

History, Discourse, and Document Analysis: Consideration of Methods for an Institutional History of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission

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<https://doi.org/10.15017/4774247>

出版情報：飛梅論集. 22, pp.1-18, 2022-03-18. 九州大学大学院人間環境学府教育システム専攻教育学
コース
バージョン：
権利関係：

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Abstract

Established in 1928 in Beijing to aid in governing the disputed regions of Tibet and Mongolia, the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (MTAC) was only officially disbanded in 2017 in Taipei, Taiwan. In its 68 years of existence on Taiwan, the MTAC produced literature on a range of subjects related to the Mongolian and Tibetan peoples and territories. Considering that the Republic of China's (ROC) realized sovereignty was limited to Taiwan, the MTAC through its body of publications thus offers an opportunity to understand the ROC's official imagining of national identity and statehood. This paper aims to review the project's two-stage selection of methodology, its application and the challenges encountered by the researcher. The initial method of document analysis proved successful in delivering a basis for surveying the texts and in producing a basic narrative of the MTAC's institutional history, but did not adequately facilitate situating the text within its historical or contemporaneous socio-political contexts. A second stage of discourse analysis called for a more critical approach that centered history. Thus, the researcher adopted a discourse-historical approach to critical discourse analysis to reveal the influence of certain historical legacies on the shifting trends of discourse within the Commission.

I. Introduction

Deliberation on selection of methods occupies all researchers at some stage in their work. For those of us whose research predominantly relies on historical text sources, the multitude of possible ways to read and analyze written language demand careful reflection before selection. In some cases, more than one methodological lens may be necessary. Investigation into the history of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (MTAC) on Taiwan presents an excellent case for reflecting on the process of selecting methods and their application in this project. Established in 1928, headquartered in Beijing, the MTAC was officially disbanded in 2017 by the newly elected Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) administration in Taipei (Executive Yuan 2017). Between 1928 and 2017, the Commission had relocated to Taiwan in 1949, following the Chinese civil war and the retreat of the Kuomintang (KMT) to Taiwan. In its 68 years

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of existence on Taiwan, the MTAC continued to produce literature on a range of subjects related to the Mongolian and Tibetan peoples and territories. Considering that the Republic of China's (ROC) realized sovereignty was limited to Taiwan and its surrounding islands (including Kinmen Island and others), the MTAC through its body of publications and historical documents thus offers an opportunity to understand the ROC's official imagining of its national boundaries and national identity. Investigation into the history of the MTAC requires review of its available documents and publications. This paper thus aims to review the project's selection of methodology, its application and the challenges encountered by the researcher.

The project, a doctoral dissertation, aimed to illuminate the trajectory of the Republic of China's official discourse of national identity. To accomplish this, I proposed to investigate the history of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Council in the Republic of China and the Commission's shifting propagandistic message. In particular, I hoped to analyze how the MTAC's status, official mission and range of its activities changed as the ROC on Taiwan made the transition from Martial Law to democratic governance. I presented three main lines of inquiry:

1. How have political agendas within the ROC shaped the role and status of the MTAC and its propaganda messages?
2. How does the history of the MTAC as an institution illuminate the shifting official conceptualization of national identity in the ROC and its relationship with the PRC and the outside world?
3. How has MTAC helped shape and responded to the emerging discourse of "multiculturalism" in Taiwan, particularly since the advent of democratization in the late 1980s?

The issue of national identity in the ROC on Taiwan is not one facing academic neglect or scholarly disinterest. Rather, particularly since the process of democratization began in the 1980s, extensive scholarship has investigated questions related to Taiwanese-ness, Chineseness, of the development and impact of Taiwanese nationalism, and the extent and nature of the shift in the ROC's official conceptions of citizenship, recognition of language, portrayal of national culture, and much more. Indeed, the process of democratization since the late 1980s and shifting discourses of national identity in the ROC over the past 70 years have inspired many researchers to investigate the causes, mechanisms, and effects of these changes. Recent work on late 20th and 21st century ROC identity building in Taiwan focuses on the impact on those living on Taiwan (Chang 2015; Heylen 2011; Hughes 2016; Song 2009), and many have investigated Taiwanese nationalism and its influence on the ROC (Hsiao 2003, Song 2009).

However, limited scholarship has investigated the trajectory of official portrayals of the Mainland after 1949, especially of non-Han peoples. More generally there is little scholarship on the ROC's positioning of its imagined "frontiers," including Tibet and Mongolia, especially in later decades after its retreat to Taiwan. Research into the MTAC offers an opportunity to center ROC narratives of Mongolia, Tibet, and

other minority groups in Mainland China, referred to for decades as “the frontier.” This perspective has the potential to shed a transformative light on the transition of national identity on Taiwan, as it showcases the often neglected narratives on the ideological and geographical periphery. Thus, to effectively investigate the history of the MTAC, contextualization in both history and contemporaneous politics are key to exploring official ideologies. During the initial stages of research, it became evident that a critical approach to discourse analysis is necessary to interpret the bounds of meaning, greater ideology, and further implications for the evolutions of official national identity in the ROC.

