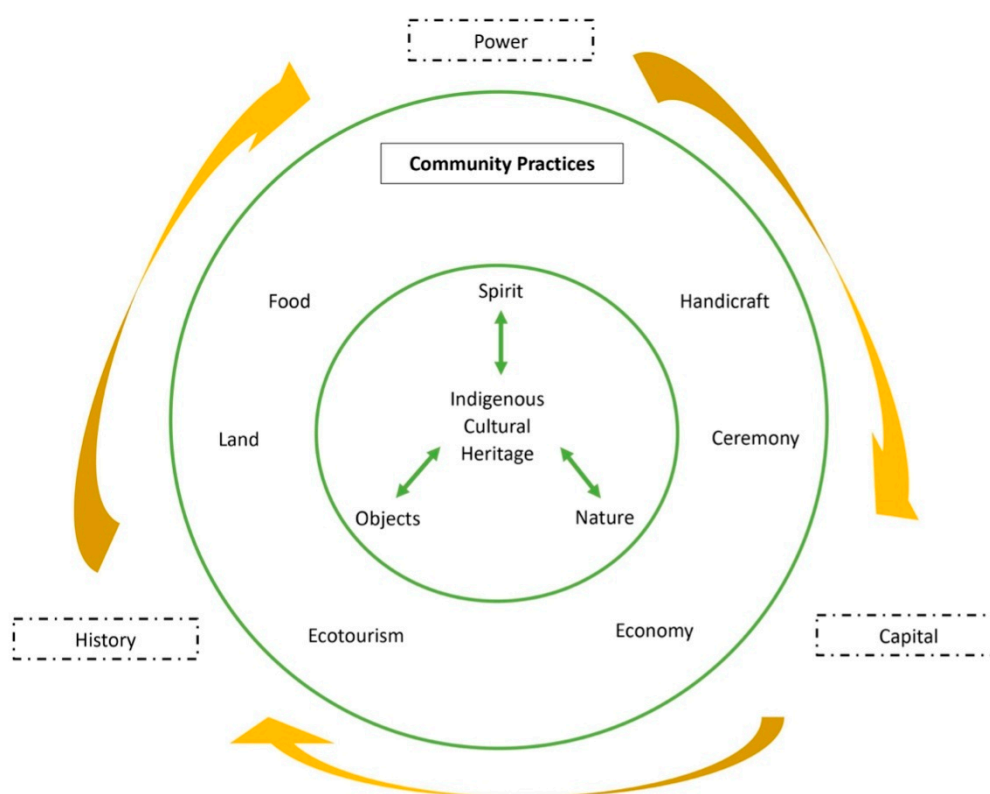


Figure 2. How the six cases fit together: Cultural mechanisms are provided by indigenous community practices and local development in the renewal of indigenous cultural heritage.

However, indigenous communities face contestation from external forces, and they are compelled to negotiate with the state or settler colonialism, which holds power, capital, and history. The process of struggle is engaged at the community level where cultural revitalization and local development come into focus (Figure 2). The six cases are dealing organically with the forces to create an upward spiral for indigenous cultural heritage involving land, economy, ceremony, food, handcraft, and ecotourism. Thus, the cases highlight cultural identity and ethnic subjectivity, the capability of indigenous communities to cope with social change, and the agency to rebuild transformative tradition.

The transformation and innovation of indigenous cultural heritage provide indigenous peoples with more possibilities for cultural identification and development, offering an understanding of how to engage, transform, and represent different forms of cultural heritage in the face of changing contemporary society. This paper seeks to probe these different developments through six interrelated case studies within a research approach that involves assessing the management and revitalization of cultural and natural resources as they merge with socio-cultural explorations of local knowledge and development practices. By approaching heritage from a socio-cultural perspective and applying theories of globalization and representation, the project examines how heritage is constructed, interpreted, and represented in indigenous Taiwan.

We argue that an empirically grounded understanding of how indigenous heritage is (re)produced through the mediation of unequal power relations, and how processes of alternative paradigms of development [11] is a prerequisite for any serious attempt to instigate dialogue that would allow all stakeholders to benefit from sustainable development initiatives. The major goal of the paper is to show that cultural revitalization is a significant context for understanding social, cultural, economic, and political action in indigenous communities. Building upon earlier research by the authors, the paper analyzes several patterns of development and uses case studies to illustrate the arguments.

2. Study Approaches and Methods

This research applied the approaches of post-colonial theories and methods, with special attention to cultural sensitivity in the research process [12]. We consulted, negotiated, and dialoged with people and scholars from indigenous communities. In order to highlight the subjectivity and diversity of indigenous heritage, we focused on continuous listening to local voices, ongoing negotiation of positionality, and proceeding reflection on equal relationship with communities and people. To capture a range of types of cultural heritage, six cases were undertaken. The cases dealt with different communities and different resources, offering a range of development experiences and alternatives.

