

# “New Taiwanese”

## Evolution of an identity project in the narratives of *United Daily News*

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This study explores how “New Taiwanese” was offered and constructed as a viable identity category for people in Taiwan through the news discourse of the *United Daily News (UDN)* referenced in 922 news reports between 1987 and 2007. From the term’s first appearance in 1987, its promulgation as official discourse by the KMT government primarily between 1998 and 2000, to the end of 2007, “New Taiwanese” as an identity project (Laitin, 1998) has been utilized and challenged by political players of various camps at different junctures to achieve their political agenda. It has also gradually transformed its references and modified its meanings to join in the construction of Taiwan’s national identity. As a mediating concept for “Taiwanese” and “Chinese,” “New Taiwanese” has maintained a precarious and ambivalent positioning, having to constantly adjust to shifting ethnic relations of Taiwanese people and their complex, in-flux array of national identifications.

### Introduction

In 1987, the then Taiwan President Chiang Ching-kuo, son of Chiang Kai-shek, claimed, “I am also a Taiwanese.” This simple yet profound statement was made in hopes of mediating conflict between early and late Chinese immigrants to Taiwan and to give legitimacy to the rule of Chiang’s KMT (*Kumintang*, the Nationalist) party. Onlookers might have been puzzled — why was it necessary for a president who governed and lived in Taiwan to make the self-evident claim to be, himself, a Taiwanese? Yet at that time “Taiwanese” was not used as a label for national identity, since people in Taiwan were considered “Chinese.” It was to be a dozen or so years until people would need a new term, “New Taiwanese” (*xintaiwanren*, 新台灣人), to describe the integration of people in Taiwan, and in 2000, for the then

Taipei Mayor Ma Ying-jeou (now President) to claim: “Mr. Ching-kuo is the very first New Taiwanese!” (“Yesterday was the twelfth year,” 2000, p.4).<sup>1</sup>

These designators are heavily laden with political ideologies shaped by Taiwan’s hesitant and conflictual history. After being defeated by the Chinese communists in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek’s political party, the KMT retreated to Taiwan, thus ending Japan’s fifty-year (1895–1945) colonial rule. Unfortunately, the encounter between Chiang and his followers (“mainlanders” [*waishengren*] or late Chinese immigrants from provinces outside Taiwan) and the island’s inhabitants at the time (mostly early Chinese immigrants who migrated to Taiwan in the 17th century and who call themselves *benshengren* [people of this province] or *taiwan-ren* [Taiwanese]) was, in the words of Phillips (1999), “... less the restoration of historical ties than the attempt to forge an entirely new relationship” (p.276). This unfortunate conflict climaxed in the February 28, 1947 massacre, an event that began the reign of “white terror” by the KMT government. The historical moment of Ma referring to Chiang Ching-kuo as the “first New Taiwanese” was indexed through such encounters.

Chiang Kai-shek felt obliged to support Chinese civilization as the finest in the world and claimed the Republic of China (ROC) as the only legitimate, democratic Chinese country. Chiang’s spiritual, quasi-religious vision (Roy, 2003), aided by the cold war of the 1960s, made Taiwan a temporary base for the government to eventually take back the mainland, said by the Nationalists to have been “illegally” occupied by the Chinese communists. The symbols “Chinese” (*zhongguoren*) and “China” (*zhongguo*) soon claimed superiority, succinctly summarizing Chiang’s goal to recapture the mainland, as the government “considers the word ‘China’ a term representing a culture, a nation, and a state” (Wang & Liu, 2004, p.573).

The labels “Taiwan” and “Taiwanese” were thus marginalized, with Taiwan’s people being seen as heirs to a Chinese civilization needed to be educated about. “Taiwan” as an identity category was forbidden and those advocating independence were seen as traitors. Supported by state institutions and power, “China” and “Chinese” subordinated “Taiwan” and “Taiwanese” by assuming their right to represent Taiwan and its citizens (Chang & Holt, 2007). It was not until after 1987, when martial law was lifted and local consciousness fortified, that the center-peripheral positioning (Tu, 1994) was gradually reversed. “Taiwan” has been increasingly claimed as the national symbol, whereas “China” has become less significant through various de-Sinicization (B. Chang, 2004), particularly during the rule by DPP (the pro-Taiwan Democratic Progressive Party) from 2000–2008.

It is from the struggle between the relative positioning and differential power inherent in “Taiwanese” and “Chinese” that a new term, “New Taiwanese,” gradually gained ground in popular consciousness. For a time “New Taiwanese” was strategically manipulated as a mediating influence by politicians of various camps

and, starting around 1998, promoted heavily by the Nationalists as the basis of an official discourse and a master narrative (Bruner & Gorfain, 1984).

We analyze the construction and evolution of “New Taiwanese” as revealed in news discourse of the *United Daily News* (UDN) since 1987 to 2007. UDN was founded in 1951 by mainlanders and core members of the KMT central committee. From roughly 1959 to a few years after martial law was lifted in 1987, it was considered one of the most influential newspapers in Taiwan. Though privately owned, UDN has been seen as adopting a more pro-unificationist position. UDN provides a comprehensive archive of news articles since it started publishing in Taiwan (a total of 4,310,000 pieces of data)<sup>2</sup> as well as articles published by its subsidiary newspapers and magazines. With its comprehensive news archive and its affiliation with KMT — the major promoter of the concept — it is a good site for analyzing how New Taiwanese has been advocated.

We apply Laitin’s (1998) idea of “identity project” to see how “New Taiwanese” has been promoted as an identity category by key political players. To uncover the underlying power and ideological struggle in fashioning this category, we adopt Bakhtin’s insights on multiple contesting voices (Bakhtin, 1986; Bruner & Gorfain, 1984) to see how narratives on “New Taiwanese” unfold in media texts. Within the complex discursive terrain of modern Taiwan engendered by other political symbols (Ortner, 1973), “New Taiwanese” charts its own territory, forming a unique Taiwanese identity (Chang & Holt, 2007; Cheng, 2006; Chuang, 2001; Gold, 1993).

### “The New Taiwanese”: Identity category in the making

Incubated in a fertile and ever-changing political landscape from as early as 1987, “New Taiwanese” took tangible shape around 1994 and was crystallized in the 1998 Taipei mayoral election and continued to gather momentum through 2000, primarily through the advocacy of the KMT government. Afterwards, “New Taiwanese” gradually became dormant and encompassed new configurations of its contents when the DPP came to power and endeavored to promote “Taiwan” on its own from 2000 to 2008, and finally has been primarily applied to the children of foreign spouses.

This trend can be observed in the large number of articles published in *United Daily News*.<sup>3</sup> From the term’s first appearance in 1987, to 1998, only 222 articles contain the phrase; however, in just one year, 1999, 221 articles had it, and in 2000, another 216. After the high tide in 2000, the popularity of discourse related to the identity category tapered somewhat in subsequent years: 52 appearances in 2001, 52 in 2002, 20 in 2003. During the presidential election, the category

was again promoted enthusiastically — 40 in 2004 and 44 in 2005 — and then reduced again, with 31 in 2006, and 26 in 2007. In a period of 21 years from 1987 to 2007, 50% of the articles containing “New Taiwanese” were published between 1999 and 2000.<sup>4</sup>

This quantitative measure gives us an initial frame for understanding the term’s narratives, with four points of interest. First, *UDN*’s coverage of news about “New Taiwanese” can be divided into three periods, each corresponding to specific political circumstances: before 1998; between 1998 and 2000; and after 2000. Second, compared with the large number of news reports, readers’ responses and other commentaries are few, with only about a dozen articles discussing the concept, and among these, only two holding a more challenging perspective (i.e., Ka, 1996; Pan, 1998). Moreover, among these “reader” responses are quite a few submitted by semi-official promoters of the concept, so that the “bottom up” narratives can be said to be in fact posed top-down. Third, while there has been much discussion on how the concept can help society, there is very little on evaluating the concept itself, thus confirming the label’s propaganda status. Fourth, despite adopting a pro-KMT position, *UDN*’s reports on “new Taiwanese” are not entirely favorable, though much more so than the pro-DPP *Liberty Times*, both in number of articles and positive views in them. This ambivalence is perhaps due to the concept’s problematic relation with the KMT government’s assertion that people in Taiwan are Chinese, which has later changed to a focus on Taiwan-centeredness.

