

## Contested Memories of the Past: Teaching the History of Taiwan in American Classroom

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July in subtropical Taiwan, a large island off the southeast coast of mainland China was always hot and muggy. In the summer of 2015, the island was also permeated with an atmosphere of confrontation and conflict. On the evening of July 23, dozens of Taiwanese students pitched ladders against a side wall of the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taipei and broken into the compound. After a brief occupation of the minister's office, 33 young activists were arrested. The students' storming of the Ministry kicked the long protest from April into high gear. Their ire was provoked by the Ministry's plan to introduce a series of "minor" adjustments to history textbooks, which, claimed by young activists, embodied a Sino-centric view and devalued Taiwan's national identity. One of those arrested, Lin Guan-hua committed suicide through carbon monoxide inhalation one week later, bringing the protest to a climax. In his final Facebook posting, Lin wished the MOE to withdraw the curriculum guidelines. On July 31, the students occupied the courtyard again, displaying pictures of Lin who carried a placard with the slogan, "Education is not a political tool." The public outrage did not shake the government's determination to carry out the plan of textbook revisions, though the MOE held direct dialogue with the activists before and after the protest. However, their efforts in guarding Taiwan's identity had won a moral victory on the island. Six months later, the opposition party had landslide victory in both presidential and legislative elections. The new administration with a clear pro-independence slant rescinded the curriculum guidelines immediately.<sup>1</sup>



Students stormed the Ministry of Education on July 31, 2015.

The popular protest of 2015 was not the first time that history textbook revisions erupted into fierce controversy in Taiwan's history. Taiwan, a former colony of Japan, came under the

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<sup>1</sup> "Birthday suicide of student activist sparks protests outside Taiwan education ministry," accessed July 20, 2018, <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2015/07/31/taiwan-students-surround-education-ministry-after-young-activist-kills-himself-on-birthday/>

rule of the Republican government in 1945, and then became the offshore retreat for the Chinese Nationalists (KMT) in 1949 as the Communists took over the mainland. To maintain its political legitimacy, the KMT government indoctrinated orthodox Chinese historiography in historical pedagogy, while marginalizing the history of Taiwan. Parallel to the political democratization since the late 1980s, a Taiwan-centered perspective in history education and research emerged (though controversial at first) and has gradually gained prominence. After three decades of democratization, the indoctrination of state ideology through history textbook becomes futile. Taiwanese people, who were diverse in their ethnic and historical experiences generate assorted (which are sometimes polarized) memories of Taiwan's past that lead to diverse historical perspectives. This short article aims to offer an overview of the history textbook writing across different periods, and explains sociopolitical forces that shape the dynamic of historical narrative. Taiwanese society has been struggling with the culturally and ethnically mixed identities. As this article suggests, the variety in historical experiences and political democratization give rise to a historical view that appreciates diversity, autonomy, and consciousness. The democratization of knowledge keeps the state from monopolizing the production of historical discourse, which becomes diverse and socially involved.

### **A Brief History of Taiwan**

Located in the Western Pacific, the island of Taiwan, owing to its important strategic location, has always been coveted by a succession of foreign regimes. Long before the early seventeenth century, the island was inhabited primarily by indigenous people who had immigrated from other Western Pacific islands. In 1624, Dutch traders set foot on Taiwan and established nominal jurisdiction, which was governed by the Dutch East India Company. The Dutch presence in Taiwan came to an end when Koxinga (1368-1644), a Chinese general of the Ming dynasty drove the Dutch out of Taiwan in 1662, and used the island as his base against the Manchus, who overthrew the Ming Empire and established the Qing (1644-1912).<sup>2</sup> Taiwan was incorporated into the Qing administrative structure in 1683, becoming a prefecture of the Fujian province and later gaining provincial status in 1887.

