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# Curriculum Reform and the Teaching of History in High Schools during the Ma Ying-jeou Presidency

Vladimir STOLOJAN

**Abstract:** The last two years of Ma Ying-jeou's (Ma Yingjiu) presidency saw the eruption of a controversy surrounding proposed revisions to the high school history curriculum. Although not the first time that the subject of history has exacerbated the tensions between holders of a China-centred view of Taiwan's history and those favouring a more Taiwan-centred approach, this crisis, which took place mainly between 2014 and 2015, was undoubtedly the fiercest witnessed by the Taiwanese society in the sphere of educational issues. By putting the 2014–2015 dispute into perspective through a review of the different attempts made by the pro-Taiwan independence Chen Shui-bian (Chen Shuibian) and the pro-unification Ma Ying-jeou governments to edit the history curriculum, this article will underline the specificities of this particular controversy. This contribution will, therefore, help to shed new light not only on the perception of Taiwan's history promoted by the Ma administration, but also the policy-making process which characterised the last years of Ma's presidency.

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**Keywords:** Taiwan, textbooks, history teaching, national identity, memory

**Vladimir Stolojan** is a PhD candidate at Paris Diderot University. His PhD research deals with the elaboration of a national memory on the Nationalist dictatorship in Taiwan.

E-mail: <vladimirstolo@gmail.com>

## Introduction

The only textbooks included in Pierre Nora's seminal *Les Lieux de mémoire* were edited by Ernest Lavissee at the end of the 19th century. By incorporating France's diverse historical experiences into one positivist narrative culminating with the triumph of the Republic and the centralised State, Lavissee played a major role in the building up of a new national sentiment at the turn of the last century. It is their long-lasting impact, as their influence was still felt in the 1950s, which qualifies Lavissee's publications as *Lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory).

It is too early to assess whether the same term can be applied to *Knowing Taiwan* (認識臺灣, *Renshi Taiwan*), a series of textbooks on Taiwan's history, geography and society. If a *Lieu de mémoire* is "no longer quite life, not yet death" (Nora 1989), the *Knowing Taiwan* textbooks are alive, and doing well, as they remain widely used in history, geography, and social studies at the junior high school level in Taiwan. What could in the future lead researchers to identify *Knowing Taiwan* as being one of Taiwan's *Lieux de mémoire* is the fact that the series' authors penned a pedagogical perspective which marks a complete break from the one enforced since the transfer of sovereignty over Taiwan from the Japanese empire to the Republic of China (中華民國, *Zhonghua Minguo*, ROC) at the end of World War II. Up until the publication of the *Knowing Taiwan* series, the teaching of history in Taiwan had been exclusively articulated around China. If we take the example of the 1984 guidelines on junior high school history teaching, the sole chapter dedicated to Taiwan introduced the island only as a temporary base from which the Kuomintang (中國國民黨, *Zhongguo Guomindang*, KMT) could recover mainland China.

Published in 1997, the first edition of the *Knowing Taiwan* textbooks followed an approach theorised by Tu Cheng-sheng (杜正勝, Du Zhengsheng), then the head of one of the two committees in charge of the reform (Corcuff 2001; Wang 2005). Known as the "concentric circles" (同心圓, *tongxin yuan*), Tu's pedagogical framework for history teaching was built as a three-level scale beginning with the teaching of lessons relating to Taiwan, then lessons dealing with China, and ending up with an introduction to world history. Though Chinese history was no longer at the core, it was however far from being neglected. Nevertheless, the first version of the *Knowing Taiwan* textbooks triggered a controversy in June 1997 which lasted

for four months and led to the publication in the national press of 250 articles, 18 editorials and 100 columns debating the relevance of this educational reform (Chang 2011). According to their detractors, the textbook authors had adopted a perspective that was not critical enough towards the Japanese colonial regime in order to “de-sinicise” (去中國化, *qu Zhongguohua*) Taiwan’s history and to flatter the Lee Teng-hui (李登輝, Li Denghui) administration (Wang 2001).

Despite the outrage of pro-unification lawmakers and intellectuals, the “concentric circles,” which gained the support of moderates from both sides of the political spectrum, quickly became the norm in junior high. In 1999, textbook production, previously a State monopoly, was opened to the private sector according to the principle of “one curriculum, many textbooks” (一綱多本, *yi gang duo ben*). Under this system, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has to adopt a curriculum which serves as a blueprint for those publishing houses willing to take their share of this lucrative market. After reviewing the different propositions, the MOE then establishes a list of authorised textbooks. The final choice of textbook is made by individual schools, which are able to pick up any material that meets the MOE’s blueprint. Therefore, since 1999, curriculum writing, rather than textbook writing, has become the main focus of the debates between the holders of China- and Taiwan-centred identity perspectives, respectively.

As a matter of fact, even though the *Knowing Taiwan* textbooks were widely used in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the conservative wing of the Nationalist camp (a term referring to the KMT and its allies), which advocates Taiwan’s unification with China within a short timeframe and an exclusively China-centred view of Taiwan, never accepted the 1997 textbook reform. When, after the victory of the Democratic Progressive Party (民主進步黨, *Minzhu Jinbu Dang*, DPP) at the 2000 presidential election, the Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁, Chen Shuibian) administration tried to implement a new curriculum at the high school level in line with the “concentric circles” approach, the KMT-led opposition successfully managed to delay the implementation of the new history curriculum.

After regaining power in 2008 when Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九, Ma Yingjiu) became president of the ROC, the KMT began its own cycle of educational reform. Although the curriculum adopted during Ma’s presidency did not challenge the perspective inaugurated with the *Knowing Taiwan* textbooks, the content of the new curriculum never-

theless bore significant differences from the texts edited by the Chen administration. Does the cyclical nature of the curriculum rewriting process imply that this issue will inevitably reappear at every governmental change or could we identify several areas of convergence which could lead to the edition of a history curriculum acceptable to both the Nationalist and the pro-independence sides? The purpose of this contribution is to understand the dynamic inherent to the elaboration of the history education programme at the high school level in Taiwan by overviewing the initiatives taken by the Chen and Ma administrations in terms of curriculum editing.

This article is threefold. It begins with a review of the educational reforms conducted by the Chen administration between 2000 and 2008. After its first attempt was thwarted by the KMT in 2003, the government put forward a “temporary” curriculum which was implemented in September 2006 and was supposed to run for a trial period of two years before giving way to a final version in 2008. However, the DPP’s defeat in the 2008 presidential elections led to the withdrawal of the last text edited by the Chen administration.

The second part analyses the way that the Ma Ying-jeou administration edited its own curriculum, promoting a more China-centred perspective on Taiwan history. The KMT-led government formalised a new curriculum in 2011, which was the real successor to the 2006 so-called “temporary” one. This programme did not satisfy the government, however, as in late 2013 the Ma administration began a highly controversial “fine-tuning” (微調, *weitiao*) of the text adopted in 2011. By doing so, the government broke the practices regulating the edition of curricula and caused a major uproar in the Taiwanese society.