The following paper therefore considers the appropriate methods and approach for research into the MTAC and evaluates their application throughout the process as completed thus far. After establishing a strong foundation of historical background, I first performed documentary analysis, considering it a vital step to survey the considerable body of MTAC publications from 1949 to 2017. Following the historical background reading and initial stage of documentary analysis, the aims of the research were then specified to the following:

...to improve our understanding of how the MTAC, as part of the ROC’s larger state apparatus, imagined its national territory and statehood; understood the state’s relationship to its so-called “frontier;” approached the management of diversity and its conception of multiculturalism; and advocated for its representation – and indeed continued existence – overseas.

After several rounds of analysis as my data set grew, I found that while documentary analysis could serve as groundwork for further discourse analysis, a second critical approach was necessary to uncover linkages between text and history, between text and text, and between contemporaneous socio-political movements and text. A discourse-historical approach (Wodak 2001) situates the text in both history and contemporaneous politics, allowing for a critical reading with a view onto shifting ideology. Using a discourse-historical approach has allowed for stronger findings that prioritize interpretation situated in socio-political and historical contexts and focus on tracing shifting ideology, fulfilling both the original umbrella questions and later specified aims of the research. It was clear that a modification of methods to incorporate both modes of analysis in a two-stage procedure was necessary.

This paper is divided into five sections. Following this introduction, I provide a brief review of necessary background information to situate the research problem and questions. The third section offers justification for the research framework, including both documentary and critical discourse analyses. In the fourth section, I discuss the original research plan and its subsequent changes. Finally, the paper concludes with a brief discussion of lessons potentially pertinent to my own further research and other scholars in related fields.

II. Approaching the Research Questions

To understand the research's line of inquiry and special need for contextualization, a brief historical background into the ROC and the primary institution in question, the MTAC, is necessary. Both the ROC and the MTAC inherited certain Qing precedents. Indeed, although the MTAC was officially established in 1928, its conceptual foundations were forged much earlier. Moreover, neither the ROC concept of its "frontier" regions nor its approach to specialized governance were original inventions. It was under the Qing Empire (1644-1911) that many of the prominent national identities, ethnic categories and political ideologies at play in the Republic came into being (Rigger 2011). The Qing portrayed its five recognized races within the empire as one family (*wuzhongzhijia*, 五種之家), comprising Manchu, Han, Mongols, Muslim Turks and Tibetans (Harrison 2001). China Proper, defined as the "interior empire," was the domain of the Manchu and Han peoples, while the territory of the Tibetan, Mongolian and Turkic peoples was classified as the "exterior empire," (Smith 1996, 145). Furthermore, Qing political domination and rule varied considerably, with different structures of regional government in place for each territory, a philosophy of governance called *yinsu'erzhi* (因俗而治). This differentiated policy was effectively accomplished through a Qing commission, the *Lifanyuan* (理藩院), established to supervise government of the "exterior empire": Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang (Leibold, 2007).

In 1912, after decades of a Han nationalist movement, revolutionaries founded the Republic of China, claiming sovereignty over the territory of the former Qing Empire (Harrison 2001). Abandoning some revolutionaries' earlier calls for an exclusionary Han nation-state, the founders of the Republic operated on the notion of a "Five Nation Republic" (*wu zu gonghe*, 五族共和), strikingly similar to *wuzhongzhijia* (a family of five nations) during Qing rule. However, Republican sovereignty was greatly limited or non-existent in much of the territory previously belonging to the Qing's "exterior empire" (Leibold 2007). Following the establishment of the People's Republic of Mongolia, its independence unrecognized by the ROC, the incorporation of Inner Mongolia into the ROC became increasingly ideologically complex. Within Tibet, Tibetan assertions of independence and fractured conflict across the Tibetan plateau meant Republican presence was limited to symbolic claims (Mackerras 1995). Threat of foreign encroachment and approaching war with Japan were important factors in shaping attitudes toward the Republic's frontier during this time (Bulag 2006). Thus, the MTAC was established in 1928, in a similar fashion of the Qing *Lifanyuan*, purportedly to assist in governance and engagement with local peoples in two of the Republic's frontier regions. As it had for the Qing *Lifanyuan*, Buddhism was seen as a means for governance and liaison and played an important role in shaping the MTAC (Bulag 2006). Establishing control of these outer territories was seen as vital for protection of China Proper. From 1928 to 1949, the MTAC worked as a political linking institution between the central government and its Mongolian territory and as a primarily symbolic institution for asserting the Republican presence in Tibet.

