# MEDIATING NATIONAL IDENTITY

## Television, Politics and Audience in Taiwan

Shih-Hung Lo

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Media@LSE and the Department of Social Psychology
London School of Economics and Political Science
University of London

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ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the relationship between the mass media and national identity. It uses methodological triangulation involving multiple methods and multiple sets of data to investigate the ways in which the mass media and television in particular have contributed to the formation of national identity in Taiwan. The Taiwanese case markedly points to the inadequacy of a widely held assumption about the influence of the media on the formation of national identity: that national media foster national identity and global media weaken national identity. The thesis argues against this simplistic assumption, which reflects two dominant perspectives in the study of nationalism and communication: (1) the diffusionist view of national identity-formation, and (2) the transmission view of communication. Both perspectives underestimate the complexity of the media-identity relationship and cannot adequately accommodate the Taiwanese case. This thesis provides an alternative perspective that stresses national identity-formation as a conjunctural mediation process between media representation and audience reception, whereby the powerful media and the active audience co-exist. As a constitutive part of the national discursive space that contains both text and reader, television has helped to create among the Taiwanese audience an imaginable community of solidarity, constituting both the symbolic textures of national identity and the contexts in which that identity is experienced. Through the conjunctural mediations between media representation and audience reception, the respondent families in the present study have subscribed to a national identity that necessarily assumes a hybrid form. Yet despite (or indeed because of) Taiwan's ambiguous statehood, the respondents' hybrid identifications with the 'nation' can best be summed up in the term 'Taiwan-centred identity'. The findings of this thesis extend beyond the Taiwanese case to the broader theorisation of the role of the media, especially television, in the formation of national identity in an age of globalisation.

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## NOTE ON ROMANISATION AND TERMINOLOGY

The *Pinyin* system has generally been used for the transliteration of Chinese names throughout this thesis. However, the spelling of such names as Chiang Ching-kuo, Chiang Kai-shek, Kuomintang, Lee Teng-hui, Mao Tse-tung, Sun Yat-sen and Taipei follows the Wade-Giles system, since these forms are more widely known in the literature. Also, the English spellings preferred by authors for their own names are retained.

The terminology used to categorise 'ethnic' groups is always problematic not least because of the frequency of inter-ethnic marriage in Taiwan. In this thesis, the following rules of usage are followed.

**Taiwanese** (*Taiwanren* in Mandarin Chinese): The term 'Taiwanese' is used in this thesis to refer to all inhabitants of Taiwan, i.e. it includes a variety of ethnic backgrounds -- the so-called Hokkien, Hakka and 'Mainlander' groups, and the aboriginal. The current population of Taiwan is 23 million. Speaking diverse ethnic languages, the inhabitants of Taiwan now share Mandarin, which has been the only official language in Taiwan since 1945. Among the Taiwanese, the Hokkien is the largest ethnic group (roughly 76 per cent of the population), followed by the Hakka (about 12 per cent of the population), the 'Mainlanders' (approximately 11 per cent of the population), and the aborigines (about 1 per cent of the population), who consist of a number of different tribes.

**The Taiwanese aborigines** (*Yuanzhumin* in Mandarin Chinese): The term 'Taiwanese aborigines' refers to the non-Chinese people who have lived in Taiwan for millennia. The group is sub-divided according to further ethnic and/or linguistic distinctions.

**'Mainlander'** (*Waishengren* in Mandarin Chinese, literally 'people from outside the province'): The term 'Mainlander' originally refers to the people who came with the KMT from the Chinese mainland after the end of the Second World War. It is sometimes (misleadingly) used to refer to the Taiwan-born offspring of these people. The term 'Mainlander' is arguably not an accurate ethnic marker since it contains people from diverse parts of China. Unlike the Hokkien or the Hakka, the 'Mainlander' group

does not share a single ethnic language but speaks a variety of mother-tongue languages. Furthermore, the proportion of people who were actually born in the mainland is becoming less and less significant even within the 'Mainlander' group; and their Taiwan-born offspring do not necessarily accept the label 'Mainlander'. Since this term is problematic as a classification of an 'ethnic' group in Taiwan, it appears in quotation marks throughout the thesis apart from its use in the informants' verbatim statements.

**'Native Taiwanese'** (*Benshengren* in Mandarin Chinese, meaning 'people from this province'): The term 'native Taiwanese' is used to refer to the Chinese people who settled in Taiwan before 1945 and their offspring. It includes the Hokkien group and the Hakka group, who originally came mainly from the Fujian and Guangdong provinces of China in successive waves of migration from the late sixteenth century. Both these groups have their own distinct ethnic languages. However, the term is problematic for its implicit exclusion of the Taiwan-born 'Mainlanders' and even the aborigines. Therefore, like the term 'Mainlander', the term 'native Taiwanese' is also used in quotation marks in this thesis.

# 1.
# Introduction

This thesis seeks to resolve an apparent paradox pertaining to the role of the media (and television in particular) in the formation of national identity in Taiwan. Despite two compelling and apparently unfavourable cultural forces (national television and transnational television), a sense of political identification with Taiwan has grown among the population, and the adjective 'Taiwanese' has increasingly become synonymous with 'national'. Decades of top-down national media control aimed at fostering a supposedly 'national' (i.e. unified 'Chinese') identity have not prevented a 'local' identity from growing; nor has the 'global' culture accessible via Taiwan's high cable/satellite penetration weakened this identity.

The paradoxical relationship between the mass media (and television in particular) and national identity in the Taiwanese case has two further dimensions. On the one hand, from 1971 to 1996 in Taiwan there were only three terrestrial television channels, all of which were owned and/or controlled by the Chinese Nationalist Party (also known as Kuomintang, KMT -- the political party which formerly ruled China and fled to Taiwan when it was defeated in 1949 by the Chinese Communist Party, CCP). The KMT exploited the mass media deliberately to promote Chinese nationalism. On the other hand, in the run-up to, and following, the process of political democratisation in the late 1980s there was a remarkable multiplication of channels in Taiwan, to an extent unmatched by other Asian countries, and this made available a huge provision of foreign programmes to the Taiwanese audience.

## 1.1 The Aim of the Thesis

This thesis addresses the aforementioned paradox by exploring *whether* and *how* the media, and television in particular, have contributed to the configuration of national identity in Taiwan. The question will be approached in a manner different from the

conventional theories, which simplistically posit that national media necessarily bring into being and strengthen national identity while global media necessarily undermine that identity. Both national and global media have become part and parcel of Taiwan's shifting media landscape. Thus, the intersection between the two is a key concern of the present study, although the empirical focus is more on the role of national media.

Drawing on insights from the fields of nationalism, media studies and cultural studies, the thesis offers a contribution to the interdisciplinary study of national identity-formation in relation to the media. Questions surrounding the genesis, diffusion and construction of national identity, and especially the impact of the media on the continuity and contingency of that identity, have generated an intense debate among scholars. These questions are studied here with particular reference to the case of Taiwan.

By using a variety of methods and multiple sources of data, the thesis probes how the sense of national identity has been discursively represented by the media and television in particular in Taiwan, particularly since 1971. It also examines how the Taiwanese audience has engaged with a spectrum of mass-mediated identities, accommodating them in different ways within the changing political and media landscapes. In relation to both questions, the concept of a shifting 'national cultural space' offered by Philip Schlesinger is vitally important. As he points out, 'national cultures are not simple repositories of shared symbols to which the entire population stands in identical relation,' but rather they are complex 'sites of contestation in which competition over definitions takes place' (Schlesinger, 1991: 174). Equally important is the observation that audiences are not passive recipients; instead, as Morley and Robins point out, they 'continually ... recompose and redefine their boundaries' (Morley and Robins, 1995: 46) in their everyday lives.

The changing media landscape facilitated by technological advance has put the question of national identity into sharp focus, particularly with the advent of transnational television with accelerated cross-border cultural flows, and has given impetus to an ever-growing body of research. The Taiwanese case is especially interesting in this respect. In terms of both media consumption and national politics, a profound transformation has taken place since the late 1980s. On the one hand, Taiwan has embarked on a rapid process of media globalisation, with a level of cable/satellite

penetration that is among the highest in the world. On the other hand, Taiwan has experienced a political transition from authoritarianism to democracy, and during this transformation different nationalist discourses have competed for electoral support, with the issue of national identity emerging as a subject of constant debate in the public domain.

Under these circumstances, the Taiwanese audience has engaged with the multivalent cultural forces in (re-)making a sense of national identity in the reconfigured 'national cultural space', with national television emerging as one of the most important constituents. Thus, following Schlesinger's suggestion, this thesis aims to examine 'alternative accounts of national identity, and the motivations, strategies and practices of various groups in producing these [accounts]' (Schlesinger, 1991: 171). Yet, as Halliday observes, 'nationalism allows of no challenge to its authority in the name of these [sub]groups, nor to alternative definitions of identity, and commitment, that members of these sub-groups may feel' (Halliday, 2000: 164). The tension between Chinese nationalism (promoted by the KMT) and alternative definitions of national identity in the post-Second World War context of Taiwan provides a case in point.

To contextualise these intricate questions, it is worth emphasising in this introductory chapter how far-reaching the transformation in terms of both nationalist politics and media globalisation has been. In what follows, therefore, I will first give a brief account of nationalist politics in Taiwan and, secondly, consider Taiwan's move into the world of global media.

## 1.2 Nationalist Politics in Taiwan

In 1996, Taiwan became the first Chinese society to choose its head of state by secret universal ballot. Within less than a decade from 1987, the country had accomplished a transition from an authoritarian society to the first Chinese democracy (Chao and Myers, 1998). This achievement, which has been variously hailed as 'a quiet revolution' (Copper, 1988), a 'political miracle following on an economic miracle' and as 'puncturing the myth that authoritarian politics – rather than democracy – is more suitable to Asian, and particularly Chinese, societies' (*Far Eastern Economic Review*,

14 March 1996: 18). The impact of these dramatic changes on the formation of national identity in Taiwan is one of the main concerns of the present analysis.

### 1.2.1 The Driving Force behind the Political Transition

None of these dramatic changes can be adequately assessed without considering the development of nationalism in Taiwan. First of all, since the end of the Second World War, two distinct nationalisms with conflicting ideas of the nation have co-existed in Taiwan. Both have engaged in national myth-making and competed with each other for legitimacy and support. Secondly, the transition to democracy in Taiwan is much more than a simple result of high economic growth. For one thing, Taiwan's democratic transition has signalled not only a transition from authoritarianism to democracy, but also a shift from Chinese nationalism to what is probably best referred to as a 'Taiwan-centred identity', a term chosen in preference to 'Taiwanese nationalism' because the latter is exclusively used in the sense of 'Taiwanese independence'. Besides, although it has to do with the expression of a particular kind of nationalist sentiment, Taiwan-centred identity is at the same time more complex, being more open than 'Taiwanese nationalism' to the question of unification versus independence. Having said that, the importance of the shift from Chinese nationalism to a Taiwan-centred identity in Taiwan's democratic transition cannot be underestimated. To explain this point further, I shall first consider the growth of this identity since the political transition of 1987-88 and then its return in the run-up to the democratic transition.

Nothing more clearly demonstrates the growth of Taiwan-centred identity since 1987 than the democratic transition itself. Indeed, in a sense, Taiwan's democratisation is tantamount to Taiwanisation, with each feeding on and strengthening the other. The swiftness and frequency of constitutional amendments testify to this fact. These amendments put an end to the world's longest period of rule under martial law (38 consecutive years) and the longstanding bans on organising political parties and publishing new newspapers. For the first time, the parliamentary bodies and the President were elected directly by the citizens of Taiwan. The blacklisted exiles were allowed to return home, and the dissidents advocating Taiwanese independence were released from prison. The KMT has since softened its territorial claim to the Chinese mainland, though the goal of unification with Mainland China remains national policy.

The growth of Taiwan-centred identity is clearly manifested in the birth of multi-party politics. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), an embodiment of Taiwanese nationalism, has secured its position as the largest opposition party, whereas the New Party, a breakaway faction from the KMT that defends Chinese nationalism in Taiwan, has lost support and is now of little political significance. The signs of growing Taiwan-centred identity are no less revealing within the ruling party itself. While the KMT remained in power after the political transition of 1987-88, it 'had to change out of all recognition to win [elections]' (*Economist*, 7 November 1998: 7). Not surprisingly, in recent years politicians have been eager to capitalise on the growth of this Taiwan-centred identity.

Understandably, China has been aware and wary of the rise of a resilient Taiwan-centred identity. The Chinese government attempted to reverse the trend by launching missile tests off the island to intimidate a rising Taiwan-centred identity after the visit of Lee Teng-hui, Taiwan's first native-born President, to the United States in 1995 and during Taiwan's first Presidential election in 1996. It is reported that China has pointed an increasing number of missiles at Taiwan, at the rate of 50 more per year, in addition to the 300 it already has (*Guardian*, 24 April 2001). China also demanded of American President Clinton that he should publicly spell out the 'three noes' during the President's state visit to China in 1998, i.e. the United States would not support 'two Chinas'; nor 'one China, one Taiwan'; nor Taiwan's membership in important international organisations such as the United Nations.

### 1.2.2 The Search for National Identity

Over the last century, Taiwan has been the object of two large-scale programmes of assimilation launched by external regimes, the first by the Japanese colonialists, the second by the KMT government. Both these attempts to 'nationalise' the Taiwanese from above exacerbated pre-existing misconceptions among Taiwan's inhabitants concerning their polity and their identity.

The Japanese colonial government exercised discrimination against local culture and prohibited the use of the Taiwanese language and the Chinese script for the purpose of assimilating the Taiwanese. The KMT followed suit, taking political and cultural measures to impose yet another national identity. Chief among these measures was

KMT's way of 'prolonging' the Chinese civil war, the 'mission to retake the mainland' being touted as something sacrosanct in order to encourage the Taiwanese to sacrifice their civil and political rights to help the KMT defeat the Chinese communists. Yet, after Taiwan's loss of its China seat in the United Nations Security Council in 1971, the ambiguities surrounding Taiwan's juridical statehood became even more pronounced. The myth of the KMT regime as the sole legitimate government of all China began to evaporate, and the incongruence between the Chinese KMT state and the Taiwanese people became increasingly evident.

Taiwan's political transition since the late 1980s also suggests that there was previously a definite upsurge of Taiwanese consciousness (or *Taiwan Yishi* in Chinese). As early as the late 1970s, the dissidents in favour of Taiwanese nationalism held mass rallies against the then authoritarian KMT and pushed hard for democratisation. The KMT responded by introducing more repressive measures of political control and cultural censorship, and charged the dissidents with advocating Taiwan's independence. Other Taiwanese nationalists, however, continued to apply pressure to KMT. They gathered under the banner *Dangwai* (meaning 'outside the Party [the KMT]') and won seats that were open to the 'native Taiwanese' in national by-elections in the early 1980s. Eventually, in 1986, they organised the DPP, disregarding the KMT's intention to maintain repression. The KMT, on this occasion, did not respond with the use of force, thus suggesting that it had calculated the high political cost of a crackdown, but the DPP was not officially legalised until 1989. In 1986, President Chiang Ching-kuo, Chiang Kai-shek's son and successor, who claimed that he was himself 'already Taiwanese', promised that he would introduce political reforms.

As demonstrated above, the democratic transition was a two-way process, signalling the surge of Taiwanese nationalism as much as the adaptation of the state to popular demands. This might account for 'why the regime, having shown little interest in political change prior to the emergence of the opposition, suddenly reversed its stand' (Cheng and Haggard, 1992: 16), and might help us to understand how this far-reaching transformation became possible. Indeed, as one observer noted, 'ten years ago, all this would have seemed like a fantasy' (Buruma, 1996: 78). On balance, it seems that the rise of Taiwanese consciousness was 'the invisible hand rocking the cradle of democratisation in Taiwan,' and 'the most powerful force driving Taiwan's new-born

democracy is not a rising standard of living but a peculiar kind of nationalism' (Buruma, 1996: 78).

All these phenomena suggest that what ultimately gave rise to Taiwan's transition to democracy was a significant shift of power from predominantly China-centred nationalist ideas about the nation and the national past to a Taiwan-centred nationalism. If this assessment is valid, it is necessary to explain why Taiwanese nationalism was able to return in the late 1970s against a state-sanctioned Chinese nationalism. To begin with, each of the two nationalisms inherited their pre-war legacy. This thesis thus provides an historical account of how Chinese nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism intersect to give rise to a Taiwan-centred identity. It challenges certain assumptions about Chinese nationalism that are found in the literature. It also seeks to compensate for what, with a few notable exceptions (see: Kerr, 1965, 1974; Meisner, 1964; Mendel, 1970; for the recent literature, see Fix, 1993; Geoffroy, 1997; Hughes, 1997; Wachman, 1994) is a neglect of Taiwanese nationalism in the literature.

## 1.3 WHY TELEVISION? WHY TAIWAN?

The spread of global media and the multiplication of television channels have challenged national television systems in many countries. The eventual outcome is not certain; different analysts have been led to different conclusions. Elihu Katz, writing about the Israeli case, laments that, because of the growing number of television channels, national television no longer binds the nation together (Katz, 1996). By contrast, James Curran, discussing the British case, argues that national television remains dominant and still binds the nation together (Curran, 1998). Despite their different estimates of the extent to which multi-channel television has weakened national identity, both scholars agree that national television plays a positive role in national identity-formation and that the saturated media environment has a negative effect upon national identity.

In Taiwan, since 1971, there has been a strong national television system consisting of three terrestrial television channels broadcasting mainly domestically produced programmes. The system was formerly under the tight control of the KMT, with its commitment to Chinese nationalism. In addition, to a greater extent than in Israel, the

UK and many other countries, the multiplication of television channels has reached a very high level of access in Taiwan. However, the question remains open as to whether Taiwan's national identity has been forged by national television, or whether the multiplication of television channels has weakened that identity. It must be stressed, though, that when considering the media-identity relationship, the multiplication of television channels is not the only important concern. We also need to ask: who controls the media channels?

When examined more closely, the political economy of the media (and television in particular) in Taiwan appears to be very complex. First, from the beginning of its rule on the island, the KMT monopolised the media, and especially broadcasting, in order to confer Chinese identity on the Taiwanese and indoctrinate the population with Chinese nationalism. It seems reasonable to assume that television could be of particular importance to a Chinese society like Taiwan. As Anderson argues, owing to its writing systems and the enormous variety of mutually unintelligible spoken languages, we-consciousness (among the literate elite) was created 'out of signs, not sounds' (Anderson, 1991). By extension, television and radio may both be viewed as media with a strong potential to make a community out of signs *and* sounds among different ethnic and linguistic groups. It should have been the medium for both 'the efficiency and complementarity of communication among individuals' (Deutsch, 1953: 162), thereby helping to shape a homogeneous nation.

Secondly, by 1998 Taiwan had achieved a very high level of cable television penetration – covering about 80 per cent of all households (compared with 43.4% in 1994 and 54.2% in 1995; Directorate-General of Budget Accounting and Statistics, 1996: 44) and offering viewers some 60 to 80 television channels. The number of cable television households grew rapidly and is still growing. Not only does this represent a very rapid increase in the number of channels available to Taiwan's population, but it has also provided access to an increasing number of programmes made outside Taiwan, especially in the United States, Japan and Hong Kong.

Thus, Taiwan is a very suitable choice as a case study to assess the role of television in the formation of national identity. However, an analysis informed by the determinist cause-and-effect model is of limited use (cf. Gauntlett, 1998). There are several grounds for this conclusion: (1) The KMT did have intentions and needs to promote Chinese

identity through the channels of national television. (2) National television under KMT's control consistently reflected much more Chinese nationalism than Taiwan-centred nationalism. (3) National television did not significantly change its emphasis on Chinese nationalism, not least before the political transition of 1987-1988. (4) Changes in national television since political transition have not reflected a simple Taiwanese nationalism. Therefore, there seems to be little point in trying to establish a direct link in the cause-and-effect sense between national television and national identity.

In addition to the long-term state control of the national media, there are also conflicting pressures arising from the growth of foreign programming which might be thought to undermine national identity. However, I will suggest in this thesis that this latter argument is not valid because it lacks empirical evidence. The multiplication of television channels in Taiwan does not seem to have (1) fragmented the audience, or (2) weakened national identity, or (3) functioned as a medium of national differentiation.

It is Taiwan's uniqueness in terms of the degrees of post-war media control and ongoing media globalisation that makes it a fascinating case study of the relationship between the media (and television in particular) and national identity-formation. The thesis does not question whether television has played a role in national identity-formation in Taiwan. Rather, it is concerned to identify precisely what that role has been. Thus, the key questions to be addressed are: How can we define and characterise television's role? Is it possible that the convergence in Taiwan of global, national and local cultural forces in a distinct form of 'national identity'– Taiwan-centred identity – might not be as paradoxical as at first sight? How far can the media be *powerful* while the audience members are *active*, and, in what sense?

To explore the role of the media (and television in particular) in the formation of national identity in Taiwan, I will present an empirical analysis of both media representation and audience reception, examining two central questions: (1) What images and discourses of nationhood have been represented in the media texts? (2) How has the audience made use of terrestrial and cable/satellite television and interpreted the media texts, thereby constituting a sense of national identity? First, the media texts to be analysed were produced between 1971 and 1996 and include a sample of television serial drama synopses and two domestically produced films which were popular at the time of their release. This period is chosen for special attention because of its socio-

political significance in Taiwan's modern history. 1971 saw loss of the KMT's seat in the United Nations and the emergence of television as a nation-wide medium in Taiwan; 1996 was the year when the first ever presidential election by direct vote was held in Taiwan and when the KMT no longer owned all of Taiwan's terrestrial television channels. Secondly, the analysis of audience reception will be based on two waves of in-depth interviews with 19 television families with a high degree of diversity in terms of family members' ethnic background, gender and age.

## 1.4 The Structure of the Thesis

The rest of the thesis is divided into two parts.

The first part, consisting of Chapters 2 to 5, is intended to ground the research by establishing theoretical, historical and methodological perspectives. Chapter 2 draws insights from the literature on the intersection of national identity and the media. Chapter 3 sets the scene historically in Taiwan, addressing the character of the Chinese nationalism that was subsequently imported by the KMT from the Chinese mainland into Taiwan, and the clash between that nationalism and its locally nurtured counterpart. Chapter 4 considers the dominance of the one-party state in Taiwan's political-economic formation of the national media, and examines the state-media relations which helped the KMT regime to consolidate its power on Taiwan. In Chapter 5 I detail the rationale behind the empirical research design for the thesis and explain how each empirical analysis was conducted.

The second part consists of four empirical chapters. Chapter 6 presents a content analysis of the sampled television serial drama synopses, investigating the patterns of Taiwan's television representation. Chapter 7 offers a qualitative analysis of two historical films which were laden with nationalist ideologies and discursively set the boundaries of nationhood in their respective historical contexts. Chapter 8 explores the past and present experiences of the respondent families with the medium of television. Chapter 9 focuses on the questions of how the informants interpreted the two films and how they positioned themselves with respect to the question of national identity.

Chapter 10 brings together the empirical findings of the research in an assessment of the role played by the mass media and television in particular in the formation of national identity in Taiwan.

# Part I

## Theory, History and Methodology

In the first part of this thesis, a large literature is drawn on selectively to consider the relationship between the media and national identity-formation from theoretical, historical, and methodological perspectives.

