

## **Formation and Transformation of Three-tiers Ethnic-Spatial Regime in Qing Taiwan: A Comparison of Pre and Post Purple-Line Borders**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the boundary drawings and arrangements of ethnic land tenure along the frontier area to explicate the ethnic-spatial deployment by the state power in Qing Taiwan circa 1745-1790 (*Qianlong* era). It was the state's intention since 1745 to initiate a three-tier ethnic-spatial regime, through creating a buffer zone at the foothill boundary separating head-hunting mountain aborigines and coastal-plain Chinese settlers with plain aborigines sandwiched in between. The aim was to quarantine Chinese reclamation of aboriginal land and preempt security harass beyond the borderline. To achieve this aim, a plain aborigine border guard (*ai fan*) system was implemented concomitantly, with the reallocation of plain aborigine land rights to the buffer zone for segmentation as well as providing rations to border sentry posts. However, the state's effort to counter cross-border reclamation and thus prevent Chinese encroachers from developing into unruly force proved in vain. Even worse, it backfired, as shown in the Lin Shuang-wen revolt (1786-1788). With the aborted purple borderline of 1784 as the benchmark, a comparison of the pre- and post-1784 boundary redrawings, blue borderline of 1760 and green borderline of 1790 respectively, as well as concomitant reallocations and rearrangements of aborigine land rights indicates a transformation of the three-tier ethnic-spatial regime, as witnessed in the shift of governance rationality from quarantine to active alliance with plain aborigines through fostering its militia forces (*tun fan*).

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