In 1945, Japanese colonization of Taiwan ended, and in 1949, the KMT was forced to retreat to the island during the Chinese Civil War. To suppress the widespread civic unrest, the KMT responded with harsh crackdowns, placing the territory under military rule until 1987. Heylen (2011) argues that for these decades under military rule, Taiwan and its pre-1949 inhabitants remained marginalized within the official “Chinese master identity,” which centered around a mainlander Han identity. However, since the end of ROC military rule, an indigenization or localization movement has aimed to consolidate national identity to shape a “Taiwanese consciousness” as distinct from a Chinese identity (Liu, et al., 2005).

After relocating to Taiwan, the MTAC continued to remain active. At various times, MTAC publications were largely articles and books on Mongolia, Tibet, and/or other ethnic groups within greater China and diaspora communities, falling into the genres of history, geography, politics, and, increasingly in later decades, culture. Narratives of history embedded in documents across subject or topic, particularly in the years under military rule were largely accounts of official records of history. There are two main categories of contributing authors within the MTAC. The first is made up of MTAC officials and members; the second consists of academics. These categories often overlap. Of those credited authors with a career in academia, most were associated with history, politics and multi-disciplinary studies university departments. In addition, many documents are not attached to any specific author and instead cite either the Commission itself or one of the Tibetan or Mongolian Affairs Offices.

Thus, the MTAC’s institutional history is complex in many ways. First, the precedent of the Qing’s *Lifanyuan* contributed to the Republican establishment of the MTAC, as Qing imperialist legacies greatly influenced Republican state ideologies of governance and civilizational or cultural hierarchy. Furthermore, following the fall of the Qing, the tenuous political situation in the Republic’s early days helped motivate the establishment of the Commission and shape its implementation. Finally, the socio-political developments on Taiwan after 1949 played a significant role in determining the evolving role of the institution, with democratization and localization movements ultimately influencing the DPP’s decision to disband the commission in 2017.

The following section outlines the framework of the two-stage methodology for investigation into the MTAC, with special consideration of the complex historical background of the data. The first stage follows Bowen’s (2009) document analysis. As document analysis provides means only for a reading of the material as *text*, rather than as *discourse*, a more critical second stage of analysis, adopting a discourse-historical approach, is reviewed in addition below.

III. Research Framework

a. Documentary Analysis

Bowen (2009, 27) defines document analysis “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating

documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material.” He further explains the method primarily consists of an “iterative process” (32) involving content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis requires the labeling and categorization of a document’s content and subject matter to identify relevant information. Thematic analysis identifies the patterns of categorization within a specific document and among the body of documents. In other words, content analysis focuses on the categorization of text, including the content’s form, function, scope, and meaning. Thematic analysis further identifies patterns in data, offering an opportunity to reflect on thematic shifts of the text over time or across specific subjects. Together, content and thematic analysis provide a thorough textual analysis of the discourse. However, the bounds of meaning and greater ideologies are not yet put into question. These questions will be asked during critical discourse analysis – the second stage.

Document analysis is especially suited as an initial stage in a mixed-methods study so as to provide a basis for more directed questions. Bowen makes this note, stating that documents can provide material that “suggest[s] questions that need to be asked” (30). In this study, the broad aims of the project were further specified after conducting documentary analysis to identify particular themes and problematics of interest. Furthermore, document analysis is often used in tandem with other forms of analysis to provide triangulation of findings. This brings us to our second approach: discourse analysis. Finally, it should be mentioned that not all researchers adopt Bowen’s or similar procedural approaches to textual analysis. For an example of an analytical approach that is less mechanical, Vickers and Yan (2019) outline a framework that foregrounds reading to allow the researchers to identify narrative themes in text sources.

b. Discourse Analysis

A Foucauldian understanding of discourse situates text within its surrounding power relations, and can provide an approach to investigate the ideologies and meaning propagated in official discourse. Foucault (1974) describes discourse as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak,” stating that discourses are “not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention” (49). According to Wodak, et al. (2009; 8) “the aim of Critical Discourse Analysis is to unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language use.” The conceptualization of language and meaning as socially constructed requires the researcher to have a robust understanding of the utterances’ context(s). In the case of the MTAC, not only itself now a historical institution but also an institution greatly informed by its historical precedent, the body of language in question has an important historical context that cannot be ignored. Finding a suitable approach to discourse analysis thus cannot only be critical, but must center history.

Wodak (2001, 65) explains that a discourse-historical approach follows “at least” three aspects, paraphrased below:

1. Critique aimed at exploring “inconsistencies, (self-)contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas” within the body of data.
2. Critique aimed at illuminating the hidden, neglected or “latent” character of the greater discourse. This critique requires the researcher to “exceed the purely textual ... sphere,” by grounding analysis in “his or her background and contextual knowledge” and integrating additional theory into the research.
3. Critique aimed at the “improvement of communication.”