Chapter 2 focuses on a theoretical account of the relationship between the media and national identity-formation, an area of interest in which theories of nationalism, nation building and media imperialism provide insightful yet inconclusive answers. These theories disagree in terms of their emphasis on the positive or negative effects of the media on national identity-formation, but all of them share, in varying degrees, a view of the media as all-powerful and the audience as passive. It will be argued that they also tend to focus on a macro level of analysis (media-culture-identity) and neglect the key micro-level relationship between the text (representation) and the reader (reception). In order to address the relationship in question at both the macro and micro levels, this chapter argues that the interaction between media representation and audience reception should be grounded in the historical conjunctures specific to a given society.

Given the weight of nationalism in Taiwan's political change, which arose as a consequence of the contest between Chinese nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism, a historical examination of nationalism in Taiwan is indispensable. Chapter 3 thus explores the origins and development of the two major nationalist currents (Chinese and Taiwanese). Then, Chapter 4 looks closely at the role of the state in Taiwan's political economy of the media since 1945 and the importance of the media in supporting the KMT regime.

Chapter 5 lays the methodological foundations for the thesis. Essential among the guiding concepts are the dominant ideology thesis, the polysemy thesis, and the relationship between text and audience. I argue for a critical synthesis between the theses of dominant ideology and polysemy. Drawing insights from the relevant literature on media representation and audience reception, I then proceed to set up three case studies including a content analysis of television serial drama synopses, a textual analysis of national cinematic texts, and in-depth interviews with television families.

# 2.

# Nationalism, National Identity and the Media

This chapter takes issue with conventional theories of the media-identity relationship as reflected in the ideas of development communication, media imperialism and cultural globalisation, and points to the complexity of national identity-formation and the consequent need to examine this complexity with reference to its historically specific conjunctures.

By drawing key concepts from the literature, the chapter seeks to establish the theoretical basis for the thesis. The central questions are: national identity and its relationship to nationalism, the role of the media in the historical rise of nationalism, and the debates raised by the increasing interconnectedness of the global and the local resulting from the enhanced role of transnational communication media.

## 2.1 Nationalism and National Identity

I shall begin the investigation of national identity with a discussion of theories of nationalism.

### 2.1.1 Theories of Nationalism

Nationalism has been theorised from two major perspectives: the modernist and the primordialist. The proponents of modernist views see the 'nation' as the product of modernity, exemplified by the historical rise of nationalism, the bureaucratic state, the industrial economy of capitalism and secular social norms (Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1983, 1990). The modernist views are challenged by other writers who emphasise the importance of primordial elements (ethnic origins, shared myths,

symbols, historical memories, and roots, etc.) in the process of modern nation-formation (Hutchinson, 2000; Smith, 1986, 1991).

The modernist views of nation-formation can be summarised as follows:

- Nations are theorised as political communities with consolidated territories. They are defined as those communities which aspire to control 'a chunk of the earth's surface' (Miller, 1995: 25) for the purpose of self-government in accordance with ideas of popular sovereignty and the principle of political legitimacy, which prescribes that nation and state should be 'congruent' (Gellner, 1983: 1).

- Nations are seen as arising from a new configuration of state-culture relationships, one which arises from the demands of what may be broadly defined as a capitalist-industrial economy (Gellner, 1983). Within this context, a culturally homogeneous formation is created by means of a standard vernacular language and print culture (Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983).

- The rise of nations is seen to have been accelerated by a radically changed understanding of space and time, which create the foundations for the popular imagination of a nation-as-community (Anderson, 1991; Cooke, 1989).

- Nations are seen to have been forged by 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm, 1990), that is, the sustaining myths beloved of nationalists can be borrowed, revived, transformed, or simply invented (though, of course, not entirely fabricated).

The arguments from the modernist perspective, in a nutshell, can be read as a powerful refutation of the claim by nationalists around the world that nationalist traditions have a pre-modern origin. For example, Gellner explicitly argues against such nationalist claims by saying that 'nationalism is not the awakening of nations to be self-conscious: it invents nations where they do not exist' (Gellner, 1964: 169). Hobsbawm also explicates this modern novelty of nations: 'the basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it is its modernity' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 14).

However, the modernist views of nationalism have not been received without challenge. The most notable critiques are those of Anthony Smith and John Hutchinson, who emphasise nationalism's primordial elements, especially its ethnic origins (Hutchinson,

2000; Smith, 1986). However, the debate between the two schools of thought does not necessarily imply two mutually exclusive polarities. Beiner offers an even-handed assessment of both views when he remarks that 'a radically modernist view of nations serves to debunk nationalist myth-making, whereas the view that national sentiment is linked to authentically pre-modern cultural resources helps to legitimise these sentiments of national belonging' (Beiner, 1999: 6).

From the above, it is clear that the nation is principally defined in theories of nationalism as a modern construct, although certain primordial elements can be mobilised to shape a nation. This relationship between nationalism and modernity is developed further in by Anthony Giddens in his elaboration of the notion of 'ontological security' and by Michael Billig in his concept of 'banal nationalism'. The notion of 'ontological security' emphasised by Giddens has generated widespread discussion among scholars (e.g. Billig, 1995: 44; Silverstone, 1993; Tomlinson, 1991: 85-90). Giddens defines 'ontological security' as follows:

> The phrase of [ontological security] refers to the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action. A sense of the reliability of persons and things, so central to the notion of trust, is basic to feelings of ontological security; hence the two are psychologically related. (Giddens, 1990: 92)

It follows that nationalism and nationalist sentiments arise from the situation in which the 'sense of ontological security is put in jeopardy by the disruption of routines' (Giddens, 1985: 44). Accordingly, Giddens sees nationalism as a primarily psychological phenomenon (Giddens, 1985: 218), arising from the drive to regain a sense of ontological security under the threat of social disruption in the conditions of modernity. Silverstone argues that Giddens exaggerates 'the fragility of ontological security in conditions of modernity as compared to the pre-modern' (Silverstone, 1993: 579) and 'belatedly considers the media as significant factors in creating modernity' (Silverstone, 1993: 580). Nevertheless, there may be something to be gained by applying Giddens' notion to the social disruptions caused by war, external threat, and national crisis, which often seem to move nationalism forward.

On a different front, Billig's thesis of banal nationalism suggests that contemporary social life is replete with taken-for-granted nationhood. He sees 'banal nationalism' in the use of 'prosaic, routine words, which take nations for granted, and which, in so

doing, inhabit them. Small words, rather than grand memorable phrases, offer constant, but barely conscious, reminders of the homeland, making "our" national identity unforgettable' (Billig, 1995: 93). In other words, the discourse of nationhood is everywhere, including the media, and often becomes so obvious (banal) that we do not notice it. Though Giddens and Billig seem to focus on different aspects of nationalism, there may be scope for the two theses to converge, as I shall seek to show in the application of their views to the case of national identity in Taiwan.

### 2.1.2 Culture, Community and Identity

'Culture', 'community' and 'identity' are among the terms used regularly by theorists of nationalism. Too often, though, these terms are used vaguely and sometimes in a circular way. Gellner, one of the most influential theorists of nationalism, defines the terms as follows:

> What is meant by *culture*? Basically, a non-genetic mode of transmission, located in an on-going community. A community is a population which shares a culture. ... Culture and community are defined in terms of each other: culture is what a population shares and what turns it into a community. ... Meaning, culture, community – these notions interlock with each other. The circularity of their definitions, their interdependence, does not matter. (Gellner, 1995: 45-46, italics in the original)

Although one may agree with Gellner's point that the concepts of culture and nationality are indeed intimately linked, his argument is not entirely satisfactory, especially when he suggest that 'the classification of men by "culture" is of course the classification by "nationality"' (Gellner, 1964: 157).

The complexity of the word 'culture' has been well described by Williams (1976: 87). The word 'community' is no less problematic as it has been mostly used and taken as a 'warmly persuasive word' (Williams, 1976: 76), regardless of competing definitions and its use on different political agenda. As Neil Smith puts it, 'community is ... the least specifically defined of spatial scales, and the consequent vague yet generally affirmative nurturing meaning attached to "community" makes it one of the most ideologically appropriated metaphors in contemporary public discourse' (Smith, 1993: 105). Similarly, Stuart Hall suggests that 'identification' is a more appropriate concept than 'identity', for the former refers to a process of dynamic articulation rather than static fixity (Hall, 1996:

1-3). For all these reasons, I shall use the terms 'culture', 'community' and 'identity' with considerable caution and, where appropriate, further clarification in the present study.

Anderson's seminal work *Imagined Communities* illustrates the ways in which a community is imagined on the national scale but says relatively little about the idea of community itself (Anderson, 1991: 7). In discussing the idea of community, we need to understand it within the specific context in which the community is imagined; and more importantly, the question of power should not be left out. Various definitions of community have revolved around two key formulations: community in terms of shared geographical place, and community in terms of a shared culture/social position. Each model of community, based on a particular locale or a shared culture, is considered as crucial to the production of identities (Mayo, 2000: 39). However, both models of community may be questioned.

### *(1) Community based on shared place*

Nationalism is characterised as a kind of 'spatially based' ideology (Smith, 1993: 110). However, the national community has become increasingly destabilised, since the territorial homeland is no longer the only 'place' which mobilises popular allegiance (Mittelman, 2000: 72-73). The identities which hitherto provided a basis for attachment within particular places, have been de-territorialised and re-territorialised by the expansion of transnational flows of goods, capital and people, and by the synchronised access to information across formerly rigid boundaries of separate national communities. This view is most clearly expressed in the oft-quoted phrase of Jashua Meyrowitz that there is 'no sense of place' (Meyrowitz, 1985):

> Electronic media have had a tremendous impact on group identity by undermining the relationship between physical location and information access. ... The identity and cohesion of many groupings and associations were fostered by the fact that members were 'isolated together' in the same or similar locations. ... Electronic media begin to override group identities based on 'co-presence,' and they create many new forms of access and 'association' that have little to do with physical location. (Meyrowitz, 1985: 143-144)

For Meyrowitz, the changes that the electronic media have brought about are profoundly new and different from other homogenising forces in the sense that the electronic media provide people with experiences of being *with* others (Meyrowitz,

1985: 146). But, as Ferguson argues, the reverse might be the case: 'rapid technological changes in global communications have made temporal and spatial concerns more paramount and more problematic than previously' (Ferguson, 1989: 152). She argues that 'the determinist assumption that communication technology almost unilaterally possesses the power to render time-space differences insignificant can be denied by an abundance of historical, anthropological and psycho-social evidence, irrespective of any technology' (Ferguson, 1989: 153).

Taking these competing views into account, it is fair to say that the sense of place is still present in today's globalised world, although it no longer exists in the way it used to: the sense of place *multiplies* rather than *dies* in a global age.

*(2) Community based on a shared culture*

The second model of community is based on the notion of a shared culture. First of all, we need to consider the question of power relations involved in the making of such a community and identity (Bauman, 1990: 45). The process of making a 'shared' culture does not necessary serve the interests of all and is quite often at the expense of minority cultures. Secondly, we need to consider that the members of a given (political or cultural) community might in effect be more heterogeneous than is usually supposed. For instance, the so-called Chinese nation actually comprises more than fifty minority ethnic groups which are officially recognised; but, according to Gladney, up to 350 other applicant ethnic minority groups are excluded from official recognition (Gladney, 1998: 108). Even within the majority ethnic group (i.e. the Han people) there is in effect a great diversity of spoken languages and local particularities. Thus, national communities, even those deemed to be long established, are not as homogeneous as is often supposed and usually involve a social and cultural diversity on the basis of language, ethnicity, religion, etc.

The essentialist assumption, which reifies nations as homogenous communities, is widely held in discussions of the Chinese nation. As Modood observes, 'when non-Chinese people, for example, talk of "Chinese Civilisation", their starting point often is that it has coherence, a sameness over centuries, and a reified quality' (Modood, 2000: 178). An extreme variant of the essentialist view is that of 'the clash of civilisations' put forward by Huntington (1993), which implies an internal sameness within each

'civilisation'. This assumption is so widely held that even Hobsbawm, himself an influential theorist who adopts a thoroughly modernist view of the nationalist phenomenon of Western Europe, argues in his *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (in a primordialist tone) that China is 'among the extremely rare examples of historic states composed of a population that is ethnically almost or entirely homogeneous' (Hobsbawm, 1990: 66). In the thesis, I challenge this essentialist assumption made about the Chinese nation, and argue that 'the Chinese nation' is far from homogeneous and historic but instead heterogeneous and modern. A detailed account of how the timeless 'sameness' of Chinese nationhood was created in the modern era will be given in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that although many nationalists explicitly value homogeneous communities, nations are never perfectly homogeneous entities. Some nations include a minority (or even, as in the case of Taiwan, a majority) which does not always identify with the stipulated national ideal.

Thirdly, and perhaps quite inevitably in the Gellnerian sense, definitions of national culture and national identity tend to be circular: a nation is often defined in terms of a shared culture, and a national culture is defined in terms of values or beliefs shared by a nation. Involving as it does a mix of historical, political, economic, social, cultural and linguistic factors, a particular national identity is not uniformly accepted by everyone residing within the boundaries of particular nation-state, however strongly nationalists themselves feel about it. More often than not, dominant definitions of national identity are linked to the group that is numerically, economically or politically dominant within a country (Thomas, 1997: 4-5), which runs against the ideal of universal citizenship with equal rights.

Much harsher criticisms of 'community' come from some writers who are closer to the post-structuralist or post-modernist perspectives. I will not repeat here those criticisms which tend to deconstruct altogether the idea of community and are preoccupied with the social differences among individuals. To be sure, conventional conceptions of community are theoretically flawed in some aspects and should be interrogated. But this does not mean that we should go as far as to abandon them as ideas or ideals altogether (see Morley, 2000: 6).

*(3) Conceptualising 'national identity'*

The conceptual difficulties involved in the ideas of culture, community and identity make it even more formidable to define what is meant by 'national identity', although it is generally referred to as 'a specific form of collective identity' (Schlesinger, 1991: 153) or 'an abstract collectivity' (Scannell and Cardiff, 1991: 277). In order to unravel the tangled thread of national identity-formation, it is necessary to reformulate conceptions of national identity in certain respects. First, the idea of national identity as a monolithic and fixed entity should be replaced by a more fluid and flexible conception. As Hall points out, identities are 'points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us' (Hall, 1996: 6).

Secondly, national identity needs to be seen, not categorically but relationally, as consisting of interconnected structures created through the repeated articulation of cultural differences between multiple national histories/traditions and historically specific conjunctures (Hall, 1996: 4-5).

National identity-formation as a process necessarily involves discourse and difference. As Hall argues, 'identities are constituted within, not outside, discourse' and 'identities are constructed through, not outside, difference' (Hall, 1996: 4). For the purpose of this thesis, 'national identity' is considered to denote a system of cultural signification which defines a national political community and constructs individuals as members of the nation. This consideration is informed by the dynamic notion that national identities are 'constituted within a system of social relations and require the reciprocal recognition of others. Identity ... is not to be considered a "thing" but rather a "system of relations and representations"' (Schlesinger, 1991: 154). This points to a shift away from 'nation' itself as an unquestionable pre-given towards an analysis of the power relations between the dominant and subordinate forces. This shift, in turn, prompts us to ask how the sense of national identities is discursively constructed through the channels of communication and how individuals appropriate and reproduce nationhood in their everyday lives.

## 2.2 National Identity and the Media

The question of national identity is of profound importance to the modern world, not least because the nation-state, far from withering away, remains a very significant actor.

The end of the nation-state (Ohmae, 1995), and by implication national identity, has been predicted for a very long time, yet nation-states continue to thrive. But, as Held (2000: 172) argues, 'states today remain very powerful, if not more powerful than their predecessors in earlier centuries'. States have become deeply involved in the emerging transnational governance system (Sassen, 1996), and it is argued that nation-state formation is itself a constitutive part of globalisation rather than a process contrary to it (Greenfeld, 1992; Robertson, 1992).

Before addressing the relationship between national identity and the media in general, there are two fundamental questions worthy of note. The first is whether national identity is necessary to stabilise a national political community and whether it is the best, or only, basis for that community. In other words, to what extent is it the political consequence of state formation and social inclusion, rather than the establishment of a viable national culture itself, that really counts? To what extent is the legitimacy of a nation-state embedded in a distinct national culture, or based on democratic-constitutional norms (Klusmeryer, 1996: 91)? Should the consolidation of a national identity be grounded in the universal realisation of national citizenship (Habermas, 1994) rather than the establishment of a homogeneous national culture? The former ground alone may not be sufficient to sustain a national identity, whereas the latter ground would seem to be wrong and even dangerous.

A second fundamental question concerning national identity is about change. The change brought about by the external cultural forces has acquired a topical relevance since the advent of globalisation. Again, a uni-linear, causal relationship between culture and identity seems taken for granted, so that cultural nationalism is typically promulgated in defence of national culture against media imperialism. However, cultural identity changes all the time, and this changing formation has always been in process (Hall, 1996). This being the case, it seems surprising that so many nation-states are concerned with the influx of cultural products from outside. The cause for this concern lies elsewhere, I would suggest, reflecting an oversimplified conception of the relationship between media and national identity. This, combined with imperatives around nationalist agendas, predisposes nationalists to consider that the media equals culture, and culture equals identity. From this, it follows that national communication

fosters national identity while global or transnational communication weakens it, as discussed below.

### 2.2.1 National Media and National Identity

Policy-makers around the globe have customarily regarded the media as a key means of creating and strengthening a shared national identity. Nonetheless, the complex relationships between communication and national identity remain open to debate.

*(1) National media and the rise of nationalism*

In relation to the role of media and communications in the process of national identity-formation, some insights worthy of note are those of Anderson, McLuhan and among others (Anderson, 1991; Deutsch, 1953; Eisenstein, 1979; Habermas, 1994; Innis, 1951; McLuhan, 1987). In varying degrees, all these authors point to the importance of printing in the historical rise and spread of nationalism.

The role of printing in the standardisation of vernaculars and the expansion of a national culture has been emphasised by several authors (e.g. Eisenstein, 1979; Innis, 1951; McLuhan, 1987). McLuhan even describes printing as the 'architect' of nationalism (McLuhan, 1987: 172). Anderson takes a similar view of printing as fundamental for the development of national cultures but makes more explicit the link between printing and capitalism. For Anderson, printing lays the basis for national consciousness and capitalism, as a driving force, accelerates its spread (Anderson, 1991). On the one hand, he highlights its importance as a means of communication which is able both to disseminate national consciousness across long distances and to preserve cultural traditions across generations. On the other hand, he recognises the crucial agency of capitalism, without which the spread of the printed word beyond the control of church and state would have been impossible. As he puts it, 'nothing serves to "assemble" related vernaculars more than capitalism, which, within the limits imposed by grammars and syntaxes, created mechanically reproduced print-language capable of dissemination through the market' (Anderson, 1991: 44).

From the above, it is clear that printing contributed to both the historical rise and spread of nationalism. What is not clear is how far and to what extent television -- though

commonly seen as a more powerful and accessible medium than the printed word (Calhoun, 1991) – has contributed to the formation of national identity in the contemporary era.

*(2) National media and nation building*

Early empirical studies can be found in the work of scholars interested in the theme of communication and nation building (also known as the communication version of 'modernisation theory' or 'development communication').

It has been argued that in the wake of de-colonisation following the Second World War, the formation of new states usually preceded the consolidation of nations (Martinussen, 1997); hence the urgency for such states of achieving successful 'nation building'. What emerged in practice, however, was often a form of state nationalism that was intended to make a nation congruent with the state.[1] At the same time, radio broadcasting and television, as the then new media, came to prominence in the western countries. Against this backdrop, there was an enthusiastic attempt to put the then fashionable social theory of modernisation into practice.

Modernisation theory – especially its communications version – holds that the media play a crucial role in promoting economic development to achieve successful nation building in new states through attitude change and the encouragement of innovative behaviour. Almost unanimously, the most prominent proponents of this theory, including Daniel Lerner, Lucian Pye, and Wilbur Schramm, posit that the success of nation building and societal modernisation depends in large measure on the penetration of mass communications, especially the audio-visual media. The reasoning behind this stemmed from the desire of people in newly independent nations, who may have witnessed sudden and violent changes, for the speedy establishment of a 'viable nationhood'. These theorists therefore advocated the precedence of communications in initiating and accelerating modernisation and nation building in these transitional societies (Pye, 1963: 3-5).

[1] Taiwan after 1945 could be understood in the same way, except that, as we will discuss in the next chapter, the state that was built in de-colonised Taiwan was imposed from the outside.

In the dominant paradigm of development communication, summarised by Rogers, the audio-visual media is seen as the vehicle by means of which technological innovations are transferred from development agencies to their clients, thereby stimulating an appetite for change by means of a 'climate of modernisation' (Rogers, 1976: 49). According to this view, experiences of modernisation can easily be replicated in other states, including those in the Third World. Modernisation theorists believed that modernisation was capable of transplanting development models and media technologies already successfully applied in western countries to less developed countries. This line of argument is now generally seen as much too optimistic and is criticised by some as reflecting 'overtones of ethnocentrism and uni-linearism' (Hannerz, 1992: 263). Moreover, the optimism widely shared by the proponents of development communication was not borne out in practice. As Lerner laments, the 'revolution of rising expectations' which the media, as 'magic multipliers' or 'change agents', were supposed to inspire in emerging nations turned ultimately into 'revolutions of rising frustrations' (Lerner, 1963: 330).

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that, on the one hand, the rise of nationalism and the consolidation of nation-states were linked to the emergence of national mediated communications. On the other hand, applications of national mediated communications in the task of building a nation were not always effective.

### 2.2.2 Transnational Media and National Identity

Two processes relating to transnational media and national identity have come into conflict. One is the cultural protectionism expressed through resistance against foreign cultures; the other is the transnational cultural flow accelerated by information technologies and the audio-visual media. Few countries want either to open or close the domestic market completely to the outside world. Yet any compromise policy would inevitably have to deal with undesirable influences introduced by global media; the worst scenario for many countries would be the undermining of national identity (Thomas, 1997). Countries have found it difficult to turn their back on the globalising forces along with the influx of exogenous cultures that they entail. On the other hand, their efforts to protect indigenous cultures have often been misdirected. To put it differently, according to Hannerz, there are actually two kinds of 'provincialism': a

provincialism of closure and a provincialism of openness (Hannerz, 1992: 260). The former refers to defensive isolation from foreign cultures, while the latter contains 'too much deference and mindless mimicry on the part of the periphery toward the centre' (Hannerz, 1992: 260).

*(1) Provincialism of closure/openness: exemplars*

China and Singapore took the first option and were among the predominantly Chinese societies where unlicensed ownership of satellite-receiving dishes was banned for the purpose of excluding unwanted programmes from abroad. Both countries generally regarded cultural globalisation as a threat to their national identities.

