

Making Sense of Who We Are in a New Perspective:
An Analysis of High School History Textbooks in Taiwan and Mainland China

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Presented at International Assembly
87th Annual NCSS Conference
Houston, Texas
November 14-17, 2008

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Abstract

Using critical discourse analysis (CDA) method, presenters examine how power and ideology plays in high school history textbooks in Taiwan and Mainland China. The focus of the analysis is on the historical periods from mid 20th century to current. Reviewing and analysing chapters and pages regarding these two parts of the world, presenters highlight one of the ten NCSS social studies thematic strands: time, change, and continuity. Both sets of high school history textbooks portray the other part from different perspectives showing that power and ideology control the discourse of history texts. Yet, there are changes in history textbook accounts since power relations and ideology are constantly changing and textbook history are written to be in alignment with such changes to reveal new social and power relations.

Introduction

The cultural, economic, and political relationships between Taiwan and Mainland China have been heated topics since 1949 (Crane, 1993). Their relationships affect the relationships between Mainland China and the United States, and the relationships among other Asian countries and entities. The temperature of the relationships between Taiwan and Mainland China has become one of the most important readings on the thermometer of world peace.

China and Taiwan have shared a common cultural heritage. China and Taiwan emerged from the civil war between the Communist and Nationalist parties in 1949 and since then treated each other as enemies until 1990s when both governments started to profit from a thriving economic relationship. The two societies share a sense of “Chineseness” and belong to the “the first symbolic universe” of Chinese culture (Tu, 1991).

The two governments, however, have adopted since 1949 very different political systems. In Taiwan, when Chiang Kai-Shek and his son led government, the goal was to fight against communists in China. However, when Chiang Kai-shek passed away, Martial Law was lifted in 1987. Since then people are allowed to have more freedom in terms of deliverign public speeches, touring around in Taiwan and mailand China, and establishing economic exchanges. So “Taiwanese (Chinese in Taiwan)” and “Mainlanders” (Chinese in Mainland China)” have more interactions and have known each other more. Right now most people in Taiwan are seeking to maintain the peaceful relationship with China. Few people insist on Taiwan’s independence. In Mainland China, after abandoning the goal of creating an

egalitarian social order advocated by Mao Zedong, the Chinese communist party's legitimacy to rule is now predicated upon a historical mission to restore China's central position in the world, which only a strong and unified China can achieve, and upon its role as the guardian of China's national sovereignty (Chen, 1996; Tucker, 1996; Christiensen, 1996). Such different approaches to stoke up nationalist sentiments motivate both of us, who come from Taiwan and mainland China and met as colleagues in a graduate program of social science education in the United States. Despite our different hometowns, we develop a common interest in the role played by social science education in child development and socialization. Despite our experiences in different schools, we attempt to explore the treatment of high school textbooks towards promoting a national identity across the Taiwan Straits. The focus of our analysis is on the historical periods from the end of 19th century to current. Both sets of high school history textbooks portray the other part from different perspectives showing that power and ideology control the discourse of history texts. Yet, there are changes in history textbook accounts since power relations and ideology are constantly changing and textbook history are written to be in alignment with such changes to reveal new social and power relations.

The paper aims to explore the following research questions:

1. How did high school history textbooks in Taiwan and mainland China define national identity?
2. How are both accounts similar?
3. How are both accounts different?
4. How do textbooks in Taiwan and mainland China portray each other?
5. To what extent do both accounts reflect the current relationship between Taiwan and China?

Methodology

Using critical discourse analysis (CDA) method, presenters examined how power and ideology plays in high school history textbooks in Taiwan and Mainland China. Presenters reviewed and analyzed chapters, pages, photographs representing these two parts of the world. Robertson (2007, p. 3) has pointed out that "CDA sets out to capture the dynamic relationship between discourse and society, between the micro-politics of everyday life and the macro-political landscapes of ideological forces and power relations, capital exchange and material, historical conditions." Discourse is produced in a particular social and cultural context ; especially, school curricular in Taiwan have responded to contemporary sociopolitical changes primarily in relation to the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Law, 2004, p. 253). Therefore, we describe both sites' social and political contexts as follows.