As summarized in Table 1, multiple qualitative methods were used in the project. Fieldwork, participant observation, participatory action research, visual analysis of indigenous weaving craftworks, and in-depth interviews were carried out over a 3-year period. The project explored what cultural heritage means to indigenous peoples and their communities, and what forms of representation and developments arise within these practices. Indigenous heritage is seen as an embodied practice, so the paper addresses the negotiated character of knowledge production with reference to the knowledge interfaces between local communities and external agents of change who have their own practices and discourses.

Table 1. Research methods for the six cases.

Case Title, Period of Research, Research Site	Research Methods and Methodologies
<p>Joyce Hsiu-yen Yeh's project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Food Power 2016–2019 <p>NDHU-National Dong Hwa University Millet Farm, Ceroh Amis Community and, Chunrih Elementary School</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory Action Research with National Dong Hwa University students, Ceroh Amis community people, and Chunrih Elementary School students to rebuild local food system and indigenous food culture biodiversity In-depth interviews and informal conversations with key informants engaged in the projects Focus group with indigenous elders and university students, and elementary school students who participated in growing millet and Formosa quinoa
<p>Shu-chuan Lai's project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Revival of the Kebalan Tribe 2018–2019 <p>Paterongan and Kodic (Kebalan)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting oral history interviews with the elderly from the Paterongan and Kodic tribes Participant observation involving representative sea rituals and harvesting ceremonies Observing and recording the development of Paterongan and Kodic crafts (banana silk weaving, wood carving, and bamboo weaving)
<p>Shu-chuan Lai's project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are Weaving the Different Stories 2017–2019 <p>Shanli (also known as Tawsay) and Shueiyuan (also known as Sakura)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participant observation with the following organizations and activities: Community development association, weaving-related festival, weaving workshops, and craft fair. In-depth interviews with (a) women who are weaving, their family and life history, experiences of weaving and (b) officers working in local organizations related to weaving such as township government, churches, the association of community development, and schools.
<p>Ying-hao Huang's project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solidarity Economy in the Tribes 2017–2019 <p>Da-an River (Tayal) and Tafalong (Amis)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth interviews: Interviewing the group members of Ina Kitchen and the social workers involved the project. Focus groups to collect the history and the collective experience of the Ina Kitchen. Participant observation: Visiting and making observation in the tribal village (Da-an River and Tafalong) and taking part in the activities of the Ina Kitchen.
<p>Chen Yi-fong's project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Heritage, Identity Politics and Alternative Development 2016–2020 <p>Da-Tung and Da-Li communities in the vicinity of the Taroko National Park</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participant observation: Participating in ethnic tourism guided by local operators to observe the interactions between indigenous tour operators and tourists; observing how indigenous people demonstrate knowledge about the environment to earn the respect of tourists. In-depth interviews with indigenous tour operators to understand how they initiate ethnic- and eco-tourism, and how they reinforce cultural identity by performing their cultural heritage during the process of tourism activities.
<p>Yi-tze Lee's project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Indigenous Flavor to the Making of Local Terroir 2015–2017 <p>Two Amis communities, Talampo (daylily) and Tafalong (rice)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participant observation: Staying in the villages for six months and participating in life events of local farmers; learning how local flavor and food preparation is done. Snowball sampling interviews: (a) learning the commodity chains; (b) how the flavor of fermented foods was negotiated between Han factory and Amis farmers; and (c) learning about the home-returning of local farmers

3. Taiwanese Indigenous Cultural Heritage and Revitalization: Six Case Studies

3.1. Indigenous Food Power: Participatory Action Research on Indigenous Agriculture and Edible Heritage

The ongoing project, “Farm to Table”, uses participatory action research (PAR) methodology to reinforce community-university partnerships. Yeh has been working with college students to grow Taiwanese traditional indigenous crops such as millet and Formosa quinoa on NDHU campus since 2012. The NDHU Millet Farm is not only the first farm in Taiwan to develop indigenous farming knowledge and food culture in a university setting, but this farm also connects food, culture, and community to create a cultural landscape where indigenous elders and students are working and learning together to pass on their cultural heritage [13]. At the same time, Yeh and her student team—food, agriculture, tourism, and sustainability (FATS) are working with the local Amis Ceroh community and the elementary school to cultivate their own millet farm so “lost” traditional foods could be brought back to the table.