In 1978, China started to open her doors gradually to the rest of the world. By the 1990s, the level of government concern at the political consequences of new media penetrating the country had reached fever pitch. Typical of this was Yang Weiguang, Vice Minister of Radio, Film and Television and the General Director of China Central Television (CCTV), who gave a strong warning over the rapid spread of new electronic media, especially satellite broadcasting. 'If we do not act resolutely and effectively now,' Yang stated, 'the US and other Western countries may achieve their goals of disintegrating China by trans-border broadcasting and other new media technologies, just as they did to the USSR and other Eastern European countries' (Huang et al., 1997: 18). This remark epitomises the most common charge levelled by the Chinese authorities at information and entertainment from abroad – that of 'spiritual pollution' (and/or that of 'peaceful evolution') – since it is seen to undermine the essence of Chinese civilisation and, of course, the legitimacy of the continuing communist dictatorship in China (Lull, 1997).[2]

Reflecting a similar mindset, despite immersing himself in Western culture, Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore has asserted that Western notions of participatory democracy cannot be applied to Asian countries because of major cultural differences. He appears

[2] The Internet is no exception. The Chinese state has taken strict measures for the purpose of 'controlling coverage and blocking access to foreign news sites,' thereby ensuring that 'its version of events was the only version most Chinese heard' (*Washington Post*, 20 April 2001: A25).

particularly aggrieved that Western countries (notably America) have 'foisted their system indiscriminately' on Asian societies (Zakaria, 1994: 10).[3]

In contrast to the above cases, Taiwan seemed much too eager to make the best of the trend towards globalisation. Since the mid-1990s, when it developed a hunger for exogenous culture and foreign capital, Taiwan has initiated a series of projects aimed at greater internationalisation. The most ambitious of these involves establishing Taiwan as the Asia-Pacific's regional media centre and enticing foreign media industries (print, audio-visual media, multimedia and other information technologies) to move there. In this case the state attracted participating consortia by levying no income tax for the first five years of the project (Government Information Office, 1996: 1120). Although this ambitious aim remains largely unfulfilled, it represents a major policy shift, and the consequences for Taiwan's domestic market have been decreasing regulation and rapidly expanding consumption.

In the Western hemisphere, there is a more complex situation. A supranational project of European integration, intended to challenge the economic strength of America, Japan and the newly industrialised countries, has been under way. In the area of culture/identity, for example, the Green Paper *Television without Frontiers*, published by the Commission of the European Communities in 1984 and further developed since then, involved an attempt to foster a unified European cultural identity. Not surprisingly, in view of the implied homogenisation of such a culturally diverse territory, the policy behind it has been subjected to severe criticism. As Collins points out, both advocates and opponents of *Television without Frontiers* based their arguments on similar nationalist precepts that culture and political institutions should be isomorphic (Collins, 1990b: 200). The nationalist notions of community on which a European identity were to be based were condemned as wishful thinking (Schlesinger, 1993; Servaes, 1993). Even if it were possible to fortify Europe against the threat of Americanisation, the problem of defining European culture would remain (Stevenson, 1995). Billig shares this view but argues differently. Even if a unified cultural identity for Europe were

[3] In opposition to the view that Asian values are somehow sacrosanct, Kim Dae Jung (who became South Korea's President in 1998), writing in 1994, rejected Lee Kuan Yew's assertion that 'culture is destiny' and criticised the Orwellian vision it represents; instead, he was optimistic about democracy's compatibility with Asian culture (Kim, 1994).

successfully established, so he argues, the very idea of nation (and national 'boundary-consciousness') would remain intact (Billig, 1995).

*(2) In critique of a global culture*

How far an essentially supranational European identity will be strengthened by fostering pan-European television (which is not yet viable) seems open to doubt (Collins, 199?). As discussed earlier, an oversimplified conception of the media-identity relationship has found expression over recent decades in contributions both by proponents of development communication and critics of media imperialism. This problematic conception lies at the heart of the idea of a global culture, which appears to comprise four component arguments: (1) There is a global culture (2) which is mainly the result of cultural homogenisation caused by Westernisation/ Americanisation (3) and which tends to undermine national identity. (4) Therefore, given that national identity is threatened by other cultures from within and without a country, a form of policing of culture becomes necessary. I will now examine each of these component arguments in turn.

**(i) A global culture?** The seemingly contrary cases mentioned above should not be read simply as dichotomies of East versus West, South versus North or the like, but rather as a result of different attitudes to intensified trans-frontier communication as one of the most conspicuous phenomena of globalisation. These responses also reflect degrees of enthusiasm for (or fear of) transnational cultural flows (and, of course, of the international capital flows underlying them).

It is impossible to sustain the argument that increasing globalisation brings about a global culture that is literally universal or homogenous, not least because the influx of that culture 'does not enter into a vacuum, or inscribe itself on a cultural tabula rasa, but enters into a various kinds of interaction with already existing meanings and meaningful forms' (Hannerz, 1992: 262). Nor, in turn, should we assume that there exists a single, homogenous, global culture (Schlesinger, 1997: 373).

**(ii) Globalisation as Americanisation?** Notwithstanding the existence or otherwise of such a culture, we must also consider the extent to which it is synonymous with Americanisation, the extent to which it is a consequence of Americanisation, and more importantly, how far it amounts to cultural homogenisation.

On the first issue, we reasonably might question whether it is plausible to define a global culture in terms of American culture at all. Critics of media imperialism (Schiller, 1992) have imputed to the U.S.-based cultural industries a desire for economic dominance, accusing them of dumping cheap cultural goods with the intention of arresting cultural development in target countries, of promoting (albeit indirectly) an 'American way of life', or of spreading commercialism, consumerism, violence and pornography. Such charges may not be entirely without foundation, but are not easily verified. The criticism pitched against American cultural products should not blind us to the possibilities -- as argued by Pool -- that without them, some of the substantial developments of political democratisation and competitive cultural productions in these disadvantaged countries might not have occurred (Pool, 1983; 1990).

Let us assume for the sake of argument, therefore, that a global culture is one that is designed to cater for different segments of global audiences with diverse cultural tastes/traditions. De-nationalising cultural production in the first place might be the condition to meet the needs of such audiences. A culture defined as simultaneously global and American might arguably be a contradiction in terms. This also raises the question of how much the so-called 'Americanness' is still manifested in the American cultural products, including the many Hollywood films which appeal to a global audience (Wang et al., 2000: 68-69).

In opposition to the media imperialism thesis, Appadurai writes that 'the crucial point ... is that the United States is no longer the puppeteer of a world system of images but is only one node of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscape' (Appadurai, 1996). However, Appadurai's argument does not appear to reflect the reality that the United States was and still is the most powerful player in the transnational flow of news, images and other cultural products. In no case should the United States be seen as 'only one node' in the transnational network of cultural flows; rather, that flow operates on unequal and asymmetrical terms, with the United States playing a dominant role.

Having said that, it is equally problematic to assert that there is cultural homogenisation and that the issue of national identity can be reduced to a simple formula: the more one consumes American cultural products, the less one possesses a sense of one's own national identity. First and foremost, globalisation also encompasses – and is not the

antithesis of -- localisation (Pieterse, 1995: 49). Or, as Hall points out, the possible consequences of cultural globalisation largely remain an open question. The weakening of local/national identity is not the only scenario that might be introduced by cultural globalisation; there is 'the possibility that globalisation might lead to a *strengthening* of local identities, or to the production of *new identities*' (Hall, 1992: 308, emphasis in the original). Hall thus offers some major qualifications of the cultural homogenisation argument. He argues that the tendency towards cultural homogenisation and globalisation is significantly countered by the tendency towards cultural localisation with an emphasis on cultural differences. Moreover, globalisation is influencing everywhere; the United States and the West (including Japan) are themselves more profoundly affected than countries at the periphery by cultural globalisation (Hall, 1992: 305).

**(iii) National identity under threat?** The issues around these debates on the intended and unintended consequences of transnational communication are too numerous to consider here. Assuming that even if there was such a global culture and even if it could easily be identified as a kind of Americanisation, its actual effect on the formation of national culture or identity in a given country would still be a matter of contention. As Smith reminds us, not only is the transcendence of nationalism difficult to envisage, but so also is a global culture that is 'essentially memoryless,' since such a culture is incapable of binding people into any kind of group (Smith, 1990: 179). For Smith, it is clear that national culture and national identity remain unrivalled by their so-called 'global' counterparts. As Hutchinson argues, 'since ... national differentiation is occurring in a period of an allegedly global homogenisation of peoples, we need a more nuanced account of the possible forms of accommodation between national and transnational organisations than one that assumes the suppression of the former' (Hutchinson, 2000: 655).

Moreover, for Pool, there is another obvious reason why no global culture could threaten the survival of a national identity. As he asserts, many constitutive elements of what has come to be known as a national culture were originally imported from abroad and 'sometimes the very things that symbolise a culture's identity turn out to have resulted from foreign intrusion' (Pool, 1990: 66).

Of course, none of the above views (of Smith, Hutchinson, and Pool) is implausible. However, each of them can be challenged. Smith fails to recognise that the cultures of nations are overlapping and interweaving, and he thus tends to underestimate the potential power of the transnational culture. Moreover, he and Hutchinson, as scholars who emphasise the lasting power of ethnic origins in the formation of nations, seem to have too much confidence in the viability of national culture vis-à-vis transnational culture. The reverse is the case with Pool's argument: in proving the innocence of transnational cultural influences on any national cultures, he allows little room for a significant distinction between the cultures of the 'nations'.

**(iv) Defending national identity by cultural policing?** Despite legitimate rationales for state intervention in regulating cultural flows (see, e.g., Price, 1995), the view that there is a threat posed by transnational cultural flows to national identity is equally problematic. It is usually accompanied by proposals for strengthened border patrols against foreign cultural threats and provides a powerful rationale for excluding or discriminating against cultures that differ too much from the indigenous one (Klusmeryer, 1996). The practices of state policing of culture are not only directed outwards against the influx of foreign cultures, but can also be exercised inwards against cultural diversity within a given country. Thus, it bears the stamp of hegemony, because whether the hegemony maintenance comes from the state or a dominant ethnic group, its aim is generally to homogenise the people within a country.

Such a discourse of 'threat' generally implies that the national identity concerned exists as a monolithic entity. Given that an identity in any case involves cultural construction, and that identities at any level are always negotiated, this is very hard to justify. From a non-essentialist point of view, a national culture or identity is constantly changing, re-constructing itself or otherwise being re-negotiated by its adherents, of whom a significant (or insignificant) number at any given time may not even subscribe to it at all. Yet no matter how uncertainly constructed, provided it genuinely 'belongs' to a nation, it is difficult to speak of any sort of fundamental 'threat' surrounding it. For these reasons, it is not really sustainable to argue that global communication necessarily results in the weakening of a national identity (though it probably does), or that a national identity reaches a crisis point as the result of global communication. As soon as the idea of

'threat' or 'crisis' has been constructed, it leads to an unfortunate result that any violent means of homogenising and 'nationalising' the nationals becomes justifiable.

## 2.3 Cultural Globalisation and Hybridisation

In this section I attempt to connect the above discussion with a broader agenda, namely, the intricate relationship between cultural globalisation and hybrid identities.

As a buzzword in both public and academic discourse, globalisation remains poorly defined, variously evaluated, and hotly debated. The difficulties involved in defining 'globalisation' are captured in the remark that 'there does seem to be broad agreement that something is happening, but rather less agreement about precisely what it is' (Cochrane and Pain, 2000: 42). Some core characteristics of globalisation can nevertheless be identified as part of the multidimensional process that is taking place across nation-state boundaries: for example, the intensification of economic and cultural flows, and the compression of time and space. All of these are said to be turning the world into a single place (Cochrane and Pain, 2000; Mittelman, 2000: 5-6).

It is usually argued that the cultural identities of countries at the receiving end of global cultural flows are eroded by cultural homogenisation, and new forms of hybrid culture are thus emerging. Of particular relevance here are the concepts of 'hybridisation' (or 'creolisation'), 'cosmopolitanism', and the 'global-local nexus'. I shall offer a brief discussion of each of these in turn.

### 2.3.1 National Identities as Hybrid Formations

The notion of 'hybridity', as opposed to the essentialist idea of a fixed (group-based or placed-based) identity, has gained currency in the literature on cultural globalisation and national identities (Bhabha, 1990; Hall, 1992; Hannerz, 1996). It is argued that the increased mobility of peoples, capital and goods has brought about the mixing of different cultures and the emergence of hybrid forms of culture/identity everywhere (Appadurai, 1996). Bhabha offers a useful definition of hybridity:

> All forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. ... [H]ybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitutes it, and sets up new structures of

> authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. ... The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. (Bhabha, 1990: 211; cf., Rowe and Schelling, 1991: 231)

*(1) The hybridisation thesis: strengths and weaknesses*

The term 'hybridity' is not entirely satisfactory. First, it has a derivative meaning that refers negatively to 'something less than the "species" from which they are derived' (Modood, 2000: 185) with 'a loss of purity, wholeness, authenticity' (Pieterse, 1995: 54-55).

Secondly, the term implies an ontological purity of formerly separate identities and indigenous cultures, which merge subsequently to become hybrid identities/cultures. The problem of the concept is that it 'evokes the myth of pure indigenous cultural forms, which are then supposed to be "hybridised" along with globalisation' (Alasuutari, 2000: 263).

Thirdly, the hybridisation thesis tends to celebrate hybrid forms of culture/identity uncritically and does not take the question of power seriously. The hybridisation thesis thus runs the risk of sanctifying the *fait accompli* caused by asymmetrical power relations exerted by colonialism and/ or state violence (Pieterse, 1995: 55)

Nevertheless, the hybridisation thesis still has its strengths. First, by employing the metaphors of 'routes' in place of 'roots' (Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1995) the hybridisation thesis not only has an empowering potential but also rescues us from falling into an essentialist position (Pile and Thrift, 1995: 10). Furthermore, it enables us to transcend the homogenisation arguments offered by the crude version of the media imperialism thesis.

A point of departure in discussing cultural hybridisation is that the hybridisation thesis itself needs to be tested. Some commentators therefore call for empirical studies which give substance to the impact of global media/culture on local media/culture (Alasuutari, 2000: 259; Wang et al., 2000). Similarly, as Pieterse argues:

> A theory [of hybridisation] which ... focus[es] on fuzziness and melange, cut-and-mix, criss-cross and crossover, might well be a relief in itself. Yet,

> ironically, of course, it would have to prove itself by giving as neat as possible a version of messiness. (Pieterse, 1995: 55)

Moreover, cultural hybridity does not assume precisely the same form around the globe. As Mittelman cautions us, 'empirically, it is important to ground a study of changing global structures, for they have not been experienced uniformly across regions, and the reactions vary widely. There is no substitute for understanding the many layers that form a particular sense of time and place' (Mittelman, 2000: 11).

*(2) Rethinking hybridity*

In order to explore cultural hybridisation empirically, as a phenomenon that accompanies cultural globalisation, the notion of hybridity needs reformulation. First, 'hybridity' cannot be conceptualised as a fused culture/identity in which all its constitutive cultures/identities are no longer distinguishable and cease to function socially. Contrary to usual supposition, the idea of national identity is not invalidated by the rise of hybrid identities. Writing in the British context, both Hall and Modood emphasise an emerging new type of hybrid ethnic identity (Hall, 1991; Modood, 2000). As Hall explains:

> Third generation young Black men and women know they come from the Caribbean, know that they are Black, know that they are British. They want to speak from all three identities. *They are not prepared to give up any one of them.* ... Because they need to know that difference, that difference that makes a difference in how they write their poetry, make their films, how they paint. It makes a difference. ... They need it as a resource. They are all those identities together. (Hall, 1991: 59, emphasis added)

Following Hall, Modood argues that this new form of identities/ethnicities in the British case is 'a form of complex Britishness. ... Because in Britain there are people who want not just to be Black or Indian in Britain, but positively want to be black British or British Indians' (Modood, 2000: 186). Clearly, as noted above, the hybrid forms of identity do not necessarily run against the quest for a national identity as one which is renegotiated rather than cancelled (i.e. re-territorialised but not yet borderless). In other words, there is room for overlapping allegiances.

Secondly, 'hybridity' is better conceptualised as opening up spaces for accommodation as well as resistance between different senses of belonging to the nation, than merely as a harmonious state of cultural mixing that can always be celebrated. The process of

hybridisation is replete with ambiguities, conflicts, contradictions, and the potentials for domination as well as empowerment. Pieterse aptly captures this dynamic nature of hybridisation:

> Relations of power and hegemony are inscribed and reproduced *within* hybridity for wherever we look closely enough we find the traces of asymmetry in culture, place, and descent. Hence hybridity raises the question of the *terms* of mixture, the conditions of mixing and melange. At the same time it's important to note the ways in which hegemony is not merely reproduced but *refigured* in the process of hybridisation. (Pieterse, 1995: 57, emphasis in the original)

This leads to a third reformulation of the concept, indicating that 'hybridity' is not '"as the label of flattening sameness"... [with] undifferentiated Difference (with a capital D) [which] marked unproblematically against a EurAmcentric standard' (Morley, 2000: 232).

Extending these reformulated conceptions of hybridity to the Taiwanese context, it is perhaps misleading to assume that there is a presumably Taiwanese identity with undifferentiated difference, and that there is a unified Sino-centric identity to which the former stands in opposition. As I will argue later in the empirical chapters of this thesis, in the Taiwanese case, the national identity has come to encompass of late a wide range of hybrid formations. It is the ways in which they have creolised and the contexts in which people appropriate (and are distributed) along this 'continuum of hybridities' (Pieterse, 1995: 56) that need to be the focal points for further exploration. Of course, this continuum of cultural hybridisation cannot properly be conceptualised without taking into account the interplay of the local and the global.

### 2.3.2 The Local and the Global

Amongst the competing propositions which are concerned with the media-identity relationship at the intersection of the global and the local are two of particular importance: (1) the national media forge national culture and thus contribute to national identity-formation; (2) with the multiplication of television channels, the increased access to the foreign media weakens or endangers national identity. Both propositions are problematic as they assume either positive or negative media effects (national versus foreign media) on national identity. It is noteworthy that neither proposition places the

audience at the centre of theorisation, but rather each implies the existence of a generally passive audience.

Katz considers both the positive and negative effects of television. In his judgement, 'the rapid multiplication of channels' means that television has ceased to function as 'the medium of national political integration' (Katz, 1996: 22-23). This implies that previously audiences shared a limited number of television channels, which promoted integration into the nation, whereas now television is segmenting its audiences as the number of channels increases. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Curran shares a similar premise that national television is a positive force for national integration, though he disagrees with Katz's view that this role is now being undermined by the multiplication of channels.

However, the premises of both their arguments can be questioned, i.e. the ideas of a fragmented or unified audience and of the global/local divide. First, it is premature to substantiate the claim of either an already fragmented audience or a unified audience. In either case, it remains an open question whether national identity would become weaker. Secondly, the global/local distinction should not be held in absolute terms. As Massey argues, '... there has never been a historical moment untouched by the world beyond; in that sense the global has always been part of the construction of the local' (Massey, 1994: 116).

In this sense, some commentators argue that there is a simultaneous phenomenon of *global localisation* and *local globalisation*. For Massey, 'the global is part of the local, not just as an invasion, nor even as a patently evident cultural mix, but as part of the very constitution of its "heartlands." Those who are not displaced should recognise our/their global connections just as do those who have recently migrated' (Massey, 1994: 118). Or, as Giddens states, 'globalisation can ... be defined as the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa. ... Local transformation is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral expansion of social connections across time and space' (Giddens, 1990: 64). The interplay of the global and the local does not simply result in a weaker or robust national identity. However, as noted earlier, the idea of a global culture is questionable; likewise, what it means to be 'local' is also subject to change. Indeed, It is hard to find something inherently local,

since, as Hannerz argues, 'not all cultures are local, in the sense of being territorially bounded' (Hannerz, 1992: 262). Therefore, the 'local' should not be used as an all-embracing phrase set up in stark contrast to the 'global'. Nor can the local always be equated with the 'national' (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996).

But, to be fair to the arguments held by Katz and Curran, it is true that national identity is increasingly open to challenge, especially in the contemporary media-saturated context. It is equally true that the relationship between communications and national identity might be re-structured in the globally dimensioned environment of today, in which instantaneous electronic communications provide an unprecedented degree of 'connectedness' between nations, cultures and localities. We all are becoming a bit more cosmopolitan than ever in the sense that we are exposed by the media to other cultures without leaving home (Robbins, 1998).

This proliferation and prevalence of mediated experience, along with other factors, contributes to 'the plurality of choices which confronts individuals' (Giddens, 1991: 83-84). Indeed, the cultural landscape that is profoundly shaped by the globalisation of media has, as some scholars observe, confronted us with a choice between a 'cultural home' and the 'cultural supermarket' (Hall, 1992: 303; Mathews, 2000) where diverse cultures are on offer and identities become *detached* and/or *disembedded.*

To a certain extent we may agree that there are indeed a wide range of identities available to us. But at stake here is how freely people can actually choose between identities in their local and global forms, namely, a presumably local *cultural home* and the presumably global *cultural supermarket.* It can be argued that, first, the 'choice' being constantly made between identities – ranging from the local to the global – is not out of freedom but because, in an age of late modernity, as Giddens points out, 'we all ... are forced to do so – we have no choice but to choose' (Giddens, 1991: 80-81). Of particular importance in this respect is that we should not overstate the freedom of choosing between identities through the acts of consumption alone. As Billig observes,

> One can eat Chinese tomorrow and Turkish the day after; one can even dress in Chinese or Turkish styles. But being Chinese or Turkish are not commercially available options. (Billig, 1995: 139)

In a similar vein, Kellner states that 'in modernity, identity becomes more mobile, multiple, personal, self-reflexive, and subject to change and innovation. Yet the forms

of identity in modernity are also relatively substantial and fixed; identity still comes from a circumscribed set of roles and norms' (Kellner, 1991: 141). Thus, the individual freedom to choosing identities is not actually free from the coextensive social constraints. As Dunn argues, 'identity is forged in the encounter between a conscious and reflexive self striving for its own *realisation* and the *limits* of biography, society, and history' (Dunn, 1998: 63, emphases added). Arguing for a social relational theory of identity formation, Dunn emphasises the importance of 'providing a picture of the *dialectical interplay* between self-determination and social determinism' (Dunn, 1998: 63, emphasis in the original)

Secondly, 'detached (or disembedded) identities' should not be overstated. Rather, the very meanings of identities are about *attachments* to, and *embeddedness* in, *times* and *places*. Few really qualify as footloose cosmopolitans in the narrow sense of cosmopolitanism, meaning a 'noncommitment and unfeeling detachment from particular affective and concrete ties [to specific times and places, etc.]' (Cheah, 1998: 24). The (actually existing) cosmopolitan figure is not likely to be the one who freely travels between cultures, picking a little bit from here and a little bit from there, with no need of home(land), no attachment to any particular culture and without a sense of national identity. As Robbins argues, 'instead of an ideal of detachment, actually existing cosmopolitanism is a reality of (re)attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance' (Robbins, 1998: 3). From this, we might argue that the choice between a cultural home and the cultural supermarket is not confined to be an either-or one. As noted above in the discussion of cultural hybridisation, there is a possibility that allegiances forged at different levels ranging from the local to the global can overlap.

To elaborate further on the idea of cosmopolitanism, we may draw from the work of Ulf Hannerz, to whom cosmopolitanism means 'a willingness to engage with the Other' and requires 'competence' to 'make one's way into other cultures' (Hannerz, 1992: 252-253). From this perspective, cosmopolitanism should not be seen as the opposite of nationalism. Nor does the engagement with other cultures necessarily result in the loss of self (culture/identity). As Robbins observes, 'like nations, worlds too are "imagined." ... There is a growing consensus that cosmopolitanism sometimes works together with nationalism rather than in opposition to it' (Robbins, 1998: 2).