Large-scale emigration from mainland China to Taiwan occurred soon after the Qing court consolidated its control over the island. By the late nineteenth century, Taiwan's population consisted predominantly of Han Chinese migrated from mainland China, with a small number of indigenous inhabitants. Taiwan was separated from China between 1895 to 1945 during when it became Japan's colony after the Qing dynasty was defeated in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). As Japan's first colony, Taiwan was established as a laboratory for experimenting with modernization and empire-building. Japanese colonial policy was both developmental and predatory. In many ways, colonizers promoted economic development, upgraded Taiwan's infrastructure, introduced modern civilization, and brought tremendous social change. On the other hand, Taiwanese gentry and intellectuals with anti-Japanese sentiment, who called for self-rule were brutally suppressed. Like their European counterparts, the Japanese authorities implemented what was called Doka (assimilation) policy to repress Chinese culture. Students were forced to be indoctrinated in the Japanese language and culture. Under Japanese colonial rule, Taiwan had transformed itself from an overwhelmingly rural and agrarian society

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<sup>2</sup> See Tonio Andrade, *Lost Colony: The Untold Story of China's First Great Victory over the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

to an important industrial and commercial entity, though it had become closely linked to the Japanese economy and strategic demands.<sup>3</sup>

Following the end of World War II in 1945, the Nationalist Party (KMT) -led Republic of China took control of Taiwan from Japan. After half-century of colonial rule, the Taiwanese, who enjoyed a higher standard of living than that of mainland China, were frustrated by the new administration's efforts of trying to establish tight central control in Taiwan. Politically active Taiwanese, who were perceived as Japanese collaborators by the new government, lost their posts in government. The conflict escalated on February 28, 1947 when a dispute between unlicensed cigarette vendor and government officer triggered an island-wide anti-government protest. Nationalist government dispatched troops to brutally put down the uprising, which led to thousands of people died. Known as the "2/28 incident," the violent suppression seriously deteriorated relationships between the Taiwanese and their new rulers. As one of the most horrific incident in modern Taiwan, the incident left deep emotional scars on Taiwanese people and became a rallying point for the independence movement in Taiwan today.<sup>4</sup>

The island has been separated from mainland China again since 1949 when the Nationalists lost the Civil War (1945-1949) to Communists, and made Taiwan as the offshore retreat of the Nationalist regime. From the late 1940s to the early 1950s, nearly two million Chinese, including refugees, wealthy families, government officials, military personnel, and their families came to Taiwan. The Nationalist Party, led by Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975), reestablished the Republic of China (ROC) on the island, which was initially constructed as a military base to retake the Mainland. The ROC based in Taipei claimed itself the sole legitimate government of China and continued to control the Chinese seat on the United Nations Security Council until the early 1970s. When Chiang Kai-shek realized his dream of repossessing Mainland would never be achieved, the government gave the highest priority to the goal of modernization and industrialization of the island, which led to the creation of the "Taiwan Miracle." After Chiang's death in 1975, his son Chiang Ching-kuo launched out ambitious programs of economic construction. Unlike Mao Zedong who preferred "redness" over "expertise," the ROC government placed high priority on the development of industry and business.<sup>5</sup> After successful programs of industrialization and economic aid from the United States, Taiwan's economy took off. From the 1970s through the end of the twentieth century, Taiwan underwent rapid industrialization and became one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

Taiwan today is an economically vibrant and militarily strong entity, but facing many uncertainties. Its successful export-oriented economic strategy and robust manufacturing industry make Taiwan an inevitable actor in international community. Trade and investment ties have deepened economic interdependence between mainland China and Taiwan. The political links between Beijing and Taipei, however, are fragile. Relations across the Taiwan Strait never ceased to be a hotly contested issue in regional security. Beijing remained firmly committed to

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<sup>3</sup> For Taiwan's development under the Japanese, see Harry J. Lamley, "Taiwan Under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945: The Vicissitudes of Colonialism," in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2007), 240-242.

<sup>4</sup> During the authoritarian period in Taiwan, it was not allowed to criticize the ROC government in suppressing the Incident. After the lifting of martial law in 1987, memorial sites were set up to commemorate the victims. Scholarly research has boomed in recent years. The Incident still triggers intense public discussion today to blame the KMT and celebrate people's fighting for democracy. For the legacy of the Incident, see Robert Edmondson, "The February 28 Incident and National Identity," in *Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan*, ed. Stephane Corcuff (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 25-46.

<sup>5</sup> For details on Chiang Ching-kuo's democratic reform and economic construction in Taiwan, see Shao-chuan Leng, ed., *Chiang Ching-kuo's Leadership in the Development of the Republic of China on Taiwan* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993).

the one-China policy and determined to achieve national unification, while a majority of Taiwanese prefer to maintain the status quo.<sup>6</sup> The future of Taiwan is still uncertain.