The farming process has helped students to develop skills in working with community, discover indigenous values, cultures, traditions, and heritage [14]. The project aims to engage with the Amis Ceroh indigenous community in Hualien and its elementary school’s agriculture and food education. Yeh stresses the importance of using cultural knowledge, culinary traditions, and agricultural resources to develop indigenous peoples’ ability to exercise and implement empowering opportunity to promote their food heritage and sharing economy. Encouraging meaningful participation by all parties, she jointly explores how agriculture and food turn into edible heritage and become multiple resources for local economic development and education. The initiative emphasizes indigenous peoples’ capacity for adaptability, resilience, and restoration of traditional agriculture and food use, as well as food production in response to changing conditions.

Food is commodity and culture too. For indigenous peoples, food can be the basis of a collective social movement to make culturally appropriate foods visible, and exercise indigenous heritage. The project considers the ways in which edible heritage is identified, experienced, and brought into the present. It also examines the role of tourists as consumers of edible heritage. By engaging in PAR processes, the local people and students articulate and examine how their knowledge is produced, reproduced, and experienced. Out of those articulations, locals and student groups jointly implement action plans that address issues salient to them. Edible heritage matters because indigenous peoples’ right to agriculture and food is inseparable from their rights to land, territories, natural resources, culture, and self-determination. Yeh argues that the community-campus food projects can begin as “incubators”, pioneering new nodes in an alternative food chain for the local region. At the same time, experiential learning in indigenous agriculture and foodways deepens connections to place, integrates values beyond those embedded in conventional food system, and fosters new ethical choices, both for the cultural industry and for community participants.

3.2. Cultural Revival of the Kebaran Tribe—Heritage and Re-Creation in Historical Practice

This research explores how Kebaran Tribe continues to practice its culture and rituals in the context of modern society. The development of intangible culture is manifested in the accumulation and the transmission of memories. Traditional beliefs, regardless of origin, have a dual nature. They are collective traditions or memories, but they are also concepts or customs derived from the understanding of the present [15]. Memories may be translated into an idea or symbol, and acquire a meaning, becoming an element in the system of social ideas. This is why tradition and current ideas can coexist [15].

The ethnic group revival movement of the Kebaran Tribe started following the “Fakong Night” performance at a sarcophagus exhibition in 1987. For nearly 30 years, certain cultural traditions, such as myths, ritual activities, songs and dances, tribal language learning, banana silk cloth, traditional skills, food, and clothing, have been restored or created. In addition, ethnic totems such as *gasup*, *saur*, and others have also been created, displaying

the spirit and cultural values unique to the tribe and drawing recognition for the local tribal people. In the first year of the project, the most representative sea rituals and harvesting ceremonies were explored. When the contemporary social environment underwent change, people of Paterongan and Kodic took into account historical memory and traditional customs. They sought from within solutions and ways of holding events, such as the regeneration of new and old sea ritual sites and hosting events through traditional cross-ethnic *mipaliu* (mutual aid and trade). They engaged in spontaneous operations, formed alliances, and represented meanings.

In the transmission of rituals or making of products with ethnic characteristics, the Keblan Tribe's cultural and social response can be found in that the tribe chose to use meaningful space and historical memory as the starting points for identity, thus reorganizing culture for the contemporary era. The new practices allowed memory "appear" to the present. As for the distinctive cultural products integrated into myths (legends) and historical memory, these products were endowed with images that could be recognized by the public as being characteristics of Keblan Tribe. Our research found that the adapted rituals or commodities emerged out of the interaction between the Tribe and the larger society.

The study was intended to develop specific implementation models to serve as examples for other ethnic groups. These models demonstrated flexibility, as they strategically used traditional methods to achieve cultural heritage. During the 30-year revival process, vanishing cultures on the brink of extinction revived crafts (e.g., banana silk weaving, wood carving, and bamboo weaving), rituals, and agriculture and fishery practices. Studies and analyses showed how contemporary adaptations and reorganization were integrated into the myths of the tribe, how historical memory generated characteristic products for economic development, and how these actions strengthened tribal identity, and enabled the tribal communities to become a "living traditional culture".

3.3. *We Are Weaving the Different Stories: The Reconstruction and Contestation of Weaving Memories for Pan-Facil Tatto Groups*

With the development of weaving craft by the Pan-Facil Tattoo groups (Pan-Tayal), following the activation of the ethnic revival and cultural economy movements, weaving workshops were conducted, one after another, in many indigenous communities. However, these weaving workshops now barely survive due to inadequate marketing strategies. Is the renewal of cultural heritage necessary to connect to the capital market? What is the best mechanism for the conservation of weaving culture? There are two cases, Shanli (also known as Tawsay) and Shueiyuan (also known as Sakura) villages, where weaving culture continues within the household. The motivation to weave is to recall the memories of mothers' or grandmothers' weaving experiences, and to prepare dowry for daughters or granddaughters. In Shanli the "ramie festival" is held every few years in order to strengthen ethnic identity. In the festival, the action of making thread by *ramie* (a traditional fiber crop) and weaving is demonstrated. Narratives and songs concerning migration experiences are presented. Many villagers who have left their home villages to work in cities come back to participate in the festival, and memories of the weaving and migration history strengthen their ethnic identity.