In the following, we first discuss the changes of the identity label across the three time periods, and follow with an analysis on how its substance is predicated upon its connection with both “Chinese” and “Taiwanese.” We then address how “New Taiwanese” challenges the national identity of people in Taiwan.

### *Context of emergence*

History has given “New Taiwanese” numerous arenas for expression in multiple forms. “The” origin thus remains an artificial idea chosen as an anchor from which to begin discussion. According to *UDN*, “New Taiwanese” first appears in 1987, when members of the Provincial Parliament discussed appropriate terms to refer to aboriginals.<sup>5</sup> In an article titled, “Whoever Lives on This Land can be Called Taiwanese” (1987), Parliament member Z.-n. Lin proposed a tripartite approach: aboriginals would be called “Original Taiwanese” (*yuan taiwanren*, 原台灣人); current residents “Current Taiwanese” (*xian taiwanren*, 現台灣人); and late immigrants who came after 1949 “New Taiwanese.” This idea, with “Taiwan” as common to all labels, did not gain wide consensus. Later, H.-m. Chen (1991) traces the history of Taiwanese names in the reader’s forum and calls the second generation late Chinese immigrants “New Taiwanese.”

Since the late 1980s, as the mythic goal of recovering the mainland gradually dismantled and Taiwan became more liberalized (Schafferer, 2001), and with local residents, particularly the majority early Chinese immigrants (i.e., *benshengren* or *taiwanren*, which includes both Fukien immigrants and Hakka, in contrast with mainlanders) gaining political power once martial law was lifted in 1987, Taiwanese consciousness has increased and heightened significantly. Simon (2005) notes, “In a context of free media and thriving civil society, debates about Taiwanese identity flourished at all levels of Taiwanese society. ‘Indigenization’ becomes a household word” (p. 2). As the focus has centered on democratic Taiwan and meanings of “Taiwanese” have been increasingly contested (Chuang, 2001; Chang & Holt, 2007), people in Taiwan needed an inclusive label to share a common foundation from which to build their identity and show love of country and nativity.

But the readily available label “Taiwanese” [*taiwanren*] was not up to these tasks. Rising Taiwanese consciousness has enabled the largest population, early Chinese Fukien immigrants, to claim the term “Taiwanese” as representing all in Taiwan. Such consciousness is often conflated with the sorrow of the Taiwanese people (*beiqing yishi*, or 悲情意識) who have never ruled themselves throughout their history.

Yet the position was severely criticized by some non-Fukien minorities including mainlanders, Hakka, and aboriginals, who contend that the label “Taiwanese” referred only to early Chinese immigrants from Fukien and could not be used for other groups.<sup>6</sup> Thus the naming of all people as “Taiwanese” was thought likely to essentialize differences, particularly between early Chinese Fukien immigrants (“Taiwanese”) and late Chinese immigrants (“mainlanders”). Branded as “Hoklo chauvinism,”<sup>7</sup> this was criticized as narrow-mindedly confined to promoting only the status and solidarity of early Chinese Fukien immigrants. Many scholars oppose the position of Taiwanese national identity on the grounds that it excludes other non-“Taiwanese” (e.g., Jiang, 1998) and argue for a free-choice, modern conception of citizenship as the basis for Taiwan’s national identity (T.-l. Chen, 2002b). Also associated with the name are stereotypical images of “Taiwanese” as earthy and lacking in culture (or more precisely, Chinese culture) and refinement (T.-l. Chen, 2002a), and thus inadequate as a national label.

Responding to calls to invent an inclusive label, “New Taiwanese,” along with other alternative identity categories<sup>8</sup> (Laitin, 1998), has been proposed to open up the narrowly defined “Taiwanese ethnicity.” Soon political parties of different persuasions capitalized on the term to further their particular political agendas. For example, the DPP, as a local party, used the term to reach out to and stress its openness toward people other than “Taiwanese,” likely to avoid the criticism of “Hoklo chauvinism.” On December 17, 1992, the party held a major political rally for the legislator election billed as “the Night of the New Taiwanese.”

In the KMT, Guan Zhong, a late Chinese immigrant and candidate in the 1992 legislator election, published a book titled, *New Taiwanese*. The New Party (a pro-China, unificationist party that split from KMT in 1993; hereafter NP), whose members were mostly mainlanders, also actively applied the term to indicate their loyalty to Taiwan. Several legislators, such as T.-s. Yang and Q.-m. Chen, though themselves “Taiwanese,” have also advocated “New Taiwanese.”

These efforts to focus on Taiwan are concurrent with removing the ancestral district (*zuji*, 祖籍) in 1992 and replacing it with birthplace in household registration (M.-l. Lin, 1992). Propagation of “New Taiwanese” can never be pinned down to specific individuals, but is shared by all who have been involved with and participated in its construction (Bakhtin, 1986). At the early stage, however, “New Taiwanese” was merely a potential identity label in progress, with relatively few further discussions on its meaning and even its use in political propaganda was limited.

The voices, however, do not always agree and eruptions disputing the identity label occasionally appear. When “New Taiwanese” was proposed in the early 1990s, some saw it as anti-Chinese. In 1993, a high school teacher who motivated graduating seniors with the phrase “be a dignified New Taiwanese” was forced by the principal to change it to “be a dignified Chinese” (Lai, 1996b). Such interruptions, however, remain minority voices, with related news reports disappearing after two responses from readers.

Elections for provincial governor and mayor in 1994 provided further opportunities to raise the issue. The first Taiwan provincial governor and mayoral elections provided a testing ground for Taiwan’s ethnic attitude and “New Taiwanese consciousness” (“Battle Examines Taiwan’s Political Ecology,” 1994) by asking voters to choose between KMT’s James Soong, a mainlander, and DPP’s D.-n. Chen, a “Taiwanese.” Although the then President Lee Teng-hui called Soong a “son of Taiwan” rather than a “New Taiwanese,” Soong’s victory reinforced a positive outlook for ethnic integration, thus further stimulating enthusiasm for “New Taiwanese.”<sup>9</sup>

By this time, the identity category “New Taiwanese” has, in the words of Laitin (1998), cascaded into various discursive sites. Aside from politics, in 1994 *Global Views* (遠見雜誌) magazine, affiliate of UDN, commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (which made Taiwan a colony of Japan) by devoting an entire issue to “New Taiwanese.” X-j Gao, the chief editor of the magazine, wrote an article titled “New’ Taiwanese Rewrite the New Script for Taiwan’s Life Force,” published simultaneously in the special issue and also in UDN (Gao, 1994). Gao more formally developed the notion of “New Taiwanese”:

The appearance of the “New Taiwanese” brings a fresh start for the Taiwan society that is dangerously lacking in having a common ground... The foundation of their

common fate is no longer limited to the same dialogue or coming from the same province, but is based on the same language, same culture, same bloodline, or even the same dream. (p. 11)

Unlike quick applications of the term by most politicians, Gao's explanation elaborates on the concept by delineating new attitudes embraced by the forward-looking and confident “New Taiwanese” as they go beyond self-pity and the confinement of the island and history. Gao continued to advocate the concept in the *UDN* (publishing another 8 articles on the concept by 2007) as well as later issues of *Global Views*. That this mode of expression was coming to claim status as a dominant discourse can be seen by the issue's receipt of both the 1995 Public Service Award and a Golden Tripod Award, both sponsored by the Governmental Information Office.

Instances of “New Taiwanese” gradually converge and by 1995 there is an upsurge in discussion of the concept amid calls for ethnic integration. Semantically, the term has also moved from designating only late Chinese immigrants to representing *all* in Taiwan. For example, on the night of February 27, 1995, to commemorate the February 28 massacre, DPP, in conjunction with National Taiwan University's Students Coalition, sponsored a series of events titled, “Searching for the New Taiwanese,” with one event inviting three parties (DPP, KMT, and NP) to exchange ideas about building a “New” Taiwan. This seminar was called “Creating an Ethnically Harmonious New Taiwan” (Ju, 1995).

“New Taiwanese” seemed to be a cure for ill will between local residents and mainlanders. On February 28, 1995, the NP established a “New Taiwan Research Center” to promote “New Taiwanese,” with the goal of “establishing new historical perspective, creating new Taiwanese, and drafting a sketch of new Taiwan” (Sun, 1995, p. 4). It aims at going beyond the four hundred years of history, improving ethnic integration, and implementing objective public policies.<sup>10</sup> NP legislator Q.-m. Chen has continued to give speeches on the topic since the early 1990s, trying to elaborate on “New Taiwanese” from a cultural perspective. The Party consistently used this concept in various election campaigns, until it all but vanished in late 1990's.