This being the case, some of the assertions made by Appadurai and others are arguably premature. According to him, nationalism today is receding at the advent of what he calls a post-national global order in which a wide range of postnational, de-centred identities makes national identity irrelevant (Appadurai, 1996). But I wish to argue that it remains as relevant as ever to take nationalism seriously in an increasingly globalised/cosmopolitan world. As Cheah remarks, the postnationalist thesis mistakenly 'takes the distending of the hyphen [between nation and state] in contemporary globalisation as a sign of the disintegration of both nation and state' (Cheah, 1998: 33). Moreover, as one of the leading authorities on theories of cosmopolitanism, Hannerz concludes that global cultures do not provide a robust alternative loyalty although for some people the nation has worked 'less well as a source of cultural resonance' (Hannerz, 1996: 88). Equally, I agree with Anthony Smith's remark that national identity 'is likely to continue to command humanity's allegiances for a long time to come' (Smith, 1991: 176) but for reasons different from his. The continued importance of national identity is not due to its robustness vis-à-vis other forms of identity, but because the national and the cosmopolitan do not always develop independently of each other. Nor do they necessarily stand against each other as if there could only be either cosmopolitanism or national identity. The same goes for the dynamics of the global and the local.

## 2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed a number of interlocking concepts which are central to the media-identity relationship in question, linking the discussion with the ongoing debate over cultural globalisation, localisation, and hybridisation.

We may conclude from the competing ideas available in the literature that in some cases national communication may not strengthen national identity and transnational communication may not undermine national identity. Overall, the argument in this thesis should not be read as a defence of a global cultural hybridity or as a rejection of the media imperialism thesis. My position is that I am not satisfied with either line of argument. As has been discussed in this chapter, the uncritical celebration of cultural globalisation/hybridisation is dangerous; equally, to reduce the complexity of the media-identity relationship is to endorse something akin to the crude version of the media imperialism thesis.

I argue further that much has been missing in the theory of cultural hybridisation/globalisation, especially the recognition that power relations in the process of cultural mixing remains unequal within and between nations. Similarly, the media imperialism thesis oversimplifies the complex relations between media and national identity, positing that the availability of cultural product undermines national identity. Instead, I argue that the media-identity relationship is shaped by the changing historical conjectures, especially state-society relations and the global-local nexus. Undoubtedly, neither thesis by itself can support an unqualified generalisation on the global scale.

In the remainder of this thesis, therefore, I will examine the Taiwanese case with the aid of reformulated concepts derived from the insightful yet inconclusive debate on nationalism, cultural globalisation and hybridisation. As explained earlier in this chapter, the process of cultural hybridisation does not take place on equal terms, and by extension individuals may not evaluate the component elements of the hybridised identity with equal weight. We should see 'national identity' as a system of cultural signification which helps to define a national political community and construct individuals as members of that community. We need to shift from an essentialist and unquestionable view of 'nation' to an analysis of the power relations between the dominant and subordinate forces in both the media representation and audience reception of nationhood. We thus need to consider how the sense of national identity is discursively constructed thorough the media and how individuals appropriate and/or reproduce nationhood in their everyday lives. Through a close examination of the historical conjunctures specific to the Taiwanese case, this research seek to attain some kind of qualified generalisation about the role of the media, and television in particular, in the formation of national identity.

With this aim in mind, I shall first turn to the contingent particularities of the Taiwanese case in the next chapter. As will be seen, in tune with the modernist view of nationalism, Chinese nationalism and its Taiwanese counterpart are more modern than are often supposed, and the state is the dominant force in the promotion of Chinese nationalism and the suppression of Taiwanese consciousness in Taiwan.

# 3.
# Nationalist Politics and Taiwan

What makes Taiwan a fascinating case for the study of nationalism is precisely the historical contingency which has placed the question of Taiwan at the heart of the Chinese nationalism that has been upheld for decades by the Chinese nationalist regimes on either side of the Taiwan Strait.

The contribution of this chapter is built upon a disagreement with some western theorists of nationalism who tend to contrast China with the Western 'norm'. This contrast involves a number of binary oppositions:

- *Historic* versus *modern*: Scholars often use the Chinese case to question modernist theories of nationalism (e.g. Guibernau, 1996), assuming that Chinese nationalism stands in contrast to nationalism in the West. It is seen to embody antiquity and thus to have no need for modernity (as expressed in the collapse of Empire and the rise of industrialism). This assumption is so widely held that even Hobsbawm, a modernist theorist, endorses it (Hobsbawm, 1990).

- *Ethnic* versus *civic*: It is argued that Chinese nationalism is ethnic in character by comparison with its civic counterparts in Western Europe (e.g. Smith, 1991).

- A *weak* versus *powerful* influence of printing in the rise of nationalism: In contrast to the West, the printed word is seen to have had little effect on the historical rise of nationalism in China (Anderson, 1991).

I argue that the rise of nationalism was historically new to all of the Chinese societies, including China and Taiwan. Moreover, Chinese nationalism and its Taiwanese counterpart are less ethnic in character than is often supposed. I also pay special attention to the role of printing in the pre-modern absence (as well as modern presence) of nationalism in China (and, by extension, in Taiwan).

The chapter begins with an historical overview of Chinese nationalism, which originated in Mainland China and was brought to Taiwan by the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT) from 1945 onwards. Chinese nationalism did not emerge until the late nineteenth century; before that, China was an Empire, perhaps 'the last of the old empires' (Habermas, 1998: 106). Its rise began after the cession of Taiwan to Japan and therefore had less significant influence in colonial Taiwan itself. Moreover, the nationalism that emerged in colonial Taiwan was another nationalism – Taiwanese nationalism (also known as 'Formosan nationalism' in the early literature, e.g., Meisner, 1964; Mendel, 1970) – a phenomenon that will be addressed in the second half of this chapter.

## 3.1 CHINESE NATIONALISM AND TAIWAN

Chinese nationalists across the Taiwan Strait have for decades claimed that the idea of the Taiwanese nation (or identity) was artificially created to persuade residents of Taiwan to cleave from the Chinese mainland.[1] However, this perspective overlooks the issue of whether Chinese nationalism (which originated in Mainland China) itself might also be a modern invention. As the following historical review suggests, two strands of nationalist movements emerged and grew in Mainland China and Taiwan. Also, there was no such a thing as Chinese nationalism before the impending collapse of the Qing (Manchu) Empire; and before the rise of Chinese nationalism, Taiwan had already been ceded to become, in legal terms, part of Japan.

There was no nationalism in China before the impending collapse of the Qing Empire, when Sun Yat-sen organised the Association for Reviving China (*Xingzhonghui*, the predecessor of the KMT), China's first revolutionary group, against the Manchu rulers in 1894. From then onwards, China experienced a painful and prolonged transformation from an Empire to a national state. What nationalism manifested in China was a formidable task of transforming a 'civilisation' into a 'nation' (Kedourie, 1970: 65) -- a notion which was alien to China. As Lin concludes, 'Chinese national consciousness did

[1] Halliday observes that 'for some, notably Kedourie or Hobsbawm, nationalism is, by dint of its very artificiality and modernity, to be questioned; in polemical contexts of interethnic conflict modernism can be used as a tool of delegitimation – against the other. Since "they" are recent invention, "they" have no legitimate claims' (Halliday, 2000: 156). Similarly, in the eyes of Chinese nationalists, Taiwan has no legitimate claim to nationhood or statehood.

not emerge from internal historical evolution but came instead through a traumatic blow struck from the outside' (Lin, 1979: 62).

### 3.1.1 The Traditional Chinese World Order

'The Chinese world order', coined by the Sinologist John Fairbank, refers to a set of cultural mentalities embedded in a traditional Sino-centric world (Fairbank, 1968). The Sino-centric world extended far beyond the territories under Chinese administrative power, and China took a superior attitude towards its neighbouring peoples and applied a universal culturalism to them. As Fairbank points out, it was arguably a world without *international relations*, a world of a hierarchical order with China as its summit (Fairbank, 1968). It was a world (*tianxia*, or *t'ien-hsia*, literally 'under the heaven') in which the Chinese imperial court, with its Confucian culture, was dominant and unchallenged by any of the neighbouring political and cultural formations. The Sinologist Joseph Levenson clearly illustrates what this Chinese world order meant:

> *T'ien-hsia* [*Tianxia*] signifies 'the (Chinese) Empire' – alternatively, 'the world'; as *t'ien-hsia*, China *is* the world. And *kuo* [*guo*] is a local political unit, a part of 'the Empire' in classical times, and in the modern world, 'the nation'. (Levenson, 1958: 99, italics in the original)

The maintenance of the traditional Chinese world order thus accounts for the lack of nationalism in Chinese history. I argue that the late arrival of industrialisation and the absence of capitalism only partly explain why historically there was no nationalism in China. The point is that China was a world very different from that of Western Europe, where the international state-system was gradually formed mainly through the mutual competition among the states in military and economic terms (Tilly, 1975). This longstanding Chinese world order was inimical to the development of nationalism in China. Thus, for the Chinese, as Townsend argues, 'there was no concept of, or need for nationalism, in this world devoid of cultural or interstate competition' (Townsend, 1992: 98-99).

The Chinese world order was primarily built on what was seen as the superior Confucian culture. A basic tenet in Confucian political thinking was the importance of maintaining the boundaries between what was perceived as China (the civilised world) and 'the rest' (the barbarian world). Nevertheless, these boundaries were not strictly defined by the notion of ethnicity; barbarians could easily become Chinese as long as

they had been sufficiently cultivated by Confucian ethics (Bockman, 1992). In such a 'world', there were virtually no clearly demarcated borders between China and 'the rest', not even the Great Wall. By the same token, Sinicised barbarians (e.g. the Manchus) were accepted as 'Sons of Heaven' by the Chinese 'with equanimity' (Anderson, 1991: 13).

The mutually reinforcing concepts of cultural superiority and universal kingship were the products of 'the Chinese world order' and its underlying 'culturalism'. However, since it was by this time no longer based on descent from one particular ethnic group, nor located within clearly delineated borders, this consciousness could best be described as supranational. Since the Confucian ideology was seen as having a universal currency that could be acquired by anybody, it followed that political legitimacy could be extended to non-Han groups such as Manchus and Mongols. Moreover, provided that these minorities accepted the prevailing orthodoxy, it was believed that they could exercise kingship in the same way. An important consequence of this was that the loyalty of their subjects was to the Confucian principle of 'rule-by-virtue', regardless of which ethnic group wielded it, rather than to a particular regime or nation state. At the same time, China's kinship-based social structure precluded identification with any unit higher than the family and clan.

### 3.1.2 Print and Nationalism in China

As a primary means of mass communication, printing has been widely recognised as a catalyst for the rise of nationalism. Yet, despite the fact that China was one of the first societies to use them, print and paper did not engender nationalism until the turn of the twentieth century. To assess the impact of printing on the rise of nationalism in the Chinese case, we need to take into account the writing system and the traditional Chinese world order: printing did have an influence on the rise of Chinese nationalism when the Chinese world order collapsed in the late nineteenth century. In other words, the absence of nationalism in pre-modern China cannot simply be explained away by 'the absence of capitalism' (Anderson, 1991: 44).

Although Anderson correctly states that the Chinese script itself 'created a community out of signs rather than sounds' (Anderson, 1991: 13), he attributes printing's failure to promote political and social transformations in China to the country's lack of capitalism.

Hence, in contrast to printing's role as an agent of social change in the West, it exerted only a 'weak' influence in China (Anderson, 1991: 44, n.21). His argument can be qualified by making explicit the socio-political implications of the Chinese writing system. Since it was unsuited to representing the countless vernaculars spoken by ordinary people (as was Latin in Europe) and was composed principally of ideographs rather than phonetic elements, the Chinese script was never universally used as a means of mass communication. Due to the nature of the writing system, in contrast to the case of Western Europe, printing in China had little chance to create 'unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars' and hence could not lay 'the bases for national consciousness' (Eisenstein, 1979: 44).

Over thousands of years in China, the only printed word, *wen yen*, remained the classical literary language and the preserve of elite classes such as civil servants, intellectuals and the gentry. Because of this 'sacred' writing system and the help of printing, a horizontal alliance among the elite was formed; and the elite effectively exerted its social control in the old Chinese world order. This writing system, together with printing, forged a high degree of cultural homogeneity among the elite in China, Korea, Vietnam and other places in East Asia. In other words, possessing literacy was akin to possessing a cultural capital that perpetuated the huge class divisions on which the continued imperial social order depended. Thus, China used to be a society in which the written language effectively precluded rather than facilitated access to literacy and the communication of ideas. Since the written/printed word was used in China as one of the principal agents of social stability, it is misleading to argue that printing was 'weak' in China.

Taken together, therefore, it was the Chinese world order and the nature of the Chinese writing system, rather than the absence of capitalism, that conditioned the influences of printing in making social change (e.g., the rise of Chinese nationalism) in China. There are some other grounds for this argument. First, the erosion of the Chinese world order did give rise to the political press in the late Qing period (Judge, 1996), when capitalism barely took root in China. Moreover, Chinese nationalists such as Sun Yat-sen did use printing to exert their profound influences upon the elite classes and finally overthrow the Qing Empire.

Secondly, nationalism did not exceed the circle of the elite classes even after the Republican Revolution of 1911. The critical factor for this was that there was no language cutting across all classes and all regions to unite the 'nation'. The classical literary language, *wen yen*, was unsuited for this task, but there was no alternative written language – not even for Mandarin, let alone the wide variety of other spoken languages in China. Against this background, some asserted in the Republican period that the Chinese characters should be abandoned and the Chinese spoken languages should be Europeanised (Romanised). But this radical move was opposed by many because, if this move succeeded, the Chinese people would not only speak differently but also write differently, thereby causing the already divided China during the period of warlordism (roughly between 1912 and 1928) to separate even further. Afterwards, while preserving the Chinese characters, the intellectuals finally invented a new literary language, *paihua* (or *baihua*), based on spoken Mandarin, and made efforts to promote it among the Chinese people (Goldman, 1973). Later, after the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) further simplified the Chinese characters.

### 3.1.3 The Rise of Chinese Nationalism

Though Anderson does not appropriately assess the power of printing in stabilising the Chinese world order, I agree with his argument that 'the Middle Kingdom – which, though we think of it today as Chinese, imagined itself not as Chinese, but as central' (Anderson, 1991: 12-13). This centrality, or as it has been called the 'Middle Kingdom Complex', was accepted as an authentic belief which it was the responsibility of the cultural elite to keep alive. Lucian Pye warns that 'the traditional Chinese "Middle Kingdom Complex" or the concept of Han chauvinism should not be treated as the same thing as Chinese nationalism' (Pye, 1993: 109). Chineseness was a symbolic, cultural, and (loosely defined) ethnic entity, sustained by interdependent infrastructures such as a unified script, an educated elite, etc. But this should in no way be construed as conferring the status of nation (McNeill, 1986). As will become clear in the following, the matter of who should be included in the newly established Chinese nation had confused the nationalists themselves.

*(1) The invention of the Chinese nation*

There was hardly any sense of national identity among the Chinese people. Not until 1899 was the very term *minzu* (the equivalent of 'nation' in English) introduced into the Chinese vocabulary. The same is true of the Chinese term for 'nationalism' (*minzu zhuyi*). Even the Chinese 'national father', Sun Yat-sen, did not begin using both terms until 1904 (Hughes, 1997: 3). Sun Yat-sen was clearly aware of the absence of the 'Chinese nation' he wished to promote when he gave a series of speeches in 1924. In the speeches which were later collected as *Three Principles of the People* (*San min zhu yi*), he bitterly complained that the Chinese people had only family and clan groups and there was a lack (loss) of 'national spirit' because the Chinese were fragmented as 'a heap of loose sand' (Sun, 1969: 1). It is worth noting that the speeches were made a decade after the establishment of Republican China. This illustrated that although the revolution of 1911 tore down the old Empire, the 'nation' was yet to be built or imagined. People in rural China only began making sense of the notions of 'China' and 'Chinese nationality' as late as the late 1930s, when the Japanese troops ravaged China (Johnson, 1962; Waldron, 1995). The same is true of the overseas Chinese in South East Asia (Anderson, 1998).

It is also worthy of note that all the ethnic groups mentioned by Anderson belong culturally to the Han, China's largest ethnic group. But there are more than 50 other officially acknowledged minorities which presently make up China. Suffice it to say that a Chinese nation of which the Han and other minority groups (such as Tibetans) are inclusive is a modern invention, involving a form of national myth-making which conflated the Empire with the nation-state. As will be argued in the following paragraphs, the Han was exactly the 'nation' that the Chinese nationalists in the late nineteenth century attempted to make, although the 'nation' was later extended to include other ethnic groups within the confines of the former Qing Empire. The process of expanding the meaning of the Chinese nation clearly demonstrated how the Chinese nationalists created the boundaries of nationhood.

At first, Chinese nationalism was synonymous with anti-Manchu nationalism amidst the impending traditional Chinese world order. The seeds of the collapse of culturalism had been sown around the time of the Opium Wars (1839-1842), and by the end of the nineteenth century most of its pillars had been undermined. The first target of what

nationalist feeling there was at this time was the Manchu ruling class, who were blamed for China's inability to stand up to the challenges posed by the powers. Since the Manchus had themselves been foreign aggressors, the nationalist revolt could at the same time be construed as anti-imperialist in character, yet its basic appeal was to Sino-centric sentiment as a means of reasserting the 'superior' ethnic-Han Chinese culture and values. By the time it erupted in the 1911 revolution, its strategy had not developed much beyond the elemental desire to overthrow the Manchus. The Chinese nation was imagined by the revolutionary nationalists not to include the Manchus. It was therefore not surprising that instead of the emergence of an integrated Chinese nation, all that followed was the collapse of the Empire and chaos on an unprecedented scale.

Subsequently, the 'nation' was re-invented to include all 'Chinese', regardless of ethnic, linguistic or religious differences, from within the former Manchu Empire. After the Republican revolution of 1911, Sun Yat-sen reinterpreted Chinese nationalism to include all the ethnic groups (the Manchus included) to make the Chinese nation, which was to be formed by five main ethnic groups (the Han, Manchus, Mongols, Muslim, and Tibetans). The 'five-barred flag' was adopted by the early Republic to reflect this reinterpretation (Hoston, 1994: 190).

*(2) Two rival heirs to Chinese Nationalism*

The development of Chinese nationalism split into two contrasting currents: a culturally syncretistic nationalism on the one hand and an iconoclastic anti-traditional nationalism on the other. The former was chiefly represented by the KMT and the latter was represented by the CCP. However, both currents of nationalism were similar insofar as the traditionalist unifying myth of 'all under heaven' 'was readily transferred [from culturalism] to state nationalism, which asserts that the state represents the true interests of its people as a whole, who constitute a nation in being or becoming, whatever their past cultural and political difference' (Townsend, 1992: 113). This is shown by the fact that once the modern Chinese states (the KMT state in the Republican era and the Communist state in the post-1949 era) were established, they asserted sovereignty over old imperial territories and extended the definition of 'Chinese' to incorporate non-Han peoples into a Chinese polity under their control.

This was actually an all-embracing concept of 'the Chinese nation', which was employed to include all ethnic groups as well as to claim the territories of the former Empire. As Lucian Pye asserts, 'it is important to distinguish Chinese nationalism from all the powerful sentiments associated with Chinese cultural and ethnic identity' (Pye, 1993: 110). Pye also finds it ironic that, despite its enormously rich cultural heritage, the nationalism displayed by China today appears relatively contentless. He recommends seeking definitions of Chinese nationalism, not from the claims of the nationalists themselves, but from what China was and who the Chinese used to be.

What was (or is) Chinese nationalism is hard to decide, but Pye probably comes as close as we will get when he asserts that 'Chinese nationalism is not something Chinese society can use to limit the Chinese state. Rather, Chinese nationalism is what the leaders of the day say it is, and this means that it becomes a defence of their formulation of what the consensus should be' (Pye, 1992: 231-232). Since 1949, the two heirs to Chinese nationalism, the CCP and the KMT, have represented two rival states across the Taiwan Strait, and accordingly Taiwan has become an agenda of central importance to Chinese nationalism.

### 3.1.4 Taiwan in Chinese Nationalism

At the end of the nineteenth century, Taiwan was regarded as China's least significant province. A mere 50 years later it was considered the most significant. What *is* remarkable is that both these contrary assessments were considered to be in the best interests of China as a whole.

The first assessment, by the Qing Empire, entailed hiving off Taiwan in 1895 to appease Japan, presumably in the hope that the integrity of the rest of the country would not be further threatened. The second assessment, by the KMT in Taiwan after 1949, was based on the need to include Taiwan in the ROC, the political recognition of which depended on its territorial possession of at least one constituent province. An important consequence of both these circumstances has been that for most of the last hundred years, the dominant perspective surrounding any discussion of the Taiwan question has

been essentially nationalist. This has been particularly the case since 1949.[2] Both the CCP on the Chinese mainland and the KMT on Taiwan itself have insisted that the island be re-united within the framework of a single Chinese nation (under their respective regimes).

First of all, Taiwan was not included as a part of China in the versions of the draft constitutions that were written for the republic established in 1912. Secondly, when Taiwan was mentioned in the Chinese nationalist discourses, it was not explicitly regarded as a territory that the new republic purported to include. For example, in Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles of the People*, Taiwan was listed alongside Korea, Vietnam, and others as 'the lost territories' (Sun, 1969: 13-14) by the old standards of the Qing Empire. Under Japanese colonial rule, the Taiwanese who went to China were treated by the Chinese 'as foreigners in the same way as Koreans' (Hughes, 1997: 5).

The above examples represented the KMT view on Taiwan. But there was no difference on the part of the CCP, another heir to Chinese nationalism. A thorough analysis of CCP documents between 1928 and 1943 shows that the CCP recognised the Taiwanese nationalist movement which took root under Japanese colonial rule as 'a national liberation by a distinct Taiwanese nation (*minzu*)' (Hughes, 1997: 13). Mao Tse-tung himself was said to take a similar view on Taiwan. In 1936, Edgar Snow, an American journalist with close connections to the CCP, had an audience with Mao. The conversation between Snow and Mao clearly reveals that Mao tended to see the Taiwanese as a distinct nation who had a right to self-determination (Snow, 1972: 128-129).

The Chinese nationalist view on Taiwan only started changing in 1942, when Chiang Kai-shek made claim to Taiwan. The claim that 'all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa [Taiwan], and the Pescadores [Penghu Island], shall be restored to the Republic of China' (quoted in Hughes, 1997: 6) received recognition from the United States and Great Britain at the Cairo Conference in 1943, when Chiang met Roosevelt and Churchill.

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[2] The territorial claims made by the CCP and KMT largely overlap, especially in respect of policies concerning the independence of Tibet and the Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang. Until recently, the KMT also laid claim to Outer Mongolia, now known as the People's Republic of Mongolia.

After the Second World War, the civil war between the KMT and the CCP resulted in the defeat of the KMT. Chiang Kai-shek and the remaining KMT forces fled to Taiwan in 1949. It was the CCP's turn to lay claim to Taiwan with the aim of 'liberating' the island from KMT control. The KMT claimed Taiwan for the simple reason that it represented its last stand. At the same time, the CCP's claim to Taiwan showed that the CCP could not afford to be less 'nationalist' and 'patriotic' than the KMT. This confrontation between the CCP and the KMT during the Cold War confirmed that Taiwan had secured its position as a critical dimension of the Chinese nationalism to which both the KMT and CCP regarded themselves as the only legitimate heir. Making claim to Taiwan as part of China has been vital to the legitimacy of the KMT and the CCP in both domestic and international politics. It enabled the KMT to secure its status as the legitimate government of China in the United Nations up to 1971. The Taiwan issue was also crucial for the CCP. As Hughes argues:

> If CCP dictatorship was to be established on the strange hybrid of nationalism and proletarian revolutionism, what is particularly relevant for the long-term significance of Taiwan in PRC politics is how the former element comes to take on an increasing prominence as belief in the revolution and CCP governance declines. (Hughes, 1997: 14-15)

## 3.2 Taiwanese Nationalism and China

Two major historical factors characterise Taiwan society above all others: one is that for centuries the island has been settled by people who emigrated from south-eastern China. Secondly, they have been mostly dominated by a succession of foreign regimes: the Spanish, the Dutch, the Manchus, the Japanese, as well as (from the perspective of some Taiwanese), the Chinese Nationalist regime that took over Taiwan at the close of the Second World War.