In Shanli, weaving enables a continuous learning network from generation to generation in the community. Life memories such as *waya* beliefs (religious belief), marriage customs, the norm of gift exchange, and the sharing stories of textile patterns, sustain the motivation and vital energy to continue weaving. In Shueiyuan, some middle-aged women form companionships in learning groups in which they weave together daily and share the memories of their mothers and grandmothers. These learning groups even attract women from other villages, transforming weaving from household labor into a community-wide activity of cultural expression and market trade. With the development of tourism, they also share their weaving experiences and memories with tourists.

People in Shanli and Shueiyuan move between tradition and future by revitalizing and re-practicing weaving culture, thus making transformative survival of heritage possible.

Weaving memories are reconstructed and become the source of cultural capital needed for tourism. Through the cases of Shanli and Shueiyuan, it is shown that the social memory of weaving is important in the conservation of the weaving culture, and it further enhances the cultural capital of the local economy. Formation of cultural capital is empowering, as it indicates “micro-resistance” to mainstream society, and shifts the position of women from the margin to the center.

This study has investigated the different mechanisms that conserve the weaving culture in these two cases. It has examined how the social memory of weaving is reconstructed; how the memory of weaving experience is related to the social relations and practice of everyday life; how political intervention affects the contestation of memories; and regarding memory contestation, how social memory turns into cultural capital deployed in stimulating the tourism economy. The project has studied how the community competes, cooperates, and negotiates with mainstream travel agents in terms of cultural interpretation and economic benefits.

3.4. Solidarity Economy in the Tribes: The Da-an River Tribal Kitchen as a Starting Point to Explore

Social work in indigenous tribal communities is only a small part of the service that the State provides, but it also often functions as a tool of social control by the State apparatus. How could the implementation of social work avoid the imposition of mainstream values on indigenous peoples, or become an accessory to the State’s assimilation and control powers, given that it is privileged with an abundance of resources? These have long been crucial questions for indigenous social workers. If social work is a matter of social reform, then economic autonomy, free from the constraints of corporations and government, is of crucial importance. The possibilities of social reform in Taiwan have been significantly restrained due to dual repression by professionalism and neoliberalism. When the commodification of public service becomes the norm, the implementation of social work turns more and more bureaucratic and becomes rigidly standardized. In light of that, it becomes critical how indigenous peoples, who are often economically marginalized due to neoliberalism and globalization, can develop means of progressive resistance.

The term “solidarity economy” refers to a grassroots form of cooperative economics to connect thousands of local alternatives together to create large-scale, viable, and creative networks of resistance to the profit-over-all-else economy. Solidarity economy is an economic form which seeks to improve the quality of life of a region or community on the basis of solidarity, often through local business and not-for-profit endeavors. It also refers to a set of strategies aimed at the abolition of capitalism and the oppressive social relations that it supports and encourages. Instead of prioritizing competition and profits, these economies place human needs and relationships at the center [16,17]. Solidarity economy is a way to resist the colonizing power of the individualistic, competitive, and exploitative economies. Indigenous solidarity economy may be one promising route for indigenous peoples and a way to think about indigenous social work.

Da-an River Tribal Community Work Station began as a social work station that developed tribal industries [18]. Upon realizing the exploitative nature of capitalist markets, it adjusted its goal to work towards a solidarity economy. When indigenous peoples enter the global capitalist system, economic development of tribal communities becomes fragile as external forces take control. The issue is not only to let the tribal community flourish economically but also to resolve the fundamental problem of feelings of economic inferiority. This project has attempted to extend the field of research on the Tribal Kitchen at the Da-an River tribal community to the Ina Kitchen of Tafalong tribe in Hualien, and to continue examining the reality of social work in indigenous communities. It focuses on the process and challenges in developing tribal industries as people gain experience in a solidarity economy. It then compares the Da-an River experience with several communities in Hualien that are currently developing or have the potential to move towards a solidarity economy, in an attempt to discuss and analyze the solidarity economy as an alternative to existing models of tribal community development.