Former President Lee Teng-hui, at the time also chairperson of the KMT, started to use the concept extensively in election campaigns, speeches, and other addresses. *UDN* credits the first appearance of the term with Lee on March 24, 1995 in an article titled “Reform is to Continue Mr. Ching-kuo's Ideal”: “To go beyond the threshold of another century and seek the elevation of Taiwan experience, we need to learn to cultivate a new culture, shape new social values, and nurture the confidence and bearing of the New Taiwanese. To accomplish this will require our accumulated wisdom and the discarding of useless ideology” (Xie, 1995, p. 6).

Lee knew well the limitations of “Taiwanese,” a politically incorrect phrase if one wished to stress integration. A few months later, on August 22, in a meeting with overseas KMT representatives, Lee claimed: “Whoever identifies with Taiwan, loves Taiwan, and works hard for Taiwan is Taiwanese; if people do not agree with this phrase, then we could call it ‘New Taiwanese’” (Hu, 1995). Perhaps as a local resident himself, Lee did not object to the use of “Taiwanese” as an identity label for all in Taiwan, although he left it open for a competing label such as “New Taiwanese” to appease people.

This was particularly important given KMT’s status as an “outside” regime and the need to make more connections in the wake of Taiwanese consciousness. “New Taiwanese” became a strategic measure — it drew “China KMT” (*Zhongguo Guomindang*) closer to Taiwan by emphasizing Taiwan while helping to avoid becoming totally Taiwanized by making it “New,” since Taiwan, considered merely a province of China, had yet to be elevated. KMT’s tie to China has yet to be severed, as was clearly revealed by the article’s title, “Taiwanese are Chinese,” a phrase that Lee stressed in the meeting and chosen to be the title of the news report (Hu, 1995).

After “New Taiwanese” was promoted more heavily by NP and less by DPP in early 1990s, KMT emerged as the term’s primary endorser, backed by the sanction of official power. The identity broker of “New Taiwanese” changed hands from the NP and the DPP to the KMT, and as such more formally propagated as master narrative and civic discourse. With the increasing call for Taiwanese consciousness, “New Taiwanese,” representing inclusion for all who identify with Taiwan no matter when and under what circumstances they arrived, became prominent, compelling notice by politicians of different political persuasions, even if only nominally.

This spirit continues into 1996, year of the first direct election of the ROC president. Interestingly, though advocated in his election campaign and also used to thank his voters after the election, Lee did not mention either “New Taiwanese” or “Taiwanese” in his inaugural speech but rather talked about “Managing the Big Taiwan.” Nevertheless, the news report still cast Lee’s inaugural speech as “President Lee anticipates rebuilding the value system of the ‘New Taiwanese,’ with five reforms to cultivate Taiwan’s ‘revolution of the mind’” (You, 1996).

Lee’s seemingly lukewarm endorsement of “New Taiwanese” and his claim that “Taiwanese,” “New Taiwanese,” and “Chinese” are all the same, perhaps were done to fend off concerns by some party members that “New Taiwanese” actually covered his true intention to promote Taiwan’s independence, a growing concern as the identity label become more and more popular. Calling for people in Taiwan to become “New Taiwanese” seems to challenge the long-held ideology forbidding statements about Taiwan’s independence, an act seen by some in the KMT as a gesture of betrayal.

For some in KMT, “New Taiwanese” is seen as conceptually different from “Chinese,” and if it must be promoted, at least the concept should be made equivalent to “Chinese.” This is why some party members wanted Lee to proclaim that “New Taiwanese” are also “Chinese.” Ideological issues aside, this concern has become the more important, given the ever-present threat of military reprisals by China should hints of Taiwan’s independence become too prominent.

The rhetoric of “New Taiwanese” was more actively promoted by Soong, a mainlander and then governor of “Taiwan Province.” According to Soong, Lee’s victory represents “the rise of the New Taiwanese-ism,” though not Taiwan’s “independence-ism.” Soong elaborated “New Taiwanese-ism” facing interrogation from Provincial Parliament members in the first Congressional meeting in April 1996. He claimed that regardless of when they arrived, Chinese have developed a consensus on status as a “common life entity” and want to work hard for the land; they work together for democracy and to expand and develop economically. This spirit is “New Taiwanese-ism” and “New Taiwanese” are, in line with Lee’s idea, “small but great” (Lei, 1996b).

Soong’s advocacy of the “New Taiwanese-ism” invokes debate, criticism, and suspicion from people of various political parties. DPP Parliament members claimed Soong copied the idea and his using it reflected endorsement of “Taiwan’s independence.” NP Parliament members noted that they have already given detailed analysis of the concept and saw Soong’s ideas as less than sophisticated and not appropriately referred to as “-ism.”

As for KMT Parliament members, one suggested that “New Taiwanese-ism” should be changed to “New Chinese-ism” (*xin zhonghua zhuyi*, 新中華主義) to avoid being seen as practicing “New Taiwan’s Independence.” This interpretation is possible since, before the election, Soong warned China that its continual treat to Taiwan is likely to help produce the separationist “New Taiwanese-ism,” an act that would be detrimental to the unification plan (Lei, 1996a). Critics claimed that if he presented “New Taiwanese-ism” as a separationist proposal, then the proposal stands at odds with his political beliefs. In any case, Soong continued to advocate New Taiwanese-ism until he stepped down from the provincial governorship in December 1998, after the structure of Taiwan province was “frozen.”

The confusion can be observed in titles of several articles, such as “Who’s New Taiwanese, Oppositions have Different Definitions” (1996, June 16) and “New Taiwanese, Scholars Diverge on Their Opinions” (1996, July 10). More critically, Ka (1996) proposes the notion of “alternative Taiwanese” to prevent “New Taiwanese” from becoming a control tool to undermine civic power and oppress marginal groups.

Despite such confusion, three months after the election, Taipei Mayor S.-b. Chen (DPP), Kaohsiung Mayor D.-y. Wu (KMT), and I-lan County Mayor X.-q.

Yu (DPP) participated in a conference and claimed that whoever lives and identifies with Taiwan is a “New Taiwanese” (Dong, 1996). A week later, all three parties participated in a seminar, “The New Taiwanese over the Twenty-First Century,” co-sponsored by *Global Views* magazine and the Taiwan Provincial Government. At that meeting, representatives from various parties debated the definition of “New Taiwanese,” the purposes of the category, and even the time it was first made public (C. Wu, 1996). Perhaps the fact that the meeting was held at all is more important than what ideas were articulated and whether there was consensus. It is a ritual that pays homage to the identity category “New Taiwanese” as a touchstone recognized by all major parties at that time. However, under this seemingly harmonious front, currents of divergent interpretations of the identity label have already been initiated.

There followed a brief period when the term’s popularity abated somewhat, only to resume its full strength in 1998. There have been scattered activities using the label, such as Peng Ming-min Cultural Foundation’s (a supporter of Taiwan’s independence) holding a seminar titled “New Culture, New Society, and New Taiwanese” on March 14, 1998. Three months after the 1996 presidential election, “New Taiwanese” appeared in a total of 28 news articles. Since then and until the December 1998 elections, for two and a half years, the term appears in only 16 articles, most of these not on the front page of the newspaper, but in comments and reflections from readers.

### *Enacting “New Taiwanese”: The 1998 Drama*

The reclaiming of “New Taiwanese” as a key identity label had to wait until December 1, 1998,<sup>11</sup> when President Lee clasped hands with Taipei mayoral candidate Ma Ying-jeou four nights before the city election, proclaiming, “We are all ‘New Taiwanese.’” Lee asked voters to “walk away from sorrow” and vote for Ma, since he was “a real New Taiwanese.” This was a highly significant and exceptionally successful public drama, perfectly timed to resolve rhetorical exigencies played out through the collaboration of two key political figures: the early Chinese immigrant Lee (a “Taiwanese”), who grew up primarily under the rule of Japan and who could thus take to heart the sorrow of Taiwanese people; and the second-generation late Chinese immigrant Ma (a mainlander), who supposedly represented what “grand” Chinese culture had to offer. When the two joined hands under the name “New Taiwanese,” the gap between mainlanders and “Taiwanese” seemed to have been bridged and the connection cultivated.