### **Taiwan's Road to Democracy: The Formation of Taiwanese Identity**

Lying at the heart of Taipei, the Liberty Square is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Taiwan. Wandering around the vast Square, one cannot help being impressed by the grand octagon-shaped memorial hall dedicated to Chiang Kai-shek, the political and military leader of the ROC. After Chiang passed away in 1975, the government and the Nationalist Party decided to build the square and monument, which would “direct people toward a renewed loyalty” to Chiang and the KMT. Nevertheless, over forty years after Chiang’s death, the square witnessed a gradual process of democratization. It was on this square where pro-democracy demonstrators sought to challenge Taiwan’s authoritarian system in the 1980s and 1990s. After Taiwan underwent a democratic transition, the square was renamed (from Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Square) Liberty Square by president Chen Shui-bian, whose political party defeated the KMT in the 2000 election. Under his presidency, he also renamed Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall to National Taiwan Democracy Memorial Hall. The name change was short-lived. When the KMT returned to power in 2008, President Ma Ying-jeou restored the hall’s original name.<sup>7</sup> After the KMT lost the election in 2016, the new administration has been seeking ways to transform the memorial into a site celebrating Taiwan’s democratic transition. The hall witnesses Taiwan’s democratic transition, and becomes a contested public space filled with an array of symbols.<sup>8</sup> The dynamic memories and interpretations of its past, as indicated by the Memorial, denote the cultural and political diversity in Taiwan. As this section suggests, the democratization since the 1980s has allowed the co-existence of diverse identities in Taiwanese society, which in turn influenced the ways they remembered their past.



Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in Taipei

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<sup>6</sup> Beijing saw the People’s Republic of China as the sole legitimate China. Beijing and Taipei reached a consensus in 1992, known as the “1992 Consensus,” which stated that “there is one China, but the definition of it on each side is different.” However, the Democratic Progress Party in Taiwan, which won the elections in 2000, 2004, and 2016 did not acknowledge the Consensus.

<sup>7</sup> For details on the CKS Memorial Hall’s transformation, see Charles D. Musgrove, “Taking Back Space: The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall and Taiwan’s Democratization,” *Twentieth-Century China* 42, no.3 (2017): 297-316.

<sup>8</sup> In 2018, the Transitional Justice Commission has been set up to transform the function of the CKS Memorial Hall. The Commission aims to remove all symbols of authoritarianism in Taiwan. See “Justice commission prioritizes CKS Hall,” accessed July 21, 2018, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2018/06/02/2003694161>.

Falling in the Civil War, Chiang Kai-shek and his government claimed the exile was a temporary expedient, and maintained an authoritarian regime in Taiwan. The island had been under martial law from 1949 to 1987, implementing a “no contact” policy with mainland China. The mainlander elite who followed Chiang to Taiwan maintained political dominance, while all dissident activity, especially by Taiwanese was brutally suppressed. To strengthen KMT’s central control, Chiang launched political movements (notably, the White Terror) to eradicate Chinese communists and Taiwanese elite who pursued Taiwan’s independence.<sup>9</sup> KMT’s authoritarian rule has been relaxed from the late 1970s, when Chiang’s son Chiang Ching-kuo opened up the political system to Taiwanese. During his presidency, the KMT government undertook liberalization measures in response to popular political pressure. The termination of martial law and the formation of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) ushered in democracy, cultural pluralism, and an open society in Taiwan. In 2000, the DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian, won Taiwan’s direct presidential election, which marked first peaceful and democratic transfer of power in the ROC’s history.

Taiwan’s successful transition from authoritarianism to democracy gave rise to a more culturally diversified society, in which multiple versions of sociocultural identities have coexisted. The Chinese who came to Taiwan in 1949 (known as Mainlanders or *waishengren*) usually have a pro-China position, while many other Taiwanese became more determined to assert their distinct Taiwan identity. The identity pluralism was manifested in different ways people interpreted Taiwan’s history and their own identities. During the authoritarian period, the ROC government asserted itself the only legal government of China. Chiang Kai-shek initiated the Chinese Cultural Revival Movement from the late 1960s, in sharp contrast to the eradication of the “feudalistic tradition” in socialist mainland China. A myriad of programs were designed to promote Chinese nationalist ideology, asserting the island as the legitimate repository of Chinese culture and educating Taiwan citizens into a Chinese identity.

