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Recentring the national self

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The trajectory of national selfhood in *Social Studies* education

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The national self in textbooks

If affection for and loyalty to one's country are generally taught in childhood, how is a sense of self beyond a child's immediate environment and experience encouraged and guided? It has been widely acknowledged that primary education in particular is crucial in forming national identity and fostering nationalism (Tuan 1977: 158–160; Mohammad-Arif 2005; Lind 2011; Chang 2015). What better tool is there than education to construct an ideal national identity for the next generation methodically and efficiently? Patriotism in education takes many forms – romanticising and inventing the past, glorifying the uniqueness of the people, celebrating the political achievements of the ruling regime, as well as distancing or demonising the enemy. Not only do educational institutions become the primary agents of official knowledge, reproducing dominant values, but they also systematically and effectively consolidate the national self. Within education, textbooks are regarded as particularly powerful 'vehicles through which a government transmits national identity to a country's young people' (Lind 2011: 15). By constructing and extolling the idea of 'my country', the self-image of the nation is embedded in the knowledge that shapes children's worldviews. This kind of 'banal nationalism' becomes second nature, maintained and practised unconsciously (Billig 1995: 42).

To explore how the national self is portrayed and perceived in Taiwan's primary education, this chapter presents a study of the textbooks used in social studies education, one of the most important instruments of childhood socialisation. Social studies is recognised as the most comprehensive subject in primary education and the key to providing young people with 'the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active participation in society' (Ross 2006: 17–18). Through a systematic and consistent process, children learn social norms and values, take on social roles, and develop a sense of self, both as an individual and collectively. The study examines 72 volumes of post-war social studies textbooks in order to trace the genealogy of the idea of the national self-image and reveals how social studies education presents a particular vision of the collective 'we'. The investigation concludes with

an exploration of the ways in which the collective ‘we’ has been imagined, represented, and re-centred over the period in question.

The study finds that the change in official national self-image is not just a revisionist shift from China to Taiwan. Rather, the changing meaning of ‘we’ is best understood as a repositioning process, the usage and meanings of various self-references are fluid and contingent. The decentring of China started as early as the late 1960s, triggered by the Cultural Revolution on the mainland and strengthened by growing international isolation. An earlier emphasis on ‘where we came from’ is replaced, as early as the 1968 curriculum, by a shifting focus, first to ‘what we have achieved’ and then to ‘what we have become’, highlighting modernity and liberal-democratic values. In other words, over the period studied, the self-image projected in primary education moves away from the ‘historical we’ to construct a ‘contemporary we’ with a different value system and worldview.

Methodology: What to look out for

Students are seldom aware of the linkage between power and knowledge and most children cannot see beyond the official knowledge they are taught. Little wonder then that Althusser (1971: 153–155) calls education the ‘number-one’ ideological state apparatus (ISA) in his discussion of the reproduction of capitalist relations of exploitation and dominant values. He cautions that the power of education is usually invisible and that dominant values are disseminated discursively and silently. Because education selects and presents certain knowledge before transmission in schools, such selective partial truth appears to the students as the only reality. As Apple points out, schools process people as well as knowledge (2004: 5). Extended and systematic inculcation through compulsory education¹ is particularly influential within an environment that values academic achievement highly and in a period during which education is almost the only opportunity for upward social mobility (except for the privileged). Thus, education provides the perfect platform for the ‘manufacturing of national identity and citizenship’, guiding the young to form an officially sanctioned worldview and selfhood (Mohammad-Arif 2005).

In understanding how a rooted sense of national identity is fostered from childhood, social studies textbooks are particularly illuminating. As a powerful and silent ISA, the design and content of social studies education is a crucial battleground in the fight for ideological hegemony and political loyalty. Worldwide, social studies were only introduced as a formal subject in the school curriculum in 1916, with an emphasis on the development of citizenship. Since then, the goals, nature, and content of social studies have been contested,

with a debate between a social-issue approach that treats the subject as one comprehensive field of study and a more discipline-based approach that combines a cluster of separate disciplines (Ross 2006: 2, 7). The origin and development of social studies education in post-war Taiwan has followed a similar trajectory. The subject, social studies, was first introduced into the Republic of China's (ROC) 1923 curriculum (Sheng 1934: 125).² The discipline-based approach was adopted during the early post-war period, dividing social studies into individual subjects such as history and geography for the higher year-group (Year 5 and Year 6). Starting from the 1968 curriculum, the discipline-based approach started to lose ground. It was not until the 1975 curriculum that the social-issue approach became the norm, and all related content merged into one single subject: Social studies. Since then, social studies has been an all-encompassing subject covering everything the state deems children need to be considered good citizens.

Over the years, the content of *Social Studies* was arranged concentrically – teaching children to understand their family, their immediate environment, and basic daily norms in the lower year-group (Years 1 and 2, age 7–8),³ broadening to understand wider society in the middle year-group (Years 3 and 4, age 9–10), and transmitting more abstract concepts about the nation, history, and geographical knowledge in the higher year-group (Years 5 and 6, age 11–12). Although older children were taught about the country's history and geography, the construction of a sense of we-ness started much earlier than in the explicit patriotic education that older year-groups received. Rather, the idea of a national self and collective we-ness could be inculcated much earlier through different topics and a hidden curriculum.⁴

This chapter examines 72 social studies textbooks published by the semi-official National Institute for Compilation and Translation (NICT)⁵ between 1945 and 2000.⁶ The list of textbooks examined here includes 12 volumes of *General Studies (changshi)*⁷ and 60 of *Social Studies (shehui)*:

Post-1945 version

Chinese and General Studies (*Guoyu Changshi*). Taipei: NICT. [8 volumes;
Year 1–Year 4]

1952 version

General Studies (*Changshi*). Taipei: NICT. [4 volumes; Year 3–Year 4]

1962 version

Social Studies (*Shehui*). Taipei: NICT. [4 volumes; Year 3–Year 4]

1968 version

Social Studies. Taipei: NICT. [8 volumes; Year 3–Year 6]

1975 version

Social Studies (1st ed.). Taipei: NICT. [12 volumes; Year 1–Year 6]

Social Studies (2nd ed.). Taipei: NICT. [12 volumes; Year 1–Year 6]

Social Studies (3rd ed.). Taipei: NICT. [12 volumes; Year 1–Year 6]

1993 version

Social Studies. Taipei: NICT. [12 volumes; Year 1–Year 6]

To reveal the sometimes ambiguous and contradictory nature and implications of the national self, the study selects five keywords commonly used to index or point to an image of the national self in post-war Taiwan's social studies textbooks. The five self-references are: *Zhongguo* (China), *Zhonghua* (Chinese or China), *Zhonghua minguo* (Republic of China, ROC), *Taiwan* (Taiwan), and *woguo* (my/our country). The study also considers a few related alternatives – such as *dalu* (the mainland), *jiaxian* (hometown), and *baodao* (precious island) to see which other options might describe similar ideas. Combing through the 72 textbooks and mapping out their usages, this chapter explores the ways in which these terms are employed to construct a national narrative and reveals the changing trajectory of the national self-projection.