In 1590, when the Portuguese navigators 'discovered' the island and named it 'Formosa', Taiwan was also 'new' to the Chinese. Prior to its 'discovery' by Western navigators, it had been settled only by aboriginal, non-Chinese peoples who today comprise roughly 1 per cent of the population. The Han Chinese people did not constitute Taiwan's majority population until the seventeenth century. By 1642 the Dutch, who had annexed the island after receiving the message that it remained unclaimed even by China, were firmly in control (Goddard, 1966: 51). It was in this year that the Dutch East India

Company (DEIC), having expelled the Spanish from the north of the island, set up a political administration and began to levy taxes from the inhabitants (Wu, 1995: 20). In 1661, Koxinga (also known as Zheng Chengong), a Ming Dynasty (1369-1644) loyalist, expelled the DEIC in turn and set up a Chinese regime. This was the first time that Chinese people had exercised political control of Taiwan, and waves of migration from China ensued, driving the aboriginal population into the mountainous interior of the island (Lai et al., 1991: 13). However, Koxinga's regime, whose declared aim was to recapture the mainland from the Manchus and banish them to beyond the Great Wall, lasted only until 1683, when his grandson surrendered the island to the Qing (Manchu) Empire (1644-1911).

The Manchu Emperor regarded this newly acquired territory as *hua wai zi di* (literally, 'a place outside the [Chinese] civilisation'). He gave orders to evacuate to the mainland a significant number of the inhabitants (including Koxinga's defeated armies) and prohibited any further emigration in the other direction for fear of future rebellions against the Qing Empire. However, as the population of China expanded, the regime was increasingly unable to prevent people from sailing there illegally from China's south-eastern seaboard. Up to 1722, a law prohibited emigration for all except relatives of Taiwan residents, but after this date the law was no longer enforced. It was not actually abolished however until 1875 (Tu, 1993).

Although there was a degree of economic integration, Taiwan's political integration with China during Manchu rule was tenuous (Moody, 1992: 40). Not until in 1685 did the Qing dynasty bestow any administrative structure of its own on Taiwan, and then only by making it a prefecture of Fujian province. For most of the period it appears to have been regarded as a lawless society populated by random immigration from the coastal provinces of China. From time to time fierce fighting broke out amongst the different ethno-linguistic communities; however, the local government does not appear to have intervened. There are some records of rebellions against the Qing (Moody, 1992), but despite the weakness of the centre, there is little evidence before 1895 for supposing that a distinct Taiwanese consciousness developed.

### 3.2.1 The Birth of Taiwanese Consciousness

The real attempt by the Qing dynasty to bring some order to the island was made in 1885, when, in belated recognition of its economic and political importance, Taiwan was declared a separate province of China. Its first governor, Liu Mingchuan, initiated a programme of early modernisation (Goddard, 1966: 176).

Subsequently, Japan demanded Taiwan as reparation following the first Sino-Japanese war, and the crumbling Qing regime duly sacrificed it in the Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895. The response of the Taiwanese themselves to being made the scapegoat for the Qing regime's impotence was to declare a republic of their own. They named their new state *Taiwan Minzhuguo* (literally, 'the Democratic Republic of Taiwan'). This was arguably the first attempt in Asia to build a republican state. It was also extremely short-lived and little evidence about the social penetration of the ideals of its proponents survives (Tu, 1996: 1124).

Once Japan had established solid control of Taiwan by 1905, the process of early modernisation begun by Liu Mingchuan only accelerated and Taiwan's separation from the Chinese mainland inevitably became even more marked. The Japanese colonisers worked efficiently to develop its first colony Taiwan. There were also significant advances in aspects of mass education, literacy, medical care, and communications. Furthermore, for the first time in the history of the island, a functioning legal and police system was established (Beasley, 1987; Ho, 1984; Tu, 1993).

The combined result of these developments under Japanese colonial rule was a society becoming more economically self-sufficient, socially integrated and politically stable. However they were viewed, these conditions had conferred on the Taiwanese a sense of a separate destiny sufficient to lay the basis for a separate Taiwanese consciousness (Ho, 1984; Lai et al., 1991). At the same time, the awareness-raising effect of developments overseas spurred on the rise of a Taiwanese nationalist movement demanding equal citizenship and self-government. The rise of a Taiwanese nationalist movement was also stimulated by external developments such as the Chinese Republican Revolution of 1911, Taiwanese students' experiences of constitutional democracy in Japan during the Taisho period (1911-1925), the American President Wilson's declaration in 1918 of the

principle of national determination, and the mass demonstrations for Korean Independence in the spring of 1919 (Wu, 1971: 76-77).

In 1920, the local bourgeois Lin Xian-tang and a group of Taiwanese students in Tokyo set up the so-called *Xinminhui* or 'Association of New Citizens', the aim being to raise Taiwanese nationalist sentiment and initiate a long-term struggle for both self-government and equal citizenship. Since previous experience of armed struggle against the combined forces of the Japanese military and police had proved futile, the strategy adopted was liberal rather than radical. Their actions included publication of a nationalist newspaper and journals, the lobbying of the Diet (Japanese parliament) for a Taiwan-based assembly, and eventually the organisation of the first political party in Taiwan's history, the Taiwan People's Party (TPP, established in 1927, was banned in 1931 by the Japanese colonial government), to press for devolution and autonomous self-government (Wu, 1971:142, 150).

Many obstacles were placed in the way of the nationalists' attempts to publish and distribute newspapers and periodicals. Lin Xian-tang's first publication, the *Taiwan Youth Periodical* (later renamed *Taiwan*), first appeared in 1920. Published in Japanese with a section in Chinese, it circulated predominantly among Taiwanese students in Japan. A second periodical, the *Taiwan Minbao*, appeared three years later in Tokyo. It took years of lobbying for permission to publish in Taiwan itself and it was not until 1932 that the *Taiwan Xinminbao* finally appeared there. Although the same restrictions were placed on language as before (only one third of the content was in Chinese), the *Taiwan Xinminbao* was the only Taiwanese-owned and operated newspaper ever to be published daily throughout the 51-year rule of the Japanese colonial government. Over the next five years its circulation rose from 10,000 to 50,000, making it the second biggest-selling newspaper in Taiwan. It was forced by the Japanese colonial government to be incorporated into a Japanese-owned newspaper when the second Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937 (Robinson, 1984: 323; Wu, 1971: 551-552, 558, 568).

Of the campaigns launched by the early Taiwanese nationalists, the most notable was its annual lobby (from 1920 to 1934) of the Diet for a Taiwanese assembly with legislative and fiscal powers to be elected by the residents of Taiwan. Calling for an end to the despotic rule of the Governor-General, they demanded that Tokyo should allow Taiwan to become an autonomous dominion. Although there was some support among the

Japanese for some of the Taiwanese nationalists' aims, pleas for a parliament tended to be regarded as a Trojan horse of independence and national self-determination (Wu, 1971: 156). Nevertheless, while local Japanese-owned newspapers tried to discredit these claims, Tokyo-based Japanese newspapers did show a degree of sympathy (Wu, 1971: 168-174).

In 1921, the limitations on access to print media prompted Lin Xian-tang and others to set up cultural organisations for promoting Taiwanese national consciousness. They organised meetings throughout the island involving activities such as public speaking, newspaper reading clubs, and theatrical and other performances using Taiwanese vernaculars. Additionally, study camps were organised in summer vacations to teach students Taiwanese history and related knowledge (Wu, 1971: 92).

In 1927, news of the massacre of communists in Shanghai by Chiang Kai-shek's KMT caused a major split in the Association for Taiwanese Culture (Jian, 1997: 65-66). In Taiwan itself the remnants of the Association for Taiwanese Culture together with the Peasants' Association turned leftwards in sympathy, eventually becoming the Taiwanese Communist Party with the declared aims of overthrowing Japanese imperialism and seeking national independence for Taiwan (Jian, 1997: 141-142). The right, meanwhile, remained true to its liberal reformist tradition by re-organising itself under the banner of the TPP. Initially this was sanctioned by the colonial government, a move which was doubtless designed to dissuade the growth of a more militant opposition. As such it became the first legal political party in Taiwan's history but not for long: four years later, in 1931, it too was banned (Wu, 1971: 150).

What was demonstrated by these early nationalist campaigns was above all their pursuit of self-government and full citizenship rather than unification with China or separation from Japan. Before the Taiwanese nationalists' left-right split, there had been no call for complete independence from Japan, still less for a 'return' to China. Moreover, it was significant that even after the split, the national liberation strategy of the left (the Taiwanese communists) entailed the establishment of a national identity that was distinct from those of both Japan and China. Viewed from either a liberal or communist perspective, Taiwanese nationalism was arguably civic in character and in no sense a ramification of the incipient ethnic Chinese nationalism on the mainland. In any case,

despite divisions on strategy, the cause of self-government continued to receive support amongst the population at large until the Japanese were defeated.

### 3.2.2 The Coming of 'China'

The defeat of the Japanese at the end of the Second World War brought the Taiwanese not only de-colonisation but also the prospect of self-government. During the war and especially prior to an eventually abortive plan of seizing Taiwan for use as a base for an amphibious attack on the Japanese Mainland, the U.S. had launched a propaganda campaign via broadcasting and leaflets. The aim was to persuade the local population to assist this military operation or at least to behave as neutrals (Dreyer, 1995: 281; Kerr, 1965: ch.2).[3] Upon Japan's surrender in August 1945, American propaganda and world news entered Taiwan, raising the expectation of self-governance among the Taiwanese (Kerr, 1965). The actual outcome -- no self-governance and China's takeover of Taiwan – was a cruel blow to the Taiwanese (Lai et al., 1991: 51). It seemed to Taiwan nationalists that, as in the case of the Qing dynasty's ceding of Taiwan to Japan, the Taiwanese had once again not been consulted.[4]

When the Japanese troops surrendered in 1945, most Taiwanese rejoiced to see the end of Japanese rule. However, their excitement soon faded as they saw the poorly disciplined soldiers and officials arriving as late as in October 1945 from the Chinese mainland in sharp contrast to that of the relatively disciplined Japanese. The islanders soon realised that returning to the motherland was going to be far from auspicious (Kerr, 1965; Lai et al., 1991; Peng, 1973; Wu, 1995). A common expression of the time characterising the transfer of Taiwan from the Japanese administration to the Chinese administration was *gou zou zhu lai* or 'out with the dogs, in with the pigs' (see Lai et al., 1991: 93).

It was undoubtedly this clash of rising expectations and disappointed reality that culminated on February 28 1947 in what later became locally memorised as *Ererba*

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[3] In 1945 the number of radio sets in Taiwan was estimated at 50,000 (Kerr, 1965: 63); in 1947, when the February 28 Incident occurred, the number was 100,000 (Lai et al., 1991: 106).

[4] Taiwan's post-World War II status was a contentious matter. Some have argued that the diplomatic realignments which ensued from the de-colonialisation of Taiwan failed to take into account the then prevailing principles of national self-determination as they applied to de-colonised areas all over the world (Chen and Lasswell, 1967).

*shijian* (the February 28 Incident). In a savage crackdown, thousands of protesters against the KMT were killed by troops despatched from the Chinese mainland and many more were jailed and tortured (Kerr, 1965; Lai et al., 1991). Observers reported that the government that had taken over the island just two years earlier killed thousands of Taiwanese. The *New York Times* correspondent Tillman Durdin reported on March 29 1947 that 'these witnesses estimate that 10,000 Formosans were killed by the Chinese armed forces. The killings were described as "completely unjustified" in view of the nature of the demonstrations.'[5] The death toll caused by the Incident varied considerably from 6,000 (Lai et al., 1991) to 28,000 (*The Economist*, 8 March 1997: 76). Most of them were native educated doctors, lawyers and landlords. Clearly, this incident marked a defining moment in the history of Taiwan. It was followed by a regime of KMT police suppression wielded with varying degrees of severity right up to 1987, when martial law was finally lifted. It is not surprising that, up to the turn of the 1990s, the February 28 Incident and the subsequent 'white terror' (an anti-communist witch-hunt) of the 1950s remained officially ascribed to the actions of Communist agitators, and discussion of them was taboo in Taiwan. The fact was, however, that without eliminating the native opposition in this way, it is unlikely that the KMT state would ever have been able to consolidate itself on the island.

It took more than a decade after the Incident for another opposition group to emerge. It was not until 1960 that the fragmented and weakened opposition reassembled under a different banner as an informal association of native politicians and liberal intellectuals of 'Mainlander' origin attempting to organise a political party. Using the columns of the *Free China Semi-Monthly*, a liberal periodical published by Lei Zhen, they criticised Chiang Kai-shek's dictatorship and called for a real 'Free China' instead of the KMT's self-styled version. During the same period, native scholar Peng Ming-min drafted the 1964 *Declaration of Taiwanese Salvation* with an explicit appeal to Taiwanese self-determination. Soon afterwards, both Lei Zhen and Peng Ming-min were imprisoned (see Hughes, 1997: 33-36). In January 1972, following the ROC's expulsion from the UN and completion of his ten-year prison sentence, Lei Zhen addressed his *Jiuwang Tucun Xianyi* (*A Proposal for the Survival of the Country*) to Chiang Kai-shek, in which he proposed to rename the ROC the Democratic Republic of Chinese Taiwan

[5] Available online from http://cinemaspace.berkeley.edu/Papers/CityOfSadness/thread.html.

(*Zhonghua Taiwan Mingzhuguo).* Coincidentally, this echoed the same name (*Taiwan Mingzhuguo)* by which the short-lived republic declared in the late nineteenth century had been known. Lei's justification was that that 'the territories we are now governing used to be called "Taiwan". If we include "Taiwan" in the official name of the country, then the country [the ROC based on "one China" policy] will since no longer exist as a myth' (cited in Li, 1995: 79, translations are mine). This second wave of Taiwanese nationalism since the defeat of Japan was stopped in its tracks by KMT suppression.

The third wave began to gather momentum in 1971. This was the year in which the Republic of China on Taiwan was expelled from membership of the United Nations (and replaced by the Beijing-based government of the People's Republic). This was a move that brought the KMT's project of constructing Taiwan as a microcosm of all China open to challenge.

Following Taiwan's expulsion from the United Nations, the most noteworthy of many political magazines to emerge were *The Taiwan Political Review* and *The Formosa Magazine.* All were critical of the KMT and demanded democracy. The KMT responded by confiscating or suspending the publications and even imprisoning the publishers. Such dissident journals provided a key vehicle for the arguments of Taiwanese nationalists, who had gathered sufficient momentum in 1986 to set up their own political party—the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)—even before the KMT had officially withdrawn its ban on the formation of opposition groupings. The KMT must have known that this third wave of the democratic movement with implicit Taiwanese nationalist appeal was unstoppable.

Before moving on to map the later trajectories of Taiwan nationalism, I will examine in turn some linked strands from which the knot of Taiwan's national identity question has been tied.

### *(1) The marginalisation of the ethnic majority*

It has been claimed that for the sake of consolidating and legitimating an authoritarian regime and minimising potential ethnic conflict (and even secession movements), the state tends to recruit from and therefore incorporate the ethnic majority (Smith, 1991:

41). Over the first two decades of the KMT rule in Taiwan, however, the very opposite was the case. In practice this meant that 'Mainlanders' simply filled the political vacuum left by the departing Japanese occupiers. All the top positions of power on the island within party, government and military were assigned to 'Mainlanders' who had taken refuge with Chiang Kai-shek's defeated armies after 1949. Since no national elections were held until 1969, this meant that Taiwan's ethnic majority was effectively excluded from political participation for the first two decades of KMT rule. Even then only a limited number of seats in the Legislative Yuan and National Assembly were open to contest for the purpose of supplementing the seats previously occupied by delegates 'representing' Mainland constituencies.

In fact it was not until the1970s that 'native Taiwanese' were recruited to any of the ROC's ruling circles. The initiative here was taken by Chiang Kai-shek's son Chiang Ching-kuo, who, on assuming the premiership in 1972, appointed three 'native Taiwanese' members of the 19-member Executive Yuan,[6] the national cabinet of the Republic of China (ROC). This was part of a 'Taiwanisation' policy designed to strengthen the regime's legitimacy over Taiwan and thereby to compensate for its lost international legitimacy (Moody, 1992: 5; Wu, 1995). Although the policy took effect slowly -- 'native' membership of the Executive Yuan was still only 7 in 1986 (Domes, 1993: 121) -- these efforts at 'Taiwanisation', which are still commended by DPP figures today, did help the KMT to improve its relations with the ethnic majority in Taiwan. Nevertheless, the continuing political dominance of 'Mainlanders' was by no means compromised. Even in 1987, the last year of Chiang Ching-kuo's rule, the ethnic composition of top positions of the ruling party, national cabinet, military, police and parliament were still far from proportional. Although they made up less than 13 per cent of the population, 'Mainlanders' occupied most of the top positions in state organs and up to 96 per cent of the top positions in the military (Kau, 1996: 57, 59; Moody, 1992: 59).

*(2) Prolongation of the civil war*

The outcome of the civil war between the Nationalist and Communist Parties was the establishment of the PRC in October 1949. Paradoxically, though, the war on the

opposite side of the Taiwan Strait has never ended. It has been cynically prolonged for more than four decades, and has affected every aspect of Taiwan politics since, including the Leninist structure of the ruling KMT and the resulting authoritarian style of governance.

In 1949 it seemed unlikely that the KMT government could survive without external support, notably from the United States. Prior to the Korean War, U.S. policy toward Taiwan was confused. But, following the PRC's intervention in the Korean conflict, and principally as a means to contain the spread of international communism, it was firmed up into U.S. recognition of the KMT regime as the sole legitimate government of China (Gold, 1993: 171; Moody, 1992: 67). As long as Taiwan was embroiled in intermittent disputes as one of the parties to a civil war and there was no plebiscite to prove otherwise, there seemed no alternative for other countries such as Japan but to go along with the KMT regime (Gold, 1993; Kerr, 1965; Moody, 1992).

In retrospect, the consolidation of the KMT on Taiwan depended not only on the regime's ability to legitimate its representative status as the government of China but also on its maintenance of the one-party dictatorship by means of state repression. Thus, the advocacy of Taiwanese independence was inevitably tarred with the brush of collaboration with the rival Communist regime (Tsang, 1993: 2-3). The situation was loaded with ironies, not the least of which was that the Taiwanese people were being prevailed upon to sacrifice their civil rights for the sake of recovering the mainland, a cause which was not only futile but also superfluous. In short, the KMT had boxed itself into a corner. Its argument, as Moody points out, was circular: its rule over Taiwan could only be justified by its claim to the whole of China, while its claim to rule the whole of China functioned as the prerequisite of its rule over Taiwan (Moody, 1992: 4-5).

### *(3) The mismatch between the state and the governed*

At the beginning of his introduction to *In the Shadow of China*, Tsang states:

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[6] One of the three was Lee Teng-hui, who became in 1984 the Vice President of ROC and in 1988 succeeded Chiang Ching-kuo as the first native-born President of ROC in Taiwan.

> The history of Taiwan since 1949 is a paradox. For all practical purposes, it is an independent state. However, its government has most vehemently held that an independent state of Taiwan does not exist. (Tsang, 1993: 1)

The paradox highlighted by Tsang is that for the KMT Taiwan was only a temporary base, since it claimed that it formed the government of the whole of China. The chief means by which the Chinese nationalists have achieved this is the 1947 Constitution of the Republic of China, which represents for them a sacred source of legitimacy, known in Chinese as *fatong*. However, their constant struggle over half a century to preserve *fatong* has not only widened the gap between the polity and the governed but created a whole range of political anomalies. For the KMT to narrow the gap in any way would be tantamount to undermining its claim to be the sole and legitimate government of all China. Hence the necessity, from the KMT's point of view, to retain the four-tier political system in Taiwan as if the government still governed the whole of China.

At the apex of this system was the central government, ostensibly for all China. Below that were ranged the Taiwan provincial government and the Taipei and Kaohsiung municipal governments. The third level comprised municipalities (*shi*) and counties (*xian*), and the fourth towns (*xiang*) and districts (*li*). Administratively such a structure was superfluous, since the territories controlled by the ROC government coincided with those of the 'province' of Taiwan. However, if the ROC government had reduced this structure by even one tier, at either central or provincial level, at a stroke it would have become a government of Taiwan alone. Many political debates addressed this anomaly, but for all the old reasons of self-preservation the KMT remained reluctant to amend the 1947 constitution (Tsang, 1993: 5) until the late 1990s.

A further political anomaly was manifested in the non-elective parliamentary bodies, which demonstrated an inability to replace members elected in 1947 from Mainland constituencies to the National Assembly, Legislative Yuan and Control Yuan upon expiry of their terms of office. According to the KMT's conception of legitimacy, if the ROC government reconstituted these bodies by holding elections only in territories under its control, it would lose its claim to represent the whole of China. Thus, in order to maintain the myth, it continued to regard these ageing members as representatives of the entire Chinese nation. Not until January 1989, when a law was passed requiring these members to retire by the end of 1991, was this anomaly resolved.

*(4) The promotion of Chinese nationalism*

Taiwan's residents were divided by two conflicting mentalities: those of the 'Mainlanders' and the 'native Taiwanese'. As we have seen, mutual antagonisms arose between these two groups almost as soon as Chiang Kai-shek's troops set foot on the island. I have also considered some of the political consequences for the Taiwanese of the KMT regime's need to present itself as the representative of the people of the whole of China. There were also far-reaching cultural consequences. Public discourses tended to be overloaded with high-pitched patriotic sentiments. Social infrastructures, particularly educational and military programmes, were full of explicit political and nationalist indoctrination.

Another important way in which the KMT sought to bolster its image as the guardian of Chinese traditional culture was to establish in Taipei a Committee for Chinese Cultural Renaissance. Headed by President Chiang Kai-shek himself, this was Taiwan's response to Communist China's so-called Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the mid-1960s, and was a vehicle for the promotion of Chinese nationalism. An ideological dispute was whipped up between the two rival states on the theme of 'Cultural Renaissance' versus 'Cultural Revolution'. The Communists on the Chinese mainland declared war on traditional Chinese culture and religion, attacked Confucian values, destroyed ancient temples, tortured practitioners and scholars of tradition, and banned traditional opera and literature. By contrast, the KMT in Taiwan promoted a renaissance of Chinese traditions, art forms, Confucianism and Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles of the People.* Much of the posturing was done by the two rival party leaders (Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek) personally, and in both territories the cult of personality ran riot.

In Taiwan the KMT strove to characterise Chiang Kai-shek as the inheritor of Chinese culture and the island itself as the repository of China's cultural heritage. To be loyal to Chiang therefore also meant to be patriotic to the Chinese nation. The converse was deemed to be true, of course, and the consequences for Taiwanese subjectivity of this ideological battle to make Taiwan more Chinese than the Chinese mainland were profound. These practices were accompanied by a simultaneous suppression of Taiwanese local culture and languages. Schoolchildren were punished for speaking their mother tongue in school. Though they had to memorise the names of Mainland rivers and mountains, they learned next to nothing about the island they lived on. Main roads

in Taiwanese cities were renamed after Chiang Kai-shek or Sun Yat-sen. Streets in Taipei were renamed after Mainland cities such as Beijing or Nanjing, as if the whole of China had been transplanted there. Native place names that even the Japanese had retained were replaced by the KMT. Until the early 1990s the KMT continued to mark in people's identity cards their places of origin in the Chinese mainland.