The last part will analyse the scope of the changes in curriculum content brought by the latest reform cycle, which began with Ma’s victory at the 2008 election. Different tables will compare the sections dedicated to Taiwan’s modern and contemporary history in the last three curricula, namely the one edited in 2008 by the Chen administration (the 98 Curriculum, 98 課程綱要, *98 kecheng gangyao*). In Taiwan, curricula are named after the Republican calendar according to the first school year they are to be put into practice), its 2012 successor (the 101 Curriculum, 101 課程綱要, *101 kecheng gangyao*) and its “revised” version (the 101 Revised Curriculum). The research data in this contribution is drawn from four main sources: press and maga-

zine articles recalling the positions of the different actors involved in curriculum-related controversies, bulletins from the Legislative Yuan and the MOE, and the content of the last three history curricula.

## History Teaching during the Chen Shui-bian Era

The 1997 disputes between the proponents of the Taiwan-centred and the China-centred identity theories did not, at first, impact on high school-level history teaching. In the 1999 school year, only four out of the 14 course units dedicated to national history dealt exclusively with Taiwan history. There was, therefore, a large discrepancy between junior high school level courses, which followed the narrative that emerged during democratisation, and history teaching at the high school level which remained close to the narrative of the authoritarian era. During the Lee Teng-hui presidency, it was decided that a new general framework for national education would be established to incorporate the nine years' compulsory education into a "nine-year integrated programme" (九年一貫課程, *jiu nian yi guan kecheng*). The trial versions of the new curricula were supposed to be implemented in 2001 before giving way to their final versions in September 2004. The need to reform national education was therefore politically consensual when the DPP came to power in 2000.

## Temporary Curriculum 95

The new government started to reform the education system in 2002. The process began with the nomination of Huang Jung-tsun (黃榮村, Huang Rongcun), professor of psychology at National Taiwan University, to the role of minister of education. Huang had already taken part in commissions set up by the previous government, so his selection seemed to reflect a desire for continuity with the work already done by the Lee Teng-hui administration. Huang appointed history professor Chang Yuan (張元, Zhang Yuan) as head of the select committee in charge of reforming history teaching. Before joining the Institute of History at National Tsing Hua University, Chang had worked as a junior high school teacher and later remained close to the education field. In his committee, Chang surrounded himself with historians and high school teachers. Together they started drafting the curriculum in 2002 and a trial version was made public in 2003 (Stenzel 2012).

The first task of the committee was to define the aims of the new programme. It was to become a tool to allow pupils to “understand the present” (了解現在, *liǎojiě xiànzài*) so that they could “grasp the roots of their own culture and build their own identity” (理解自己的文化根源, 建立自己的認同感, *lǐjiě zìjǐ de wénhuà gēnyuán, jiànli zìjǐ de rèntónggǎn*) while also being introduced to “abroad multicultural perspective” (多元文化的開闊胸襟, *duōyuán wénhuà de kāikuò xiōngjīn*) through which they should assess the complexities of the island’s society (Lifa Yuan 2003).

All explicit references to national identity were eliminated. The structure of the curriculum was completely changed, with the first semester dedicated to Taiwan history and the second to China before the 16th century. The second year was dedicated to world history, including modern China because of the increasing levels of interaction between China and the rest of the world after 1500. Although this plan was very similar to the “concentric circle” approach which had fuelled the polemics of 1997, Chang Yuan never made any specific reference to the theories of Tu Cheng-sheng. After publishing the trial version of the new programme in June 2003, Chang responded to his first critics by explaining that teaching Taiwan history in the first semester seems logical because Taiwan is the place that pupils are most familiar with and thus this unit prepares them well to understand China and the world. He also insisted that the histories of Taiwan and China should be taught separately, the reason being that the second is much more complex.

Chang made only one reference to the dual identity of Taiwan in which he stressed the importance of the Chinese element, which was seen as the most significant and the primary source of Taiwanese traditions. In doing so, he did not advocate unification with China nor did he express an opinion that might be shared by members of the pro-independence camp.

Alongside Huang Jung-tsun and Tu Cheng-sheng, in October 2003, Chang faced a hearing in the Legislative Yuan during which he declared that he was in favour neither of independence nor reunification with China, but that he was in favour of keeping the present political “status quo” (Lifa Yuan 2003). Facing a barrage of criticism, Chang Yuan resigned at the end of 2003 and his project was abandoned.

In order to overcome the opposition of conservatives adhering to the China-centred view of Taiwan and also the ire of radical Taiwanese independentists, on 23 November 2003, Education Minister Huang Jung-tsun convened a meeting between the remaining members of the now-defunct Chang Yuan committee and historians from the Academia Sinica. Following discussion at the meeting, the Minister announced that no new history curriculum would be implemented before 2006 and that China must receive more attention in school programmes (MOE 2004). Before being replaced by Tu Cheng-sheng as head of the MOE in May 2004, Huang nominated Chou Liang-kai (周梁楷, Zhou Liangkai), a history professor at National Chung Hsing University, as head of a new edition committee. The members of this committee followed largely in the steps of their predecessors, except that they reinstated modern Chinese history in the section dedicated to Chinese history. While the pedagogical objectives and the ternary approach remained unchanged, the trial text of Temporary Curriculum 95 (95 暫時課程綱要, 95 *zanshi kecheng gangyao*) introduced a new format for content built on four parts, namely: “unit; main topics; key points; explanation” (單位; 主題; 重點; 說明, *danwei; zhuti; zhongdian; shuoming*), which became the standard for subsequent history curricula editing. As the explanation part was much more developed than before, it was easier to grasp the authors’ point of view. This made the whole programme more open to critical assessment.

In addition to pointing out what they saw as a “de-sinicisation” (去中國化, *qu Zhongguohua*) of the curriculum and a bias when introducing the Japanese occupation period, the explanation part of which described the achievements of the colonial government rather than just its coercive policies, the members of the KMT’s conservative wing criticised the new text on three points relating to the post-1945 era. Firstly, they disapproved of the description of the debates surrounding the Cairo and Potsdam declarations and the San Francisco Treaty, all three of which have been used by both sides of the Taiwan independence/unification debate. For those people favouring Taiwan’s independence, the declarations and treaty provide no clear status for post-war Taiwan; whereas for pro-unification Chinese Nationalists, the Cairo declaration justifies the reattachment of the island to the Republic of China. Secondly, they disapproved of the trial textbook’s designation of the Chiang regimes (first under President

Chiang Kai-shek and subsequently his son President Chiang Ching-kuo) as “authoritarian systems” (威權體制, *weiquan tizhi*); and thirdly, they rejected the description of the post-war period, including the February 28 Incident (二二八事件, *Ererba shijian*) in 1947 as examples of the “bad governance of the Nationalist government” (國民政府亂政, *Guomin zhengfu yuzheng*). The latter two points were ultimately dropped from the final version of the program adopted in January 2005 (MOE 2006).