Another important factor to consider is the curriculum version, because curriculum revisions are often part of educational transformations, which are both a result and symptom of social change (Durkheim 2006: 166). There were six (i.e. post-1945,⁸ 1952, 1962, 1968, 1975, and 1993) curricula during this period. Thus, the frequency and the scale of Taiwan's curriculum revisions have reflected the drastic political and social changes closely. For example, the 1975 curriculum went through two revisions, first in 1985 and again in 1989,⁹ in order to respond to the major political and social transformation.

A sense of 'we-ness' in textbooks

An examination of the terms that index the national self throughout the textbooks reveals that these keywords are used strategically and in specific ways with varying frequencies during different periods. They are used in conjunction to construct a clear image of an ideal national self and to contrast between 'superior we' and 'inferior they'. In deploying various self-referencing terms, the ROC national rhetoric is written and rewritten, while a very different 'we-ness' emerges during different periods.

Before delving into the textbooks, it is important to sketch out the ways in which these keywords are employed. Without doubt, both *Zhonghua minguo* and *Taiwan* are the least ambiguous terms. The former is the name of a state that was established in 1911. It is

used in the textbooks as an official self-reference, and sometimes taken as synonymous with the Kuomintang (KMT) regime; the latter literally refers to the geographical region of Taiwan. The mention of Taiwan in the early textbooks is often associated with its history (from a Han Chinese perspective), its geographical characteristics, and its status as a Chinese province. Taiwan becomes important after the 1968 curriculum when a more superior sense of ‘we’ emerges in contrast to the inferior other, or the ‘contaminated mainland’. During the mid- to late 1980s, the once marginalised Taiwan subjectivity shifts to the centre. Taking Taiwan as the core of national self, *Zhongguo* is shifted to the periphery.

The term *Zhongguo* is similar to but different from the term *Zhonghua*. Literally, *Zhongguo* means ‘the middle kingdom’ or ‘central state’ emphasising its pivotal position and importance, while *Zhonghua* suggests ‘the magnificence in the centre’, extolling the brilliance of Chinese culture and the Han Chinese. In Taiwan’s textbooks, the term *Zhongguo* represents many aspects of China – the various states and dynasties throughout its history, the geographical region, a generic idea, and a political entity. In comparison, the term *Zhonghua* carries a broader and more general association of China and is often used as an adjective to describe its people (*Zhonghua minzu*)¹⁰ and culture (*zhonghua wenhua*). In other words, *Zhongguo* indexes history and geography, while *Zhonghua* indexes cultural heritage. The most versatile term is *woguo*, or sometimes simply *women de* (our/ours). This self-referencing term could easily replace other keywords under all political climates. Consequently, it is the most useful and used phrase throughout the period examined.

The following sections explore the different functions and characteristics of the terms in pairs.

Zhongguo and Zhonghua

Although similar, the two terms *Zhongguo* and *Zhonghua* have different implications. The former is mostly used in lessons about Chinese history and geography, while the latter is associated with cultural excellence and Han superiority. They are both important self-references, especially in early curricula, for students to identify with and be proud of.

One of the most common usages of *Zhongguo* in the earlier textbooks is to celebrate the ‘greatness of China’, for instance, ‘*Zhongguo* is a great country...and the No. 1 most populous country in the world’ (*SS* 1968 VI: 63).¹¹ The concentration of such an approach in the early post-war years reflects an official suspicion towards the Taiwanese about their supposed ideological enslavement by the Japanese. Post-war education, therefore, aimed to indoctrinate a Chinese national awareness and educate the Taiwanese to ‘become’ Chinese again (Chen and Chen 1989: 93–98, 221–231). Little wonder then that China’s brief

emergence from the ashes onto the world stage to become one of the victorious Big Four (Kimball 1991) after WWII is constantly emphasised and reiterated. Such lessons proudly announce that China was ‘the first democratic republic in Asia’ (SS 1968 VII: 37, 44), and ‘one of the four superpowers in the world after winning the anti-Japanese war, on a par with the US, the UK and Russia’ (SS 1968 VII: 67). Being one of the ‘world’s four great powers’ (GS post-1945 VII: 27; SS 1968 IV: 57), China is then described as the ‘leading hegemon in East Asia’ (GS post-1945 VII: 17, 27). By extolling a powerful China, social studies education in the early post-war years prepared Taiwanese children to get to know their ‘motherland’, to develop pride in being part of China after the Japanese surrender, and to learn to be Chinese.

This term also plays an important role in constructing a narrative of national suffering to arouse patriotic fervour and indignation. In a lesson entitled ‘National Trauma’, children learn about imperialist aggression against China, the destruction and humiliation of China’s ancient civilisation, and the ensuing Communist upheaval in modern Chinese history. Many lessons describe ceaseless assaults by the British, the French, and the Russians. Facing invasion and attack from all sides, *Zhongguo* becomes a victim ‘besieged and encroached on...[suffering from] unrelenting imperialist offensive’ (SS 1968 VII: 19). Foreign encroachment on territory and sovereignty is compared to a massive pair of pliers squeezing the country and ‘forcing all doors into *Zhongguo* open...the international status of *Zhongguo* collapsed as a result’ (SS 1968 VII: 22–26; SS 1975 [2nd ed.] XI: 16–23).¹² To lament the trauma and learn lessons from the century-old disgrace, the textbooks teach students about the shame and humiliation of colonial invasion. A stark contrast is made between the old fallen empire, humiliated for centuries, and the powerful new republic that rose from the ashes to win international respect. Both emphases are designed to stir up patriotic feeling and indignation against external aggressors such as Taiwan’s previous occupier, Japan, and also to encourage students to be proud of a rising [Nationalist] China, accept their ROC identity, and strive to build a ‘new China’ (*xin Zhongguo*) free from colonial invasion (GS 1952 III: 33; SS 1962 I: 58; *ibid.* II: 70; *ibid.* IV: 76; SS 1968 IV: 55, 69; *ibid.* XI: 71; SS 1975 [2nd ed.] VIII: 140).