### 3.2.3 The Return of Taiwanese Consciousness

The result of this bombardment by Chinese nationalism, however, was that Taiwanese consciousness returned to the political front. In using the term 'returned', I deliberate imply its earlier emergence but do not mean the two are one and the same. In its early form, as already explained, Taiwanese consciousness moved forward the campaigns for home rule, the goal for which the Taiwanese had struggled under Japanese colonialism and in the early years of the KMT regime (Kerr, 1965, 1974; Lai et al., 1991). Despite differences between Taiwanese nationalism of late and its predecessor in the colonial/post-war times, the agenda of Taiwanese nationalism since the 1970s has remained clear: to aim by means of civic strategies for a polity based upon popular sovereignty. In the run-up to the political transition of 1987-1988 and over the decade since the transition, Taiwanese nationalism has played a pivotal role in Taiwan's far-reaching political transformation.

As has been noted, the one-party state in Taiwan limited the range of electoral competition and political participation for nearly half a century. Nevertheless, since the 1970s, international isolation coupled with the emergence of the middle class created by steady economic growth within the island has given rise to an emergent civil society in Taiwan. As Taiwan's middle class grew stronger, the non-KMT native elite started to challenge KMT's authoritarianism in various ways. One involved the first mass demonstration against the KMT since 1949. This took place in Zhongli during communal elections in 1977. Two years later, following de-recognition by the U.S. and the KMT's suspension of national elections of 1978, the so-called Formosa Incident erupted in Kaohsiung. This was a mass rally calling for a new Parliament comprehensively re-elected from a constituency which included 'native Taiwanese'. The subsequent suppression, military trial and imprisonment of the organisers stimulated anti-KMT sentiment throughout the country, and it was significant that throughout

succeeding national elections in the early 1980, they garnered considerable sympathy and support from voters (Li, 1987).

During the 1980s, a series of collective actions and social initiatives were launched against the KMT. Issues ranged from environmental protection through agricultural policy and freedom of speech to women's rights (Hsiao, 1990). These popular movements accelerated a resurgence of Taiwanese consciousness and, as explained earlier in this chapter, in 1986 a new political party was (illegally) established for the first time since 1945. The general expectation was that the KMT government would ban it. However the desire of the Taiwanese people had finally become obvious enough even for Chiang Ching-kuo to realise that this would be counter-productive. More surprising however was Chiang's move to lift martial law, repeal the ban on opposition newspapers, and to legalise opposition parties. This dramatic change, which suggested that even a powerful authoritarian state had to make concessions to the rise of civil society and Taiwanese consciousness, symbolised one of the most significant changes of course in Taiwan's post-war history.

During the period 1989 to 1997 elections were held in Taiwan almost every year. Although the DPP increased its support in the local and county mayoral elections, the KMT retained its overall majority in the national legislature. It appears that the DPP's retention of its pro-independence stance still deters electors from supporting the party in elections to the national legislature or presidency. For example, in the run-up to the 1991 National Assembly election, the DPP provoked the anger of the mainland CCP by declaring itself in favour of a referendum on independence, thereby scaring the electorate at large. Whilst they were in favour of a strengthened opposition, the majority of voters remained reluctant openly to support independence. More recently, the DPP has responded to this electoral trend by shifting its focus from mass-movement issues to public policy concerns.

Paralleling the softening of the DPP's radicalism, a split opened up within the KMT between the faction around Lee Teng-hui (the first native-born president of the ROC on Taiwan) and the old hard-line 'Mainlanders' over the 'Taiwanisation' of the party, a trend initiated by Lee in order to form a strategic alliance with the DPP in the interest of ongoing political democratisation and constitutional reform. Consequently, democratisation led to concessions by the KMT over the most sensitive event -- the

February 28 Incident of 1947. In 1992, the government, led by the ruling KMT party, admitted the KMT's responsibility for the 1947 killings. In 1995, President Lee Teng-hui unveiled a monument to the victims in Taipei and made a public apology for the KMT's behaviour; and the legislature passed a bill to compensate victims. Since then, progress in rehabilitating the victims of the February 28 Incident has been under way. In 1997, a few days before the 50th anniversary of the Incident, the legislature voted to make February 28 a national holiday (*The Economist*, 8 March 1997: 76). These changes, in retrospect, paved the way for a unique hybridisation between the two strands of nationalism.

## 3.3 Conclusion

This historical account of nationalism in China and in Taiwan has provided evidence of the role of printing in mobilising national consciousness in the two cases. It has also pointed to the fact that nationalism only emerged in China and/or Taiwan after the collapse of the old Chinese world order. As we have seen, the issue of Taiwan only came on to the agenda of Chinese nationalism in the 1940s and has since secured its significance. The problem is that since the early twentieth century, people in Taiwan have gradually developed a different, if not necessarily opposing, image and expectation of nationhood. Therefore, there were actually two distinct and conflicting nationalist movements in Taiwan after the end of the Second World War, when Chinese nationalism imported from the mainland met its Taiwanese counterpart. Both strands of nationalism have survived and changed (or changed to survive) in recent decades and have had a profound influence on the formation of national identity in Taiwan.

The return of Taiwanese consciousness, I have argued, paved the way for the long transition of Taiwan from an authoritarian polity to an increasingly sustainable democracy, which, in turn, has forged in Taiwan a relatively new political culture. Within this new political culture, the unprecedented combination of freedom of the press and political participation has made it possible for the power of the state, which formerly only revolutionary violence was capable of influencing, to be potentially restricted and redefined by public opinion. The reconfigured relations between state and society have continued to develop.

Taiwan's democratisation has made it possible, for the first time in the Chinese societies, to negotiate one's national identity rather than have it imposed from above or defined for one merely by ethnic origin. In terms of its future prospects, I agree with Tu Wei-ming when he points out that what it means to be Chinese has changed (Tu, 1994, 1996), and that 'Chineseness' in Taiwan is no longer incompatible with Taiwanese consciousness. However, where I part company with him is in his assertion that 'it is not inconceivable that de-Sinicisation will be a precondition for a new Taiwanese cultural identity' (Tu, 1996: 1117). I wish to argue that, while it is true that what it means to be Chinese has changed, so has what it means to be Taiwanese. Thus, it follows that the Taiwanese nation (however defined) of today may encompass not only the 'native Taiwanese' but also people of 'Mainlander' origin and their offspring. It is therefore constituted in terms of territorial and civic factors that emphasise equal citizenship among the people of Taiwan rather than ties of descent alone. This is not to deny that the renewed concept of nationhood itself may for some time be perceived, as it is still conceived in many Chinese communities, as foreign.

In later chapters I will examine the role of the media, and television in particular, in the complex process of interaction between the state and the nation in giving rise to a redefined national identity in Taiwan. Prior to this examination, the next chapter will profile the media landscape in Taiwan, as this will help us to understand how the KMT used to control the media for the purpose of promoting Chinese nationalism and how the mediated national culture was strictly regulated from above but subsequently became more open to challenges posed from below (and from outside Taiwan).

# 4.

# The Political Economy of the Media in Taiwan

This chapter seeks to demonstrate the centrality of the media in the consolidation of the Chinese Nationalist regime (KMT) in Taiwan, and to identify the main trends and characteristics of the KMT's media policy and their implications for the formation of national identity in Taiwan. It also examines the KMT's exploitation of television to assert its ideological hegemony and repress political dissent, particularly dissent arising from the emergent Taiwanese nationalism.

The chapter first explores how the political economy of national media has formed since the end the Second World War, when the KMT took over Taiwan following the defeat of Japan's colonial rule. Then, it examines the factors contributing to the changes in Taiwan's television landscape, especially since the late 1980s, when satellite and cable television took root and spread over the island, and when the political transition turned the island nation from an authoritarian society into a nascent democracy.

## 4.1 Media Matters: The KMT as A Diasporic Regime

Few political parties in the world are as powerful as the KMT, which exercises dominant power in the spheres of Taiwan's national politics, economy, and culture.[1] In view of the fact that the KMT was originally a regime in exile in Taiwan, how can we explain this transformation? Clearly, many factors are important, but certainly the media have been especially significant in helping to build such a powerful diaspora regime. The argument here, in a nutshell, is that the media not only contributed to the

[1] The KMT was considered to be probably the world's richest political party (*The Economist*, 30 December 1998). According to *The Economist*, the KMT owns 'majority stakes in at least 30 big Taiwanese firms, and minority (but often controlling) stakes in 300 more' (*The Economist*, 9 March 2000). That makes the KMT a '$20 billion business Empire' (*The Economist*, 9 March 2000).

consolidation of the KMT regime in Taiwan, but also became a constitutive part of that regime.

Let us first consider the question of how the KMT, as a regime in exile following its defeat and withdrawal to Taiwan in 1949, was able to survive and subsequently prosper in Taiwan, where it had to govern a somewhat alienated majority population (i.e. the 'native Taiwanese'). How did the KMT overcome all these difficulties and legitimise its principal aim of consolidating itself in Taiwan with a view to mobilising the population to retake the mainland? In fact, in order to achieve this aim, the KMT needed to create a national identity in Taiwan which was congruent with the Chinese homeland to which it continued to lay claim.

But, however widespread it may be among nationalists themselves, the conception of a nation-state as a ready-made 'package' incorporating a national identity based on shared descent, history, language, ethnicity or whatever is quite unrealistic. (This is especially so in the case of Taiwan, as was made clear in the previous chapter's discussion of the development of Chinese and Taiwanese nationalisms.) A major problem with this agenda, of course, was that conceptions of nationhood among the population the KMT now controlled were largely contradictory. The 'Mainlander' incomers, on the one hand, for whom the idea of a nationalist cause was still barely a generation old, were actually 'in exile' and were separated from the homeland in which they were expected to realise their aspirations. The 'native Taiwanese', on the other hand, though living in their own homeland, had already had one alien Japanese identity imposed upon them and were unlikely to be enthusiastic about submitting to another.

Another obstacle was the lack of a common language. The majority of Taiwanese had no command of Mandarin, while the 'Mainlanders' spoke no local Taiwanese languages.[2] Probably about two-thirds of the Taiwanese population at large were far more familiar with Japanese (Lai et al., 1991: 93-96). For their mother tongue, most Taiwanese spoke one or more of a range of 'dialects' such as Hokkien and Hakka which,

[2] It should be emphasised here that even within the 'Mainlander' group there was great linguistic diversity, since they came from many different provinces of China, speaking a variety of provincial and local languages. Furthermore, in the early years of KMT rule in Taiwan, Mandarin had yet to become a common language even for 'Mainlanders'.

although mostly stemming from the same Sino-Tibetan roots as Mandarin, were so far removed from it as to be, certainly in their spoken form, virtually separate languages.

A third threat to the KMT's consolidation of its own brand of national culture was the impact of foreign culture, particularly from the United States and Japan. On the one hand, Japanese culture was deemed to have left behind a negative influence, whereas, on the other hand, it was feared that military and economic dependence on the United States might lead too far in the direction of cultural dependence. Indeed, Chiang Kai-shek himself is said to have suggested that too great an emphasis on materialism could have a demoralising effect on the population and thus weaken their resistance to communism (Lee, 1980).

Among the obvious means to KMT's initial end of establishing a uniform national culture were policing, compulsory military service and compulsory education. Just as pivotal to its design, however — particularly in view of its alarm at the effectiveness of Communist propaganda in the battle for the mainland — was the control of the media. One of the main aims of this chapter therefore is to examine the KMT state's attempt, in the face of these problems, to use the media to define a national culture. The focus will be on the post-Second World War period from 1945 up to the political reforms of 1987-88.

A key feature of the state's ideological intervention in the media and cultural domains, according to Winckler, is that it intensified throughout this period and only started slackening its grip in the run-up to the transition (Winckler, 1994). This is in contrast to the level of authoritarianism in the political arena generally, which declined gradually throughout, and markedly so from the 1970s onwards, when Chiang Ching-kuo began to introduce his so-called Taiwanisation programme. Regarding the cultural sphere generally, Winckler is correct. However, where the regulation of broadcast media, and television in particular, is concerned, it was only after the transition period that the KMT began to relax its controls.

## 4.2 MEDIA CONTROL SINCE 1945

Apart form martial law, the Broadcasting Act and the Publication Act, the KMT state was never short of means to censor the press, print and broadcasting. Some of the relevant laws, such as the General Mobilisation Law of 1942 that had existed in the mainland, were brought with them to Taiwan by the KMT. Three major features of the KMT's cultural policy, which the party instituted from the beginning of its rule, were 'Mandarinisation', 'Mainlanderisation', and 'fortification'. All were applied to the regulation of print and broadcast media. The aim of the first of these policies was to promulgate the use of Mandarin Chinese as widely as possible and establish it as the national language. 'Mainlanderisation' would seem to be an apt description of who controlled the media in Taiwan, for an inevitable consequence was that most of the important media were put in the hands of the 'Mainlanders'. The third of the policies bears the stamps both of anti-communism and cultural protectionism. Here the intention was to strengthen popular antagonism against the CCP and to fortify media culture against foreign (especially American and Japanese) influences.

### 4.2.1 Print Media: Newspapers and Magazines

During the first five years of the KMT's rule, the total circulation of newspapers in Taiwan was relatively small. From 1945 up to the February 28 of 1947 Incident, there were about 20 dailies, many of them new titles. Since the majority of Taiwanese knew little Chinese, most of the newspapers contained a Japanese section. Following the Incident, 11 Taiwanese-owned titles were banned by the Nationalist Governor-General of Taiwan, Chen Yi, who had been sent by Chiang Kai-shek to govern Taiwan in 1945. Others went bankrupt as a result of the severe inflation caused by the worsening civil war on the mainland, but as more 'Mainlanders' arrived and more Mainland newspapers were transferred to the island, the total number of newspapers increased to about 40. Most of them were owned by the government, the KMT, the military or others who were affiliated with the power circle. Only two newspapers, *The Independent Evening Post* (*Zili Wan Bao*) and *the Public Critique Daily* (*Gong Lun Bao*), were owned by native non-KMT Taiwanese (Chen and Zhu, 1987: 25, 28, 35, 81).

From 1950, KMT control of the press was considerably tightened. The size, selling price and number of titles were all restricted. Japanese-owned paper plant was confiscated, paper imports from abroad were prohibited, and the distribution of newsprint was centralised. No newspaper was permitted to exceed six pages in size. In 1958 the limit was increased to eight pages and in 1967 to ten. The prices of all titles were set at a single level. Printing and distribution was strictly limited to registered locations. From 1951, by which time the government itself owned seven newspapers, the establishment of new titles was further restricted through a licensing system which favoured 'Mainlanders' (Chen and Zhu, 1987: 59). This inequity was further exacerbated by the fact that since most advertising in that period consisted of government announcements, the KMT was able indirectly to control the revenues earned from it. In this way, the KMT-owned *Central Daily* (*Zhongyang Ribao* in Chinese) and the provincial government-owned *Taiwan New Life Daily* (*Taiwan Xinsheng Bao*) were able to absorb two-thirds of advertising expenditure between them, while eight privately owned newspapers shared the remainder. This was mainly to the disadvantage of the papers owned by the 'native Taiwanese'.

Press freedom was tightly controlled. Here, too, papers owned by the 'native Taiwanese' suffered more, since they tended to be more critical of the government. In 1960, for instance, Li Wan-ju, the publisher of *the Public Critique Daily*, was implicated in a campaign to organise a new political party. *The Public Critique Daily* was closed in 1961, never to reappear. For reporting this, *the Independent Evening Post* was suspended twice. Around this politically sensitive time, when 31 newspapers between them shared a total circulation of about 700,000, the granting of publication licences was suspended altogether (Chen and Zhu, 1987: 110).

The KMT claimed to control the print media primarily through post-publication censorship but it also had other methods. It ensured that, in keeping with their Mandarinisation policy, newspapers were staffed by writers whose command of Mandarin Chinese was of a suitable standard. More often than not, these were 'Mainlanders' whose political credentials were deemed to be equally 'suitable'. Much of the time, self-censorship ensured that damaging material was never written in the first place. Often the KMT would 'place' a story out of the need for anti-communist

propaganda or enhancement of its own image, in which case it would stipulate how it should be handled (Tien, 1989).

As Taiwan's economy began to take off around 1963, the market for newspapers expanded significantly, and by 1971 total circulation had doubled. Over the same period a series of mergers and take-overs resulted in the party-owned *Central Daily* yielding its circulation to the privately owned *China Times* (*Zhongguo Shibao*) and *United Daily* (*Lianhe Bao*). This was an example not so much of privatisation as of cronyism, since the two titles, which between them had a circulation of over 70 per cent of the total newspaper market in Taiwan, were owned by members of the Central Standing Committee of the KMT (the KMT's equivalent to the CCP's politburo). These two publishing companies then went on to swallow up many other publications, eventually turning themselves into conglomerates. Despite the resulting concentration of ownership, till 1988 the total number of titles remained at 31, made up of 24 daily, 5 evening and 2 English-language titles. Of these, the government and party admitted to owning 11 titles between them, although there are grounds for supposing that they continued to control or subsidise many of the remaining 20.

The third major privately owned paper was *The Independent Evening Post*, which was published by the late Wu San-lian, a non-KMT political figure in Taiwan who, like Li Wan-ju, was involved in the unsuccessful campaign in 1960 to form an opposition party. The relative freedom of his newspaper from interference is accounted for by his friendly relations with Chiang Ching-kuo. Nevertheless, public institutions and official agencies were forbidden to subscribe to the paper (Tien, 1989: 244).

The case of magazine publishing in Taiwan is of special note, for although the KMT characteristically discouraged political content, magazines became important channels for political dissent. One reason for this was undoubtedly that the spotlight of political censorship tended to be trained on the more frequently appearing newspapers. Nevertheless, magazines were subject to broadly similar restrictions (Winckler, 1994: 33).

During the 1970s and 1980s, magazines began to appear in greater numbers,[3] though they still had to run the gauntlet of government restrictions. Among the political magazines, *Taiwan Political Review* (*Taiwan Zheng Lun*), *the Eighties* (*Bashi Niandai*, launched by Kang Ningxiang in 1979) and *Formosa Magazine* (*Meilidao Zazhi*) were most outspoken in their criticism of the KMT.[4] The articles they ran promoted Taiwanese consciousness, addressed Taiwan's future status and called for political reforms (Li, 1987).[5] As Tien (1989) points out, the frequency of confiscation and suspensions connected with such publications increased rapidly from about 1984 onwards, confirming Winckler's argument that the KMT actually stepped up its surveillance of the media through the period up to 1987.[6]

The overall aim of the KMT's policy with respect to print media, then, was to keep public discourse in line with party positions and discourage political discussion. 'Mandarinisation', of both newspapers and magazines, meant effectively that as far as possible 'Mainlanders' were placed in positions of stewardship of media content, whether as owners, editors or staff members. Fortification, on the other hand, entailed rigorous censorship of any materials which might weaken the resistance of readers to Communism. It also meant that until 1988 the import of publications (including newspapers, books and magazines) from abroad was strictly limited.

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[3] In 1966, there were 953 magazines in Taiwan. By 1971, the number had grown to 1,534. In 1981, it was 2,244 (Directorate-General of Budget Accounting and Statistics, 1996: 260).

[4] The title *"Eighties"* for a magazine which began publication in 1979 indicated that the opposition, especially the pro-independence faction, was deliberately questioning the legitimacy of the KMT and the ROC, in whose official calendar 1979 was reckoned to be the 68th year of the Republic. A similar practice had been adopted by the pro-independence publishers of *Formosa Magazine*, knowing full well that the KMT loathed this "alien" term for the island of Taiwan.

[5] The *Formosa Magazine* was particularly active in urging people to call for political reform. In 1979, when the U.S. was ready to withdraw diplomatic recognition of the ROC, the founders of the *Formosa Magazine* lead an unprecedented mass rally against the KMT government. As a consequence of disturbances which later became known as the 'Formosa Incident', eight leading opposition figures were subsequently sentenced to from 12 years to life imprisonment.

[6] From 1950 to 1981, 141 such measures were carried out. In 1984 alone there were 211, then 275 in 1985 and 302 in 1986. Actually, a banned magazine would usually resurrect itself under a new name (Tien, 1989: 256-260).

### 4.2.2 Audio-visual Media: Radio, Cinema and Television

In the case of audio-visual media, the KMT's Mandarinisation and fortification measures were more blatant, and right up to the transition of the late 1980s the government operated a virtual oligopoly of radio and television.

*(1) Radio broadcasting*

Radio broadcasting was introduced to Taiwan during Japanese rule in 1928, soon after it had appeared in the West. By the end of the occupation, the number of radio stations had reached six (Ng, 1996: 194), all of which were confiscated by the KMT government in 1945. Table 4.1 shows that in the first few decades of KMT rule, licences were granted for a small number of privately owned radio stations, but almost exclusively to 'Mainlanders' (Wang, 1993).

**Table 4.1: Allocation of radio broadcasting resources in Taiwan**

| Ownership | Number of companies | Transmitters | Transmission capacity (kw) | Proportion of transmission capacity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Private | 20 | 64 | 304 | 1.8% |
| Military | 6 | 176 | 8,524 | 51.4% |
| Government | 6 | 56 | 609 | 3.7% |
| KMT | 1 | 139 | 7,159 | 43.2% |
| TOTAL | 33 | 435 | 16,596 | 100% |

*Source:* (Cheng, 1993: 34-35).

Mandarinisation was introduced only gradually, partly because most listeners did not understand spoken Mandarin, but also because non-Mandarin programmes, which had a wider appeal, were capable of absorbing commercial advertising. As a result, a high proportion of the broadcast output during the 1950s was in the Taiwanese languages. In 1963, the government issued a directive stipulating that the proportion of non-Mandarin broadcasts from a given station could not exceed 50 per cent (Su, 1993: 239), and the Broadcasting Act of 1976 reduced this further to 45 per cent.

With respect to 'fortification', it was forbidden to receive radio broadcasts from abroad, and the possession of short-wave radios was illegal.

*(2) The national cinema*

Before the television service gained momentum in the early 1970s, a moderately large cinema-going population sustained the Taiwanese-language film industry. For more than a decade (roughly between 1956 and 1968), Taiwanese-language film productions overwhelmed their Mandarin counterparts in numbers (Lent, 1990: 63; Li, 1997: 252). The KMT Mandarinised production by subsidising its own film studios, especially the Central Motion Picture Company (CMPC, established in 1954) and by setting up an award scheme for films in Mandarin Chinese only. The CMPC assumed the form of vertical integration, with its own production, distribution and exhibition capacities. The rise of the CMPC also signified the decline of Taiwanese-language film-making in Taiwan.

In addition to swordsman and romance movies, there were two distinct categories of Taiwanese films, 'Policy Films' and 'Taiwan New Cinema'. Both categories tended to base their films on 'national' histories, focusing on a specific historical event or situating the story in a particular setting. While Policy Films tended to represent stories set in the distant past and faraway localities (notably the Chinese mainland), Taiwan New Cinema placed an emphasis on stories closer to Taiwan itself, both temporally and spatially (Lent, 1990). Another point worthy of note is that both categories of film production emerged in part as a result of the party-owned CMPC's significant involvement (see Chapter 7). Hence, both categories of film practices, to varying degrees, reflected the interests and ideologies of the CMPC and ultimately those of the ruling party.