The first critique is limited to the texts themselves and provides necessary groundwork for the latter two aspects. The first critique in this project is conducted during the documentary analysis stage. The second critique forms the bulk of the discourse analysis conducted, and, as noted by Wodak, depends on the researcher’s knowledge background and exposure to the contexts in which the discourse is situated. The final critique forms only a small part of the project: the goal of improved communication is realized primarily through analysis’s illumination of neglected aspects of the greater discourse. In other words, despite refraining from specific policy recommendations, I hope that uncovering certain historical legacies and revealing their impact on contemporary language use and ideology will help to clarify official statements, policies and positions both within Taiwan and in the greater Asia-Pacific region.

Wodak’s (2011, 44) discourse-historical approach is specifically “designed to enable the analysis of implicit, coded prejudiced utterances, as well as to identify and expose the allusions contained in prejudiced discourse.” Indeed, shedding light on implicit ideology are the project’s stated aims, re-iterated here:

...to improve our understanding of how the MTAC, as part of the ROC’s larger state apparatus, imagined its national territory and statehood; understood the state’s relationship to its so-called “frontier;” approached the management of diversity and its conception of multiculturalism; and advocated for its representation – and indeed continued existence – overseas.

However, some may question the relevancy of discourse analysis, especially critical discourse analysis, in the context of Chinese language and society. Fortunately, there is a significant body of research both into the application of discourse analysis in a Chinese social and/or linguistic environment, and of studies which themselves adopt both Foucauldian and discourse-historical approaches to their analysis. Many of these scholars investigating the application of Chinese discourse analysis trace the scholarly investigation of meaning and language to Confucius. This includes discourse analysis scholar Cao (2014, 1), who pins the following excerpts at the top of her chapter:

‘Without legitimacy, words are invalid; invalid words lead man to nowhere’. (名不正则言不顺, 言不顺

则事不成。Mingbuzheng ze yanbushun; yanbushun ze shibucheng) Confucius (The Analects)

‘Truth’ is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statement. ‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A ‘regime’ of truth. Foucault (in Rabinow 1984: 74)

The implication here is that Foucauldian understanding of discourse is not a foreign concept in China, as one of China’s greatest and most well-known scholars spoke of a similar notion millennia before Foucault.

Cao also notes that Wodak’s discourse-historical approach is particularly common in Chinese language discourse analysis, as many scholars are especially interested in situating their research in history. Chilton, Tian and Wodak (2010, 1) posit that the fundamentals of critical discourse analysis of Chinese language changes little, except by way of context and linguistics:

“To research discourses in China is then to examine how discourses change in context-dependent ways, and to relate the changes to the social factors that lead to these changes or are the effects of them. Discourse research will also examine how social identities are constructed through language use and how discourse facilitates change in society. Further, this kind of research may include the investigation of the ways in which agents or agencies manipulate meanings. In the context of Chinese society, a discourse approach has its focus on the role of the Chinese language, or more precisely its use, in the socio-political transformation that is currently unfolding.”

Wei (2019; 49) notes that while “it is often not possible or desirable to hone in on a person or institution and be critical about their discourse in the Chinese context, we can still use the CDA toolkit to uncover the underlying power structures and value systems embedded in the texts.” Here, Wei is primarily referring to the People’s Republic of China, whereas my research is not principally concerned with the PRC. If this project were conducted a few decades before during the ROC’s period of military rule or in the early days of democratization, Wei’s comment may have needed to be heeded, but it does not especially apply within the context of contemporary Taiwan. Certainly, discourse analysis is a common scholarly tool, for Taiwanese academics writing in either Chinese and English (Teng 2004; Chiang and Lin 2020; Ferrer and Lin 2021)

The following section relays my research plan, beginning with background research, followed by two main levels of analysis: documentary and discourse.

IV. Research Plan

a. Background Research

From the above research framework, it is clear that a strong research plan must include a sturdy foundation of background research – history in particular. My background research began formally in October 2018, although my own life experiences living and teaching in China as well as previous scholarly pursuits provided some additional direction. I began my exploration of history related to the MTAC with a series of broad questions:

- How has the official concept of identity and “national identity” shifted over time within China, from the late Qing to Republican Era?
 - o How has the role of the “other”, and “internal other” in particular helped shaped these ideologies?
- Within these ideologies how have different categorizations of social grouping: lineage, race, ethnicity, language, etc, shifted over time?
- Separately, what was the process of national identity formation for Han people, Republican China, Tibet, and Mongolia? How do these ideological formations intersect?
- How have “metaphors of sex” and gendered portrayal of “the other” played a role in official construction of national identity?