Following the lifting of martial law in 1987 and the democratic transition in the 1990s, the old social and political order was overturned, which gave rise to a process of “Taiwanization” or “indigenization.” The process was marked by the boom of Taiwan studies and the history curriculum reform, which had challenged a collective memory of Taiwan’s past constructed by the authoritarian regime. Native Taiwanese, as the majority population, gradually distinguished themselves with mainlanders who migrated to the island in 1949, and generated different memories of Taiwan’s turbulent past, such as the Japanese colonial rule, and the KMT authoritarian period. In recent years, Taiwanese tend to emphasize the distinctiveness of the island whose identity is multicultural and has been shaped by a cluster of cultural and political influences. Thirty years after the democratization, it has become a trend that increasing number of people identify themselves as Taiwanese, regardless of their national origins. According to a 2016 social survey conducted by the Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation, more than 80% of respondents claimed themselves as Taiwanese, whereas only 8.1% self-identified as Chinese and 7.6% said they were both Taiwanese and Chinese.<sup>10</sup>

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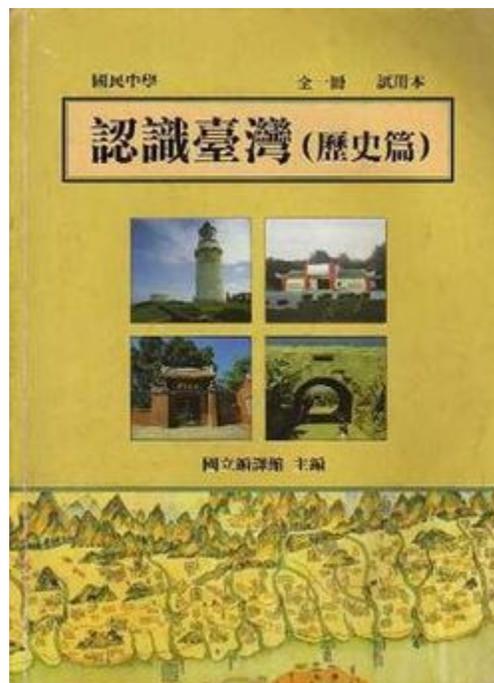
<sup>9</sup> The term “White Terror” refers to the period from 1949 to 1987, during which the KMT government suppressed political dissidents. For details and personal experience about the period, see Kang-i Sun Chang, *Journey Through the White Terror: A Daughter’s Memoir* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> “Taiwanese identity reaches record high,” accessed July 21, 2018, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2016/05/28/2003647291>.

## The textbook controversy

The co-existence of Taiwanese identity and Chinese identity in Taiwan influences the ways the island's history has been presented in history textbook. During the authoritarian period, national history in textbooks had adopted a "China-centric" historical view, focusing on the glories of China's past and touching only cursorily on the history of Taiwan. From the 1950s through 1980s, the ROC government designed a school curriculum that indoctrinated students into a belief that "loyalty and devotion to the ROC as a nation was the primary duty of all citizens."<sup>11</sup> Students were cultivated to appreciate Chinese culture, history, and geography, and to be dedicated to the anti-communist ideology. When mainland China suffered from catastrophic Cultural Revolution, the ROC government depicted Taiwan was the reservoir for traditional Chinese culture. The island of Taiwan was treated merely as one province of China, and was labeled as a temporary expedient.

The ROC government opened the door to democratic reform in the late 1980s. The years since then have ushered in a new era of democracy, liberalization, and new identity formation. After Lee Teng-hui, a Taiwanese politician, became the first freely elected president in 1996, he accelerated the process of Taiwanization, by creating a new Taiwanese identity and attempting to build a separate independent nation-state. One of the concrete manifestations of this process was the reform of the school curriculum and history textbook. In 1997, the Lee administration introduced a new set of junior secondary school textbooks entitled *Getting to Know Taiwan*. The textbooks rejected the orthodox view, which made Taiwanese history as subordinate to Chinese history. They portrayed Taiwan as a distinctive multicultural community, which was subject to diverse cultural and political influences dating back to four hundred years ago.



*Getting to Know Taiwan*

<sup>11</sup> Liu Meihui, "A Society in Transition: The Paradigm Shift of Civic Education in Taiwan," in *Citizenship Education in Asia and the Pacific: Concepts and Issues*, eds. W. O. Lee (Hong Kong: the University of Hong Kong and Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 101.

