

## **Identification and Transformation of Plains Aborigines, 1895-1960: Based on the “Racial” Classification of Household System and Census**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The household registry system of colonial Taiwan was closely associated with the police and ho-kō (poa-chia in Chinese), and the colonial regime utilized the data collected through census as a tool to control Taiwan. This paper traced the origin and transformation of the household registry system in Taiwan under Japanese rule. It was found that household surveys conducted prior to 1905 focused mainly on social control and security. In 1905, the first island-wide census was launched which laid the foundation for the current household registry system.

The racial classification employed in the census registry portrayed the social reality of colonial Taiwan. The different racial categories demonstrated not only the co-existence of ethnic varieties, but also the ambitious control of the colonial regime. The 1950s saw the drastic transformation of ethnic identities when the Plains Aborigines gave up their original identity and became assimilated as Han Chinese. Only until the 1990s did the Plains Aborigines resume their own ethnic identity.

The paper emphasizes the context regulating racial classification during the colonial period in order to clarify the issue of postwar identification of Plains Aborigines.

**Keywords:** household system, population census, race, Cooked Barbarians, Plains Aborigines, identification