The above set of questions aimed to lead up to a larger, big-picture question: Who is “Chinese?” However, to accommodate the complex and shifting nature of late Qing imperial identities, Republican nation-building discourses and late 20th century identity in the ROC on Taiwan, this question soon widened to: “Who belongs?” Despite widening this inquiry beyond a “Chineseness,” focus ultimately narrowed in on investigating the hierarchies imbedded within the greater politics of belonging.

This stage of research continued through October 2019, although it continues even now when certain questions arise or gaps in my knowledge are noticed. To date, the background research has found several significant historical narratives that are highly relevant to later analysis. After a year of work largely dedicated to establishing a strong knowledge of history and a few initial looks at the Mongolian and Tibetan Cultural Centre and its online resources in early 2019, data collection began in earnest in October 2019, when I relocated to Taipei for archival fieldwork.

b. Data Collection and Reading Process

During the initial stages of the research planning process, I originally planned to make extensive use of the Mongolian and Tibetan Cultural Center (MTCC). The Center was established in 1993 under the jurisdiction of the MTAC, and although management of the Center has shifted to the Ministry of Culture,

the Center continues to offer a small exhibition space close to National Taiwan Normal University in Da'an District, Taipei (MTCC 2020). The MTCC also houses a large collection of MTAC documents and artifacts. However, during visits to both the Center's headquarter office within the Ministry of Culture and its exhibition space in March 2019, it became clear that access to these archives would be difficult to access in practice. Through discussion with several staff members at the MTCC exhibition space, I learned that while access to the archives was technically open to the public, individual applications must be completed to request specific materials or documents. The MTCC did not offer a catalog, database or other record of its archives. Consequently, as I could not learn what specific documents were held in the MTCC's collection, I could not file an application request to view them. Furthermore, while the MTCC's online collections remained available for download, the earliest of these documents were published in 2009. Thus, during the same preliminary visit to Taiwan in March 2019, I visited the National Library (in Taipei), finding several hundred publications listed as available with a library card, and a few documents accessible with only a visitor's pass. As a result, I updated my research plan so as to instead conduct the bulk of data collection at the National Library. In October 2019, after relocating to Taipei, I included a second public archival library: National Taiwan Library in the adjacent New Taipei City.

Consequently, through March 2020, data collection was primarily conducted on-site at the two archival libraries in Taipei/New Taipei City. While the many texts in the library systems were available for viewing, it was a daily occurrence to find volumes noted as lost or removed from circulation at both the National Taiwan Library and the National Library. Most texts were required to read in-library, thus limiting reading hours to the library's desk operation. Relevant titles available for check-out I took home for out-of-hours reading. During these months, particularly on occasions when I returned to Kyushu University to meet the location-specific obligations to receive my funding, I also relied on the MTCC's on-line archival collection for certain documents and journals published after 2009.

In March 2020, it became evident that the novel coronavirus would soon disrupt travel between Japan and Taiwan. Expecting that the Japanese borders would soon close, I began to photocopy as many of the available relevant documents as possible in National Taiwan Library. However, this library soon closed due to an outbreak in the district, and so I returned to the National Library to continue photocopying. I arrived successfully in Fukuoka, Japan on April 1, 2020. In Fukuoka, I continued reading from my personal collection of the 34 scanned or photocopied MTAC publications and from the MTCC's limited on-line collection. Additionally, I found and purchased 13 volumes of MTAC publications from private sellers online. It must be noted that without a complete record of all MTAC publications, it is impossible to determine the extent to which the texts I was able to access might represent a full picture of the scope or nature of the MTAC's work during its time on Taiwan. However, a catalogue of holdings in the MTAC library from 1975 is available and indicates a much greater list of publications on a much wider range of topics than is publicly available, particularly from the 1960s and 1970s. Based on their titles alone, most of these volumes are related

to the Cold War and are explicitly anti-communist, although it is difficult to speculate further.

Although my research proposal did not originally include concrete plans to conduct interviews, I was considering the potential benefits of incorporating a limited number of expert interviews, primarily for the purpose of triangulating any findings or to fill in any gaps in the institutional history overview. However, COVID-19 made the option of organizing one or several interviews with former MTAC affiliates considerably more difficult to realize. While living in Taipei, I was unable to tap into a potential network of former MTAC officials or staff members. I was also unable to locate records of former employees, and for many of the named contributing authors, I found it challenging to find contact information. Indeed, the majority of contributing authors do not appear to have an on-line presence, or have been confirmed as no longer living. Furthermore, the MTCC, the final online remnant of the MTAC, does not offer any online or web-based method of contact, issuing only a Taiwanese telephone number and physical address. Thus, after my hurried relocation to Japan, my ability to identify, contact, and secure an interview with a former official, member, employee or other associate of the MTAC became greatly reduced. Still, a small number of the authors writing in the 2010s have an on-line presence with viable contact information. In the coming months, depending on these scholars' agreement and availability, on-line interviews via video conferencing technologies or simple text correspondence may occur.