## Opposition from the KMT Conservative Wing

The electoral calendar undoubtedly had a strong influence on the 2003–2004 curriculum debates. Criticism of the DPP-led textbook reform was particularly harsh in the autumn of 2003, just a few months before the 2004 presidential elections and right before the legislative elections took place in December 2003. The first commentary in a national newspaper criticising Chang Yuan was published on 19 September 2003. Its author, Wu Chan-liang (吳展良, Wu Zhan-liang), a professor of history at National Taiwan University, considered Chang’s position to be in line with the idea of “one country on each side (of the Taiwan strait)” (一邊一國, *yi bian yi guo*), implying that Chang favoured Taiwan’s independence (*Zhongguo Shibao* 2003). While Wu approved of the “concentric circles” approach for the elementary and junior high school levels, he did not think it useful for high schools because he considered the four units dedicated to Taiwan history in the 1999 curriculum to be sufficient to cover the island’s history. Wu also declared that he was surprised to find that the name “Republic of China” appeared only towards the end of the section dealing with modern world history.

Wu’s comments seemed to be very moderate, however, compared to the criticism levelled at Chang’s work in articles published by *Haixia Pinglun* (海峽評論, *Straits Review*), a monthly op-ed magazine founded in 1991 by Wang Hsiao-po (王曉波, Wang Xiaobo), now professor of Chinese philosophy at Shi-Hsin University and vice-secretary of the Alliance for the Reunification of China (中國統一聯盟, *Zhongguo Tongyi Lianmeng*). The magazine is known for being a platform for more conservative intellectuals who favour unification with the mainland. In it Wang Chung-fu (王仲孚, Wang Zhongfu), a retired professor of history at Chinese Culture University who was

involved in the 1997 *Knowing Taiwan* textbook controversy, published a paper in November 2003 in which he called Chang Yuan's text "absurd" (Wang 2003). In the article, he said that he did not understand why the history of China post-1500 had been included in the section dealing with world history, while Taiwan's history had been allocated its own specific section. He accused Tu Cheng-sheng of being the true driving force behind the new curriculum. To him the "concentric circles approach" was nothing but an attempt to de-sinicise Taiwan, "insidiously eroding the historical conscience of the youth" (默默地侵蝕青少年的歷史意識, *momo de qinshi qingshaonian de lishi yishi*) in order to give way to the pro-independence narrative.

Another conservative, Chen Yu-chun (陳毓鈞, Chen Yujun), then director of the Graduate Institute of American Studies at Chinese Culture University, also used *Haixia Pinglun* as a platform to slate Chang's edition for putting Chinese history from the Qing Dynasty period onwards in the section dealing with world history. For him, this was akin to "forgetting one's own roots" (數典忘祖, *shu dian wang zu*, literally "recounting history, but forgetting one's ancestors"). In his article, Chen argued that the curriculum revision was another attempt to de-sinicise Taiwan. To support this view, he wrote at length his argument for the Chinese character of the Qing Dynasty. His text was also a violent criticism of the pro-independence faction which he considered to be strongly influenced by Japanese right-wing ideology, in other words by a sort of Japanese jingoism, the exponents of which are unrepentant of the crimes committed by the Japanese imperial army during the Second Sino-Japanese war (Chen 2003).

Criticism of the trial version of the new history programme was continuous between autumn 2003 and 2004, and was expressed more or less virulently depending on the source and author. Following the official adoption of the Temporary Curriculum 95 in January 2005, the history teaching controversy quieted down. Subsequently, the drafting of its successor, the 98 Curriculum, did not provoke the same impassioned debate because the overall political situation was very different from that at the end of Chen Shui-bian's first presidential mandate in 2004. The changed political climate towards the DPP following serious allegations of corruption against President Chen, his family and several senior DPP aides had overshadowed the polemics over the content of the high school history curriculum. As a conse-

quence, the KMT did not need to use the curriculum issue to attack the Chen administration and only a small number of critical papers were published by *Haixia Pinglun*. This did not mean that the Nationalist camp had accepted the new curriculum, however. Although the 98 Curriculum was adopted by the legislature in the last few months of the Chen government before Ma Ying-jeou was elected to president, it was never formally implemented for history teaching in Taiwan.

## The Impossible Return to the “Spirit of the Constitution” under Ma Ying-jeou’s Presidency

The first attacks on the 98 Curriculum were voiced by Wang Chung-fu. In the first of a series of articles published in *Haixia Pinglun*, in May 2008, he called upon newly-elected President Ma and his cabinet to “bring order out of chaos” (撥亂反正, *boluan fanzheng*) in education by revising the 98 history curriculum (Wang 2008b). Two months later, addressing the new minister of education directly in his article, he denounced the substitution of the more neutral “post-war” (戰後, *zhanhou*) in place of the term “recovery” (光復, *guangfu*, the term used in ancient China for the legitimate recovery of lost territory and also employed by the KMT to refer to the liberation of Taiwan from Japanese rule by the ROC in 1945) and the rephrasing of the “period of Japanese occupation” (日據時代, *riju shidai*) with the “period of Japanese rule” (日本統治時代, *Riben tongzhi shidai*) in the text dealing with the 1945–1949 period.

Furthermore, Wang denounced both the curricula revisions conducted during the Chen presidency as the utmost examples of the “de-sinicisation” process, which started with the *Knowing Taiwan* textbooks. He said the revisions “deviate from the education policy stipulated in the Constitution” (脫離了憲法規定的教育政策, *tuoli le xianfa guiding de jiaoyu zhengce*) (Wang 2008a). Indeed, Article 158 of the 1947 Constitution of the Republic of China states that “education and culture shall at the development, among the citizens, of the national spirit” (教育文化, 應發展國民之民族精神, *jiaoyu wenhua, ying fazhan guomin zhi minzu jingshen*). In other words, Wang argued that education and culture shall foster a Chinese identity (in the terms defined by the government) within the national community. This accusation of anti-constitutionality would be used by President Ma to implement a two-

stage reform that would reach far beyond the pedagogical issues relating to history teaching. At the 18th Conference on the Development of Secondary Education held on the 27 October 2008, the MOE announced that most of the 98 Curriculum would be put into practice in September 2009 as expected, but with the exception of the history and Chinese literature curricula which required modification. Schools would continue to use the history and Chinese literature sections of Temporary Curriculum 95.