The *Getting to Know Taiwan*, for the first time in secondary education, placed the distinctive historical Taiwan trajectory as a subject of narrative. One of the main arguments of the textbook was that Taiwan ran through a tragic historical process, during which people in Taiwan had never been “masters of their own home.” Rather than endorsing a Sino-centered ideology, the textbook attempted to erode Taiwan’s links with the Chinese mainland, treating the Nationalist Chinese as one of the “occupiers” of Taiwan, just as the Dutch, Koxinga, and the Japanese. For example, the population who immigrated from the mainland was no longer referred to as “Chinese people *Zhongguo ren*,” but “people of Chinese culture *Zhonghua ren*,” or even “Taiwan people *Taiwan ren*.” The description of Japan’s surrender of Taiwan to ROC in 1945 was the “glorious retrocession” in previous textbook. But now it was merely referred to as “the end of the war.” It is also noticeable that the textbook highlighted the modernization brought by the Japanese, rather than simply condemning Japanese exploitive colonial rule. Furthermore, the new textbook covered many once-forbidden topics, such as the February 28 Incident in 1947, the “White Terror” in the 1950s, and the “Kaohsiung Incident” of 1979. After the initial controversy from the Nationalists, the *Getting to Know Taiwan* curriculum was formalized in 1998. For the first time, the history of Taiwan was featured in a single volume, though it served as supplementary readings to Chinese history. These initiatives were aimed at promoting a Taiwanese national identity and indoctrinating the people that Taiwan had a history separate from China.<sup>12</sup>

Taiwanization had deepened after Chen Shui-bian of the Taiwan-centric Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election in March 2000, ending the half-century KMT rule in Taiwan. While in his inauguration address, President Chen pledged that his administration would not declare Taiwan’s independence, he was dedicated to promoting Taiwan’s localization or so-called “Taiwan-ization.” During his tenure, most of his cultural policies were designed to deemphasize historical and cultural ties to China. For example, his administration carried out the “Taiwan Name Rectification Campaign” to replace China with Taiwan in all state-run businesses. The images of KMT leaders on the currency were replaced by those of Taiwanese landmarks. The “Language Equality Law” was enacted to designate fourteen languages as the national languages of Taiwan, depriving the mandarin as *de facto* national language.<sup>13</sup>

The process of Taiwanization loomed large in history education and scholarship. In 2004, the Institute of Taiwan History was established in Academia Sinica, an intellectual effort to “lay the groundwork for an integrated and multifaceted island history that is different from conventional Chinese, Japanese and Western narratives of Taiwan.” In the secondary history education, the supplementary lessons narrating the history of Taiwan were integrated into official textbooks. In 2006, the history of Taiwan was published in a single volume, which would be taught separately from that of Chinese history. The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taiwan in 2004 proposed a high-school history curriculum, which suggested “Taiwan History” and “China History (before 1949)” to be taught in different semesters. In 2007, the MOE authorized the Taiwan Historical Association to carefully review the expressions used in history textbooks. The endeavor generated a report which suggested approximately 5,000 expressions downplayed

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<sup>12</sup> See Lung-chih Chang, “Telling histories of an island nation: The academics and politics of history textbooks in contemporary Taiwan,” in *Designing History in East Asian Textbooks: Identity Politics and Transnational Aspirations*, ed. Gotelind Muller (London: Routledge, 2011): 117-134.

<sup>13</sup> For Chen Shui-bian’s efforts in stamping out Chinese cultural heritage in Taiwan, see Christopher R. Hughes, “Negotiating national identity in Taiwan: between nativization and de-sinicization,” in *Taiwan’s Democracy: Economic and Political Challenges*, eds. Robert Ash (London: Routledge, 2011): 51-74.

Taiwan’s sovereignty. For example, “both sides of the Taiwan strait” was required to change to “both the countries.” “the retrocession of Taiwan” ought to be changed to “post-World War II.” Though Chen Shui-bian carefully avoided a formal declaration of Taiwan was an independent state, his administration in many occasions downplayed Chinese aspects in history curriculum.

Chen Shui-bian’s broad-based attempt to indigenize Taiwanese society had stalled since 2008 when the KMT defeated the DPP in both presidential and national legislative elections. The popular KMT politician, Ma Ying-jeou, who was a mainlander born in Hong Kong and received a law degree from Harvard University, began his presidency with a clear mandate to reverse his predecessor’s pro-independence and de-sinicization stances. From the beginning, Ma explored ways of healing an already cracked cross-strait relationship and strengthening Taiwan’s cultural and economic ties with the mainland. His administration endorsed the “One-China” concept under the ROC Constitution (though with different interpretation) and took measures to build closer identity across the Straits. Ma’s initiatives were embodied in cultural and educational reforms, in an attempt to revitalize the nationalist Chinese heritage. Under his presidency, the Taiwan Strait was no longer a flashpoint as it has been during the Lee and Chen periods.