3.5. Cultural Heritage, Identity Politics and Alternative Development: Study on the Changes of Indigenous Ecotourism in the Taroko Area

Tourism activities based on indigenous traditional ecological knowledge continue to grow in Taiwan. This research has investigated the process of cultural heritagization and changing concepts of tradition. It also has sought the social origins of these changes within wider political and economic structures. Clifford [9,10] points out that the revival of tradition involves pragmatic selection and the critical reconfiguration of “roots”. To treat traditions as historical practices does not simply mean to return to the past, but involves the origins of social transformation. Through prosperous ecotourism, indigenous culture and local knowledge are re-packaged as intangible cultural heritage, and may successfully create vernacular characters containing a potential path toward local subsistence economy and alternative development.

The research focuses on ethnic ecotourism in the Taroko (both Taroko and Truku refer to the same group and their area in eastern Taiwan. Taroko is usually used as a place name, as in the official spelling of the nearby Taroko National Park. Truku is more often used as the name of the people) area, a long-term study site for the researcher. Serial changes have been occurring over the past two years. Firstly, the financial assistance from the government to develop ecotourism induced further capital investment by private ecotourism operators and involved larger interests. Secondly, the new ruling by the Democratic Progressive Party-DPP government called for a transitional justice policy involving the legalization of hunting rights and instituting natural resource co-management between the state and indigenous peoples. Lastly, the long-term major project informant/participant in the Taroko area was elected to the township council, in addition to his relatively overlooked earlier position as the head of the local indigenous association. Through the process of studying heritagization of indigenous traditional knowledge in the development of ethnic tourism, particularly ecotourism, the project aimed at establishing a constructive dialogue between “traditional future,” cultural heritage literature, and local practice for the consolidation of alternative development.

The local conduct of ethnic- and eco-tourism in Da-Tung and Da-Li communities has opened up an opportunity for Truku people to perform and reconstruct their cultural heritage. To comprehend and interpret the local environment as a way to revitalize traditional knowledge, is to transform cultural heritage into a living tradition. Both the tourism operation and the degree of heritage commodification are under indigenous control, resulting in a kind of solidarity economy among the communities involved. As such, indigenous peoples can take advantage of the development of ethnic tourism to revitalize traditional knowledge, an exemplary demonstration of the traditional future. However, there are growing concerns and challenges. First, the operating scale and the profit rate of ethnic- and/or eco-tourism is not sufficient to support a family. Second, there is tension between different families operating ecotourism, because the distribution of public (communal) resources might endanger solidarity cultivated during the past few years.

3.6. From Indigenous Flavor to the Making of Local Terroir: A Study of the Taste of Processes in Indigenous Agro-Products and the Function of a Local Fermentation Workshop

This project considers three kinds of indigenous fermentation-based sauces, flavors, and products: “red rice *koji*” which is a kind of fungus (used in making *anka*, a type of miso paste), “daylily fermented paste”, and fermented “millet wine”. Based on these products, the project discusses the interaction and formation of a multi-species production chain, indigenous flavors, local terroir, and ethnically embodied memories. The project aims to present research on two indigenous agricultural communities and their cooperative fermentation workshops producing indigenous flavors in Eastern Taiwan. These unique indigenous flavors are referred to here as the local terroir, the characteristic taste and flavor imparted to a product by the environment in which it is produced. Based on the historical trajectory of local workshop development, as well as the recent promotion of indigenous taste, this project explores the transition of fermented agro-product manufacture from family operations to community networks and finally to large-scale tourism factories.

Reflection on the industrialization of fermentation processes reveals translation work in producing indigenous flavors and its relationship to the construction of local cultural identity.

How does the industrial-scale production process reproduce the “terroir” of indigenous materials and climate, as well as the local memory of original taste? This is the main focus of this project. The production chain of indigenous flavors relies on the interaction among three fields: Collection of indigenous agro-materials, the fermentation technology used, and the promotion of consumption of traditional flavors. The concept of a “boundary object” [19] is a key to the project, since these indigenous products help start a dialogue between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Another key idea, multispecies ethnography (with fungi, millet, daylily flavors, and involving indigenous farmers and fermentation craftsman) helps shed light on extensive relations involving indigenous taste and terroir.

In the end, this project aims to discuss and critically trace the transition from a local agriculture-based production chain to an outside-oriented industrial-scale production network. It documents the conversion of production to serve the Han Chinese market, while trying to retain indigenous control. It reveals how local terroir based on indigenous landscape, special ways of planting and harvesting, and ancestral tales, are combined with a branded logo for consumption by non-indigenous visitors. While unfriendly policies have created difficulties for organic certification, local efforts and traditional knowledge help to promote indigenous agricultural sovereignty. The investment of indigenous labor turns an unfavorable work environment into meaningful products. Organic farming is not a feminized mode of production that reflects “women’s work” as wage labor considered low in social class. Rather, it is a corporeal revelation of the relationship between body and work: A demonstration of symbolic capital in the form of embodied experiences. Local terroir is regained through actively promoted local taste via fermentation workshops and story-making in empowered co-op tourism.