## The “Fine-Tuning” of Curriculum 101

Wu Wen-hsing (吳文星, Wu Wenxing), a history professor at National Taiwan Normal University, was appointed head of the commission in charge of revising the history curriculum. This committee included nine university professors and five high school teachers. Their work went largely unnoticed until February 2010, when one of the committee members, Chou Wan-yao (周婉窈, Zhou Wanyao), professor of history at National Taiwan University, published an article in *Nanfang Zazhi* (南方雜誌, *Southern Journal*) in which she denounced the “fraught” atmosphere within the working group (Chou 2010). In the article, she breached her duty of confidentiality to present the three proposals drafted by the different members of the committee. She said that the stumbling blocks to the revision were not only the fact that the expert panel had been unable to agree upon the choice of text, but also that all dialogue had become impossible because the panel was split between a minority led by *Haixia Pinglun* founder Wang Hsiao-po, who favoured an extremely China-centred history of Taiwan, and the rest of the commission. In the article, Chou also mentioned that Wang and two other professors on the commission had been directly nominated by the Ministry of Education, marking unprecedented political interference in the editing of the school programmes.

In order to break the deadlock, following Chou’s publication, a new commission chairman was chosen. Huang Ke-wu (黃克武, *Huang Kewu*), then director of Academia Sinica’s Institute of Modern History, took over from Wu Wen-hsing. Nine new appointments to the commission were also made. Chou Wan-yao resigned her position, in order to continue her opposition to the revision of the 98 Curriculum, whereas Wang Hsiao-po kept his job within the commit-

tee (Stenzel 2012). To his critics, who accused him of wanting to go back to a Chinese Nationalist narrative similar to the one espoused during the authoritarian period, he replied that he was himself a victim of the White Terror (白色恐怖, *baise kongbu*; the period in Taiwan when political dissidents were suppressed following the enactment of Martial law and several other measures in 1949, lasting until the lifting of the last laws framing the authoritarian regime in 1991–1992). Wang’s mother was executed by the Nationalist authorities because she was a member of the Working Committee of the Taiwan Province affiliated to the Chinese Communist Party (中国共产党, *Zhongguo Gongchan Dang*), and his father was put in jail for not having denounced his wife) and therefore felt no nostalgia for the pre-democratic era (Wang 2010a).

At the same time, in a letter addressed to Chen Yi-shen (陳儀深, Chen Yishen), a researcher at Academia Sinica’s Institute of Modern History, published in *Haixia Pinglun* in May 2010, Wang Hsiao-po restated his intention of “forcefully opposing the Japanese imperialist historical perspective” (堅決反對「皇民史觀」, *jianjue fandui huangmin shiguan*) (Wang 2010b). The term *huangmin* (皇民, literally “imperial subject”) is used derogatively here by the conservative, as a reference to the assimilation policies implemented by the Japanese administration from 1936 onwards (皇民化, *huangminhua*). It implies that, by emphasising the positive side of Japanese colonialism and downplaying the modernisation efforts made under the Qing Dynasty shortly before the First Sino–Japanese war, the pro-Taiwan independence education reformers are behaving like imperial subjects (*huangmin*) because they are unable to take a critical stance toward the Japanese rule on Taiwan.

The modification to the history section of the 98 Curriculum was never implemented and the project was abandoned in favour of the 101 Curriculum, adopted by the Ma administration in May 2011. This version differed from its two predecessors by re-emphasising the Chinese heritage of the island’s identity but without the extremes of Wang Hsia-po’s original proposal. Though Curriculum 101 was officially implemented in the school year starting September 2012, the MOE announced in May 2012 that it had collected and compiled a number of opinions and proposals made by “the people” (without giving further details of who these people were), which would have to be taken into account for the drafting of the new schoolbooks. In

July 2012, Wang Hsiao-po and Chang Ya-chung (張亞中, Zhang Ya-zhong), professor of political science at National Taiwan University and general-secretary of the Chinese Integration Association (兩岸統合協會, *Liangan Tonghe Xiehui*), launched an appeal to President Ma to complete the textbook revision process by expunging them of all the remaining pro-independence rhetorical elements (*Zhongyang Ribao* 2012a). A few days later, Ma declared that he had examined the books and had decided that the content represented a clear violation of the ROC Constitution. He declared that he favoured the opinion previously expressed by KMT central committee member Chiu Yi (邱毅, Qiu Yi), that the history of China and Taiwan should be merged within a single unit entitled “National History” (本國史, *benguosbi*, literally native history) (*Zhongyang Ribao* 2012b).

This was followed by a period of relative calm in 2012, due to the imminent presidential and legislative elections. Nevertheless, the controversy recommenced in July 2013 when the Executive Yuan announced that the term *riju* (日據, Japanese occupation) would henceforth replace the term *rizhi* (日治, Japanese rule) in all official documents. Wang Hsiao-po was put in charge of an inspection group tasked with directing the rewriting of the programmes of history, civic education, Chinese geography, and social science. It should be noted that the people in charge of revising the various programmes were not specialists in the respective disciplines. For example, an economics professor led the work of the team in charge of the history curriculum (*Ziyou Shibao* 2014). The revisions took place without any transparency of information on the composition of the various teams and their decision-making processes. This closed-door approach, together with the revised content, became the target of criticism from opponents to the reform. In spite of this, the teams worked hard and quickly, and on 10 February 2014, just three months after the first meeting of the inspection group, the MOE announced that the new history books had been validated. Ten days later, Wang Hsiao-po added fuel to an already incendiary topic by declaring that the February 28 Incident was insignificant compared to the hundreds of thousands of victims of anti-communist repression in China. Unsurprisingly, this started a new row between Wang and a large section of civil society, causing considerable embarrassment to the government (*Zhongguo Shibao* 2014).

## The Struggle against “Black Box” (黑箱, *heixiang*) Policy-making

Chou Wan-yao's *Nanfang Zazhi* article in February 2010 initiated a movement to resist the educational reforms engineered by the Ma administration. In a text published on the website of the Peng Ming-min Foundation (財團法人彭明敏文教基金會, *Caituan faren Peng Mingmin Jijinhui*, named after one of Taiwan's most famous pro-democracy political prisoners, Peng Ming-min, who was jailed in 1964 after drafting a manifesto demanding Taiwan's right for national self-determination. After serving just over a year in prison, Peng was released and escaped into exile in the United States), primary school teacher and member of the Southern Taiwan Society (台灣南社, *Taiwan Nanshe*), Huang Chao-jung (黃招榮, Huang Zhaorong), launched an appeal for the rejection of the KMT's revision of Taiwanese history teaching as it was exclusively based on the China component and thus similar to the official position before the democratisation of the 1990s (Huang 2010).

At the end of February 2010, Chen Yi-shen, then the head of the Taiwan Association of University Professors (台灣教授協會, *Taiwan Jiaoshou Xiehui*), denounced the continual manipulation of history teaching into “a tool for brainwashing” whose purposes and methods were not in phase with present day Taiwan society (*Ziyou Shibao* 2010). Previously, the debates concerning Curriculum 101 had mainly taken place among academics and between pro-unification and pro-independence activists even though the DPP officially condemned its publication. Though the written opinions of both the defenders and the opponents of the reform had been strongly worded, the tone of the general debate had remained similar to the tone of the discussions on education policy that took place in the days of the Chen Shui-bian administration. This time around, however, the arguments over the revision of Curriculum 101 saw the different actors adopting a much fiercer and more radical position, which led to an institutional deadlock.