In the educational realm, the effort was marked by suspending Chen Shui-bian’s “curriculum guidelines” and introducing the revised history textbooks and curriculum.<sup>14</sup> The initiatives, known as the “fine-tuning,” proposed to re-indoctrinate a China-centric view, downplaying the distinctiveness of the island’s past. According to the new curriculum guideline, the historical links between Taiwan and the mainland were reemphasized, bolstering Taiwanese culture’s subordinate position to traditional Chinese culture. One example was the treatment of Koxinga who drove the Dutch out of Taiwan in 1662. Under the new guidelines, the regime established by Koxinga in Taiwan against Manchu conquest was called “Ming Zheng Dynasty,” instead of the “Zheng Dynasty.” Such revision suggests that Taiwan’s affiliation to Chinese empire dated back to the Ming Dynasty. Historical incidents reflecting the severity of KMT rule such as the February 28 Incident and White Terror were watered down. The new curriculum suggests that both incidents were results of the civil war between the KMT and the Communist Party, rather than exploring social reasons in Taiwan. It also downplayed the waves of social movement calling for democracy after the KMT moved to Taiwan, but highlighting the beneficence of the KMT to initiate democratization process.<sup>15</sup>

Old Version	New Version
China	Mainland China
Governed by Dutch	Invaded by Dutch
Governed by Koxinga	Governed by <u>Koxinga</u> of Ming Dynasty
Qing Dynasty	Qing Court
Governed by Japan	Colonized by Japan
Received Taiwan after the WWII	Recovered Taiwan after the WWII
Comfort women	Women were forced to become comfort women
Cultural Diversity	Diversity of Chinese Culture
None	Taiwan’s resistance against Japanese colonial rule

Major history textbook revisions proposed in 2015

<sup>14</sup> For more details about the textbook revision, see <http://98history.blogspot.com>.

<sup>15</sup> “Taiwan has its own textbook controversy brewing,” accessed July 21, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/21/taiwan-textbook-controversy-china-independence-history/>.

## **Epilogue and Conclusion**

In the summer of 2015, hundreds of students of Taiwan stormed the Ministry of Education to protest a series of history textbook revisions which, claimed by young activists, emphasized a “Sino-centric” view and aimed at promoting Beijing’s “One-China” policy. One year later, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), with its pro-independence stance, quickly rescinded the textbook changes after winning the presidential election. As once a Japanese colony from 1895 to 1945, and then a retreat for the defeated Nationalist government in 1949, Taiwanese society has been struggling with the culturally and ethnically mixed identities. Taiwan’s identity crisis has been embodied in the political spectrum, which became highly polarized on various social, political, and historical issues. This article explores the ongoing textbook controversy in Taiwan, situating it in evolving historical contexts. It suggests that Taiwan society’s representation of its colonial and Cold War past is highly contested, and shaped by both state-actors and non-state actors. Different memories of the past had co-existed and helped construct a contested identity in Taiwan.

History textbooks have become a sensitive issue in many countries. It offers a primary vehicle through which the official historical discourse becomes socialized. The Taiwan case, nevertheless, suggests that the knowledge production and history education are by no means a state monopoly, but a process of civic engagement. From 1949 onwards, history education in Taiwan witnesses a transformation from a state-centered enterprise which indoctrinate nationalist ideology to a socially-involved process that emphasizes autonomy and appreciates diversity and differences. Though the future of Taiwan is uncertain given by domestic political changes and highly unstable geopolitics, the trend of public engagement in generating diverse discourse will be irreversible.

In the U.S., the history of Taiwan becomes marginalized in history education. Textbook always makes it subordinate to Chinese history or East Asian history, but overlooking its distinctiveness in historical trajectory. As we have seen, Taiwan has a special status in the global community. It cannot be considered a sovereign nation-state, as Beijing claimed it as a province of the People’s Republic. It also has a unique history. Various political entities had occupied and ruled the island. Taiwan has a highly diverse population, whose ancestors came to the island during different periods. The appreciation of domestic diversity and dynamics of history knowledge production would be the core of teaching the history of Taiwan in the American classroom.