Since the ROC authorities had always insisted on their political legitimacy to represent the whole of China, one would expect to see the term *Zhongguo* more widely used to stake ownership. Yet surprisingly, the term does not appear as frequently as one might expect. After the initial tribute to a glorious Chinese past and its greatness in the world, the use of this term soon becomes problematic. The trouble seems to stem from its ambiguity.

The political separation and ensuing discursive struggle between the two Chinese regimes after 1949 make any reference to *Zhongguo* confusing. For example, to which *Zhongguo* does this refer? Does it index the Chinese government, and if so, is it the ROC or the PRC (People's Republic of China)¹³? Does it index 'the whole of China' or the 'Chinese mainland'? Does it index a general idea about 'China' or communist-controlled China today? The ambiguity of the term and the impossibility of removing any association with the PRC makes it difficult to avoid confusion and risks attaching positive associations to the enemy.¹⁴

Maps, for instance, are also an obvious source of such confusion. In the early post-war textbooks, maps often have *Zhongguo* in their titles, such as 'Map of *Zhongguo*', 'Political Regions and Important Cities in *Zhongguo*', 'Topographic map of *Zhongguo*', and 'The [central] position of *Zhongguo* in the world' (*GS* post-1945 VII: 28; *ibid.* VI: 50). Their titles are later replaced with *Zhonghua minguo* or *woguo* – for instance, 'Topographic map of *Zhonghua minguo*' (*SS* 1975 [2nd ed.] X: 7) or 'The lost lands and border towns of *woguo*' (*SS* 1968 VII: 101).

To avoid misleading associations, the term *Zhongguo* is soon replaced by other alternatives, such as *woguo*, *dalü*, and *guxiang*. Such replacements are convenient ways to reduce confusion and avoid the embarrassment of claiming to represent the whole of China. For example, in a four-lesson 24-page unit entitled '*Zhongguo* geographical foundations', the term *Zhongguo* is used only once (*SS* 1968 VI: 24). Throughout the text, it is referred to as *woguo*, 'our ROC', or 'we *Zhonghua minzu*' (*ibid.*: 1, 5, 19, 21). Similar cases are common. For example, the condemnation of the Chinese Communist regime in the lesson 'Rescue *Zhongguo* and Save the World' uses the two alternatives *woguo* and *dalü* to replace *Zhongguo* (*SS* 1968 VIII: 99–102). Its ambiguity combined with ROC expulsion from the United Nations in 1971 leads to a decline in occurrences of *Zhongguo*. This reflects the awkwardness of its claim to be the legitimate representative of the whole of China. The limited presence of *Zhongguo* also demonstrates the editors' dilemma in presenting a desirable image of China (ancestral homeland, splendour of its culture, and Confucian heritage) while condemning the PRC. One major strategy is to avoid *Zhongguo* altogether and discredit the PRC by hurling insults at the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as the 'Communist bandits' (*gongfei*) (e.g. *GS* post-1945 V: 17; *SS* 1962 IV: 59, 72; *SS* 1968 IV: 55).

In contrast to the ambiguous *Zhongguo*, the implication of *Zhonghua* is broader and more positive, extolling the glorious and superior national self, especially relating to 'our' culture and 'we' as a nation. *Zhonghua* is much more widely used and less controversial for

the ROC. In many instances, it replaces the more politically contentious *Zhongguo* to index we-ness and evoke national sentiment. In early curricula, this term is often used with a highly nationalistic tone – for instance, ‘I love *Zhonghua*’ (*GS* post-1945 V: 17); ‘*Zhonghua!* *Zhonghua!* The great *Zhonghua!*’ (*SS* 1962 I: 52). It is particularly useful after the ROC’s 1967 launch of the Cultural Renaissance movement to highlight its own legitimacy as the true heir of Chinese tradition and cultural orthodoxy.¹⁵

The two extended phrases *Zhonghua minzu* (Chinese nation) and *Zhonghua wenhua* (Chinese culture) are widely used throughout the period examined. These related terms are employed to index national sentiment and cultural achievement and act as the adhesive cementing and glorifying a collective self. *Zhonghua minzu* is celebrated as ‘the largest’, ‘the oldest’, and ‘the most superior nation in the world’ (*GS* post-1945 VII: 23–24; *SS* 1962 I: 44; *GS* 1952 III: 1), and *Zhonghua wenhua* is described as the rightful heir to a ‘5,000-year civilization’ combining tradition, morality, kinship, ethics, and arts (*SS* 1968 VIII: 77). By reminding students that they are all ‘descendants of Huangdi’¹⁶ and members of this *Zhonghua minzu* ‘big family’ (*GS* post-1945 VII: 23–24; *SS* 1968 V: 20–23), the discourse of national self embedded in social studies textbooks also echoes a dominant late-Qing rhetoric around the Chinese nation (Shen 1997). In other words, the century-old Chinese myth of national origin casts its long shadow over post-war education in Taiwan, framing and shaping a sense of we-ness and connecting Taiwanese to the Huangdi bloodline.

An extended term *Zhongguoren* (Chinese people) is another convenient way to imply a collective ‘we’ and consolidate students’ Chinese identity with less connection to any political regime. In the early curricula, students were encouraged to be ‘decent Chinese’ (*tangtang zhengzheng de Zhongguoren*)¹⁷ and to contribute to the building of a ‘new China’. In the earlier curricula, *Zhongguoren* mainly indexes the collective self and an aspiration to construct a new China. The focus of *Zhongguoren* begins to change from the mid-1980s when cross-Strait relations started to thaw and unification seemed possible. Lessons begin to emphasise shared cultural and ethnic roots and insist that ‘*Zhongguoren* in Taiwan were all from the mainland [at different periods of time]’ (*SS* 1975 [1st & 2nd ed.] VII: 55). The lesson ‘Wishes of *Zhongguoren*’ compares the civil war to a family row in which both sides insisted on ‘conflicting views about how to make China great’ (*SS* 1975 [2nd ed.] VIII: 136–144).