The Executive Yuan's decision in July 2013 to adopt *riju* as the official wording for the Japanese colonial period, together with the announcement that a revision of Programme 101 was forthcoming, despite the fact that this programme had only been released very recently, prompted loud protests from historians and groups such as

the Taiwan Society, which had already mobilised against the 2010 reform (*Taipei Times* 2013). When their protests failed to pressure the government into reconsidering its position, in January 2014, they started to publish critical analysis of the reform proposals made by the Wang Hsiao-po-led commission in order to denounce what they saw as a distortion of Taiwan's history. Pointing out that the history programme had been reworked in depth without consulting any civil society actors, they expressed their concerns about a return to the methods used during the authoritarian era (*Pingguo Ribao* 2014). The announcement that the revised programme had been validated by the government further increased their determination.

In early March 2014, more than 130 historians (including members of the editing committee of the original Curriculum 101) signed a petition in which they unanimously rejected the revised curriculum (*Taipei Times* 2014a). Shortly afterwards, the Taiwan Association for Human Rights (台灣人權促進會, Taiwan Renquan Cujinhui, TAHR), along with other groups, decided to lodge a complaint against the MOE on the basis of articles 6 and 9 of the Freedom of Government Information Law (政府資訊公開法, *zhengfu zixun gongkai fa*) (*Taipei Times* 2014b). Article 6 stipulates that the government should make available after a reasonable span of time all the data relating to administrative decisions linked to the rights and interests of the people. Article 9 authorises all the citizens of the ROC to request that the State publishes all documents relevant to the functioning of public administrations. Because the MOE had in the past refused to transfer all the information requested by the TAHR concerning the revision of school programmes, the petitioners decided to submit their case to the Taipei High Administrative Court. The MOE had so far justified its position and its refusal to comply with the request on the basis of Article 18 of the same law, arguing that the requested documents were still classified because the reforms had not yet been achieved. In their petition, however, the opponents of the reform attacked the opacity of the decision-making process as much as, if not more than, the actual content of the revised curriculum. The whole revision process was seen as an example of “operating in a black box” (黑箱作為, *beixiang zuowei*), meaning decision-making in secret that goes against the principles of open, democratic government.

The main political event to occur in Taiwan in 2014 was the biggest student movement in the whole history of the island: the Sun-

flower Student Movement (太陽花學運, *Taiyanghua Xueyun*). This protest movement had originated in widespread dissatisfaction over the way the government had tried to push through ratification of a cross-Strait agreement on opening up the service sector, as a planned follow-up to the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with China adopted in 2010. As with the school reform protests, opponents of the cross-Strait service agreement accused the government of “operating in a black box” because it refused to open up the process to debate or to show accountability for decisions that were fundamental to the future of Taiwan.

Although the Sunflower movement was initiated and led by student protesters, it quickly attracted considerable attention from society at large and ended up catalysing the expression of other criticisms against the Ma administration. The opponents of the revised history programme, often the teachers of the students engaged in the Sunflower movement, supported the young protesters right from the start and this indirectly caused the two movements to converge (Chou 2014). The closed-door curriculum revision process was taken up by the student activists as an example, alongside other cases, of the government’s anti-democratic nature. If up until then the opposition to the revision of the school history programme had mobilised essentially just intellectuals and pro-independence militants, it now began to reach a much larger audience, particularly among the youth.

This spread of anti-government sentiment made the year’s end increasingly difficult for the KMT. While the Sunflower movement had gathered momentum, the Nationalist camp had suffered a rout in the November 2014 local elections. This forced Ma Ying-jeou to quit as chairman of the KMT party in early December 2014. He was also compelled to form a new government after the resignation of the premier and his cabinet. In February 2015, the opponents of the history programme revision scored their first success, with the Taipei High Administrative Court’s ruling in favour of the Taiwanese Association for Human Rights. The Ministry of Education, however, refused to accept the verdict and launched an appeal (*Taipei Times* 2015a).

The textbook controversy continued to rumble along with the local government administrations of five out of six special municipalities (直轄市, *zhixiashi*) deciding, from mid-April 2015 onwards, to reject the 101 Revised Curriculum by announcing that they would

continue using the current textbooks which did not include the 2014 revisions. To counter this, the MOE declared that, as the new programmes would be available in September 2015, they would serve as the basis for the university entrance exam from 2016 on. These declarations were largely posturing and merely reaffirmed each side's political affiliation, however, as the final decision concerning the choice of schoolbooks still belonged to the schools, not the local authorities. Nevertheless, by openly showing their political preference, each side was attempting to put pressure on school directors. Likewise, high school examination questions are drafted by the College Entrance Examination Center (財團法人大學入學考試中心基金會, *Caituan faren daxue ruxue kaoshi zhongxin jijinhui*, CEEC); they are not submitted for review by the Ministry of Education.

Summer 2015 saw a resurgence of the Sunflower movement, this time directly and exclusively aimed against the revised curriculum which was scheduled to be implemented in September 2015. High school students, alongside Sunflower protesters, organised themselves through Internet forums into different groups depending on where they lived to stage a series of demonstrations to express their rejection of the 101 Revised Curriculum. In the absence of any response from the government, they decided to take their protest higher and occupy the MOE. After having camped around the MOE for some time, the protesters stormed the building on the evening of 23 July 2015. In doing so, the activists were trying to emulate the 2014 student movement, which had similarly taken over the Legislative Yuan and succeeded in preventing the ratification of the cross-Strait agreement on the services sector.

Also bearing in mind the events of 2014, the MOE reacted far more harshly than the central government had the previous year. The 33 people who managed to break into the MOE building were arrested immediately. Of them, 24 were high school students (*Taipei Times* 2015b). This sharp response had tragic consequences. The possibility of criminal prosecutions against the youngsters led to the suicide on 30 July 2015 of Dai Lin (林冠華, Lin Guanhua), a prominent activist and spokesperson for one of the regional protest groups that had appeared in the early summer. He left behind a message on social media requesting the withdrawal of the curriculum changes. The Ministry then announced that it would drop all charges against the students. Lin's death sparked the beginning of a dialogue between the

opposing sides in August 2015, but the interaction was short-lived. Although the MOE's intransigence allowed the Ma administration to enforce the implementation of the "fine-tuned" 101 Revised Curriculum as scheduled, further adjustment of the history curriculum is almost certainly expected following the opposition DPP's victories in the 2016 presidential and legislative elections. This leads one to wonder if the Ma administration was really able to "bring order out of chaos" as announced or if they did the exact opposite.