Joining hands under the banner “New Taiwanese” was an act many, including Lee, believe enabled Ma to be elected (Zhang, 1999). It solved identity conflicts for many of Ma’s potential voters: it makes “Taiwanese” who did not support

incumbent Chen Shui-bian (also a “Taiwanese”) comfortable in the knowledge that they did not betray “their own people,” and mainlanders equally at ease knowing that they had not refused to blend in, as have others in Taiwan (Zheng, 1999).

Although “New Taiwanese” had been promoted by the KMT during the time they ruled since the early 1990s, it was an especially auspicious moment for Lee to reintroduce the notion during the campaign. Four years before, in a 1994 interview with a Japanese reporter, Lee pointedly referred to the sorrow of Taiwanese at not being able to rule themselves and noted that KMT was as much an outside regime as Japan. It was also in this interview that Lee proposed the metaphor, “Moses Coming out of Egypt,” to symbolize the need to take Taiwan out of its despair arising from its treatment at the hands of Chinese politicians (H. Chang, 2001). Lee’s claim alienated many mainlanders, since it portrayed them as intruders.

Since Nationalists relocated to Taiwan, many mainlanders saw themselves in something of a double bind, their lives and fate inextricably entrenched in Taiwan, as it became increasingly evident that reclaiming the mainland was impossible. As Hsu and Fan (2001) show, mainlanders have moved toward Taiwanese, and away from Chinese, identification. Moreover, they have moved from supporting Taiwan as ROC’s base as a base to reclaim China to backing the localization of the ROC in Taiwan. An appropriate label to make them feel part of Taiwan again seemed to be in order.

Also, earlier in 1998, Lee announced February 28 as Peace Memorial Day to commemorate victims of the February 28 massacre, an act presumably performed to ameliorate the bitter feud between “Taiwanese” and mainlanders (“A New Taiwanese Nationalism,” 2004). Lee also delivered an official apology for the massacre and built the Human Rights Memorial on the Green Island, a place where victims of the “White Terror” by the KMT were kept. All these actions signify the change Taiwanese society undergoes in getting rid of the sorrowful past and moving forward.

With all these changes, together with continuing development of democracy in Taiwan, “New Taiwanese,” propounded in 1998, filled precisely these needs (Hsu & Fan, 2001; Zhang, 1999). In values, vision, and spirit, “New Taiwanese” is different from “Taiwanese,” while embracing what Taiwan has to offer. Allowing all those of this name to identify themselves with Taiwan, it brought late Chinese immigrants alienated by Lee back to the KMT to support a “common entity of life” (Zhang, 1999).

Lee’s talk was said to have energized the KMT, so much so that the Party decided to immediately change the key theme of its advertisement to the discourse on New Taiwanese, even though the election was only two days away. Vice President Lien Chan followed by emphasizing the hope and happiness the concept brings, compared to the sorrowful feelings advocated by DPP’s incumbent mayor Chen (Zhou, 1998).

In a column titled “Eyes on the News,” Y. Yang (1998) claimed, “KMT Chairperson Lee Tenghui’s ‘Discourse on New Taiwanese’ not only solves Ma’s ethnic constraint, but also lights a new torch for Taiwan’s future” (p. 13). Particularly since the Taipei mayoral election was widely promoted as prelude to the upcoming 2000 presidential election, Ma’s winning the Taipei mayorship under the mantle “New Taiwanese” carried especially powerful meaning for Taiwan’s national identity, leading to editorials in the *UDN* calling for use of “New Taiwanese” to mediate conflicts within the society (“New Mainstream and New Taiwanese,” 1998).

This enthusiasm can be seen in articles containing “New Taiwanese,” which mushroomed in the next two weeks, such as, “New Mainstream and New Taiwanese”; “The New Era for the New Taiwanese”; and “New Taiwanese Perspective, Cultural Sector Promotes.” Reader responses and other commentary focus on how the concept can be best exemplified, or the direction it should go, and seldom explore the concept itself. Endorsements far outweighed criticisms, with one exception — Pan (1998) contends there is no need to emphasize “New Taiwanese,” since the new generation has been thinking in that direction and should be allowed to express their feelings. Articles noting the label’s acceptance have also been published, with 68% of Taipei citizens agreeing it (Dec. 7, 1998, Dec. 7); nearly 50% identifying with its discourse (1998, Dec. 13); and 56% labeling themselves “New Taiwanese” (1999, Jan. 2).

Whether it was Ma’s charm or the label’s inclusive power, enthusiasm thus aroused established “New Taiwanese” as the dominant discourse. Ma also established the “New Taiwanese Cultural Foundation” (*xintaiwanren wenjiao jijinhui*, 新台灣人文教基金會) after his election, the website of which has a welcome message: “Whoever lives on this land, and cares about this land, are all New Taiwanese!”<sup>12</sup>

More theoretical discussions also ensued. For example, an editorial titled “The Real New Taiwanese” (1998) contends that Taiwan’s ethnic conflicts are often provoked by politicians during campaigns through associating ethnic division with the unification-independence dichotomy. This was seen as unfortunate and no doubt signaling a need to establish Taiwanese identity; therefore,

To say that “New Taiwanese” is a top-down political slogan, we’d rather see it as a bottom-up social expectation... The discourse on “New Taiwanese” is a path of thinking that can help resolve ethnic issues, and if we are able to clarify such issues, then there will be space for rational discussion of our country’s livelihood strategy, whether we choose unification, independence, or neither. (p. 2)

The *UDN* seemed eager to confirm its status as key player in forming the master discourse by securing endorsement from members of other parties through the reporting of several pieces of news immediately after the drama was performed. NP candidate for Taipei mayor J.-x. Wang said that he agreed with “New Taiwanese,”

and added that everyone is also “New Chinese,” adding his hope that this would not be exploited as an ethnic problem. DPP chairperson Y.-x. Lin, though he did not disagree, said that whoever identifies with the land and is willing to defend it is a Taiwanese. Y.-z. Li, spokesperson for the newly established Independence Party (IP, split from DPP and established in 1996) said they wouldn’t object to the notion, but aside from the idea of Taiwanese ethnicity, we also need the notion of Taiwanese citizenry and if this is the case, there should be no distinction between “new” and “old” Taiwanese (Zhan, 1998). As the see-saw battle between “Chinese” as endorsed by KMT, and “Taiwanese” by DPP and IP gradually surfaced (Chang & Holt, 2007), the identity label “New Taiwanese” with its flexible boundaries that allow for diverse interpretations, seemed to have successfully absorbed everything, if only temporarily.

Ma’s election legitimized “New Taiwanese” discourse and offered people hope, even though multiple interpretations have generated much confusion, as shown by opinions expressed by representatives of National Assembly. On the “Taiwan” side, some hoped Lee would explain “New Taiwanese” to people who supported unification with China and use the name “Taiwan” to join international organizations to realize the spirit of “New Taiwanese-ism.” Others hoped Lee would bring the idea to the attention of China’s Premier Jiang Zheming. Still others praised the notion as endorsing a middle route in helping end sorrow and ethnic conflict (Tao, 1998). In addition, Z.-r. Wang, then Head of the Control Yuan, asked Lee to formally announce that New Taiwanese are Chinese and are citizens of the ROC (Z. Wang, 1998).

Vice President Lien Chan’s fervent claim that he was an “old Taiwanese” embracing “New Taiwanese” generated concerns about whether the refreshed identity category might lose its power for ethnic integration, given the implied division between “old” and “new” (“New,” 1998). Where there is “new,” it cannot help but cast the original as “old.” The division necessarily compresses time — the “old” must reconfigure itself suddenly at the moment the word “new” appears and thus compels all attention. The “new” may not mediate conflict but in fact perpetuate division.

At this time, discourse on “New Taiwanese” seemed to have reached new equilibrium: the pro-China, unificationist NP and other supporters, including some KMT members, were concerned about the implications for Taiwan’s independence, whereas the pro-Taiwan DPP and IP prefer the term “Taiwanese” itself, all while KMT is endorsing the revitalized identity label as the cure for the society.