Taiwan and China's Social and Political Contexts: Historical perspective

Nationalist Party (KMT) was established in 1919; Communist Party of China (CPC) was established in 1921. From 1937 to 1945, the Japanese invaded mainland China, destroyed some areas, and killed a lot of people. After the World War II, KMT and CPC fought with each other again; Taiwan also ended its colonized situation because Japanese were defeated. In 1949, KMT was defeated by CPC and then migrated to Taiwan. At first, people in Taiwan were pleased to welcome KMT; however, when they discovered that these people were corrupted and undisciplined. People in Taiwan became desperate about KMT's ruling; as a result, the radical conflict occurred in 1930. This event led Chiang Kai-shek practiced martial law until 1987. Since then, Taiwan really practices democracy and capitalism; meanwhile, people are allowed to have more interactions with mainland China, such as sightseeing, study, business, etc.

The communist government founded the People's Republic of China in 1949 and has been ruling it since then. A mixture of military coercion and peaceful offence has characterized Beijing's strategy of national reunification. For the first three decades since 1949, military coercion was the priority when PRC government planned to "liberate" Taiwan by force (Zhao, 1999). In 1950, PRC's army began to prepare extensively for the invasion of Taiwan. However, the outbreak of the Korean War on June 23, 1950 and the subsequent patrol of the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Straits ordered by President Truman called off the attempt. The PRC continued to threaten the use of force against Taiwan and began shelling the offshore islands occupied by KMT in 1954 and 1958. In the next twenty years, these islands continued to be bombed but only on odd-numbered days of the month. Such a peculiar pattern allowed the regular supply of the island, but at the same time, a clear message was sent out that military action was not about to come to an end.

The PRC government adopted a peaceful reunification strategy after Beijing launched a "Message" to the Taiwanese people from the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) on January 1, 1979. The message called for the return of Taiwan to "the embrace of the motherland at an early date so that we can work together for the great cause of national development (Beijing Review, 1981, 11)." This message suggested talks between the Chinese communist party (CCP) and KMT, and specifically proposed *santong* (three link, i.e., commercial, postal, and travel) and *siliu* (four exchanges, i.e., academic, cultural, economic, and sports) as the first step to "gradually eliminate antagonism between the two sides and increase mutual understanding (Beijing Review, 1981, 11)." Later, Deng Xiaoping proposed a policy of "one country, two systems" as a viable way of reunification. On January 30, 1995, Jiang Zeming, the general secretary of CCP and the president of the PRC, made another proposal suggesting that the two sides of the Taiwan Straits start negotiations "on officially ending the state of hostility between the two sides and accomplishing peaceful reunification step by step (People's Daily, 1995, 1)." The peaceful reunification strategy

successfully promoted economic and cultural exchanges and negotiations across the Taiwan Strait. It advocates that the socialism on the mainland and capitalism in Taiwan co-exist with each other for a long time. Taiwan may enjoy a high degree of autonomy, including administrative power, legislative power, independent judiciary power, a power to keep its own troops, and certain powers of foreign affairs. But only “the PRC represents China in the international arena (China Daily, 1993, 4-5).” From July 1995 to March 1996, the world was caught by surprise when the PRC suddenly sidelined its peaceful strategy and launched successive waves of military exercises aimed at Taiwan. Beijing’s Xinhua (New China News) Agency stated that “to strive to end the disunity of the country and nation by peaceful means in no way means allowing the process of peaceful reunification to be delayed indefinitely. If some people were to dare separate Taiwan from Chinese territory, the Chinese people would define the country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity with blood and lives (Beijing Xinhua News Agency, 1995)”. “With blood and lives” suggested war, but the war did not break out. Following Lee Teng-hui’s re-election as Taiwan’s president in March 1996, the PRC declared the successful military exercises, which were actually used to “demonstrate the resolution and willingness to escalate to high levels of military action if necessary (George, 1994).” Peaceful negotiations resumed as the priority after Beijing suspended the military actions. The goal of the current PRC government is to seek a stable cross-strait relations and maintain a status quo that may be conducive to eventual national reunification.