## Taiwan's Modern and Contemporary History in the High School Curricula (2008–2014)

Although the 98 history curriculum was never put in practice, it nevertheless gave shape to the understanding of Taiwan's recent history as advocated by the DPP at the end of Chen Shui-bian's presidential mandate. Moreover, as its so-called "unconstitutional nature" served as the pretext for the devising of the 101 Curriculum, the 98 history curriculum is a valid starting point for an analysis of the post-2008 trend in curriculum development. In this section, the author will assess this trend through the analysis of two textbook chapters on Taiwan's history: the Japanese era and the post-1945 period.

The 98 Curriculum did not deviate much from Temporary Curriculum 95 in that Taiwan's history and China's history were taught over one semester each, while world history was allocated two semesters. By contrast, the 101 Curriculum saw an increase in the amount of course time dedicated to China's history. This was extended to one and a half semesters to become the same length as world history, which had been shortened by half a semester. The length of time spent on Taiwan history remained the same: one semester.

Following the pattern set by the Temporary Curriculum 95 and explained in the first section of this article, each curriculum follows a structure divided in "unit; main topics; key points; explanation." The tables below show the "main topic" and "key point" parts of the units dedicated to the Japanese and the post-1945 eras. The analysis that follows the tables takes into account the "explanation" section. It is important to note that each phrase in the "main topics" or "key points" matters as this is what frames the content of several paragraphs of explanation in each version of the textbooks.

Table 1. The Japanese Era in the 98 Curriculum, Unit Title: The Japanese Rule Era (日本統治時期, *Riben tongzhi shiqi*)

Main Topics	Key Points
Specificities of the colonial rule's early period (殖民統治前期的特色, <i>zhimin tongzhi qianqi de tese</i> )	Government policies and the reactions of the Taiwanese people (統治政策與臺民反應, <i>tongzhi zhenge yu Taimin fanying</i> ) Infrastructure establishment and economic development (基礎建設與經濟發展, <i>jichu jianshe yu jingji fazhan</i> )
Social and cultural change (社會與文化的變遷, <i>shebui yu wenhua de bianqian</i> )	Colonial society and colonial culture (殖民地的社會與文化, <i>zhimindi de shebui yu wenhua</i> ) The development of literature and art (文學藝術的發展, <i>wenxueyishu de fazhan</i> )
Taiwanese society during the war (戰爭期的台灣社會, <i>zhanzheng qi de Taiwan shehui</i> )	The <i>Kōminka</i> movement and other measures (皇民化運動等措施, <i>Huangminhua yundong deng cuoshi</i> ) The Pacific War and the wartime regime (太平洋戰爭與戰時體制, <i>Taipingyang zhanzheng yu zhanshi tizhi</i> )

Table 2. The Japanese Era in the 101 Curriculum, Unit Title: The Japanese Rule Era (日本統治時期, *Riben tongzhi shiqi*)

Main Topics	Key Points
Political and economic development during the colonial rule's early period (殖民統治前期政治經濟發展, <i>zhimin tongzhi qianqi zhengzhi jingji fazhan</i> )	Government policies and the reactions of the Taiwanese people (統治政策與臺民反應, <i>tongzhi zhenge yu Taimin fanying</i> ) Economic development with colonial characteristics (具有殖民性質的經濟發展, <i>juyou zhiminxingzhi de jingji fazhan</i> )
Taiwan during the war (戰爭時期的臺灣, <i>zhanzheng shiqi de Taiwan</i> )	<i>Kōminka</i> policy and the response of the Taiwanese (皇民化政策與臺人的因應, <i>Huangminhua zhenge yu Tairen de yinying</i> ) The Pacific War and the wartime regime (太平洋戰爭與戰時體制, <i>Taipingyang zhanzheng yu zhanshi tizhi</i> )
Socio-cultural change under colonial rule (殖民統治下的社會文化變遷, <i>zhimin tongzhi xia de shebui wenhua bianqian</i> )	Social change (社會變遷, <i>shebui bianqian</i> ) Cultural development (文化發展, <i>wenhua fazhan</i> )

The 98 Curriculum and its 101 Curriculum successor both use the generic terms “rule” or “regime” (統治, *tongzhi*) and “era” (時期, *shiqi*) to designate the period of Japanese occupation. The same words are used alongside the names of the other powers that ruled Taiwan during the course of the island’s history. These expressions are therefore neutral. The main topics of the two curricula do not differ substantially and both include the term “colonial” (殖民, *zhimin*) to qualify the Japanese regime. Only the order of the sequences varies. The 101 Curriculum puts the Pacific War in the middle of the unit, whereas the 98 Curriculum follows a diachronic approach.

In the key points, the 98 Curriculum emphasises slightly more than the 101 Curriculum on the efforts made by the Japanese in the area of Taiwan’s development. More significantly, without forgetting to point out the repressive nature of Japanese rule, the explanation relating to the first main topic (“Specificities of the colonial rule’s early period”) states twice that the colonisers were concerned to “win over the hearts of the people” (爭取民心, *zhengqu minxin*). By contrast, although the text edited in 2011 for the 101 Curriculum also dedicated a significant part of its first main topic to explaining the substantial economic growth enjoyed by the island during the Japanese era, it did not ascribe any good intentions to the island’s colonial rulers, who were not described as “winning over the hearts of the people” in their efforts to develop Taiwan’s economy. On the contrary, the 101 Curriculum introduced new material by dedicating a whole explanation point to describing the repressive measures adopted during Japanese rule, as well as bringing in new topics such as the issue of the “comfort women” (慰安婦, *weian fu*) during World War II. Even though the 98 Curriculum was less critical of the Japanese regime than its successor, both texts draw on the negative and positive aspects of the Japanese colonisation of Taiwan.

By adding the word “colonial” in the unit title (see Table 3), the editors of the 101 Revised Curriculum did not follow the nomenclature used for the other powers that had ruled Taiwan. In doing so, they set the main tone of the unit: that Japanese rule has to be introduced to students essentially through its colonial nature. Overall, the use of the adjective “colonial” in the various main topic titles and in the key points was much more frequent than in the two earlier curricula.