That “New Taiwanese” had become a designator particularly suitable for mainlanders — at least through this drama — can perhaps be discerned from DPP’s ambivalence toward it. Before the 1998 Taipei mayoral election, incumbent mayor Chen said during an interview in *Newsweek*, reported in *UDN*: “If I said I

am a Taiwanese, they will accuse me of playing the ethnic divisive game; but we are all New Taiwanese. The question is how you identify yourself, not where you came from” (J. Wang, 1998, p. 2). Although DPP echoed the importance of the label in the early 1990s, with KMT gradually monopolizing official discourse, DPP became less willing to broker the category for people in Taiwan. As the branded focus on local consciousness seemed to have been successfully lifted by KMT as propaganda after the concept of “New Taiwanese” became so popular, DPP would rather have promoted “Taiwanese” instead.

Despite controversies remaining to be resolved, after the events of 1998, extensive and enthusiastic discussion resumed, and even foreign news reports took up analysis of the impact of this powerful identity label (Wang, Chen, & Zhong, 1999, p. 8). Most interestingly, the concept no longer confines itself to politics but has gradually spilled over to other aspects of cultural life (e.g., Cao, 1998).

### *From 2000 Onward*

“New Taiwanese” continued to serve as a viable identity category with a new configuration, gradually coming to be used exclusively by pro-China, mostly mainlander, politicians. Pro-Taiwan supporters gradually moved away from the once popular identity label, instead preferring “Taiwanese” as their designator.

During the 2000 presidential election, KMT candidates and their affiliates invoked “New Taiwanese” to emphasize ethnic integration. KMT candidate Lien Chan held a rally, “The Night of the New Taiwanese,” while Soong, a mainlander and independent candidate who split from KMT, echoing earlier advocacy of New Taiwanese-ism in 1996, named his team, “Service Team for the New Taiwanese” (*xintaiwanren tuandui*, 新台灣人團隊). Soong’s political party was initially named “New Taiwanese People’s Party” (*xin taiwan renmin dang*, 新台灣人民黨), though later changed to the People’s First Party (*qinmindang*, 親民黨). He uses the metaphor “New Taiwanese 2000 Hope Fund” to advocate his team as “blue-chip shares” in which voters should invest.

A similar pattern can be observed in the 2004 Presidential election, where Lien cooperated with Soong as his running mate to represent KMT against incumbent DPP President S.-b. Chen. If he were elected, Lien said, he would promote “three New-isms”: “New Taiwanese-ism, New Development-ism, and New Cooperation-ism.”

On the other hand, it now appears that DPP’s endorsement of the label back in 1992 was never seriously practiced but was more a measure undertaken to solve a political exigency. When Chen lost the Taipei mayoral election in 1998 and started to prepare for the 2000 Presidential election, some speculated that his proposed “New Center Route” was an attempt to differentiate himself from Lee’s “New Taiwanese”

(Peng, 1999). As the “New Taiwanese” discourse was later dominated by Soong, strategically, the need to make a distinction became even greater. Furthermore, ideologically the DPP’s victory in both the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections also established the legitimacy of “Taiwan” with little help needed from the modifying adjective “New.” As Chen was called “the Son of Taiwan” (*taiwan zhi zi*, 台灣之子), the first local resident from a local party elected to be the ROC President, his duties seemed to be simply to pay tribute to “Taiwan,” although, interestingly, he was called “the representative of the New Taiwanese” by Lee (S.-c. Chen, 2000, p. 13).

In 2002, when Chen was asked whether “New Taiwanese” was used to separate local and non-local Taiwanese, he replied that “New Taiwanese” was not his personal term, nor was there a distinction between “new” and “old” Taiwanese. Regardless of when they arrived, so long as they identify with and love Taiwan, and are committed to Taiwan’s survival, Chen said, they are all “the greatest Taiwanese” (Ling, 2002; see also Cheng, 2006). Not surprisingly, in the 2002 mayoral election, the then President Chen had to, as the title of the news article shows, “Wave the Knife to Chop the Image of the New Taiwanese,” as he criticized Ma’s capitalizing on the label for political gains (M. Lin, 2002). “*Abien* [President Chen’s nickname] used the words most likely to instigate Taiwanese consciousness to tear Ma Ying-jeou’s ‘bogus face’ [*jiamian*] of the New Taiwanese, since only the green candidates can tread on the road of Taiwan” (p. 5).

With the continual rise in Taiwanese consciousness, just before the 2004 presidential election on February 28, the day emblematic of the feud between the mainlanders and local residents, Chen gave a speech, again claiming

There is no distinction between “New Taiwanese” and “Old Taiwanese” of the twenty-three million people. We are all masters of the past, present, and future Taiwan. We should all trust and encourage each other, and be “Grand Scale Taiwanese”! (S.-b. Chen, 2004, p. A4)

Stepping out of Chinese consciousness, supporters of Taiwan’s independence may no longer perceive a need to avoid the charge of Hoklo chauvinism by adopting “New Taiwanese,” since “Taiwan” can stand on its own. Chen’s interest in promoting “Taiwan” can be observed in the revision of former President Lee’s statement that “the ROC is *in* Taiwan” to “the ROC *is* Taiwan.” On July 30, 2005, the website of the Presidential Office changed Taiwan’s name from “Republic of China” to “Republic of China (Taiwan)” for both Chinese and English titles.<sup>13</sup> Lee, stepping down as ROC President and resigning as KMT chair after his party’s defeat in the 2000 presidential election, other than praising Chen as representing “New Taiwanese” (S.-c. Chen, 2000), seldom promoted “New Taiwanese.” Currently as spiritual leader of the TSU (Taiwan Solidarity Union, a pro-independence party), Lee has instead advocated Taiwan’s independence.

On February 19, 2005, Lee again coined a new term — “Taiwanese of the New Era” (*xin shidai taiwanren*, 新時代台灣人) — to replace “New Taiwanese” (H. Lin, 2005). Lee explained that his use of the term in the 1998 mayoral election had misled people into thinking that “New Taiwanese” was only applicable to late Chinese immigrants. With Lee’s turn toward Taiwan’s independence, he can no longer serve as promoter of “New Taiwanese.” Lee’s revision of the term, however, received only passing attention. By the end of 2007, only 15 articles mention the phrase in reporting the activities of Lee and others. Except for two reader responses right after Lee’s statement, there were no editorial comments by *UDN* or reference to people’s reactions.

Regardless of political orientations of people who use or oppose “New Taiwanese” to further their agendas, with the ebbing of its usage, the label’s prominence has receded. With elevation of the term “Taiwan,” “New Taiwanese” has been used less by politicians, even mainlanders. Before Ma was elected president in 2008, he made a famous statement, “even burned to ashes, I am still Taiwanese.” Note the contrast with his 1998 declaration that he was “New Taiwanese.”

As it faded from prominence, the status of “New Taiwanese” had to be repositioned and its principal referents changed to more narrow association with “true outsiders,” such as early missionaries and foreigners staying in Taiwan, as well as present-day spouses from China, Southeast Asia, and other foreign countries. Since around 2002, “New Taiwanese” has become a label most frequently associated with recent immigrants to Taiwan and occasionally early foreign immigrants.

From its first appearance in *UDN* on December 22, 1998, when the then Taipei Mayor Ma classified a Belgian missionary as a “New Taiwanese” (Liang, 1998), by 2003, “New Taiwanese” is consistently used to denote foreign spouses and their children. These children are often called “children of the New Taiwanese” (*xin-taiwanren zhi zi*, or 新台灣人之子), as in titles like “National Day Babies, Many Children of the New Taiwanese” and “New Taiwanese, There Are Ways to Enter the Place and Learn Customs.” With its political connotations largely absent, “New Taiwanese” seems to have transmuted into a lighter, family-oriented, designator of Taiwan’s most recent arrivals.

### Negotiating “New Taiwanese” boundaries with “Taiwanese” and “Chinese”

Once having come to represent a dominant ideology, “New Taiwanese” inscribes versions of reality and social relations. Development of “New Taiwanese” is posed against “Taiwanese” (and “Taiwan”) and “Chinese” (and “China”) — two sets of symbols sharing layers of connectedness, culture, ethnicity, and politics, as well as ideological, affective, and practical concerns (Chang & Holt, 2007; N. Wu, 2005).