While constructing the national ‘we’, it is also crucial to connect this identity to the more intimate ‘I’. To encourage students to identify with and learn from characters in textbooks, many lessons (for the lower and middle year-groups) are written from the

children's perspective and experience after the 1968 curriculum. The names given to them are highly significant, such as Hsin-min, or 'new citizens', and Chien-kuo, or 'building the country'. Among the main characters, the most common name used throughout the decades was Hsiao-hua, or 'little *hua*'.¹⁸ The word *hua* can mean many things, including 'flowers', 'splendour', and 'essence', and often refers to the Han Chinese (Brown 2004: 22–25, 255n28). Thus, the conscious and consistent naming of the main character Hsiao-hua, as the representation of all students, seems to suggest a young Chinese identity, and encourages a Chinese cultural belonging.

Zhonghua minguo and Taiwan

In contrast to the wistful and nostalgic *Zhonghua* and politically suspect *Zhongguo*, the meanings of both *Zhonghua minguo* and *Taiwan* are much more straightforward. *Zhonghua minguo* is usually used in the materials researched to emphasise the ROC's political legitimacy and an ROC vision of China. In the earlier curricula, the term is less frequent than *Zhongguo* because it is taken for granted that the two are the same. *Taiwan*, however, is used at first purely as a geographical region and later as a general expression about an environment in which the state resides and of which students have direct experience. In other words, *Zhonghua minguo* is a political term presenting an officially defined 'we', while the latter gradually comes to replace the identity centre, and represents a pragmatic approach to indicate 'where we are' and 'who we have become' over time.

After retrocession, it was paramount for the education authorities to teach Taiwanese children to become Chinese and get to know their motherland. The specific reference to the ROC is thus connected to the Republic's history and political legitimacy, its leading role during and after the Sino-Japanese War, and modernisation in Taiwan.

As the post-1945 version shows, basic knowledge about the ROC is high on textbook editors' agendas. For instance, a lesson entitled '*Zhonghua minguo*' extols the greatness of the ROC, its superior political structure, administrative divisions, and its status as the leading country in Asia (*GS* post-1945 VII: 27). However, the most striking example is an illustration of the ROC national flag in the first volume of an early general studies textbook. This image occupies half a page, and the accompanying text claims, '[h]ere is our national flag...National flag! National flag! I love you, and I respect you' (*GS* post-1945 I: 7). While most textbooks in the 1950s were printed in black and white, the image of the ROC national flag is the only coloured picture in all eight volumes. This prominence is designed to make Taiwanese children recognise 'our' national flag and draw it correctly. Similarly, National Day celebrations are another important topic, requiring students to not only memorise ROC

history, but also perform a collective identity through direct participation in schoolyard decoration, celebrations, ceremonies, and parades. ‘National Day’ presents the establishment of the Republic (e.g. *GS* post-1945 V: 17) and develops into a depiction of children’s National Day celebrations and extracurricular activities (*GS* 1968 III: 28–30; *SS* 1975 [1st & 2nd ed.] I: 23–28, 32).

To create a unified ‘we’, early textbooks reiterate connections between the nation and the students. For example, lessons often use the possessive pronouns ‘my’ or ‘our’ to associate the self positively with the ROC. For example, sentences state, ‘[t]his is our ROC map’ (*GS* post-1945 VI: 51) with the shape of a ‘beautiful *qiuhaitang* [begonia] leaf’¹⁹ (*SS* 1968 I: 4; *SS* 1975 [2nd ed.] X: 10); or emphasise pride in being part of a great country in ‘this is our *Zhonghua minguo*, the No.1 country in Asia’ (*SS* 1962 IV: 70), or declare ‘our country, *Zhonghua minguo*, was the first democratic republic in Asia’ (*SS* 1968 VII: 37, 44).

As a rule, national history and (pre-1949) ROC geography are formally taught in the higher year-group materials. Yet, a simple introduction to the ROC can be found as early as Year 1 textbooks (‘I love the national flag’ [*GS* post-1945 I: 7] or ‘Double Tenth...is the national day of the ROC’ [*GS* post-1945 V: 17]). An official version of national history and geography, especially regarding the legitimacy of the ROC, is taught and reiterated as facts. In order to disguise the KMT defeat in the civil war and the successor government, as well as the PRC having territorial control over the Chinese mainland, content about post-1949 China is deliberately omitted, except for condemnation of Chinese Communist atrocities against their own people. Moreover, the PRC is never named in these textbooks. One strategy to account for the ROC’s retreat to Taiwan is to demonise the CCP as ‘evil’ and ‘usurpers’ (*SS* 1962 IV: 62, 72; *SS* 1968 VIII: 101–102). Many lessons describe the CCP regime as ‘rebels’ and ‘Communist bandits’ (*gongfei*), and assert that this ‘pseudo regime’ has ‘usurped the mainland’, ‘imposed tyranny enslaving the people’, and is ‘the root of Chinese turmoil’ (*SS* 1962 IV: 62; *SS* 1968 IV: 55, 57; *ibid.* VII: 67–69; *ibid.* VIII: 99; *SS* 1975 [2nd ed.] VIII: 130; *ibid.* XI: 67). It is only after the late 1980s, 40 years later, that the name *gongfei* is replaced by the less derogatory expression *Zhonggong* (Chinese Communist Party) (*SS* 1975 [2nd ed.] VIII: 137).

In order to support the ROC’s claim to be the only legitimate Chinese government, social studies textbooks present a geography and history of pre-1949 China. In the materials examined, Taiwanese children are taught to accept pre-PRC history and ROC territory as real. This includes the rightful place of the ROC in Chinese history; ROC administrative divisions (different from those of the PRC), and the ubiquity of ROC national symbols such

as the national flag, national leaders, and the ROC map both in textbooks and in school. For example, the administrative divisions are an important indicator of territorial control. Thus, one of the most important tasks in social studies education is to instil knowledge about ROC administrative divisions in China. These consist of 35 provinces, 12 municipalities, two *difang* (literally ‘places’, Mongolia and Tibet), one Special Administrative Region (Hainan), and the national capital in Nanjing. Even though these are defunct, the materials require students to remember and recite them.