It’s against such contexts that our analysis will be conducted and presented.

Major Themes Presented in Taiwan and China’s High School History Textbooks

In Table 1, we illustrated the major contents included in Taiwan and China history texts. In addition, we used photographs from the textbooks to highlight the crucial events including Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), Chinese Civil War (1946-1949), Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and Martial Law Period in Taiwan (1949-1987).

Table 1: Outlines of Taiwan and China high school history textbooks (1895~ present)

Taiwan	China
<p>Nationalist Party (KMT) and Communist Party of China (CPC) : In 1894, Sun Yat-sen established the first revolutionary organization—Revive China Society— to overthrow Qing Dynasty. Later, the name of this organization has been changed for several times. In 1919, this organization was officially called KMT.</p> <p>CPC was founded in 1921 at Shanghai.</p>	<p>Nationalist Party (KMT) and Communist Party of China (CPC) : 1894, Sun Yat-sen established Revive China Society in Hawaii. 1905, Sun Yat-sen established Revolutionary Alliance in Tokyo, Japan by combining several organizations. 1912, KMT was officially founded in Guangdong from a collection of several revolutionary groups that had successfully overthrown the Qing Dynasty in the Xinhai Revolution. 1921, CPC was founded in Shanghai.</p>
<p>The Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) : In 1937, the government led by Chiang Kai-shek decided to fight against the Japanese invasion.</p>	<p>The Anti Japanese War (1937-1945) : KMT and CPC established the Anti-Japanese coalition to fight against the Japanese together.</p>
<p>Chinese Civil War (1946-1949): KMT disapproved of CPC’s ideology— the stress of proletariat revolution. CPC prompted the farmer movements which threatened KMT’s status quo. After Japanese surrender, in 1946, KMT and CPC fought with each other again. By 1949, CPC occupied most of China. Mao Zedong, the leader of CPC, defeated Chiang Kai-shek. CPC established People’s Republic of China in 1949; KMT retreated to Taiwan.</p>	<p>CPC’s New Democratic Revolution (1945-1949): After Japanese surrender, KMT wanted to launch a civil war to usurp the power of the government. Supported by the United States, KMT planned to destroy CPC and maintain the interests of the upper class. In Summer, 1946, KMT’s army invaded territories occupied by CPC. The Civil War broke out. CPC had the support of the Chinese people and crossed the Yangtze River to liberate many parts of China. KMT’s rule was overthrown.</p>
<p>People’s Republic of China (PRC) (1949-1989) Mao Zedong started socioeconomic and cultural movements—“Great Leap Forward” and “Cultural Revolution.” After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, Deng Xiaoping started the market</p>	<p>People’s Republic of China (PRC) (1949-1989) Mao Zedong had as CPC’s main goal to revive economy, establish the Constitution, and practice socialism. “Great Leap Forward” and “Cultural Revolution” were both mistakes made</p>