Since the 1980s, alternative rhetorical strategies have been proposed by different political leaders to forge links between the two sets of symbols. In line with these efforts, "New Taiwanese" seems to have given both "Taiwanese" and "Chinese" a facelift without choosing sides, successfully fulfilling its mediating role. However, such success was only on the surface, with internal contradictions readily observed. From its initial happy acceptance by various parties, to the current irrelevance on both sides, "New Taiwanese" plays an intriguing role in the development of Taiwanese national identity.

### *Making Taiwanese "new"*

The push and pull between "New Taiwanese" and "Taiwanese" concealed much of the power struggle among different ethnic groups in Taiwan. It drove people away from Taiwan by demarcating a "new" Taiwan, while also paradoxically drawing people closer to Taiwan, having replaced China-centered rhetoric in favor of the Taiwanese locality. Such rejuvenation, however, is based upon several paradoxes that may actually perpetuate more division than commonality.

First, because the term "Taiwanese" was already available, using "New Taiwanese" can be seen as a refusal to become part of Taiwan, as it marks "Taiwanese" as inappropriate or illegitimate, as it is now constituted and as it has evolved from the past. With its supposed goal of opening up the original boundaries of "Taiwanese" to include everyone and reject the exclusiveness shared by early Chinese immigrants, "New Taiwanese," as a label for *all* in Taiwan, problematizes the conception of "Taiwan." While the term "Taiwanese" may be reserved for specific ethnic groups, the word "Taiwan," refers to a locality. Although "New Taiwanese" helps guard against Hoklo chauvinism, it cannot but also be set against what "Taiwan" was.

Second, adding "new" to "Taiwan" compels a contrast with what is supposedly "old" as the background against which the new identity must be constructed. In other words, to make something new one must tell the not-so-pleasant "old" stories.

Illustrating this point is Gao's (1994) article constructing "New Taiwanese" discourse and advocating that people in Taiwan embrace a "new" attitude to welcome the future. People, he said, must "regain their life from the ashes of history, break their cocoon from ideology, and cross over the dead Hutong of sorrowfulness and self-pity...without the appearance of 'New' Taiwanese, Taiwan cannot get out of the political swirl, and jump out of the constrictions of small scale" (p. 11). "Old" Taiwanese are thus seen as clinging to feelings of sorrow and self-pity, smaller and constrained by ideology, struggling with irrelevant histories and political upheaval.

Although Gao (1994) claims that most “New Taiwanese” are born after 1949 and include all local residents and second-generation mainlanders, his other claims suggest that the “old” history refers specifically and only to “Taiwanese.” These claims include that “New Taiwanese” are not the result of four hundred years of history; they do not hold sorrowful feelings; and that they do not need to rely upon historical events (like the February 28 massacre) to gain sympathy and provoke ethnic division to succeed.

Similarly, NP legislator Q.-m. Chen, while promoting “New Taiwanese,” articulates five problems associated with “old Taiwanese.” They are: aggressive and violent; materialistic and less attentive to righteousness; burdened with a sorrowful mood; focused on the local community but not the whole country; and stress emotion over reason (Cao, 1998). Again, his analysis seems only focused on the history of “Taiwanese,” rather than the histories of late Chinese immigrants or aboriginals.

Such reinterpreting of Taiwanese history cannot avoid the implication that old is bad, or at least in need of remedy, rather than something to be cherished on its own, as it is now. This is why, when Lien Chan claimed himself to be an “old” Taiwanese, it aroused concern. While “new” may refer to extension of the entity itself, hence new life from the original source, it can also be used to indicate efforts to discard the old to acquire the new, rendering both in competition (“New,” 1998). If “new Taiwanese” and “old Taiwanese” become divisive conceptions, it may not help Taiwan’s ethnic integration (p. 2). This view is shared by other supporters of Taiwan’s independence, who view the distinction between “new” and “old” as illegitimate and unnecessary.

Third, some people believe that “New Taiwanese” serves only as a convenient label for mainlanders to reinvent themselves (T. Fang, 2001). Supporters of Taiwan’s independence, for example, view “Taiwanese” as an appropriate designator for people in Taiwan (Hou, 1999), whereas “New Taiwanese” is used mostly by mainland politician to benefit themselves. This perception may arise because strong advocates of “New Taiwanese” tend to be either mainland politician or members of political parties that support unification, such as NP, PFP, and KMT. “Taiwanese” tend to endorse the concept somewhat reluctantly, as can be observed from DPP’s responses in early 1990’s, and later by its adamant rejection of the label. Even Lee, who moved from KMT to TSU, changed from being its promoter to rejecting it. Indeed, for some, “New Taiwanese” was most popular among mainland politician; without having to realize identification through action, the label helps sustain a reality of ethnic integration built with words (for example, Lee, 1999). This provides the impetus to drive “New Taiwanese,” not closer, but farther away from “Taiwanese.”

Fourth, “New Taiwanese” makes “Taiwanese” the newly arrived, and reverses their original host position to that of guest. Q. Yang (2005) contends that “New

Taiwanese” is “fake Taiwanese” (*jia taiwanren*) as these people try to make “Taiwanese” as “newly arrived” as they are themselves

...new immigrants who currently or in the past have relied on the new regime [to gain power]. When they do so, they have the consciousness or behavior to annex Taiwanese. They want Taiwanese to be enculturated as the New Taiwanese, like themselves new immigrants; they do not want to blend in to become Taiwanese themselves.

Yang views such acts as a power play in which guests become hosts. Instead of being assimilated into Taiwanese cultures, these identity brokers ask “Taiwanese” — hosts — to be assimilated and reacculturated as guests. Also implied in such acts is that the local, earthier Taiwanese culture is insufficient without first being elevated. Yang’s interpretations may not be ungrounded. The five problems identified by Q.-m. Chen (Cao, 1998) are for “Taiwanese” only; “problems” of other minorities are not identified, hence there would be no need for them to be reacculturated.

These observations suggest that the identity label embraces a sense of “otherness,” in that both in quantity and quality, it is more than just *within* Taiwan — it comes from outside, adds more to it, and transforms it. This otherness can be observed, regardless of what narratives about integration and the theme that everyone is a “New Taiwanese” may suggest, whoever was specifically named a “New Taiwanese” tends to be someone from outside Taiwan: Chiang Ching-kuo (named by Ma); Ma Ying-jeou (implied by Lee); and the Belgian missionary (named by Ma). Indeed, the “otherness” is most exemplified by foreign spouses, as they clearly come from outside of Taiwan.

Nevertheless, it is this otherness that curtails the status of “New Taiwanese” as a dominant discourse. As the tide of politics has changed, so will the power of the identity label invented to serve specific political agendas. Treading on a failed trajectory (Zheng, 1999), the discourse of “New Taiwanese” has gradually given way to, and been supplanted by, “Taiwan” and “Taiwanese,” symbols that only a few years ago “New Taiwanese” was intended to subsume. During DPP’s rule from 2000 to 2008, “Taiwan” and “Taiwanese” — without being invested with the quality of being outside, the “self” not the “other” — became dominant symbols guiding the construction of Taiwanese identity. Adding “New” to “Taiwanese” became redundant.

The possible supplanting by “Taiwanese” of “New Taiwanese” suggests an interesting predicament. It is the refocusing on Taiwan that makes “New Taiwanese” a viable identity label at the turn of twentieth century, but it is also the same, albeit more vigorous, effort toward Taiwanization that renders the label ineffective.

Increasing calls for Taiwan to rectify names (台灣正名運動), promoted by private efforts aided directly or indirectly by DPP governmental actions, are in

concert with demands to dissociate China's impact on Taiwan (de-Sinicization). These cultural enterprises propose that names with *zhongguo* (China) be replaced with *taiwan* (Taiwan), or at least that *zhongguo* be removed. On occasions where only Taiwan's official title "ROC" is used, advocates urge that "Taiwan" be added even if it cannot replace the word "China" in "Republic of China".<sup>14</sup> Aside from operations performed upon linguistic labels, this view holds that contents of Taiwanese cultural life should also depart from those associated with China. Whether for political or cultural reasons, some regard Taiwan's uniqueness as achievable only when it advances beyond its Chinese roots. Aside from this urge to detach itself from China's influence, these movements also reflect the impact of a post-modernist ethic that encouraged moving away from the center and to some extent becoming a synonym for indigenization (*bentuhua*, or 本土化) (Ling & Shih, 1998; Schafferer, 2001).