Table 3. The Japanese Era in the 101 Revised Curriculum, Unit Title: The Japanese Colonial Rule Era (日本殖民統治時期, *Riben zhimin tongzhi shiqi*)

Main Topics	Key Points
Political and economic development during the colonial rule's early period (殖民統治前期的政治經濟發展, <i>zhimin tongzhi qianqi de zhengzhi jingji fazhan</i> )	Colonial regime policies and the reactions of the Taiwanese people (殖民統治政策與臺民反應, <i>Zhimin tongzhi zhengce yu Taimin fanying</i> ) Economic development with colonial characteristics (具有殖民性質的經濟發展, <i>juyou zhiminxingzhi de jingji fazhan</i> )
Socio-cultural change during the colonial rule era (殖民統治時期的社會文化變遷, <i>zhimin tongzhi shiqi de shehui wenhua bianqian</i> )	Social change (社會變遷, <i>shehui bianqian</i> ) Cultural development (文化發展, <i>wenhua fazhan</i> )
Taiwan during the war (戰爭時期的臺灣, <i>zhanzheng shiqi de Taiwan</i> )	<i>Kōminka</i> policy and the response of the Taiwanese (皇民化政策與臺人的因應, <i>Huangminhua zhengce yu Tairen de yinying</i> ) The Taiwanese and the War of Resistance against Japan (台人與抗日戰爭, <i>Tairen yu Kangri zhanzheng</i> ) The outbreak of the Pacific War (太平洋戰爭爆發, <i>Taipingyang zhanzheng baofa</i> )

In the section dealing with the first decades of Japanese rule, the paragraph added in the original 101 Curriculum dedicated to Japanese repression was expanded in the 101 Revised Curriculum, whereas the paragraph stressing the benefit of Japanese developmental policies was significantly shortened. A new explicative point was incorporated to describe Sun Yat-sen's visits to Taiwan and the support he gained from the local elite in his attempt to establish the ROC. Similarly, the revised curriculum emphasised the influence of the May Fourth Movement (五四運動, *wusi yundong*) on Taiwan's intellectual life.

A new key point was added to the section dedicated to the Pacific War: "The Taiwanese and the War of Resistance against Japan," which was dedicated to the commitment of the Taiwanese who took part on the Chinese side in the War of Resistance against Japan (抗日戰爭, *kangri zhanzheng*), a term coined during the war by the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party. Even though the vast majority of Taiwanese who participated in the Pacific War were drafted into the Japanese imperial army, the subdivision of the original Pacific War key point and explanation into two parts promotes the idea that the

experiences of the minority who managed to join the Nationalist troops against Japan and those of the majority who were conscripted into the Japanese imperial army are of equal significance for the whole of Taiwanese society.

Although the 98 Curriculum and the 101 Curriculum had different perspectives on the legacy of the Japanese era, their authors tried to reach a balanced assessment by stressing both the positive and the negative aspects of Japanese rule. By contrast, the 101 Revised Curriculum focussed more heavily on Japan’s repressive policies. More importantly, its additional explanations linked the island with the historical dynamics behind the establishment of the ROC and events in the early decades of the Republic in an attempt to bind the island’s fate to that of the Nationalist regime well before 1945.

**Table 4. The Post-war Era in the 98 Curriculum, Unit Title: Contemporary Taiwan (當代台灣, *dangdai Taiwan*)**

Main Topics	Key Points
Politics: from the imposition to the lifting of martial law (政治：從戒嚴到解嚴, <i>zhengzhi: cong jieyan dao jieyan</i> )	The Nationalist government’s receipt [of Taiwan] and the retreat to Taiwan of the ROC government (國民政府的接收與中華民國政府遷台, <i>Guoming zhengfu de jieshou yu Zhonghua minguo zhengfu qian Tai</i> ) The road to democracy (民主政治的道路, <i>minzhu zhengzhi de daolu</i> ) The international situation and cross-Strait relations (國際局勢與兩岸關係, <i>guoji jushi yu liang an guanxi</i> )
Economic development and challenges (經濟發展與挑戰, <i>jingji fazhan yu tiaozhan</i> )	The overall trend of economic development (經濟發展的大勢, <i>jingji fazhan de dashi</i> ) Challenges to economic development (經濟發展的挑戰, <i>jingji fazhan de tiaozhan</i> )
Society: change and pluralism (社會：變遷與多元, <i>shehui: bianqian yu duoyuan</i> )	Social change (社會變遷, <i>shehui bianqian</i> ) Changes in the way of life (生活形態的改變, <i>shenghuo xingtai de gaibian</i> )
Culture: sinicisation, nativisation and globalisation (文化：中國化、本土化與全球化, <i>wenhua: Zhongguohua, bentubua yu quanqiuhua</i> )	Momentum in educational and cultural development (教育文化發展的大勢, <i>jiaoyu wenhua fazhan de dashi</i> ) The world as a global village (世界地球村, <i>shijie diqiu cun</i> )

Table 5. The Post-war Era in the 101 Curriculum, Unit Title: The Republic of China Era: Contemporary Taiwan (中華民國時期: 當代台灣, *Zhonghua minguo shiqi: dangdai Taiwan*)

Main Topics	Key Points
From the imposition to the lifting of martial law (從戒嚴到解嚴, <i>cong jieyan dao jieyan</i> )	The receipt of Taiwan and the retreat to Taiwan (接收台灣與遷台, <i>jieshou Taiwan yu qian Tai</i> ) The road to democracy (民主政治的道路, <i>minzhu zhengzhi de daolu</i> ) Developments in international relations and cross-strait relations (國際關係與兩岸關係的演變, <i>guoji guanxi yu liang an guanxi de yanbian</i> )
Economic development and challenges (經濟發展與挑戰, <i>jingji fazhan yu tiaozhan</i> )	Economic growth (經濟成長, <i>jingji chengzhang</i> ) Social and environmental protection issues (社會與環保問題, <i>shehui yu huanbao wenti</i> )
Social change (社會變遷, <i>shehui bianqian</i> )	Social changes (社會形態的改變, <i>shehui xingtai de gaibian</i> ) Life before and after the lifting of martial law (解嚴前後生活的變化, <i>jieyan qianhou shenghuo de bianhua</i> )
Cultural development (文化發展, <i>wenhua fazhan</i> )	The development of education (教育發展, <i>jiaoyu fazhan</i> ) The development of cultural pluralism (多元文化的發展, <i>duoyuan wenhua de fazhan</i> )

In its discussion of post-war history in Taiwan, the 98 Curriculum remained fairly neutral by avoiding any terms that could be construed as derogatory, such as dictatorship (獨裁整體, *ducai zhengtǐ*) or the use of the adjective authoritarian (威權, *weiquan*) to qualify the Chiang regimes. In the first main topic on the political aspect of post-1945 history, the explanation invited teachers to “avoid any subjective discourse” (避免主觀論事, *bimian zhuguan lunshi*), in particular when dealing with the troubles of the immediate post-war era. The key point entitled “the road to democracy” recalled the non-democratic nature of the early Nationalist regime and the February 28 Incident, but managed to avoid any value-based judgments. The term “White Terror” was only introduced briefly here as it is taught in more depth in the social studies curriculum (社會課程, *shehui kecheng*). Aspects of Nationalist rule concerning cultural life and the imposition of a China-centred national identity were described in the last two main topics of this unit (Society: change and pluralism; and Culture: sinicisation, nativisation and globalisation) because democratisation is seen

as intrinsic to the official acknowledgement of Taiwan's cultural diversity.