<p>economy.</p>	<p>by Mao Zedong, who died in 1976. It wasn't until 1978 did CPC begin to focus its goals in building up a socialist China with its unique characteristics.</p>
<p>Taiwan under Japanese Rule (1895-1945) Qing dynasty was defeated by Japan in 1895, and ceded Taiwan. During the first 20 years of colonial rule, most armed resistance against Japanese rule occurred. However, Japanese colonization paved the way for Taiwan's modernization by establishing traffic systems, schools, etc.</p>	<p>Taiwan under Japanese Rule (1895-1945) Qing dynasty was defeated by Japan and was coerced to cede Taiwan and its auxiliary islands to Japan in April, 1895. May, 1895, Japanese landed in Taiwan. Governor of Taiwan escaped to Xiamen, Fujian Province. People from all nationalities united and fought against the Japanese until October, 1895 thanks to the lack of support from the Qing Dynasty. During the 50 years under Japanese rule, the Taiwanese never ceased their fight to return to mainland China.</p>
<p>National Party governs Taiwan (1945-present) KMT retreated to Taiwan in 1945. The Nationalist government was controlled by Chiang Kai-shek and his son—Chiang Ching-kuo. Both of them practiced land reforms and contributed to Taiwan's economic and industrial developments. However, especially in the 1950s, Taiwanese were overseen to keep them from becoming communists. At that time, about ten thousand people were called "gangsters" because of joining in CPC. They were killed or put in jail.</p> <p>From 1950 to 1965, America economically aided Taiwan's development.</p>	<p>Communist Party governs mainland China (1945-present) KMT was defeated in the civil war that ended in 1945 and escaped to Taiwan. CPC established the People's Republic of China in 1949.</p> <p>Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) destroyed many cultural traditions. In 1979, CPC government made a speech to call for peaceful reunification with Taiwan.</p> <p>In the 80s, Deng Xiaopeng practiced a policy known as "One China with two systems" to guarantee Taiwan that Taiwan can still practice capitalism once it returns to the mainland China. The postal communication, transportation,</p>

<p>In the 1980s, the martial law was lifted and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was established. Since then, Taiwanese were allowed to own more freedom of speech.</p> <p>In the 1990s, Taiwan made a progress in its economic, democratic, and religious developments. These experiences distinguish Taiwan from Mainland China. KMT adopts capitalism and CPC does not; this leads to their different developments.</p>	<p>and business and trade between mainland and Taiwan have been a reality.</p> <p>In the 1990s, negotiations between CPC and KMT agreed that both governments will adopt the principle of “One China”. Economic exchanged continued to prosper.</p> <p>Reunification with Taiwan has become a priority at CPC’s agenda. CPC calls for the Taiwanese to discourage independence of Taiwan and to strive for the peaceful reunification of Taiwan with mainland China.</p>
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Photographs in Taiwan High School History Textbooks pertaining to China and as compared to China High School History Textbooks

Sino-Japanese War in China



Japanese air forces destroyed Chung king (in the middle of China).



Japanese soldiers slaughtered Chinese and buried them.



Japanese troops entered Shang hai and Chinese fled with their belongings.

Chinese Civil War in China

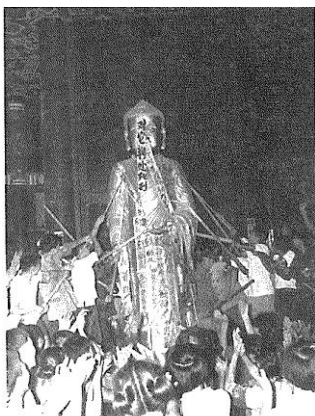


In 1949, KMT was defeated by CPC (left). CPC troops entered Beijing(right).

Cultural Revolution in China



Students raised “Mao’s Slogans” to support Mao Zedong.



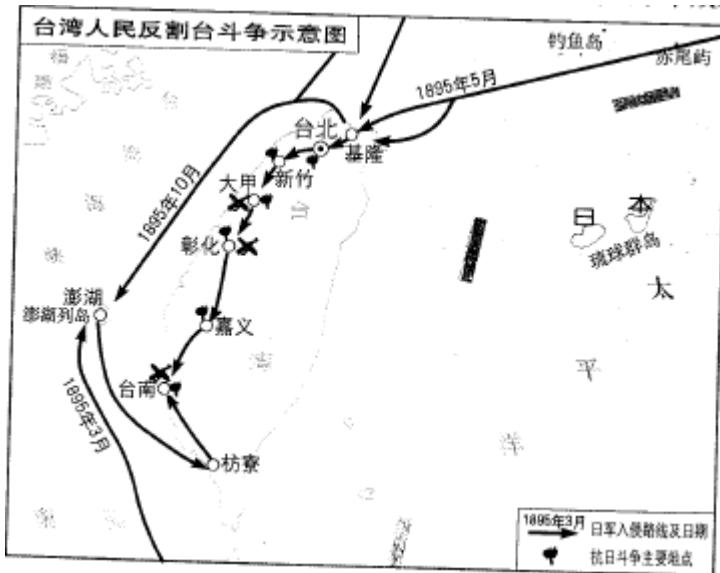
Students destroyed Buddha statue during the cultural revolution.