In the early textbooks, content about Taiwan is disproportionately absent because the island is seen simply as a reference point for ROC legitimacy (Chang 2011). Any mention of Taiwan is limited to its historical relationship with China, its geography and rich natural resources, and its status as an ROC province. To bolster the greatness of China, descriptions of the island are sometimes disparaging. For instance, in materials from the 1960s, it is described as a ‘desert island’ (SS 1968 IV: 1) that originally consisted of undeveloped virgin land (*banhuang wei pi*), covered in forest with no farmland or dwellings (SS 1962 IV: 12). After the launch of the Cultural Renaissance Movement, a significant repositioning can be seen. The post-1968 textbooks swiftly shift from asserting the ROC’s political legitimacy to emphasising its Chinese cultural authenticity.

Two identities are also attached to Taiwan – first, as a ‘base for retaking the mainland’ and, second, as the *baodao* (literally precious island) in the anti-Communist battle. These portrayals speak volumes about how social studies construct the collective ‘we’. Being the ROC’s final foothold from which it might retake the mainland, Taiwan’s anti-Communist role is reiterated in all curricula before 2000. For example, Taiwan is described as an ‘anti-Communist fortress’ (*fangong baolei*) (SS 1968 III: 3), ‘the operational base for launching the anti-Communist war’ (*fangong fuguo de jidi*) (GS 1952 I: 2; SS 1962 IV: 29, 69, 73–75; SS 1968 IV: 20, 38), and ‘the lighthouse of world freedom’ (*ziyou de dengta*) (SS 1975 [1st ed.] VII: 30). The text urges students to fulfil the mission to recapture the mainland and rescue all Chinese compatriots (ibid. III: 33).

The term *baodao* is used as a synonym with another phrase, ‘beautiful island’ (*meilidao*, or *meili de baodao*) (e.g. SS 1962 IV: 11, 28; SS 1968 IV: 4–5, 19–20, 59; SS 1975 [2nd ed.] VII: 4, 6, 16, 20, 82; ibid. VIII: 45; SS 1993 VII: 101). Although the term *baodao* is a positive expression that highlights the preciousness and irreplaceability of the island, the implication is ambiguous. It implies Taiwan’s abundant resources and geopolitical importance in the anti-Communist struggle (SS 1968 IV: 19–20; SS 1975 [1st & 2nd ed.] VII: 4–6; ibid. [3rd ed.] VII: 6). Yet, the hierarchical relationship between Taiwan and China is

clear: Taiwan's importance rests solely on its strategic role in retaking the mainland and is thus subordinate to *Zhongguo*. Despite being celebrated as 'precious' and 'beautiful', Taiwan's subjectivity is always secondary to that of China in the materials. The term also seems to imply something exotic, foreign, and different from *Zhongguo*. For example, the ROC national territory is compared to a perfect 'begonia (*qiuhaitang*) leaf' (SS 1968 I: 4), suggesting a complete and inseparable Chinese territory (Wang 2003; Chang 2015: 171–173). In this *qiuhaitang* analogy, Taiwan has no place. Rather, the shape of Taiwan is more often compared to a 'banana leaf' in the textbooks (GS post-1945 VII: 7; SS 1968 IV: 19) and Taiwan-related content is always separated from discussion of China. Such exclusion from *Zhongguo* and the ambiguity attached to *baodao* fundamentally reflects a clear categorical distinction between the inside and the outside, placing Taiwan at the margin of the imagined political centre (Chang 2015).

After its expulsion from the UN in 1971, the ROC's claim to represent the whole of China becomes increasingly unsustainable and the national narrative has to be drastically reinvented. The focus of the ROC thus moves to Taiwan. Although this decentring process is carried out reluctantly and is purely a survival tactic, separating 'Free China' from the fallen area constructs Taiwan as the 'hometown' (*jianxiang*), the place where students 'were born and bred', and a 'happy land of freedom' that they 'adore and would protect' (SS 1968 IV: 55–57; SS 1975 [3rd ed.] VI; SS 1993 VI: 6–17).

In the wake of increasing international isolation, the initial glorification of China is reduced, and the hierarchical position of Taiwan is reversed in the materials. The images of two Chinas are juxtaposed, contrasting 'paradise in Taiwan' under the KMT with hell on the mainland under the CCP. In a lesson entitled 'Life in Taiwan Today' (SS 1962 IV: 58–59), Taiwan is praised for having become a prosperous, modern, happy society with the benefits of traditional culture and family values, whose people live in 'a democratic society, leading a life of freedom and equality'. At the end of the lesson, this harmonious picture is deployed in contrast to alleged devastation and misery on the mainland, characterised by enslavement, poverty, and ruin of family life. The illustrations in the lesson accentuate this contrast. Images of broken homes, barren land, and hungry masses in the People's Communes on one side clash with shopping districts, roads, cars, comfortable apartments, and happy three-generation families on the other. The disparity between the mainland's backwardness and Taiwan's 'perfect marriage' of modernity and tradition is described as the difference between 'living in heaven and hell' (SS 1968 IV: 59). This is the starting point at which the collective self began to split into two – Taiwan became practically synonymous with the ROC, while

China exclusively related to the mainland. Although labelled ‘a Chinese province’ until the 1990s, previously backward Taiwan seems to replace the originally superior Chinese ‘centre of splendour’ in the textbooks as a better, more modern version of the here and now, from as early as 1968. Between the two, Taiwan becomes the standard bearer – first as the ‘Model Province of the Three Principles of the People’ (*sanminzhuyi mofan sheng*) (SS 1968 IV: 38, 63–66; *ibid.* VII: 69; *ibid.* VIII: 104) and ‘the model province of *our* country’ [stress added] (SS 1975 [1st ed.] VII: 4), and later a ‘good place’ [stress added] (SS 1975 [2nd ed.] VIII: 104), where ‘the Taiwan experience’, ‘the Taiwan model’, and even ‘the Taiwan miracle’ become the envy of the mainland Chinese (SS 1975 [2nd ed.] VII: 20, 25; *ibid.* VIII: 114, 119–122, 128).