c. Analysis

i. Documentary Analysis

Reading through the documents took on several stages. First, I surveyed the titles available to me through the library systems. In selecting which books to read, I prioritized insuring equal distribution of titles across each decade from the 1950s to the 2010s. However, this soon became a challenge, as the earlier decades, from 1950 to 1979, had relatively few documents, especially once those listed titles marked as lost or unavailable were removed from consideration. Although the libraries' collection of 2010s titles was not quite as plentiful as those published in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, the MTCC's online collection, as well as those in my private acquisitions, provide dozens of documents from 2010 to 2017.

During this initial stage, research was conducted according to Bowen's (2009) document analysis. I performed content analysis for each selected document: categorizing the text and making notation, including pulling relevant passages, with accordance to the document's form, function, scope, and meaning. After reading several documents, I began the process of collectively reviewing my notes, performing thematic analysis. My goal during this time was to identify thematic groupings or shifts, across time or subject material. As I continued to read, I repeated both content analysis and thematic analysis, shifting my focus and awareness of keywords, narratives, images, and representations, as certain patterns became evident. In total, I performed analysis on 51 documents, ranging from children's literature to journal articles, to full-length books. In March 2021, I also conducted a small-scale investigation of the ROC's and

MTAC's budget history, performing a separate document analysis on the MTAC's available budget reports from 1994 to 2017.

Preliminary findings during the first stage of analysis centered around identifying keywords, topics and genres, and narratives and tracing their appearance, disappearance and transitions over time. Observation of these patterns generated a long list of textual themes to further investigate. These themes included: the importance of dynastic history in showcasing the connection between Mongolian and Chinese peoples, as well as Tibetan and Chinese peoples; official delineation between Inner China and its frontier; the narratives of Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian victimhood at the hands of both Chinese Communist and foreign imperialist invaders; the cruelty and ineptitude of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP); tales of anti-Communist resistance in Tibet; praise of ROC pluralism and the concept of Five Nation Republic; emphasis of exchange and cooperation; and recognition of Taiwanese multiculturalism.

Based on these themes, one result was the periodization of MTAC history and activity. This result may provide an illustrative example of the methodological process at this stage. Documentary analysis suggested a clear delineation among three eras in the history of the MTAC's operation on Taiwan. The first fell under the period of KMT military rule (1949-1987) and was predominantly characterized by the state's insistence on retaking Mainland China. Conceptualization of "the frontier" as relating to Mongolia, Tibet, and other minority nationalities in Taiwan, Mainland China, and the Republic of Mongolia revealed a clear centering of Han-Chinese mainlander identity. The second era (1988-1999) oversaw the ROC's transition to democracy and localization movements. MTAC discourse during this era lost its harsh, antagonistic language against the now-defunct USSR and the PRC. The third era (2000-2017) was ushered in by the election of former opposition party, DPP president, Chen Shui-bian. Although the KMT retook control of presidency in 2008, MTAC discourse permanently recentered around a "Multicultural Taiwan," with frequent and direct reference to Taiwan, multiculturalism, and international exchange.

Together with the auxiliary document analysis of budgetary records, my findings from this stage produced findings suitable to determine an institutional history of the MTAC from 1949 to 2017. This overview of the Commission became critical for providing an explanation of the organization, as no English- or Chinese-language literature exists to reference for a general or comprehensive introduction to the MTAC on Taiwan, and consequently many readers, even those with scholarly interest in Taiwanese and Chinese nationalism and identity politics, are unfamiliar with the MTAC. Most significantly, this overview was also key for laying the groundwork for periodization. Beyond facilitating findings suitable for drafting an institutional history, many general textual themes and patterns emerged. At this point, when reflecting on my previous background reading, it became clear that a greater degree of contextualization was vital to explore the deeper meanings and implications of these themes. Following this realization, I began to explore critical discourse analysis, ultimately deciding on adopting a discourse-historical approach (DHA) in a second stage of analysis.

ii. Discourse Analysis

Although following Bowen's (2009) document analysis was successful in identifying certain patterns within the texts, the method gave equal weight to the wide range of trends that appeared. Moreover, without being situated in history and the contemporaneous political contexts, the deeper meanings of these themes were often lost. For example, document analysis made clear that MTAC documents through the 1980s and to a lesser extent the 1990s placed strong emphasis on the historical relationship between "China" and "Mongolia," or "China" and its "frontier," including Mongolia, Tibet, and other minority groups in China. This form of analysis also revealed a persistent focus on ROC, and later Taiwanese, contributions of aid and development to its frontier, and Mongolia in particular. However, only after reviewing these documents following a discourse-historical approach did it become clear that these two themes were related to one another, both revealing different aspects of the continuing influence of Qing imperialism and a Chinese mission to civilize on the ROC on Taiwan.