4. Discussion

The six cases illustrate alternative forms of development that aim to give priority to social, cultural, and ecological aspects of sustainable community development. They are fundamentally different from the Western paradigm of development and “progress” which are an extension of colonialism and which prioritize profits above all. The cases in this paper document how indigenous peoples are transforming cultural heritage into local economic forms that draw upon traditional knowledge and practice. This is the heritagization process we discuss in this paper—renewal of cultural heritage by strengthening and promoting the roots of indigenous traditions of knowledge and practice towards culturally appropriate social and economic development options. Cultural revitalization is an essential part of heritagization, and the context for understanding social, cultural, economic, and political action in indigenous communities.

We have argued that heritage needs to be understood in the broadest of terms to encompass not only past traditions but also contemporary conditions. The paper deals with the historical and contemporary conditions of Taiwanese indigenous peoples, and it also looks to the future. The six cases provide an accounting of the continuity of indigenous peoples, their cultures and their development. This is shown by the research themes addressed by this paper:

1. From cultural heritage, such as agriculture, food culture, weaving, tourism and ethnic education, legends, rites, and ceremonies, we explored the current status of indigenous community heritagization in Taiwan.
2. We elucidated indigenous cultural heritage and its reproduction, as well as its dynamic translatability.
3. Based on aspects of food and farming, artisanal technologies, and tourism, we have treated the content and meaning of local indigenous peoples’ views of the historical

practices of cultural heritagization, interpretive process, and transformation of skills and techniques involving cultural innovation.

4. We provided an understanding of how cultural heritagization becomes the basis for identification and the foundation for indigenous community development in the presentation of “indigenous power.”
5. As we have discovered indigenous subjective practices and connotations, we are building up research on Taiwan’s indigenous cultural heritagization as a reference for “mobile workshops” for proposing possible deliberation methods for implementing practices at the local level.

The paper takes a significant step in providing a greater appreciation of the diversity of Taiwan’s indigenous peoples, and possibilities of cultural revitalization. The inclusion of several tribes and multiple communities in the study helps document a rich experience. This is important because each case involves different conditions, challenges and opportunities. Reducing the study to fewer cases would have missed this richness and would have lowered the quality of the paper and the strength of its findings. However, the heritagization and development experience captured here, focusing as it does mainly on the east coast (Figure 1) is only a small part of the diversity and complexity of indigenous Taiwan. Therefore, we call for more empirical work that makes indigenous peoples and their communities the central vantage point to illustrate indigenous views and to provide a better understanding of the indigenous experience.

In examining and reflecting on indigenous concepts from cultural production to practice and participation, the paper provides Taiwanese perspectives on the renewal of indigenous cultural heritage, the generation of options in response to development needs, and the implications of cultural heritagization. The case studies show that culturally appropriate development is possible and feasible in a number of areas, from cultural tourism to millet wine production. Many of the cases involve social enterprises, as part of a solidarity economy. The cases do not follow the utilitarian economic development models based on profit. Rather, they aim to provide multiple benefits such as self-determination, cultural identity and pride, empowerment, and revitalization. Social enterprises are a good fit for indigenous economic development, as they help to establish control and manage local affairs [20]. They strengthen cultural relationships such as food-sharing [8], as in tribal kitchens. These enterprises and projects are important for controlling the direction of development, and thus they have the potential to contribute to indigenous resilience.

Importantly, these projects provide development options, based on the “roots” of cultural heritage, for indigenous communities impacted by the Typhoon Morakot of 2009 and other environmental disasters. Maintaining a diversity of options is important because it provides flexibility and opens up the opportunity to learn from a diversity of development “experiments”. Such a resilience-building strategy is significant in the face of Taiwan’s disaster-prone geography, and the likely increase in the frequency and strength of typhoon events in the coming years. Thus, this paper is focused on the historical and contemporary conditions of Taiwanese indigenous cultures, but it also looks toward a resilient future.

The six cases deal with a diversity of indigenous peoples, communities, cultures, and development possibilities. Based on the results of these sub-projects, reported at various stages [13,14,18,21–23], we continue to delve into indigenous cultural heritage as our overarching research area. In doing so, we connect indigenous communities and make use of multiple research perspectives related to Taiwan’s indigenous cultural heritage and relevant practical experience. The “six-sided prism” interpretative analysis (Figure 3) is used to show the path from analysis of cultural heritage to development. The prism summarizes how multiple projects are engaged with the research themes. Based on our findings, the three pie-charts indicate the main areas of tension and dynamics between global/national level market forces and local struggles for sustainability, for example, neo-liberalism vs. solidarity economy.