In light of the push to rectify names to "Taiwan," and given that fewer in Taiwan continue to subscribe to greater Chinese nationalism (Wang & Liu, 2004), Taiwan-centeredness has been solidified and its legitimacy confirmed on its own. This is in line with the observations of many that, over the years, people in Taiwan have increasingly switched their self-perceived identity from Chinese to Taiwanese, including dual identification with Chinese and Taiwanese (Chang & Wang, 2005; Dittmer, 2005; Hsu & Fan, 2001; Wang & Liu, 2004). The term "Taiwanese" has gradually shed the once-earthly image applied only to early Chinese immigrants and seems ready to claim status as a sanctioned identity label for all who live in Taiwan.

Such efforts to rectify the name of Taiwan, although challenging China-centered ideology and its representative symbol "China," also minimize the importance of the once popular "New Taiwanese." Attempts to minimize the symbol "Chinese" through de-Sinicization (*quzhongguohua*, or 去中國化) actually accelerates the distancing of "New Taiwanese." Of course, even though return of KMT government since 2008 has halted such efforts, "New Taiwanese" has yet to reemerge.

### *Push and pull between "New Taiwanese" and "Chinese"*

The boundaries between "New Taiwanese" and "Chinese" are equivocal, ambivalent, and controversial, negotiable according to different political players in varying sociopolitical circumstances. On the one hand, it endorses or energizes the concept of "Chinese"; on the other hand, it pulls away and even rejects "Chinese," particularly in its seeming endorsement of "Taiwan."

As mentioned earlier, with KMT's command of authority since 1949, China-centered rhetoric has subsumed and represented Taiwan. Configuration of Taiwan's politics in the late 1980s worked to problematize "Chinese" and prompted

"New Taiwanese" as a feasible identity category that supposedly expands a sense of "Chinese-ness." "New Taiwanese" treats Taiwan as a focal point and has sidetracked the notion of "Chinese" and its main referent, "Chinese mainland." If "Taiwan" was once subsumed under "China," without the historical associations, "New Taiwanese" supposedly need not suffer the same fate but could instead stake out its own territory.

Moreover, the officially endorsed "Chinese" label, while perhaps applicable to the majority of people in Taiwan, is not sufficiently inclusive to reflect current emphasis on multiculturalism. In addition to early and late Chinese immigrants, as well as spouses from mainland China, there are also other, non-Chinese minorities such as aboriginals and immigrants from Southeast Asia and elsewhere. "New Taiwanese" departs from the narrower boundary demarcated by the term "Taiwanese," and at the same time conveniently fulfills a vacuum that cannot be encompassed by the label, "Chinese," since not everyone in Taiwan is of Chinese descent.

As Taiwan consciousness increases, distance between "New Taiwanese" and "Chinese" has widened: the once all-encompassing Chinese consciousness must make space for "New Taiwanese." The concept's emergence signals an attempt to revise the contents of "Chinese-ness" and its associated principles and values (Dittmer, 2004), inviting both acceptance and resistance. Such revision, among Chinese, applies to both early and late immigrants: the early ones should transcend their sorrowful feelings, and the later place their focus in Taiwan rather than somewhere else.

The distancing of "New Taiwanese" from "Chinese" may create insecurity among some unificationists. This may explain why, at different times, claims have been made that "New Taiwanese" invigorates or embraces the concept of "Chinese-in-the-future," or designation as citizens of the ROC (T. Fang, 2001). After adoption as an official policy, Lee's government was also urged to proclaim that "New Taiwanese" are "New Chinese" in the making. Such attempts to mediate the two concepts shows the edginess expressed at the possibility of "New Taiwanese" engulfing "Chinese." Arguing that "New Taiwanese" retain part of the Chinese cultural heritage while developing in unique Taiwanese ways helps draw "New Taiwanese" closer to "Chinese," maintaining the more prestigious position "Chinese" has always enjoyed.

Conceptions associated with the identity category are maintained only in precarious balance and constantly swinging according to specific political configurations. Without constant substantiation through various actions and discourse, "New Taiwanese" may well disintegrate or alter its direction. For example, DPP and TSU no longer supported "New Taiwanese" after it was more heavily promoted by KMT around 1998; also, the former's contention that "New Taiwanese"

is primarily exploited mostly by mainlander politicians renders the category little more than a political tool. Such narratives help push “New Taiwanese” back to “Chinese.”

Political players after 2000 and following the development of Taiwan’s politics, such as Lee’s being forced to step down as the KMT Chairperson, also destabilizes the linkage between “New Taiwanese” and “Chinese.” Lee’s promotion of “New Taiwanese” became suspect, and the more he promoted Taiwan’s independence, the less “New Taiwanese” was linked to “Chinese-ness.” To use Laitin’s (1998) notion of an identity broker, we might say that Lee no longer committed himself to the label he had brokered once he changed his position.

But the emergent disloyalty to “New Taiwanese” is perhaps best illustrated by *New Idea* (*xin guannian*, or 新觀念), a KMT-affiliated magazine. Since February 1994, the magazine introduced a cover figure — usually a success story — as “The Pride of New Taiwanese.” The practice continued until August 2001, when the cover story has since changed to “The Pride of New Chinese.”<sup>15</sup> This transition was prompted by insecurity some felt about the potential threat of “New Taiwanese” to “Chinese” — what better remedy than to simply revert back to the identity label, “Chinese”?

Although conceptually “Taiwanese” and “Chinese” are far more complex than just two seemingly mutually exclusive and contrasting labels, in Taiwan’s increasingly bipolar politics between the “green” and “blue” camps,<sup>16</sup> unfortunately the two as opposing points have been simplified. Today KMT President Ma’s policy seems to have revitalized a China-centered ethic and minimizes the symbol of Taiwan; hence, how “New Taiwanese” will compete with “China” in the future remains to be seen.

### *A bridge without national identification*

The ambivalent connection “New Taiwanese” shares with “Chinese” and “Taiwanese” reveals interesting alternating divisions marking ingroup from outgroup. When it was blamed as an excuse proffered by mainlander politicians, mainlanders became the “outgroup” that pledged loyalty to Taiwan; when it was framed as local residents needing to transcend their sorrowful feelings, they became the “outgroup” to be assimilated into a new mindset. When the distinction between the “old” and the “new” are drawn, each is the other’s outgroup. As an identity category, the constant alternating of in-/outgroup division occasioned by “New Taiwanese” is in line with conflictual national identities of people in Taiwan.

“New Taiwanese” does not provide a solution to the continuous wrangling over Taiwan’s national identity, but rather supports its continued ambiguity. Gao (1994), for example, claims that “‘New’ Taiwanese identify with the appeal of

Taiwan as a common life entity, and also identify with the ‘status quo’ in current debate between unification and independence (p. 11). Moreover, Y. Yang (1998) comments on the success of Ma’s victory in the 1998 Taipei mayoral election under the banner of “New Taiwanese” as “compressing the space for both the immediate unificationists [*ji tong*] and immediate independence supporters [*ji du*]” (p. 13). What is left, then, is KMT’s appeal to put stability as a top priority without taking a stand on national identification. In other words, “New Taiwanese” is likely to arouse emotions for the locality of Taiwan, but distances itself from the thorny issue of national identity (Fang, 2001).

In a country whose people are divided over whether Taiwan should claim independence, the fact that the identity label takes no position seems particularly evocative. Some claim that “New Taiwanese” are “new Chinese” in the making, while others view “New Taiwanese” as those who identify with Taiwan and see “Taiwan” as their country (Fang, 2001). People are free to side more with either “Taiwanese” or “Chinese” to interpret the substance of “New Taiwanese.” Perhaps it is precisely this ambiguity that allows the identity label to succeed in bringing people together, even if only temporarily, in Taiwan’s complex, in-flux array of identifications.

The Election Study Center of National Cheng-Chi University (2008a, 2008b) has surveyed, during the years 1998 to 2001 when discourse about “New Taiwanese” was most pervasive, the identification patterns and political attitudes of Taiwanese and the results were summarized in Table 1. It appears that rising Taiwanese consciousness led more people to identify themselves as “Taiwanese only” and far fewer to consider themselves as “Chinese only,” but does not appreciably reduce the number of those embracing both Chinese and Taiwanese. As for political positioning in 2000, there is a small increase in pro-unification and a more substantial decrease in pro-independence, which was reversed in 2007, when almost twice as

**Table 1.** Identification patterns of Taiwanese, 1997–2007

Category	End of 1997	End of 2000	End of 2007
Taiwanese only	35%	39%	43.7%
Chinese only	17%	10%	5.4%
Chinese and Taiwanese	40%	45%	44.5%
Pro Unification <sup>†</sup>	18.5%	21%	11.6%
Pro Independence <sup>††</sup>	16%	11%	21.3%
Status quo <sup>†††</sup>	46%	47.5%	55.6%

<sup>†</sup>Figures derived by collapsing numbers for “immediate unification” and “prone to unification.”