Drawing on the foundation of historical background conducted October 2018 to October 2019, my research focused primarily on themes of belonging, shifting concepts of the "other" and hierarchy. Consequently, discourse analysis presented thematic trends primarily concerned with connecting 21st century Taiwan to its legacies formed while under military rule and to its historical inheritances from the KMT during the Republican era (1912-1949), and late Qing imperialism. Analysis conducted during this stage was productive. The three large overarching themes contributed to accomplishing the revised aims of exploring the trajectory of official national identity and notions of statehood, the state's relationship to its "frontier," evolving conceptualizations of diversity and multiculturalism, and shifting approaches to maintaining or establishing legitimacy both at home and abroad. With the first objective encompassing the following three, the tentative findings from the second stage of discourse analysis fall into three groupings, divided by theme. The first grouping covers the conceptualization of a Mongolian and Tibetan "frontier" and the associated Chinese civilizing mission directed at it. The second grouping examines the overlapping discourses of pluralism and multiculturalism, from the notion of the *Five-Nation Republic* to emergence of "Multicultural Taiwan." The third grouping examines another dimension of the shift from centering Mainland China to Taiwan, focusing on the role of anti-Communist resentment in identity formation. The second stage's process relies on the first stage's identification of patterns in language. While documentary analysis classified text to pinpoint periodization, critical discourse analysis positioned the shifts in language in its historical and contemporaneous environment. The result was a greater ability to trace underlying consistencies in ideology despite surface-level shifts in language.

The overlapping discourses of pluralism and multiculturalism may provide an example of this process. Documentary analysis in the first stage identified several aspects of this discursive theme, noting the 21st century emergence of rhetoric emphasizing bilateral exchange and cooperation between "Taiwan" and Mongolian or Tibetan peoples, as well as the frequent appeals to "multiculturalism" beginning in the

2000s. The first stage also identified a repeated appeal to pluralism and the *Five Nation Republic* in 1960s, 1970s, and to a much lesser extent in the 1980s. However, DHA connects the two by revealing the muted but continued Han-centrism in 21st-century discourse. While language in MTAC documents on the *Five Nation Republic* overtly appeal to Han or Chinese relative economic development and political dominance (real or imagined) and conceptualize Han Chinese language and culture at the center of the Republic, text on “Multicultural Taiwan” does not use the same key words, point to the same ROC policy initiatives or draw on the same history. Instead, MTAC documents after the year 2000 center Han-Chineseness by limiting inclusion of Indigenous, Hakka, Taiwanese (Hoklo) and new immigrant languages and cultures to texts’ descriptions of multiculturalism in Taiwan. Taiwan’s outbound exchanges are rarely cultural in nature, and the MTAC primarily reports on its professional, economic, and good governance expertise exports. These exports are based in Mandarin language and showcase institutions leftover from the Republican and military rule eras. In other words, although the China label has been removed, and pluralism has been replaced with multiculturalism, the Han-chauvinist essence in the MTAC’s meaning remains consistent. Without the integration of DHA, the underlying ideology present through these eras would not have been revealed. Although the periodization from the first stage is an important result, the second stage is necessary to uncover the underlying consistencies in meaning and the legacies of imperialist ideologies for a richer understanding of the shifts in national identity. Critical discourse analysis significantly enhanced the quality of analysis for the project.

Although the writing process is still on-going, the primary aims of the project appear to have been tentatively met. Still, several challenges arose during analysis and writing, beyond the major issue of inadequate methods during the initial stage of documentary analysis. The following section concludes with a review of the method selection process and considerations for future research and researchers in the field.

V. Conclusion

This paper aims to explore the processes involved in planning and conducting research through discussion of the investigation into the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission during its years on Taiwan (1949-2017). This paper also considers the challenges of operating on a transnational research plan during a pandemic. While the overarching line of inquiry remained constant throughout the project, over the course of reading for the literature review and historical background, the aims and focus narrowed considerably. The original proposal’s objectives targeted exploration of official national identity in the ROC on Taiwan. The heavy influence of previous ideologies and strategies of governance from the Qing and Republican eras made it clear that history should play an important role during the stage of interpretation. Furthermore, attempts to conduct a literature review revealed a dearth of scholarship on ROC’s

representations of “the frontier:” essentially, the people and territories, including Mongolia and Tibet, on the periphery of the ROC’s (former) imagined republic. Keeping in mind both the influence of Qing and Republican legacies and the limited body of scholarly work on similar topics, focus narrowed in on exploring this dimension of ROC official national identity and conceptualization of statehood. The influence of these inherited ideologies ultimately necessitated the incorporation of a discourse-historical approach as a second stage of analysis to better reveal their presence.