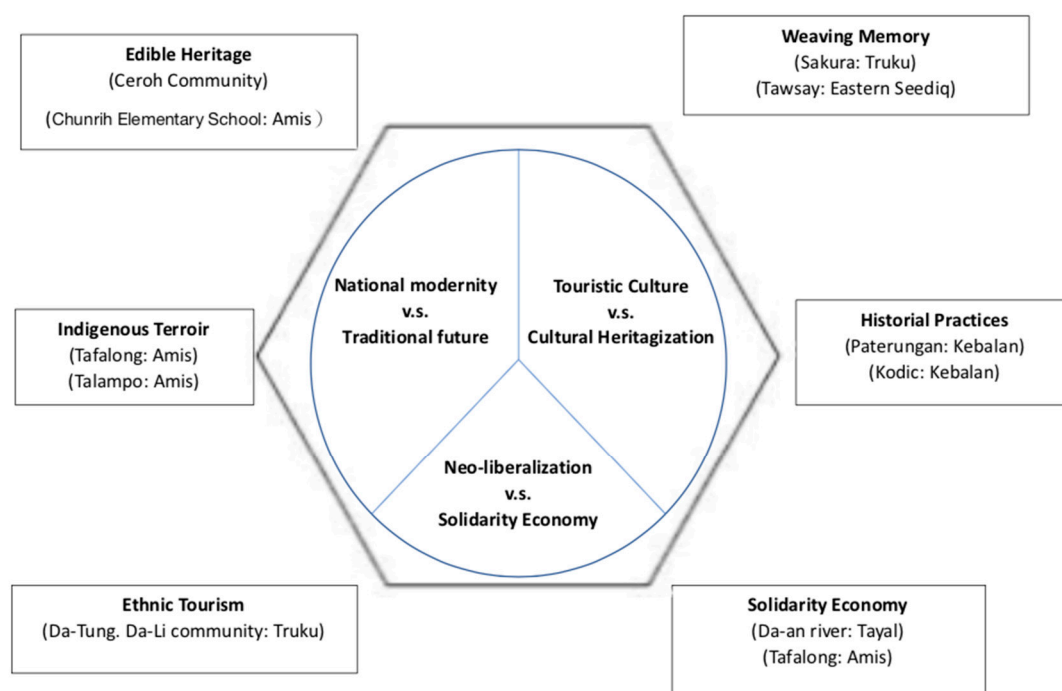


Figure 3. Relationship diagram of the key concepts and issues of “heritagization” of indigenous community practices and the local economy.

There is no one model for alternative development. Based on the situation and the current state of various indigenous communities, multiple possibilities are explored in the face of globalization. Moreover, indigenous community esthetics and the new vision of indigenous cultural heritage are presented through local agriculture, weaving and other artisanal techniques, ethnic cuisine, history, ceremonies, the establishment of collective participation and local cohesiveness, as well as the maintenance of cultural heritage. Each involves issues worthy of attention. The research team not only focuses the discussion and analysis on the themes and issues of the various sub-projects, but also through common networks of practice.

Together these six cases emphasize the connectivity and divergence of communities in different regions of Taiwan. Case studies and observations of situations are used to explore how heritage can be transformed into local industries that drive indigenous community tourism and sustainable development strategies. As well, the cases reflect on the cooperative relationships within and between indigenous communities in different areas, and political, economic, and social organizations. In these relationships we highlight issues related to the building of cultural heritagization involving dialectical relationships and derivative commercialization and industrialization. For example, solidarity economy is a critique of conventional economies that prioritize competition and profits above all. Instead, solidarity economy places human needs and relationships at the center, and is therefore similar to the Latin America-based international movement, *buenvivir* (“good living” in Spanish) [24].

From Clifford’s alternative views of history [9,10], thought is given to cultural heritagization as the action core of indigenous community practices and local economies. Six key areas (food heritage, historical practices, weaving-related memories, ethnic tourism, solidarity economy, and indigenous terroir) are the issues of concern for the six collaborating researchers. From Taiwan’s indigenous subjective concepts, the application of this integrated research project is used to explain how “the rich and glorious knowledge of the past” is inlaid in “modern times”. Through selection mechanisms, namely the different concepts and directions of the sub-projects, we elaborate on the idea that cultural heritage is the concrete presentation of history, artisanal techniques, knowledge, values, internal

logic, and cultural practices. Taking this a step further, we place emphasis on the necessary activation of indigenous traditional cultural heritage in the rebuilding of connections with the land and for indigenous community “life projects” [5] and local development mechanisms to take root.