Martial Law Period in Taiwan (1949-1987)



In 1956, the people in Taiwan pretended to shoot at a dummy communist at park.

Photographs in Chinese High School History Textbook pertaining to Taiwan and as compared to Taiwan High School History Textbooks



Map Showing the Taiwanese Fought against cession to Japan in 1895.



Liu Yongfu and Taiwanese fought against the Japanese to the bitter end. (1895)



Sun Yat-sen chaired the first meeting of KMT in 1912.



▲ 十九路军在上海闸北英勇抗击日军

KMT's Army No. 19 Fought against the Japanese in Zhabei, Shanghai, 1932.



▲ 一二九运动中，北平示威学生与国民党军警搏斗

In 1935, students were fighting against KMT police during demonstrations to protest the Japanese invasion. (December 9, 1935) The incident was known as “Incident 12.9” in history.



Mao Zedong meeting Nixon in 1972. The major issue that prevented the establishment of the normal relationship between the United States and China was Taiwan.



Deng Xiaoping, Deng Yingchao, and Liao Chengzhi having a formal exchange on the status of Taiwan. (1983)

Findings and Discussion

We summarized the similarities and differences between Taiwan and China high school history textbooks in Table 2. According this table, we highlighted some points in the following part.

In Taiwan, the high school textbook authors have taken a more neutral stand to present the communist party and the nationalist party. Instead of portraying a one-sided view of the nationalist party, the history textbook described that the nationalist party retreated to Taiwan because of political corruption and weak leadership. When our Taiwanese presenter was a student, these kinds of discourse were forbidden. However, after the lifting of the martial law (in 1987), more historical events have been reinterpreted. Taiwan's textbook says that in the 1950s the government led by Chiang Kai-Shek and his son—Chiang Ching-Kuo called the people in Taiwan joining CPC “gangsters” and killed these people or put them in jail.

Likewise, China's textbook author has pointed out Mao Zedong's mistakes. However, China's textbook seems to avoid talking about the issue of human right because it does not mention recent student protests occurring at Tiananmen Square.

There are some differences between Taiwan textbook and China textbook. China textbook stresses that CPC and KMT cooperated with each other during the period of Japanese invasion (1937-1945). However, Taiwan's textbook does not mention this kind of coalition. In terms of Taiwan people's intention to resist Japanese ruling, Taiwan's textbook just describes these people didn't want to be ruled by Japanese; however, China's textbook says that Taiwanese's fight aimed to return to China. In addition, Taiwan's textbook attributes KMT's failure in civil war to its corruption rather than to Chiang Kai-shek's personal ambition to become a dictator. Taiwan's textbook says that KMT “retreated” to Taiwan; however, China's textbook says that KMT “escaped” to Taiwan.

The textbook from China expresses its strong intention to unify with Taiwan; however, Taiwan's textbook seems to avoid talking about the issue of national identity; it even does not mention the term of “Republic of China”. In this respect, Law (2004, pp. 271-272) has pointed out that “The Taiwan government has attempted to give up its old national identity (affiliated with the pre-1949 Republic of China, including both Taiwan and the Chinese mainland) and to upgrade its subnational identity (Taiwan as part of China) to the national level (Taiwan as a nation-state). Attempts to create a new national identity and introduce a tripartite framework for citizenship education have created more problems than solutions for its people, including teachers and students.”

Taiwan's textbook stresses “Taiwan's experience” in terms of its democratic, economic and religious developments; these examples are used to explain that Taiwan and Mainland China are moving in opposite directions. This is illustrated in the following excerpts: “In the

end of 19th century, China started modernization. However, Taiwan and Mainland China adopt different political systems, so their developments are different... In the end of 20th century, CPC established an extremely centralized-government. However, because KMT implements capitalism in Taiwan, younger generations live in a prosperous and democratic society.”(pp. 208-209)

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