In terms of the regulation of the film industry, Taiwan's system used to be among 'the most rigid in Asia' (Hong and Sun, 1999: 534), with the KMT government exercising tight control through a variety of measures. Externally, the KMT's fortification of the film industry was implemented via a quota system, first established in 1949. However, this policy was undermined by greater imports of foreign films in the 1980s. In 1984, the KMT government lifted its embargo on Japanese films, which had been introduced when Japan derecognised Taiwan in the early 1970s. The entire quota system was finally abandoned in 1986 under pressure of major U.S. distributors (Lent, 1990: 74-75). As a result, Taiwan's national film industry, which was already affected by the expansion of television, was further eroded in the 1980s by the greater presence of foreign films, especially U.S. productions.

*(3) National television*

Television arrived in 1962, and over the following eight years three separate broadcasting organisations were set up. The first of these, the Taiwan Television Company (TTV), was a joint venture of the Taiwan provincial government (which was the major stakeholder), four Japanese corporations and Taiwan commercial interests. It was inaugurated, auspiciously enough, on National Day, 10 October (the anniversary of the 1911 revolution, which gave birth to the ROC). The second commercial network, established in 1979 following a directive issued by Chiang Kai-shek, was the China Television Company (CTV), in which the KMT-controlled Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC) retained the controlling interest. The third organisation, the Chinese Television Service (CTS), which was co-owned by the military and the Ministry of Education, began transmissions in 1971.[7]

Mandarinisation was applied more rigidly to television than to radio. Although, at the inception of the television service, there were no formal restrictions on non-Mandarin television programmes, strict prior censorship existed. For example, whereas scripts for Mandarin programmes required only self-censorship by high-ranking personnel within the company, Taiwanese-language programmes had to be approved by the Taiwan Garrison Command. In 1972, the Cultural Division of the KMT 'ordered' television companies to reduce the proportion of Taiwanese language programming. Later, the 1976 Broadcasting Act stipulated that the percentage of non-Mandarin television

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[7] The share ownership of these television companies was apportioned as follows

(1) TTV: Taiwan Provincial Government 49%; Fuji, Hitachi, NEC, Tokyo Shibura each 10%, making 40%; local private investors 11%. (2) CTV: Broadcasting Corporation of China (KMT-owned) 50%, private radio stations 28%, other commercial interests 22%. In 1979, BCC stock increased to 60%. (3) CTS: military 51%, Ministry of Education 49%.

It is remarkable that local private investors had an 11% stake in TTV in the 1960s and the Japanese had 40%. The Japanese share in the ownership of TTV was arguably a product of mutual benefit. The Japanese electronics giants aimed at importing their television sets to Taiwan; the KMT government for their part needed capital and technology. Therefore, the Japanese companies were invited to join in the establishment of TTV. Later, the Japanese share in TTV was reduced to 20 per cent (see also Lee 2000: 127-128).

programming was to be reduced annually.[8] This provision was not abolished until 1993. (See Table 4.2)

**Table 4.2: Proportion of programming in the Taiwanese languages**

| | 1972 | 1976 | 1977 | 1990 | 1991 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TTV | 17% | 10% | 11% | 8.5% | 9.3% |
| CTV | 20% | 12% | 12% | NA | NA |
| CTS | 16% | 12% | 10% | NA | NA |

*Sources:*Lee (1980: 157); Su (1993: 270).

The KMT party and government controlled the overriding majority of radio broadcasting resources (see Table 4.1). The same was true of television. The executives-in-chief of all three terrestrial television companies had always been 'Mainlanders'. In fact, during the period from the early 1970s up to the early 1990s the KMT party-state-military bloc increased its share-holdings in the television industry, as Table 4.3 shows.

**Table 4.3: Share capital of the party-state-military bloc in television**

| | 1970s | | | 1980s | | | 1990s | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | TTV | CTV | CTS | TTV | CTV | CTS | TTV | CTV | CTS |
| Party | | 50% | | | 60% | | | 68% | |
| Gov't | 49% | | 49% | 49% | | 10% | 49% | | 10% |
| Military | | | 51% | | | 72% | | | 76% |

*Note:* figures are rounded. *Source:* Wang (1993: 89, 94, 98).

Fortification, applied to the broadcast media, involved restricting the imports of foreign programmes and reducing the proportion of programming from abroad. The proportion of imported programming on television was significantly reduced within a limited period of time (see Table 4.4) and on average remained less than 20 per cent (Wang et al., 2000: 60). All foreign material was subtitled in Chinese and some of it was dubbed in Mandarin.

[8] From 1970 onwards, traditional Taiwanese puppet drama (*budaixi*) began to appear on television. One series, entitled 'Shi Yanwen', achieved audience ratings of up to 90 per cent. This worried the KMT government, which suspected that schoolchildren identified so strongly with the fictonal hero Shi Yanwen that they admired him more than President Chiang Kai-shek. The KMT thus banned *Budaixi* from being shown on television. Not until 1982 was traditional Taiwanese puppet drama allowed to be televised again. When it was, it was dubbed in Mandarin, which alienated much of the traditional (mainly 'native Taiwanese') audience, and ratings plummeted to about 30 per cent (see *Sinorama*, February 1998: 144-153).

**Table 4.4: The ratio of imported programmes on television channels**

| | 1969 | 1975 | 1976 | 1982 | 1991 | 1998 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TTV | 33% | 16% | 24% | 14% | 18% | 16% |
| CTV | 35% | 19% | 19% | | | |
| CTS | | 11% | 14% | | | |

*Note:* Figures are rounded. *Sources:* Lee (1980: 158); Taiwan Television Company (1976: 23-24); Wang et al. (2000: 61).

This combination of Mandarinisation and fortification in media policy was designed to shore up official Chinese nationalism in the face of what was seen as media imperialism linked to heavy economic and political dependence on the U.S. The operation seems to have been quite successful, since the influence of America and Japanese media continued to be 'restrained' and 'insignificant' (Lee, 1980: 165).

The KMT's media policy since 1949 can be summed up as follows. First, laws and directives on the media bluntly defined specific missions and goals that the media had to fulfil. For example, Article I of the Broadcasting Act prescribed that broadcasting must promote Chinese culture and national missions (against communism and Taiwanese Independence), and must defend and publicise government policies. Secondly, the government reserved the right to punish any infringements of media regulations by administrative decree rather than by means of the judicial process. Thirdly, the party-state-military bloc was charged with applying prior censorship to all kinds of programming except news. Fourthly, the party-state-military bloc secured both material and ideological profit from the media by being directly involved in its management from the outset (Cheng, 1988: 39-40). According to Chin-Chuan Lee, this 'bureaucratic-commercial complex' -- an historic party-state-military bloc with commercial interests -- has dominated cultural consumption in Taiwan (Lee, 1980).

The television industry provides a particularly compelling example of the reciprocal needs of the media and the KMT state. It is small wonder, then, that the television industry has long maintained an oligopoly; and it is no surprise either that even after the liberalisation of the press in the late 1980s, the KMT remained reluctant to loosen its control of broadcasting and of television in particular.

Three possible explanations of this development deserve consideration. First, despite its willingness to sanction reform in other areas, the KMT found it difficult to give up its ownership of the broadcasting media, since, ideologically speaking, this was to its advantage. Secondly, the consequences for the cause of national identity of suddenly opening the industry to voices from within the burgeoning Taiwan consciousness movement would have been incalculable. Thirdly, the KMT derived stupendous profits from its ownership of broadcasting media in Taiwan. In 1988, the three television networks earned advertising revenues of about US$ 450 million. Four years later, in 1992, these revenues had practically doubled to US$900 million (Feng, 1995: 46). Since then, the amount of advertising revenue galvanised by the terrestrial television channels has not been significantly threatened by their transnational counterparts (Wang et al., 2000: 59-60).[9] The KMT has been remarkably successful in making a profit for itself by engaging in cultural and monopoly enterprises.

## 4.3 Ideology and Dissent in the Age of Television

In addressing the differences between 'mainstream' and 'critical' approaches to media inquiries, Hall points to the pivotal role of ideology in any theory which 'seeks to explain both the monopoly of power and the diffusion of consent' (Hall, 1982: 86). At this point, I present more of the background to the study with a brief discussion of some of the techniques employed by the KMT-controlled media, and television in particular, to assert their ideological hegemony and to repress political dissent.

The KMT's authoritarian use of the media as a tool of socialisation and indoctrination frequently bordered on jingoism. The discourse of Chinese nationalism was all-pervading and extended from the mundane, such as the daily broadcast of the national anthem on the radio and television, to the arcane, such as the meticulous frame-by-frame replacement in a foreign movie of the word 'Taiwan' with the words 'Republic of China'. The opening words of the national anthem are '*Three Principles of the People*, the doctrine of our Party'. In schools this would be sung while facing a statue or other likeness of either Sun Yat-sen or Chiang Kai-shek. This fostered a considerable cult of

[9] Advertsing has long been the main financial source of the terrestrial television channels. For example, between 1994 and 1996, advertsing revenues constituted above 90 per cent of the income which fiananced all the three channels (Liu, 1998: 158).

personality around Generalissimo Chiang. The hegemonic pitch at which the discourse was conveyed was presumably designed to gain the active consent of the Taiwanese people. Undoubtedly, another function was to exclude from their consideration any alternative definitions of society.

Taiwan's remarkable economic growth, limited territory and high population density were instrumental in the relatively rapid penetration of television, and by the mid-1970s, it had reached every corner of the island. At the same time, the KMT bluntly made its 'media nationalism' explicit in the Broadcasting Act of 1976. This stipulated that the official language of broadcasting would be Mandarin, that programming must not conflict with the national policies of anti-communism and recovery of the mainland, and even that 'popular entertainment programmes must be educational and must be based on promoting *Chinese* culture' (Broadcasting Act 1976: Art. 17, Para 2, emphasis added).

A bigger threat to Chinese nationalism that they aimed to prevent derived, as they saw it, from cosmopolitan attitudes acquired abroad or localism (Taiwanese consciousness) originating within the island. This ensured that the airwaves over Taiwan were more or less exclusively filled with ideologically 'correct' programming. To the KMT mindset, the risk of 'contagion', whether foreign or native, was real. Since U.S. aid had ceased in 1965, Taiwan's economy increasingly relied on overseas trade. Greater integration with the global economy necessitated more business and technical exchanges overseas and hence more assiduous personal surveillance and import controls on cultural materials. Strict customs controls prohibited the import of foreign publications, all of which, but especially those produced on the mainland, were branded 'illegal'. At the same time, writers and intellectuals continued to explore new avenues, prompting the KMT to restrict or suppress certain cultural movements, especially in the area of literature and thought. Taiwanese literature written in the Japanese colonial era was banned. An experiment by a younger generation of writers to replace so-called 'anti-communist combat literature' (which the KMT eagerly endorsed) with a Westernised vernacular literature was attacked by cultural conservatives close to the KMT. A revival in the early 1970s of Taiwanese vernacular literature was condemned, as were any works offering a critique of the effects of imperialism or liberal reflection on contemporary Taiwan (Winckler, 1994: 33-34).

Not surprisingly, in view of their provenance, broadcasts from all three networks had certain features in common which reflected the nationalist perspective of the KMT regime. For example, no pictures of CCP leaders were allowed to appear since these leaders were regarded as 'rebels'.[10] The capital of the Peoples' Republic, meanwhile, was always referred to as Beiping, its official name during the period up to 1949 when the KMT government was based in Nanjing.[11] Television always glossed over the existence of a people known as 'Taiwanese' because they held that all 'Taiwanese' originally came from the mainland. These were some of the ways in which television aimed to limit or disparage not only foreign views but also indigenous identity and local culture, while at the same time preventing any valid criticisms of the KMT. However, once discussion of national identity other than the sanctioned Chinese one was no longer proscribed and the broadcast media could no longer simply ignore the political opposition active from the late 1980s onwards, they resorted to demonisation and vilification instead.

When political competition became more substantial in the early 1980s and the non-KMT candidates organised a party of their own — Minjindang, or the Democratic Progressive Party — the KMT broadcast media attempted to cast doubt on their legitimacy by refusing to call this opposition grouping by its full name. Thus the DPP was often represented as the 'Min-X-dang'. Moreover, the media continually ridiculed the appeal of the independence movement by means of a word-play associating 'independence' with 'poison'.[12]

It was therefore doubly surprising that, in contrast to the KMT's earlier claim that no spare broadcasting bands were available, a DPP-affiliated consortium was granted a licence to launch a new terrestrial television channel (Formosa Television, FTV) in mid-1995. Since then, the DPP has been less critical of the KMT's remaining monopoly, at least tacitly accepting the status quo of continued KMT control of the first three

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[10] The KMT referred to Mao Tse-tung (also spelt as Mao Zedong) as 'Bandit Mao'; and this practice was continued until the late 1980s. The KMT substituted the first syllable 'Ze' of Mao's given name, Ze-dong (Tse-tung is the most common Western spelling) with the word 'Zei', which means 'bandit'.

[11] The particle 'jing' in 'Beijing' and 'Nanjing' means 'capital'. Thus during periods when Beijing (literally 'northern capital') was not officially the capital, its name was changed to 'Beiping' (literally 'northern peace'). The KMT continued this practice to emphasise that Nanjing (literally 'southern capital'), though it was occupied, like the rest of the mainland, by the communists, remained in their eyes the official capital of China.

[12] With its many homophones, Chinese provides tremendous scope for punning. In this case the words for independence [*du*] and poison [*du*] are both pronounced 'dú'.

terrestrial television channels. Also, legislation for public service television was eventually enacted in 1997 and hence a fifth terrestrial channel was set up in Taiwan, largely as a compromise between the KMT and the DPP, which had originally lobbied for such a channel. While agreeing with the legitimacy of this demand, the DPP had become less critical of the KMT's media policy as a result of having been granted its own channel. The KMT attitude was that, having already bought off the DPP by granting the party the fourth channel, and thereby safeguarding the monopoly of its own channels, it had been in two minds about the need to create yet another channel. What helped the KMT decide was pressure from the directors of the original three channels, who claimed that, owing to competition from the growing cable and satellite concerns, it no longer made economic sense for them to grant CPT spare airtime free of charge. This case shows that the market was beginning to pay a more important part in the equation.

## 4.4 The Changing Media Landscape

The media landscape of Taiwan since the late 1980s has been radically transformed. The previous centrally controlled mono-cultural climate has started to give way to a more open and relaxed media environment in which, thanks to cable and satellite broadcasting, a variety of foreign cultural experiences are accessible. After the political transition of 1987, the patron-client relationship of state and media began to change. There were two main reasons for this: one political and the other economic.

First, the political transition of 1987 and the lifting of martial law led to the decriminalisation of various types of public protest and assembly. Free speech began to flourish. People began to express their dissatisfaction with media content more openly. The DPP's campaign against the KMT's monopoly over broadcasting expressed itself in such actions as the launching of illegal radio stations and the jamming of signals from the three KMT-owned television channels. Nevertheless, since radio broadcasting and terrestrial television had long been central to the KMT's rule in Taiwan, the regime was reluctant to loosen its grip. Whether it was from fear of compromising its nationalist agenda or simply because it wished to retain a lucrative profit base, the KMT did everything it could to retain its monopoly. It seemed, however, that part of the cost of this inertia was that the KMT had to look on helplessly as other areas of its formerly

rigid media policy crumbled under the onslaught of market forces. The increasing penetration by cable/satellite television is a case in point. In the late 1980s, the then illegal cable television systems began to spread over the island.[13] The KMT considered satellite television from abroad less dangerous than indigenous challenges to its broadcasting oligopoly. In 1988, home reception of satellite television was legalised while pirate radio broadcasting by opposition groups, particularly those in favour of independence, faced harsh penalties.

Pushed by both the political opposition and market forces, there followed a general loosening of controls over the media, first in relation to newspapers from the late 1980s, and then, during the 1990s, in relation to broadcasting. The media market as a whole was becoming more competitive (Lee, 2000). The expansion of cable/satellite television was especially impressive. By 1997, 4.3 million out of a total of 5.5 million households could receive cable, indicating a level of penetration second only to the Benelux countries (*Cable and Satellite Asia*, March/April 1997: 10).

Satellite television beamed from Japan came to Taiwan in 1984. The reception of satellite television was subsequently legalised in 1988, three years in advance of the launch of the popular Hong Kong-based STAR channel in 1991. Other satellite channel operators soon followed suit: TVBS and Chinese Television Network (CTN), both based in Hong Kong with significant Taiwanese investment interests, started broadcasting in 1993 and in 1994 respectively. Not surprisingly, the highest penetration rate of cable and satellite television in Asia means that Taiwan has become the most important market for these satellite channel operators. Indeed, STAR TV admitted this in its 1995 *Home Penetration Report* (*Cable and Satellite Asia*, March/April 1997: 10).

In his work on questions of television and national identity, Monroe Price prompts us to ask questions about how national television functions in the midst of globalisation and responds to pressures towards regionalism (Price, 1995: 18-19). In the Taiwanese context, regionalism can donate the cultural flows within the Greater China region

[13] The KMT applied double standards in policing them. Those run by opposition figures were cut off and their equipment was confiscated. It appeared that those delivering foreign entertainment programming could get away with it, while those offering alternative political news or documentaries were treated as a potential threat to KMT rule. Legislation on cable television was not enacted until 1993. However, a provision of the Cable Television Act of that year, which sought to prohibit political parties from owning cable television, was quietly abandoned to allow the KMT itself to become directly involved in the industry and take its financial share.

(China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) while globalisation involves cultural flows from outside the region.

The exchange of audio-visual media products between Taiwan and China started from virtually nothing. Not until 1993 did Taiwan legalise the import of audio-visual media products from China, but the imported products were subject to prior approval by the authorities. Similarly, the censorship of information and entertainment from outside, especially from Taiwan, continues to be strictly imposed in China. The provision of international news is still highly centralised inasmuch as the municipal and provincial stations remain dependent on CCTV, the China Central Television based in Beijing (Lynch, 1999). So far the mutual links between Taiwan and China in terms of media and communications remain limited.[14] However, future growth is predicted. Thus, a number of global media giants have expressed interest in the Greater China market, as illustrated by the actions of Time Warner and Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation. To gain a foothold in China's television market, Time Warner formed an alliance with Hong Kong-based China Entertainment Television (CET), which claims to have reached 33 million viewing households including nearly five million in Taiwan (*Financial Times* 16 June 2000). At the same time, News Corporation's Phoenix Chinese Channel (launch in 1996) has targeted the Greater China market, including China's more than 1,000 million television viewers (Thussu, 2000: 212). Another operation of News Corporation is STAR TV, which has for many years been a great success in the Taiwan market (the largest single Chinese community outside China) – seen by STAR as its laboratory for further advance to the potentially huge China market. Therefore, it is fair to say that the future communications landscape within the Greater China region will have a great impact on the media industry in Taiwan.

[14] China's state-owned satellite television channel CCTV-4, which is specially converted from PAL into NTSC for the Taiwan market, is not popular among the Taiwanese audience. More than 60 per cent of Taiwan's cable/satellite television households never watch CCTV-4 and less than 3 per cent of households with cable/satellite television regularly watch CCTV-4 (see Liu and Lin, 1996: 12; see also Chapter 8 concerning the contribution of 'propaganda' and negative reportage of Taiwan to CCTV-4's lack of popularity). However, there are other satellite and cable television channels showing mainland-produced historical dramas such as *Sanguo yanyi (The Tales of Three Kingdoms) and Shuihu zhuan (The Water Margin)* which retain a large audience in Taiwan. The same is true on the mainland of Taiwan-produced 'Mandarin pop' music, and historical or romantic dramas.

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that the media have been crucial in helping to consolidate the KMT regime in Taiwan. As a diaspora regime determined to retake the Chinese mainland, the KMT used the media to overcome the substantial barriers to its communication with the 'native Taiwanese' population. As we have seen, the KMT deliberately exploited the media under its control to promote Chinese nationalism, suppress all dissident views, and make commercial profits. Because of the vital importance of media control, the KMT was reluctant to liberalise the broadcasting media (and television in particular) even after the political transition of 1987-1988. Only when the challenges posed by the opposition and market forces became irresistible did the regime finally accept the need for liberalisation.

Despite the KMT's longstanding control of the national media, the extent to which a unified Chinese identity has been successfully fostered is open to debate. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, the changing media landscape in Taiwan been characterised by significant but contradictory phenomena: on the one hand, Taiwanese consciousness has grown despite the KMT's efforts to repress it; on the other hand, A locally nurtured Taiwan-centred identity has continued to develop since the political democratisation of the late 1980s despite the veritable flood of foreign cultural products pouring into Taiwan through the penetration of cable/satellite television.

It is therefore clear that in order to grasp the complexity of the processes involved, an empirical analysis of the relationships between the media and national identity is essential. Before presenting such an analysis, in the next chapter I will reflect on the methodological issues relating to the research and explain the study's chosen research method.

# 5.
# Methodological Triangulation

In the preceding chapters, and especially Chapter 2, the competing theories of nationalism, identity-formation, cultural globalisation and hybridisation were discussed. The analysis so far has demonstrated just how inconclusive and complex are the relationships between the media and national identity. In order to grasp this complexity, research needs to be based on multiple sources of data and analytic methods. The aim is to arrive at a range of the most reliable answers through a process of triangulation, meaning 'a comparative assessment of more than one form of evidence about an object of inquiry' that can be used to 'develop a concept, construct, or proposition' (Lindlof, 1995: 239).

This chapter discusses how the question of the media-identity relationship may be explored empirically. It first draws on the literature concerning the text-reader relationship. The underlying argument is that, apart from taking into account its historical conjunctures (in terms of state-society relations, the global-local nexus, etc.), national identity-formation can be seen as a mediating process between text and reader. This proposition absorbs, but goes beyond, both the dominant ideology thesis and the polysemy thesis, a critical synthesis which is useful for empirical analysis. In the latter half of this chapter, I pinpoint two main areas of inquiry on which the present research is focused and detail the methodological considerations involved in designing the empirical case studies.

## 5.1 The Text-Reader Relationship

The question of media power is certainly of relevance to the present study. However, it cannot be explored properly unless an equal weight is given to both the media text and the media audience (readers), a focus which is central to 'reception studies' (Jensen and Rosengren, 1990). Unfortunately, as Hall, Livingstone and among others (Hall, 1994;

Livingstone, 1998) have cautioned, there is a neglect of the text in the 'new audience research', which deviates from the original 'encoding/decoding model' (Hall, 1980) and is 'threatening to write the media, as the focus of research, out of existence' (Schroder, 1994: 338). To remedy this situation, some have advocated 'the third generation reception studies' to ensure that both text and reader are taken seriously (Alasuutari, 1999; Tulloch, 2000).

Despite criticism of the overuse of the terms *text* and *reader* in television studies (Gozzi, 1999: ch.9), I retain them here but with more specific meanings. The term *text* refers to mediated productions such as a television programme; and, the term *reader* is employed to emphasise the active nature of audience interpretation. In other words, *text* with *reader* are not to be conflated (Anderson, 1996: 86; Fiske, 1987: 85) on the conceptual level in an inquiry which is concerned to determine how they relate to each other.

At the empirical level, I agree with Livingstone's suggestion that we cannot separate text and reader in research (Livingstone, 1994). As she suggests:

> Text and audience can no longer be seen as independent or studied separately. Rather than conceiving of powerful texts and passive viewers or of indeterminate texts and powerful viewers what is required is a negotiated position that recognises the complexity of the interaction between text and viewers ... Meaning emerges from the specific and located interaction between text and reader. (Livingstone, 1994: 249)

Therefore the present research is concerned with the complex signification process of national identity within media texts, among the audiences, and most importantly, at the intersection between text and reader. Indeed, it makes sense to integrate them into the one, more general issue of the text-reader relationship (Livingstone, 1998). It is this relationship, involving the interaction between the power of the media and the power of the audience, which offers the most important key to the whole project.