After relocating to Taipei for on-site archival research, primarily located at two public libraries, it shortly became clear that the original selection of methods required revisiting. While document analysis’ textual reading proved excellent in providing a basis for surveying the large number of texts published by the MTAC and in producing a narrative of the MTAC’s institutional history, Bowen’s (2009) method was ultimately insufficient for the intention of situating the emerging trends in discourse within history. Thus, a second stage of analysis began, taking a discourse-historical approach to critical discourse analysis (Wodak 2001). While perhaps ideally DHA could have been implemented from the start of the project, the lesson here remains that often research requires readjustment: the researcher must make effort to recognize specific challenges, return to the aims, and reorient as necessary. Above all, the key lesson gleaned from this investigative endeavor was learning the value of beginning the project with a strong foundation in background reading. Knowledge of history – including both the historical developments contemporaneous with the unfolding of the MTAC on Taiwan and the relevant historical narratives pre-dating the establishment of the Commission and its move to Taiwan – served as the groundwork upon which the project could grow. Without this base, when the first stage of analysis produced shallow textual findings, the path forward would have been unclear. Owing to the thorough historical background, I was able to return to my specified aims and conduct a second stage of critical discourse analysis. These modifications to the original selection of methods fostered more critical analysis, which in turn provided much richer findings. Recalibration of the research plan throughout a project may be necessary, and additional modes of analysis may be added where appropriate and relevant. In this particular case, DHA was necessary to reveal the more hidden ideologies at play in official ROC discourse.

Is noteworthy that the reading to generate a historical foundation to serve as a background took a year’s time to conduct. The reading process demanded consideration of a wide range of sources and possible thematic avenues to provide a sturdy groundwork for the project’s later interpretation of findings. Thus, not all of the historical narratives originally incorporated, nor all the background information collected ultimately emerged as relevant to my findings. At present, the historical narratives related to gender have not become significant or especially enlightening to interpret the findings related to the aims of the project. Similarly, much of Taiwan’s prehistory and early history currently do not stand to contribute much to the interpretation of the shifts in discursive themes. However, I argue that while largely irrelevant for the final written dissertation, both early Taiwanese history and gendered representations of the

nation and/or “the other” in modern and contemporary Chinese and Taiwanese history were helpful in building a stronger and more comprehensive understanding of the context. Moreover, not all of the work completed during background research has gone to waste. Two recent publications (Ferrer 2021, Ferrer and Lin 2021) both evolved out of projects dedicated to exploring national identity formation in Taiwan and/or Mainland China. Other researchers in the field may take note of the opportunities beyond the goals of the original research generated in compiling an extensive historical background.

Finally, this project is one of many scholarly investigations to be impacted by the advent of COVID-19. Certainly, the pandemic affected the work, with some constraints placed on the study, including greatly reduced ability to return to certain texts to verify, to access potential interview networks or conduct in-person visitations and interviews. However, after some quick adjustments, such as shifting to scanning documents instead of reading at the library, these impacts ultimately did not reduce the overarching goals of the project. Still, the stress involved in negotiating the risks to one’s physical and financial well-being with the reward of completing the research plan should not be ignored. Future research planning and reviews of method selection may also consider the pandemic’s impact on the proposed or completed project, particularly those with inter- or transnational fieldwork.

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台湾の蒙藏委員会の史的考察：言説およびドキュメント分析を通じて

アレッサンドラ ルース フェラー

蒙藏委員会は1928年、チベット、モンゴル地方における行政の管轄を担う機関として中華民国政府によって北京で設立された。その後、1949年の政府移転とともに蒙藏委員会も台湾に移動し、2017年に解散するまでの68年間、台北で存在し続けた。その間、委員会によって作成されたモンゴル族とチベット族の人々と領土の関連史料は、中華民国政府による台湾国家造りにおいてモンゴル・チベット地方がどのように位置付けられてきたのかを検討する上で重要なデータを提供する。特に、中華民国の主権が台湾に限定されて発展してきたことを踏まえると、蒙藏委員会による史料は、政府が想像してきた国家とそのアイデンティティに対する、より深い理解に貢献するものである。本論文では、蒙藏委員会による史料の分析法の選択、その適用、およびその過程で研究者が直面してきた課題について考察する。まず、史料の分析において、ドキュメント分析法は文章の構造を理解し、蒙藏委員会の発展過程を読み取ることためには適切であるが、より広い社会的政治的文脈に当てはめて文章を分析するためには不十分であることを指摘する。一方で、批判論に基づくディスコース分析法は、歴史の構築過程を検討するために適している。そこで、研究者は蒙藏委員会によるディスコースの変遷において歴史的遺産が果たした役割について明らかにするために、批判的ディスコース分析法を用いることとする。