<sup>††</sup>Figures derived by collapsing numbers for “immediate independence” and “prone to independence.”

<sup>†††</sup>Figures derived by collapsing numbers for “status quo and decide later” and “status quo forever.”

many people preferred independence to unification. The majority of people, however, still prefer Taiwan in the status quo.

Similar patterns have been observed by other scholars. Chang and Wang's (2005) analysis of six waves of surveys from 1994 to 2002 shows that by 2002, almost 60 percent of respondents considered themselves as having dual identity, particularly among the younger generations born after 1953. N. Wu's (2005) analysis of surveys between 1992 and 2000 found that people switch among different identifications in the 1998 and 2000 data, and pragmatists (no specific identification) constitute the largest group. Moreover, as Wang and Liu's (2004) survey shows, although over 80 percent endorse Taiwan-centered political identity, only a quarter see Taiwanese culture as different from Chinese culture. This general trend does not deny the convergence of dual identities or fluctuation among different identifications.

These data may point to why "Taiwanese" has supplanted "New Taiwanese." The "freedom to choose" mentality offered by "New Taiwanese" gives the label resilience, yet continues to leave issues of national identity in confusion. The bridge built by "New Taiwanese" to mediate "Taiwanese" and "Chinese" is maintained in precarious equilibrium in a matrix of overlapping and internal tension between the two concepts.

### **Conclusion: The "new" direction**

By examining news reports published by *UDN*, we can outline emergence and transformation of "New Taiwanese." From its emergence around the end of the 1980s, peaking in the 1996 presidential election and again in 1998's mayoral elections, sustained in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, enthusiasm for the term "New Taiwanese" has gradually waned, albeit with quiet modifications to its contents.

With the once-powerful force exerted by "China" and "Chinese" somewhat in decline, the status and power accorded "Taiwan" and "Taiwanese" are on the rise, providing resources for development of "New Taiwanese." "New Taiwanese" was a test ground for a refocus on Taiwan and a convenient aid to ethnic integration, particularly at a time when the gap between late and early Chinese immigrants had to be bridged. The quest for a common identity unique to people in Taiwan has gradually stored energy, inscribing layers of meaning, waiting to be harvested when a new label was introduced — or more precisely, *reintroduced* — by the right players at the right time. The momentum gained by the identity project thus registers not only unique political configurations manifested during the 1990s but

the urge to establish a unique identity by Taiwan’s people developed throughout their history.

“New Taiwanese” is an experimental arena for newly cultivated senses of identity, although its direction has yet to be determined. It is a provisional yet powerful device that, through its intimate connection with “Taiwanese” and “Chinese,” has reshuffled Taiwan’s polity. It is against the political boundaries of “Taiwanese” and “Chinese” that “New Taiwanese” claims a stake in the construction of Taiwanese identity. Sometimes it drives these labels out and claims its own centrality, sometimes it fortifies both, forming clusters of elements mutually reinforcing one another’s power.

As the colors of “New Taiwanese” have faded and its vitality somewhat weakened, the label continues to survive at different discursive sites. The transition of “New Taiwanese” from a position between “Taiwanese” and “Chinese,” and then to losing its power as the symbols “Taiwan” and “China” reclaimed their status, clearly maps the irresolute Taiwanese struggle to fashion identity. While some see these changes as simply fads for the scrutiny of politicians and scholars alike, the goal of the identity label “New Taiwanese” — to consolidate the feelings of people in Taiwan and to orient them to a new political identity — can be said to have been partially accomplished.

Regardless of whether onlookers view the identity label as anything more than political propaganda used by politicians/identity brokers, or a genuine call to action, the path it has traveled has already participated in, merged with, and contributed to the consciousness of Taiwan as an independent political entity. The symbolic force they have exerted, causing people to debate meanings and pledge loyalty to their spirit, will continue to shape Taiwan’s political discourse and mark it as an object for ongoing contemplation.

Finally, *UDN*’s representation of “New Taiwanese” cannot avoid taking specific positions and hence is necessarily partial. Future studies comparing discourse propagated by *UDN* with other newspapers (particularly those endorsing opposing political perspectives, such as the *Liberty Times*), or comparing newspaper discourse with other sites/media of discourse on “New Taiwanese,” should provide us further understanding of the intricate political struggle over Taiwan’s identity.

## Notes

1. This comment came when Ma paid his respects to Chiang Ching-kuo on the occasion of the twelfth anniversary of his passing. Combining his first name (“Ching-kuo”) with “Mr.” is an expression of closeness and respect.
2. Retrieved Sept. 28, 2008, from <http://cs.udndata.com/public/about.php>

3. Articles from *United Daily News* were downloaded from *United Daily* database (<http://udn-data.com/>).
4. Similar trends appear in the pro-DPP *Taipei Times*, albeit less enthusiastically: 10 in 1999, 21 in 2000, 38 in 2001; then down to 3 in 2002, 4 in 2003, 8 in 2004, 2 in 2005, 9 in 2006, and 1 in 2007. From 1999 to 2007, 32% of target articles were published between 1999 and 2000. *Taipei Times* articles were downloaded from <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/>, which covers articles published since 1999.
5. This replaced the largely deprecatory term, “mountain people,” assigned by early Chinese immigrants.
6. There is some debate about whether Hakka are considered “Taiwanese.” Lee’s (1995) distinction between ethnicity and national identity provides a mediating ground: Ethnically, Hakka are not Taiwanese, especially when the term is narrowly defined as only Fukien immigrants. As for their national identity, Hakka are Taiwanese as they are the citizens of Taiwan as a state.
7. “Hoklo” is a direct translation of *Fulao*, where *fu* is a shortened form of Fukien and *lao* means vulgar people. The phrase connotes a sense of derogation toward early Chinese immigrants from Fukien.
8. These terms include, for example, “Newly Risen Ethnic Group” (*xinxing minzu*, 新興民族) and “Common Life Entity” (*shengming gongtongti*, 生命共同體).
9. Although Soong himself did not advocate this idea until Lee’s 1996 presidential victory, he became more earnest after “Taiwan Province” was dissolved in 1998 and Soong split from KMT to become an independent candidate in the 2000 Presidential election.
10. The Center ceased to function after just a few months, due to budget problems.
11. 1998 saw legislature and mayoral elections in Taipei and Kaohsiung, nicknamed the “three-in-one” election: KMT lost Kaohsiung’s mayoralty but won in Taipei and became the majority legislature party.
12. Retrieved March 8, 2006, from <http://udn.com/search/?Keywords=%B7s%A5x%C6W%A4H&searchtype=overture&imageField.x=16&imageField.y=9>
13. The Chinese title, *zhonghuaminguo zongtongfu (taiwan)*, was changed back to *zhonghuaminguo zongtongfu* after Ma assumed the ROC presidency on May 20, 2008.
14. Official organizations or magazine titles with *zhongguo* are replaced with *taiwan*. Taiwan’s passports now display the word “Taiwan” under its “ROC” title. The Double Tenth Celebration uses “Taiwan” instead of “ROC” on the decorative board outside of the Presidential Hall. The *ROC Yearbook* colists “ROC” and “Taiwan” in the title of its 2002 edition and has changed the title to *Taiwan Yearbook* from the 2003 edition. These are a few of many examples elevating the status of “Taiwan” (Chang & Holt, 2007). In September 2007, the last year of DPP’s rule, after failing in fourteen bids to become a member of the United Nations under the name *ROC* since 1993, Taiwan applied under the name *taiwan*.
15. Retrieved Sept. 15, 2008, from the magazine’s official site, <http://www.1988newidea.com.tw/>

16. “Pan-blue” is a label for supporters of KMT, PFP, and NP, who are in favor of Taiwan’s unification with China. The opposing side is “pan-green” and applies to supporters of DPP, TSU, and others who advocate Taiwan’s independent identity as separate from the PRC.

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