The 101 Curriculum reproduced most of the 98 Curriculum's main topics and key points. At first glance, even though the title of the unit in the 101 Curriculum referred directly to the Republic of China unlike the unit nomenclature adopted in 2008, the presentation of Taiwan's post-war history does not seem radically different between the two curricula. A more thorough reading, however, reveals that more teaching time was allocated to the cross-strait relations in the 101 Curriculum. Furthermore, the word "nativisation" (本土化, *bentubua*), which was present in the 98 Curriculum, has been removed. Nevertheless, the explanation relating to the political history of the contemporary era mentioned the term "White Terror."

Even though each text leans toward either a Taiwan-centred or a China-centred identity perspective, they are not simply one-sided in their appreciations of Taiwan's history. It would be inappropriate to consider the 98 Curriculum as a manifesto for Taiwan independence, nor to accuse its successor of strongly advocating unification with China. The 101 Revised Curriculum breaks this status-quo of relative neutrality.

In the section on the post-war era, the corrections made by the revising committee exceeded the scope of "fine-tuning" proposed by the government and came closer to a rewriting of the original version (see Table 6). The 101 Revised Curriculum showed a return to terms from the rhetoric of the authoritarian era, such as *guangfu* or "retrocession" (as seen at the end of this article's first section, this term has a strong pro-nationalist connotation) to designate the transfer of sovereignty over Taiwan from Japan to the Republic of China. Most of the revised curriculum saw the past 50 years through the prism of economic growth and paid special attention to the role of the State in Taiwan's development. Cross-strait relations were the second most important topic, thus binding the island's destiny to the evolution of China.

The editors of the 101 Revised Curriculum could not ignore the island's democratisation or the weight of the February 28 Incident in recent history, but they chose to define local autonomy as a key factor for democratisation which again shed a positive light on the State's agency. Although they did not omit the White Terror, the repression was seen as inseparable from the KMT's anti-communist

policies. Anti-communism undoubtedly played an essential role in the White Terror, but it was certainly not its sole explanation, and many of its victims did not advocate communism. Besides, it fit within a Chinese Nationalist narrative that the Taiwanese who joined organizations affiliated to the Chinese Communist Party were advocating unification with the People’s Republic of China.

Table 6. The Post-war Era in the 101 Revised Curriculum, Unit Title: The Republic of China era: Contemporary Taiwan (中華民國時期: 當代台灣, *Zhonghua minguo shiqi: dangdai Taiwan*)

Main Topics	Key Points
From the liberation of Taiwan to retreat to Taiwan (從光復到遷台, <i>cong guangfu dao qian Tai</i> )	Taiwan’s liberation and the establishment of constitutional rule (光復台灣與制法, <i>guangfu Taiwan yu zhibfa</i> ) The February 28 Incident (二二八事件, <i>Ererba shijian</i> ) The central government retreats to Taiwan (中央政府遷台, <i>zhongyang zhengfu qian Tai</i> )
Economic development from the 1950s to the 1970s (民國四十到六十年代的經濟發展, <i>Minguo sishi dao liushi niandai de jingji fazhan</i> )	Land reform and local autonomy (土地改革與地方自治, <i>tudi gaige yu difang zizhi</i> ) Cross-strait relations, anti-communist policy and the White Terror, the Diaoyutai Incident and changes in international relations (兩岸關係, 反共政策以及白色恐怖, 釣魚台事件與國際關係的變化, <i>liang an guanxi, fangong zhengce yiji baisekongbu, diaoyutai shijian yu guoji guanxi de bianhua</i> ) Economic growth (經濟成長, <i>jingji chengzhang</i> )
Politico-economic development post-1970 (民國六十年代以後的政發展, <i>Minguo liushi niandai yihou de jingji fazhan</i> )	The expansion of pragmatic diplomacy and the road to democracy (實質外交拓展與民主的道路, <i>shizhi waijiao tuozhan yu minzhu de daolu</i> ) Economic take-off (經濟起飛, <i>jingji qifei</i> ) Developments in cross-strait relations (兩岸關係的演變, <i>liang an guanxi de yanbian</i> )
Social change and cultural development (社會變遷與文化發展, <i>shehui bianqian yu wenhua fazhan</i> )	Social changes and life before and after martial law (社會形態的改變及戒嚴前後生活的變化, <i>shehui xingtai de gaibian ji jieyan qianhou shenghuo de bianhua</i> ) Society, environmental protection and education (社會, 環保與教育, <i>shehui, huanbao yu jiaoyu</i> ) Chinese culture and development of pluralism (中華文化與多元化的發展, <i>zhonghua wenhua yu duoyuanhua de fazhan</i> )

Lastly, though cultural pluralism was evoked in the section dedicated to social change and cultural development, it was mostly seen as a diversification of Chinese culture (中華文化, *Zhonghua wenhua*) which remains at the core of what could be understood as Taiwan's culture. According to the explanation, the main trend in the cultural developments of the twentieth century could be summed up as the "preservation" (保存, *baocun*) of Chinese culture on Taiwan and its new expressions (創新, *chuangxin*) in the last decades.

## Conclusion

If the intertwined nature of the relationship between history and national identity makes curriculum writing a particularly difficult task, the controversies it might draw are rarely as predictable as the ones which have emerged in Taiwan since 1997. The same bones of contention – mainly the appraisal of the Chinese character of society in Taiwan before the Qing conquest, and the legacies of the Japanese and the KMT authoritarian regimes – are debated every three to five years. Nevertheless, despite the existence of significant differences in the representations of a common past shared by actors from the Nationalist and the pro-independence camps, Temporary Curriculum 95 and the 98 and 101 curricula had moderate stances in their promotion of a narrative that leaned either towards a China-centred or a Taiwan-centred understanding of Taiwan's history. Besides, the operating modes of the various committees in charge of curriculum writing were relatively similar and did not draw much criticism from civil society groups until 2014. By adopting an approach exclusively built on a grand Han narrative close to the old ROC nationalism of the Nanking era and by working behind closed doors, the authors of the so-called "fine-tuning" of the 101 Revised Curriculum broke with past habits in terms of curriculum writing. This reform ended up as one of the most contested and unpopular policies led by the Ma administration. Unlike other textbook-related controversies, the dispute which erupted in 2013 mobilised people far beyond just education professionals and historians. The "fine-tuning" storm lasted over one year, whereas the 1997 *Knowing Taiwan* controversy, which marked a milestone in Taiwan's educational policies, went on for just four months. More significantly, the government's stubbornness and the poor climate of the last months of Ma's presidency, a time when

relations between his administration and the vast majority of civil society were dreadful, led to the tragic suicide of student activist Dai Lin. As the “revised” 101 Curriculum will almost certainly be revoked in the near future, the display of violence, both symbolic and physical, to force the revised curriculum’s implementation appears to be one of the most ill-fated decisions made by the Ma administration. The formalisation of a clear legal mechanism to govern curriculum editing would be a first step to avoid such unnecessary tragedy in the future. Equally important is the need for every government, regardless of its own ideological stance, to promote a nuanced view of Taiwan’s history. It is, after all, the best way to introduce Taiwan’s cultural diversity to students.

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