Woguo and alternative self-references

There are many alternatives and the term *woguo* (‘my/our country’, or ‘my/our country’s’), because of its flexibility and versatility, is the most widely used in the materials examined to refer to the national self.²⁰ In general, it is used in four different ways. The first three interpretations are more common and sometimes interchangeable, but the last usage only appears in the 1990s to serve a particular purpose to present a distinctive self-image.

The first usage suggests a general idea about China – for instance, ‘Mongolia is *woguo*’s northern gateway’ (SS 1968 VI: 19), ‘the establishment of the ROC...is a great progress of *woguo* politics’ (SS 1968 VII: 44), ‘*woguo* suffered from imperialist encroachment’ (SS 1975 [2nd ed.] XI: 6), or ‘*woguo* lost territories’ (SS 1968 VII: 100); the second is associated with Chinese culture and could also be used as a synonym for ‘*Zhonghua*’, such as ‘*woguo* is an ancient civilization’ (SS 1975 [2nd ed.] VIII: 32), ‘*woguo* glorious tradition’ (SS 1968 VIII: 77), or ‘Cultural Revolution fundamentally destroyed *woguo*’s inherent culture’ (*ibid.* VII: 69); the third approach refers to the ROC – for example, ‘*woguo* government accepted the Japanese surrender in Taipei’ (SS 1993 VII: 124), ‘*woguo* entered a new stage when the ROC Constitution was promulgated in 1947’ (SS 1968 VII: 76), ‘*woguo* post-war reconstruction’ was interrupted by the ‘Communist bandits’ with Russian support’ (*ibid.* VIII: 99), and ‘*woguo* has occupied an important place in the world and contributed greatly to world peace’ in the discussion about global anti-communist struggles (SS 1968 VIII: 103); lastly, the term refers to Taiwan. Although rare, it seems to indicate that the tide of self-image has turned. In the lesson ‘A Life of Security, Happiness and Abundance’, the fast-growing textile and garment industries in Taiwan are described as ‘*woguo* excellent economic performance’ (SS 1975 [2nd ed.] VIII: 47). Apparently, it refers to the textile industry in Taiwan alone.

There are a couple of alternatives similar to *woguo*, including: ‘homeland’ (*guxiang*) (SS 1962 IV: 3), *laojia* (old home) (ibid. I: 46, 48), and *jingxiu heshan* (splendid land) (SS 1962 IV: 68–72; SS 1968 VI: 1, 63; SS 1975 [2nd ed.] X: 8, 36). Most of these phrases are used to extol ancient China and its glorious past and to imply one’s origin. Among these, the term *woguo* is most useful because of its flexibility and ambiguity. However, such a convenient reference also risks sending misleading or unintended messages. In order to avoid mentioning the CCP regime in China or the new PRC state, *dalu* becomes *the* synonym for Chinese territory under the Communist rule, especially in textbooks after the 1968 curriculum.

The impact of the lifting of martial law in 1987 and subsequent democratisation brought major changes to education in terms of the imagination of the national self, not only confirming the change in Taiwan’s position but also adding a new dimension to its self-image. The 1975 curriculum goes through two dramatic revisions within a short period of time (1985 and 1989 respectively) in response to these significant changes. First, a new term, *Taiwan diqu*, or Taiwan area (SS 1975 [2nd ed.] VI: 4–8; ibid. VIII: 4, 16, 50, 81–83, 103–104, 108–122, 126, 129; ibid. XI: 75, 78, 81; SS 1993 VII: 6, 20, 37) emerges in the materials to replace terms like ‘Chinese province’ or ‘Model Province of the Three Principles of the People’. This term is used in contrast to another term, *dalu diqu* (mainland area) (SS 1975 [2nd ed.] XI: 71; SS 1993 V: 8–53).²¹ In 1991, the first ROC Constitutional Amendments were promulgated, formalising the two entities, Taiwan and mainland China, in legal terms (Office of the President 2020). This tactic of clearly demarcating the Taiwanese self and Chinese other demonstrates a further repositioning of the national self. This is not just a strategy to place Taiwan on an equal footing with the mainland area. Rather, this repositioning reflects an increasingly strong Taiwan subjectivity, and leads to a clear-cut division between the inside and the outside.

In addition to alternative referential names, the materials examined also attach a series of value-added attributes to Taiwan, describing it as a modern society that enjoys ‘freedom’, ‘democracy’, ‘prosperity’, and ‘equality’ (SS 1962 IV: 58; SS 1968 IV: 58; SS 1975 [1st ed.] VII: 15; ibid. [2nd ed.] VIII: 140). A new emphasis on environmental protection (SS 1975 [3rd ed.] VI; ibid. VII: 30–45) also emerges to showcase Taiwan’s internationalism and progressive thinking.

Conclusion

Among various discursive strategies used to present a positive national self and negative other (Reisigl and Wodak 2001), this chapter has focused on systematic ways of employing collective self-reference in social studies textbooks in Taiwan over a 55-year period, and has examined how a shared sense of national we-ness was constructed and transformed. It is evident that the core national self first changed in the late 1960s and then accelerated after the 1980s, from a righteous ROC, representing the whole of China, to the ROC on Taiwan. This reflects not just how a glorious national self was constructed, but also how a gradual process of repositioning, de-centring, and re-centring of that national self from China to Taiwan occurred long before democratisation. It is interesting to note that different qualities or focuses were attached to different self-referential terms in different periods. By shifting perspectives, the original hierarchy of a magnificent and sophisticated *Zhongguo* and an undeveloped and backward Taiwan in early curricula was reversed. After the lifting of martial law, the subjectivity embedded in textbooks shifted decisively away from *Zhongguo* and centred around Taiwan.

By exploring seemingly banal self-referencing terms in social studies textbooks, this chapter has demonstrated how official knowledge and education constructed children's sense of 'we, the nation' before education reform in 2000, and considered how particular terms were used to construct a sense of pride, self-importance, and divine entitlement. In so doing, it reveals that over the period 1945–2000 the national self, embedded in social studies education, repositioned its we-ness in response to social change for political ends. These observations produce the following conclusions.