Moreover, the food consumed and the clothing worn in daily life involve the most basic cycles of food, artisanal techniques, and ecology. Through the integration of local economy and mainstream markets, traditional knowledge (history) again becomes part of the practice and experience of market mechanisms, through experimentation to form cultural affirmations and economic flows. “Cultural heritage” is the greatest asset that contemporary indigenous people possess, something precious left behind by the past generations that has once again been proven to possess contemporary value, and has not been washed away in the torrent of time. Moreover, indigenous groups are building empowerment mechanisms and reviving cultural kinetic energy. This paper takes a significant step toward providing a greater appreciation of the diversity and possibilities of cultural heritage of Taiwanese indigenous communities and peoples.

In this way, the relationship between “the past” and “contemporary practice” forms a positive and dynamic cycle. Figure 4 provides a detailed expression of the integration of practices, approaches, and six key areas. The cultural past is not simply the cultural future. The “roots” of indigenous cultural heritage provide a diversity of cultural elements to select from. In our study, we selected the six areas shown in the figure, but there are of course many others. These selected areas become the engine for local economic development, leading to new social, cultural, political, and environmental benefits, for example, the cultural capital needed for the tourism economy. They also lead to practices that sustain these various benefits, leading to renewed and reconstructed cultural heritage.

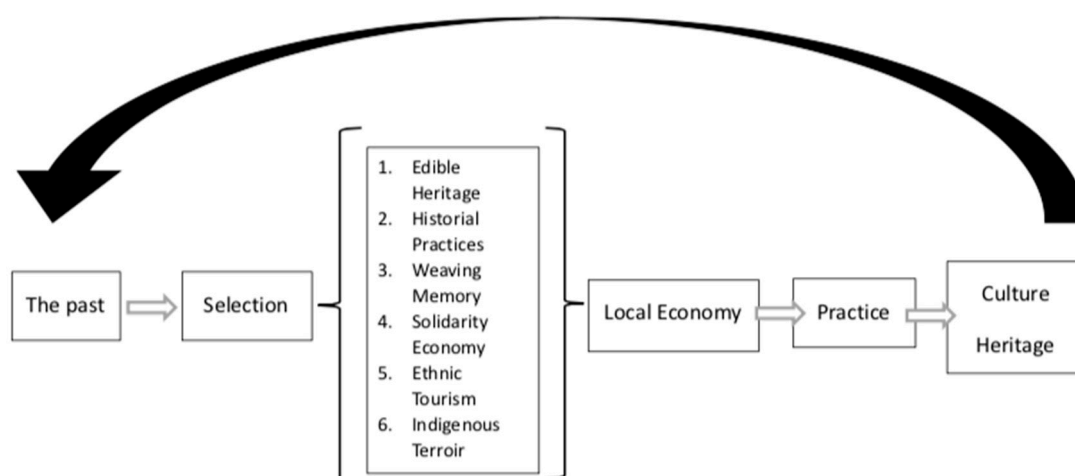


Figure 4. Integrated project practices and approaches (adapted from [25] (p.93)).

5. Conclusions

Our attempt, through the study of cultural revitalization, to understand changes related to indigenous heritage leading to social, cultural, economic, and political action, has many practical and theoretical implications. The expected academic and practical benefits of this project may be summarized as follows:

1. Deepening of the identification of different generations with farming village culture and the land, and strengthening of efforts to grow traditionally used plants and to provide relevant farming education.
2. Promotion of farming education practices and agricultural revival of food assets based on indigenous culture.
3. Through conservation and revival of weaving skills as well as memory, the indigenous traditional knowledge and cultural heritage will continue and be innovated in living

cultures. Moreover, these practices can be transformed into the cultural, symbolic and economic capitals for local industry.

4. Clarification of the rebuilding and seeking of multiple cultural mechanisms for indigenous cultural heritage under a contemporary capitalist framework.
5. By viewing intangible knowledge as cultural heritage, the definition of cultural heritage is expanded. In addition, in the process of heritagization, the recognition of traditional knowledge related to forest ecology becomes important.
6. With the integration of tourism and ecology, ecological knowledge is restored and revived. Reproduction of relationships of indigenous social and cultural traditions are promoted in multiple forms in dialogues with the mainstream society.
7. We contemplate the active and strategic use of traditional practices, such as (*mipaliu*, helping one another, exchange of labor) to preserve cultural characteristics and to pass on heritage.
8. When culture undergoes contemporary adaptation and recombination, understanding can be created about how to incorporate characteristics of indigenous legends and historical memory into products, and how to adapt to industrialization, such that the meaning of the new era is presented as “living traditional culture”.

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