Strategic ambiguity

The associated meanings of the self-referencing terms examined were always contingent and fluid. Although their usage was not homogeneous, there was a consistent trend in how they were employed. In comparison to the positive representations of *Zhonghua*, *Zhonghua minguo*, and *Taiwan*, the term *Zhongguo* was most problematic and tricky precisely because of its contentious associations. The term could not always be positive if it could also index the PRC. Yet, nor could it be negative when post-war education aimed to make Taiwan Chinese. The *Zhongguo* issue thus became the elephant in the room and was avoided at all costs. Facing problematic sovereignty and the loss of most of its territory after 1949, it was a tricky business for the ROC government-in-exile to effectively create a national self and to evoke patriotic sentiment. Strategic ambiguity became the dominant approach to these difficulties. To avoid direct association with the Chinese Communist regime, textbooks

dodged the term *Zhongguo*, unless it indexed the past. Instead, the term *woguo* resolved the dilemma by constructing a strong sense of ‘we, the nation’ without specifying that nation. To enable transition and change, ambiguity became the key. Having replaced *Zhongguo* with *woguo*, the collective self was able to transform.

Turning points

After Taiwan’s retrocession to the ROC in 1945, a China-centric discourse became omnipresent in post-war education. This discourse subsequently shifted to a Taiwan-focused one. There were two important turning points in this de-centring process. The first was the restructuring of ROC national rhetoric in the 1968 curriculum. Although China was still the core of the discourse and Taiwan a subordinate reference point, the hierarchy seemed to shift. Taiwan had become the ‘better half’ of the collective self in contrast to the ‘contaminated half’ on the mainland. The second turning point occurred after the lifting of martial law and was reflected in a salient discursive change in the 1989 edition of the textbooks based on the 1975 curriculum (3rd ed.). Although the previous two editions of the 1975 curriculum had clearly placed a firm emphasis on Taiwan, it was not until the third edition in 1989 that the China-centre/Taiwan-periphery model was reversed. These two turning points clearly signal the post-war decentring of an officially sanctioned national self, first from China to the ROC and then to the ROC on Taiwan. This process laid the foundations for a further shift centring around Taiwan in the education reform of the 21st century.

Strategies

Various strategies were utilised to achieve the repositioning identified, both by symbolic representation giving the national self a different identity and by exclusion establishing a dichotomy between self and other. Moreover, by exploiting the tactic of strategic ambiguity, two major strategies were used to facilitate repositioning – contrapuntal positioning and separation.

Contrapuntal positioning

In the process of decentring, the once important reference – *Zhongguo* – had to be othered. The tactic employed in social studies was to portray an undesirable China, tainted by communism, on the one hand and boost an image of a prosperous, appealing, and highly developed Taiwan under the ROC on the other. The early binary order of civilised China and barbaric Taiwan only existed briefly. By juxtaposing contrasting traits, the original China-centre/Taiwan-periphery model was reversed. This hierarchical position and their marked differences were reinforced in textbooks, an us-them dichotomy was reproduced, linking Taiwan to prosperity, modernity, and cultural orthodoxy; while associating China with

poverty, ideological purges, human misery, and immorality. China was linked to history, Taiwan to geography; China represented tradition, while Taiwan represented modernity. Thus, in presenting China as the past, Taiwan became the present, the here and now.

Separation

Identity has always been constructed and strengthened by exaggerating difference. To buttress a strong sense of national self, setting symbolic boundaries and exercising exclusion are important. The materials examined suggest that it is after the 1968 curriculum that a clear division emerged between lessons about Taiwan and those about China. The two separate 'collective selves' start to surface, Taiwan and the ROC are presented as one-and-the-same, while the mainland becomes synonymous with China. In other words, the separation of 'national self' is twofold, one content-based, the other structural. From 1945 to 2000, Taiwan-related topics were taught in the lower and middle year-groups and Chinese-related topics in the higher year-group. The former included Taiwan's history (emphasising the Chinese contribution), simple geographical facts about Taiwan, and post-war society and development, while the latter consisted of Chinese history, geography, and values, as well as an introduction to global affairs and world geography. Although this binary opposition was first devised with ease of teaching and the complexity of the subjects in mind, the separation unintentionally provided a convenient demarcation, and helped students differentiate 'we, Taiwan' from 'they, *Zhongguo*'. By the early 1990s, the othering process created another binary position into which the world was divided – the mainland area (where the regime upheld the foreign ideologies that had ruined Chinese culture) versus the Taiwan area (where the 'rightful' regime with cultural orthodoxy and political legitimacy had created an economic and political miracle). On many levels, Taiwan and *Zhongguo* had already been divided in terms of content and curriculum structure. In other words, Taiwan had not been incorporated into the ROC national imagination in the first place.

This research shows that the decentring of China in social studies education started as early as the late 1960s, triggered by the Cultural Revolution on the mainland. The radical shift to a model Taiwan under the ROC was designed to tackle the ROC's increasingly detrimental international isolation and to justify its political legitimacy on the island. The shift from a China-centric position seems to have contributed to the emergence and the eventual consolidation of Taiwanese consciousness in the late 1980s. Instead of ascribing the rise of Taiwanese identity solely to political activism, this study reveals that the foundations had been laid early, fostering an awareness of difference and constructing, albeit unwittingly, an exclusively Taiwanese national self through social studies education. The decentring of

Zhongguo in social studies textbooks represents a change in identity, moving Taiwan from the periphery to the centre, replacing ‘where we came from’ with a more down to earth ‘who we have become’ with an emphasis on the here and now.

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¹ In Taiwan's case, six-year compulsory (and free) education was implemented in 1947 and was extended to nine years in 1968.

² Taiwan's pre-1945 situation was different. Under Japanese rule (1895–1945), the core courses that common schools (primary schools for the local Taiwanese) offered included: Japanese language, arithmetic, and some basic sciences (Tsurumi 1979: 619). There was no formal social studies during this period. A similar subject listed in Japanese curricula was 'Shushin' (修身). Khan translated *Shushin* as 'moral education' and asserted that the Japanese aim was to 'enlighten children with the spirit of reverence for the emperor and patriotism' (1997: 76). Apparently, the emphasis was placed on loyalty to the emperor and the empire. In some ways, *Shushin* was like social studies education, in terms of fostering patriotism, loyalty, and obedience (Tsai 2009).

³ Between 1948 and 1968, 'Common Sense' textbooks were only available for Years 3 and 4. There were only 'teaching guidelines' for the lower year-group teachers.

⁴ The term 'hidden curriculum' is used in pedagogy to refer to hidden educational intent and design of which most people are usually unaware (Vallance 1973: 4). This includes: The school routines, the marking criteria, the campus design and decoration, the way classes are conducted, and so on. For example, Taiwanese schools usually mark the beginning and the end of a school day by raising and lowering the national flag and singing the national anthem. The hidden message embedded in the daily routine echoes Billig's observation on American 'flagging the homeland daily' (1995: 93–127). By saluting the national flag, the daily routine served as a kind of a performance to pledge their allegiance to the ROC and naturalised an

official sense of ‘we-ness’.

⁵ The compilation and publication of school textbooks in Taiwan before the 1990s were under the direct control of the NICT. Between 1968 and 1996, the NICT oversaw the implementation of textbook standardisation for Taiwan’s nine-year compulsory education. It was regarded one of the most important cultural ISAs in post-war Taiwan.

⁶ The reason for choosing 2000 as the cut-off point was because a new education structure – the ‘Grade 1–9 curriculum’ – was formally introduced in 2001 as the authorities’ effort to reform the education system. It is considered one of the most important milestones in Taiwan’s educational development (Wu and Huang 2010). To focus on the evolution of post-war changes, I focus on the pre-2000 textbooks.

⁷ The subject ‘General Studies’ was designed for younger children as part of social studies education in the early curricula. During the early post-war years, it was briefly taught with Chinese language (as *Guoyu changshi*) between 1945 and 1948 and became an independent subject until it was abolished in 1968.

⁸ The post-war primary education was a mixture of ROC 1941 curriculum, the old Japanese textbooks, and some localised adjustment. To simplify the comparison, I combine the early versions into one ‘post-1945’ category.

⁹ The second edition (revised edition) took effect in 1985 and the third (improved edition) in 1989. As a result, there were 36 volumes of textbooks of the 1975 curriculum.

¹⁰ For more information, see Brown (2004: 22–29, 242–245) and Harrell (1996).

¹¹ For all direct quotes from these textbooks, I will reference them in the order of: The textbook title (*SS* for *Social Studies*, and *CS* for *Common Sense*), curriculum version (e.g. 1952), volume number, and page number(s). For example: *GS* post-1945 VII: 28. One exception is the 1975 curriculum, the citation will include the edition, e.g. *SS* 975 version [2nd ed.] VIII: 136–138.

¹² In the 1968 and 1975 [1st and 2nd] curricula, the content about Chinese history in the higher year-group was very similar with slightly different wordings and change in design. This is only one of many similar cases.

¹³ The PRC (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo*) was established in Beijing in 1949 after winning the civil war.

¹⁴ This tendency of avoiding the term in order not to directly associate with China continues today. For example, after Taiwan’s major education reform in 2000, the NICT’s monopoly of compiling and editing textbooks was transferred to private publishers. In the textbooks published by the three major publishing companies (i.e. Nanyi, Hanlin, and Kangxuan), all references to the historical rules in Taiwan are now based on the regime’s names, such as Qing rule, Zheng rule, Dutch rule, etc., replacing the expression ‘Chinese rule’.

¹⁵ This movement was launched in 1967 to counterattack the Cultural Revolution on the mainland (Tozer 1970: 85). By condemning the devastation of Chinese culture, the Cultural Renaissance movement aimed to establish the ROC as the cultural guardian of Chinese culture and tradition, and thus holding the cultural and moral legitimacy to represent the Chinese.

¹⁶ The myth of Huangdi (aka Yellow Emperor) has long been portrayed as the originator of the central kingdom and the ancestor of the Han Chinese. The status of Huangdi as the ‘shared ancestor of the Han Chinese and the links between Huangdi and Han Chinese nationalism were all constructed during the late Qing period’ (Shen 1997).

¹⁷ This expression had become common since the 1968 curriculum. It appeared in lessons. The lessons encouraged students to be patriotic, law-abiding, moral, and hardworking so as to become a ‘lively good student, and decent Chinese’ (*SS* 1968 VIII: 95–98; *ibid.* III: 55; *ibid.* I: 4–6). This ‘principle’ had also been included in the guideline for the 1968 and 1975 national curricula and appeared in the ‘Editorial Guidelines’ of the textbooks. In the 1993

version, however, the emphasis was modified to encourage students to be ‘decent citizens’.

¹⁸ The name ‘Hsiao-hua’ appeared throughout all curricula (e.g. *GS* post-1945 III: 3, 10, 23; *SS* 1962 I: 2–4, 7–10, 16–17, 21–25, 38–40; *ibid.* II: 64–66; *ibid.* III: 10, 12–13; *ibid.* IV: 30–38; *SS* 1968 version I: 3; *ibid.* IV: 33; *SS* 1975 [1st & 2nd ed.] IV: 4, 6–9, 17–18, 22–24, 28–30; etc.).

¹⁹ The shape of a begonia leaf (*qiuhaitang ye*) was commonly compared to an ideal contour of the Chinese territory. The analogy between a ‘complete Chinese territory’ and a perfect ‘begonia leaf’ first appeared in the 1920s. The symbolism was reinforced by the mass popularity of the novel *Qiuhaitang* published in 1941. The romantic image of China as a ‘begonia leaf’ was thus etched in the public imagination as the embodiment of ‘the spirit of the Chinese people’ and a popular ‘representation of Republican China’ (Wang 2003: 137, 161).

²⁰ The phrase ‘*woguo*’ could be a shortened expression for ‘*woguo de*’ (of my/our country), ‘*women de guojia*’ (our country), or was simplified from ‘*women de*’ (ours). For example, ‘*woguo buliang fengsu*’ (the unhealthy customs of our country) (*GS* 1952 V: 3–4).

²¹ The name of the PRC is never mentioned in social studies textbooks, and the ruling regime on the mainland – the CCP – only appears in the 1990s (*SS* 1975 [2nd ed.] VIII: 83, 94).