In the literature, there are two competing theses concerning the media text and the reader: the dominant ideology thesis and the polysemy thesis. The former inherits most of its intellectual strength from Marxism, especially the Althusserian concept of 'ideological state apparatuses' and the Gramscian notion of 'hegemony,' and affiliates itself with the critical tradition of media and cultural studies. The latter thesis, while originating in literary and cultural studies, has found a home within liberal pluralism. Each thesis has its own specific assumptions about the nature of television texts and

television's role in social reproduction and societal transformation. The dominant ideology thesis regards television texts as carrying and constructing a relatively coherent ideology which is effective in reproducing social relations of domination in modern societies, while the polysemy thesis sees television texts as semiotically democratic and ideologically open, thus contributing positively to the enhancement of social pluralism.

In what follows I outline in turn the main assumptions and features of the dominant ideology thesis and the polysemy thesis. Methodologically, the dominant ideology thesis relies heavily on certain kinds of textual analysis, whereas the polysemy thesis relies on participant observation, in-depth interviews, and ethnography. In the present study, the empirical analysis will apply both methodological approaches -- through a critical synthesis -- to focus on the text-reader relationship in matters of national identity-formation.

### 5.1.1 The Dominant Ideology Thesis

From the perspective of the dominant ideology thesis, television is said to have reproduced the dominant ideology of the dominant class, as revealed in its output of information and entertainment. Thus, it is argued, news and current affairs programmes have been framed to be in favour of the establishment and the status quo (Tuchman, 1978). Television represents a distorted world in which the interests of the dominant class are protected. In reporting student movements, industrial disputes, or 'terrorist' activities, dominant discourses are relayed through the elite, experts and credible official sources, while oppositional views are marginalised in a negative way (Gitlin, 1980; Glasgow Media Group, 1980; Murdock, 1981; Schlesinger, 1978; Schlesinger et al., 1983). In a similar vein, the main characters in entertainment programmes are said to have been constructed to favour the dominant race, gender and class (Fiske and Hartley, 1989: 21-27).

Two general varieties of the dominant ideology thesis postulate a link of some sort between the ideas of the dominant class and the ideological role of the media. The first approach posits a strong link between the dominant ideology and the media, as represented in the so-called 'propaganda model'. This model identifies a number of

'filters' (e.g. ownership, advertising, and anti-communist ideology) through which information is selected and framed (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 298)

The second approach is manifested in the metaphors of 'primary and secondary definers of social events' (Hall et al., 1978). Compared with the first approach, this is a weak version of the dominant ideology thesis, in so far as the media 'do not simply "create" the news; nor do they simply transmit the ideology of the 'ruling class' in a conspiratorial fashion' (Hall et al., 1978: 59). Nevertheless, the media are said to stand 'in a position of structured subordination to the primary definers' and reproduce the definitions of the 'powerful' sources who 'have privileged access to the media' (Hall et al., 1978: 59).

According to this second approach, the media give priority to the views of the dominant class not only through the symbolic construction of the world but also through the mechanism of omission. The focus of media attention is placed on individuals rather than corporate entities, and the media fail to provide information about the underlying relations of political and economic power, as required by the public in the consideration of policy options. In so doing, it is argued, the media block the development of alternative views (Golding, 1981).

If we accept the existence of a dominant ideology in television discourses, a further question needs to be asked: how can the source of that domination be located? Hall provides an important clue by suggesting that media institutions are 'free of direct compulsion and constraint, and yet freely articulated themselves systematically around the definitions of the situation which favoured the hegemony of the powerful' (Hall, 1982: 86). Investigations from the perspective of political economy shed light on this issue by revealing the intimate relationship between the dominant class and the media.

First and foremost, attention has been paid to the ownership of the media industry and the direct involvement of the media with the powerful elite. According to this view, neither the technological nor managerial revolution has fundamentally changed the structural relationship between the dominant class and the media. In spite of the proliferation of television channels, there is evidence of growing trends of media concentration, cross-media ownership, and links between media personnel and government officials (McChesney, 1997; Murdock, 1990). It has also been argued that

the shifts in the methods of corporate control at the managerial level have not really challenged the owners as the primary allocative controllers of organisational orientation and editorial policy (Murdock, 1982: 132). Moreover, despite claims of autonomy, television contents are found to be in accordance with the owners' interest, as the detectable (though not always explicit) political commitments of some media moguls are translated into the output of the media which are under their control (Curran, 1996). According to this perspective, there is a tendency of media conglomerates to limit the range of information and protect related commercial interests, since owners of television networks are generally closely affiliated with, and have shared interests with, the economic and political establishment.

Apart from the issue of ownership, there are a number of no less common connections of the media with dominant groups. There is an indirect link of the media with the government. The dominant classes have been able, at different times in history, to control the media through taxation, subsidy, censorship, and license requirements. These measures have shaped and regulated the media content with considerable success (Curran and Seaton, 1991; Schlesinger, 1978). Furthermore, the increasing influence of the market does not create a free, open, pluralist marketplace of ideas, as the proponents of the market anticipate. The ideological range of the media, as Curran (1996) observes, remains limited despite the proliferation of media channels.

According to the dominant ideology thesis, then, television reflects a dominant ideology which stems from the direct involvement and indirect connection of the state and commercial interests in the media industry. Despite various versions of the dominant ideology thesis among the theorists, there is agreement about the role of the media in ideological domination and its ideological effects.

### 5.1.2 The Polysemy Thesis

Originating in opposition to the dominant ideology thesis, the polysemy thesis is in accord with what has been called the interpretative turn in media studies. The thesis suggests that there are multiple meanings within television texts, and by extension, there are idiosyncratic readings of television texts by active audiences.

Applying Hall's encoding/decoding model in his empirical research (which was originally published in 1980), David Morley sees the need to modify the model because the decodings of the text do not correspond with the class division of the viewers (although the importance of class is to certain extent confirmed in the study). Moreover, other divisions such as race and gender emerge are also shown to be relevant (see Morley and Brunsdon, 1998). Morley's work has since been regarded by John Fiske – the most influential proponent of the polysemy thesis – as supportive of his own arguments (Fiske, 1987). While it has had a profound impact on the field of media studies, the polysemy thesis has also generated extensive debate among media theorists. Simply put, the most problematic concern is that the polysemy thesis in most extreme view downplays the relevance of television effects and renders textual analysis unnecessary.

The polysemy thesis posits two lines of argument in conceptualising television texts as polysemic: the first may be described as the institutional imperative, and the other is based on textual features. First, it is argued that television caters for a diverse audience in order to be popular, and hence it must produce an ideologically open text for various sub-cultural groups if that text is to be accepted. The market success of television as an institution relies on the extent to which it is capable of meeting the diverse and competing interests of its audience through its products -- the television texts (Fiske, 1986, 1987).

Secondly, polysemy describes the textual properties of the television medium. As the most recognised proponent of the polysemy thesis, Fiske (1987) describes the television text as a 'producerly' text, which simultaneously incorporates the openness of the 'writerly' text with the accessibility of the 'readerly' text. The textual devices of television (irony, metaphor, jokes, contradiction, and excess, etc.) therefore provide the potential for polysemic readings. Fiske concludes that television, 'far from being the agent of the dominant classes ... is the prime site where the dominant have to recognise the insecurity of their power, and where they have to encourage cultural difference with all the threat to their own position that this implies' (Fiske, 1987: 326).

Fiske's early work (Fiske, 1986, 1987) reflects much of the liberal pluralist position. According to the pluralist concept of capitalist democratic society, the media operate in a free market and employ relatively autonomous media professionals. The media

present a wide range of views which compete with each other, and yet none of them is predominant all the time. Within the liberal pluralist formulation, pluralistic points of views replace the dominant ideology (see Curran et al., 1977: 4-5).

### 5.1.3 A Critical Synthesis

Each of the two theses, as outlined above, has its own particular conception of the character of television texts and, by implication, that of the television audience. Both have their advantages and disadvantages. Both have exerted a profound influence on the field of media and cultural studies, though at the same time each of them has met with severe criticism (Abercrombie et al., 1980; Condit, 1989; Seaman, 1992). Theorists who are involved in the debate have refined their original arguments in response to criticisms.

Morley argues for the existence of the 'preferred' reading position and insists that there are limits to television's polysemy (Morley, 1992: 36-39). Murdock has toned down the economic determinism reflected in his earlier formulation of dominant ideology (i.e. the link between the media ownership structure and the dominant ideology). Following Hall (1986), Murdock regards the economic as the necessary point of departure but not of destination. He adopts the concepts of articulation and structuration, acknowledging that the dominant ideology operates through multiple articulations (Murdock, 1989). Fiske's position is severely criticised by Murdock as 'simply another version of the market system's own claim' (Murdock, 1989: 229) that there is no need to increase diversity of representations and cultural forms within the established system because the audience can draw on what is provided in the dominant media and produce meanings and pleasures for themselves. The unrestrained celebration of idiosyncratic polysemy and audiences' resistance that is evident in Fiske's earlier work is also criticised by those who recognise the interpretative power of the audience (Kellner, 1995; Morley, 1992). In response, Fiske has made some revisions of his earlier thought and now shows signs of distancing himself from both postmodernism and liberal pluralism (Fiske, 1994).

As the representative scholars of the hitherto opposing theses have now modified their initial views and taken more eclectic positions, there seems to be no need to take sides with or abandon either thesis. Also, the question of what kind of evidence can be counted as acceptable to support either thesis remains open to dispute. Each thesis has its own explanatory power as long as it is not misused and carried to an extreme (i.e.

textual determinism or sociological reductionism). The same is true with respect to different methodological approaches, namely content analysis, textual analysis, and in-depth interviews. We should bear in mind that the power of the media over the audience and the resistance of the audience to the media are contingent upon the relationship of interaction between texts and the acts of reading, and cannot be regarded as predetermined or fixed.

The question at stake, however, is how we move forward and what do we gain by synthesising the opposing views that have been oscillating between the definitional power of the media and that of the audience (cf. Dahlgren, 1991: 12). Drawing on the insights offered by media scholars who work in diverse research traditions, I summarise graphically what has been written about the text-reader relationship, in which powerful media may co-exist with an active audience (see Figure 5.1). As shown in Figure 5.1, following Hall (1980), the encoding and decoding of a text do not take place in isolation/stasis. Rather, the text-reader relationship is considered as an ongoing process of intersection which goes beyond either seeing the *text* as inscribing a determinate meaning or the *reader* as producing indeterminate meanings (Morley, 1992).

Thus, the formation of national identity can be viewed a mediating process in which the media interact with the audience over time; both participating parties approach and affected each other. Audiences are knowing subjects (constantly though not always) reflexively interacting with the mediated knowledge/sentiments disseminated by the media. Likewise, the media – in cases where profit making and hegemony maintenance are the aims (as is the case with the media under the KMT in Taiwan) – have not produced texts obliviously of how audiences may receive them. Therefore, the text-audience relationship is somewhat close to what has been termed 'the discursive space that contains both text and audience' (Silverstone, 1999a: 74).

Livingstone goes further to argue against the assumption that audiences meet media texts with an established set of interpretative resources that exist independently of the media (Livingstone, 1999). She also takes issue with the binary opposition between the 'transmission' and 'ritual' models of communication, suggesting that both are essential to the mediated/mediating process of knowledge. From this, it appears that a crude separation of audience from (media) texts is not helpful to an understanding of the question of national identity formation. Similarly, informed by the concept of cultural

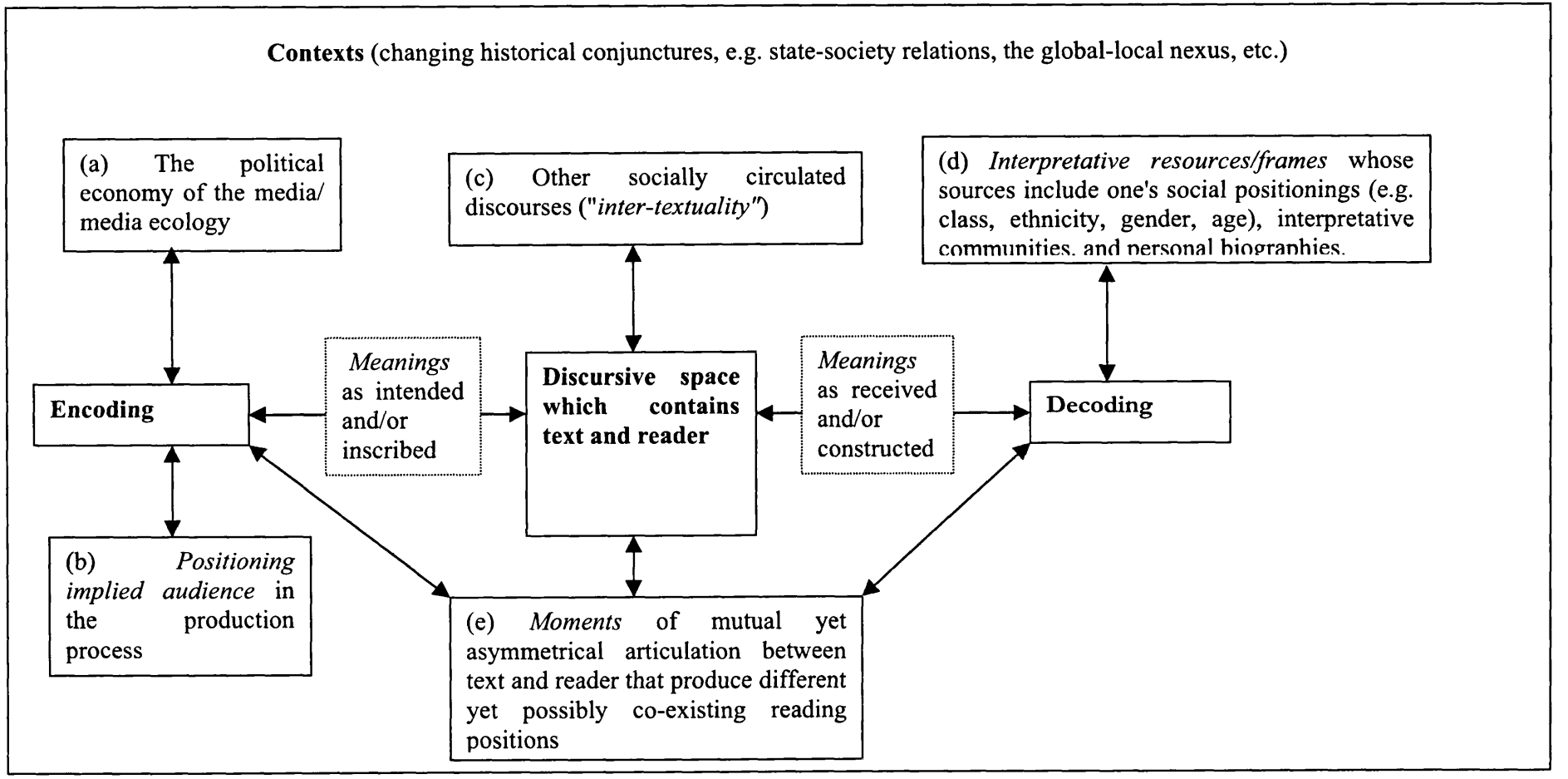
hybridity (see Chapter 2), it seems appropriate to see national identity-formation as a mediating process which should not be viewed as a struggle in zero-sum terms between two or more definitions of nationhood. Rather, it is a long-term process of mutual accommodation – but power remains unequal at any given point in time – between media production and media consumption, and, in the Taiwanese context, between the (erstwhile characteristically Chinese) state and the (Taiwanese) citizenry.

We may theorise this mediating process of national identity-formation as occurring in what Schlesinger calls the 'national cultural space', where the media and education systems, among other social institutions, engages with people's everyday experiences in mediating among various definitions of nationhood. This 'national cultural space' is too enormous to be explored in detail in the present study. In order to examine this mediating process of national identity-formation from the vantage point of media studies, the mediated text-reader relationship in question can be objectified as constituting the 'discursive space' (using Silverstone's term) in a metaphorical sense.

This discursive space is an analytic construct. First, it cannot exist on its own right without the individual as well as institutional actions of encoding and decoding the media texts in question. Secondly, it necessarily contains a flow of diverse meanings – generated in the encoding-decoding intersection from moment to moment – which are far from transparent in terms of determining (for the researcher) what is intended (or inscribed) in, and what the audience receive (or construct) from, the media texts.

Figure 5.1 seeks to conceptualise the discursive space that contains both text and reader without neglecting its necessarily multivalent and dynamic nature. Connected with the discursive space in question, there are a number of components ranging (from *a* to *e*). These constitutive components of the mediating process do not occur in sequence but as a totality. Of course, the text-reader relationship can be drawn in many ways. The presentation in Figure 5.1 does not exhaust the possible conceptualisations. However, it is useful for the purpose of summarising the main elements involved in the text-reader interaction and for relating the present study to the broader picture, although not all of the elements marked in Figure 5.1 are analysed empirically in this study. In what follows, I offer a brief discussion of each component of this mediating process in turn.

**Figure 5.1: The text-reader relationship as a mediating process**



(a) *The political economy of the media*, whose dynamics in the case of Taiwan have been addressed in Chapter 4, is vitally important in shaping the infrastructure of the discursive space in which text and reader intersect. In Chapter 6, I will touch on the centrality of television serial dramas in Taiwan's television ecology, and the way in which imported American series have been placed in a marginal position since the early 1970s. Additionally, I will detail the film genres of 'Policy Films' and 'Taiwan New Cinema', whose emergence (in the 1970s and the 1980s respectively) was closely linked to the political-economic contexts of the Taiwanese film industry.

(b) *The production process of media texts* (within the media institutions and among the media professionals) *in relation to the audience* is a crucial aspect of the mediating process, as revealed in the work of John Tulloch and others in their investigations of the interaction between producing a soap opera and locating the implied audience in the ongoing production process (Henderson, 1999; Tulloch, 1999).

(c) *Other socially circulated discourses* ('inter-textuality') reinforce a given text to persuade and/or help the audience to comprehend a particular text and produce diverse interpretations. Inter-textuality operates not only between different kinds of media but also within a particular medium such as television itself. The stress on inter-textuality is, as McGuigan points out, most noticeable in Williams's concept of *televisual flow* (for the various ways in which flow operates, see Allan, 1997) in the sense that 'no programme communicates in splendid isolation from the surrounding programmes' (McGuigan, 1993: 180). Or, as Morley points out, 'in the process of decoding and interpreting the messages of the media, other messages, other discourses are always involved, whether or not we are explicitly conscious of it' (Morley, 1992: 77).

(d) *Interpretative resources/frames*. In the chapters on the audience (Chapters 8 and 9), I will seek to identify the interpretative resources/frames employed by the audience members to make sense (and use) of the media. These interpretative resources/frames, or cultural competences, originate from personal, communal and mediated sources including one's social positioning (e.g. age, class, gender, ethnicity), media-facilitated or media-focused 'interpretative communities' (Lindolf, 1988: 92-93; Schroder, 1994: 344-345), and personal biographies. In order to analyse the audience as a set of sub-cultural groups (differentiated by age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) rather than as a random collection of individuals, we need to probe how audiences' differential interpretations are related to

their social positionings. As Morley argues, 'the audience must be conceived of as composed of clusters of socially situated individual readers, whose individual readings will be framed by shared cultural formations and practices pre-existent to the individual' (Morley and Brunsdon, 1998: 129-130).[1]

(e) *Moments of mutual yet asymmetrical articulation between text and reader* produce different but possibly co-existing reading positions. Hall identifies 'three hypothetical positions': 'preferred', 'negotiated' and 'oppositional' (Hall, 1980: 136). The two chapters on audience reception (Chapters 8 and 9) will focus on the *meanings as received and constructed* by reference to past and present audience receptions in relation to television in general and two popular media texts in particular. At the same time, this analysis cannot afford to lose sight of the *meanings that are intended and inscribed.* As I will explain in detail later in this chapter and further analyse in Chapter 7, the textual analysis of two popular media texts is aimed at unpacking the intended and inscribed meanings (ideologies) within the texts.

All these components, being appropriately analysed by reference to the changing historical conjunctures, will certainly contribute to an understanding of the discursive space that contains both text and reader. Unfortunately but perhaps inevitably, not all of the components contained in the summarised graph will be analysed in detail in the present research; and the analysis will be presented in separate chapters, each of which has its specific aim. However, in the concluding chapter I will move the discussion from the level of the specific back to that of the general – by means of methodological triangulation – to clarify how national identity is shaped through a mediating process between television and audience.

## 5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to explore the aforementioned discursive space in which text relates to reader, there are two main sets of questions to which this thesis attends. One concerns the

[1] This claim, made by Morley, seems to be impossible to disapprove. Yet there are difficulties involved in probing the question of the determinations between one's specific readings and social positionings. For example, it is impossible to take all the social positional factors, potentially infinite, into consideration in a single study. This is an enmeshed question with theoretical, methodological and empirical implications. We will return to it later in this chapter when dealing with the research design for audience analysis.

question of media construction of national identity; the other concerns audience reception/interpretation in relation to national identity. For the former question, I conduct both quantitative and qualitative analyses of media representations over time. To explore the latter question, in-depth interviews of family viewers are undertaken. Multiple methods and multiple sources of data include the following: (1) quantitative content analysis of the prime-time television serial dramas broadcast on terrestrial channels between 1971 and 1996; (2) qualitative (con)textual analysis of *Victory* and *City of Sadness*, two representative local films produced during the heyday of Taiwan's national cinema in the 1970s and 1980s; (3) interpretative analysis based on in-depth interviews of 19 viewing families which are nuclear in pattern and have access to cable television.

Below I offer an account of the premise on which each analysis is based as well as the methodological considerations involved.

### 5.2.1 Content Analysis of Television Serial Dramas

The first part of the empirical study (Chapter 6) attempts to answer the seemingly simple but actually formidable question: how *Chinese* or *Taiwanese*, in terms of temporal, spatial, linguistic and other attributes, are Taiwan's prime-time television serial dramas (most of which are produced domestically)? The television serial drama has persistently been the most important genre, contributing greatly to the finance of terrestrial television, and continues to be one of the most popular television genres (in terms of ratings) in Taiwan. The analysis will focus on the temporal and spatial attributes of representations within the television serial dramas.

*(1) Premise: why analyse television dramas?*

The premise of this analysis is based on the argument that 'time and space are ... the basic co-ordinates of all systems of *representation*' and 'all identities are located in symbolic space and time' (Hall, 1992: 301, emphasis in the original). Moreover, an analysis of the television serial drama also has theoretical implications, which are addressed in the following sections.

It has been argued that film and television 'play a powerful role in the construction of collective memories and identities' (Morley and Robins, 1995: 91); and the various kinds of television drama appear to be particularly important in this respect (Collins, 1990a; Ma, 1995; Martin-Barbero, 1993, 1995). As one of television's principal and locally produced outputs and one that has been broadcast with predictable regularity (five days a week since the early 1970s), Taiwan's television serial dramas have undoubtedly played an important role in the process of moulding collective memories, marking personal biographies, and binding the nation together – processes which have been identified in other countries (see Moores, 1988). In the case of Taiwan, the serial dramas have become fixed in the prime-time slot on all terrestrial channels since the early 1970s and remain so to the present day. This constitutes the cultural context that Raymond Williams describes as 'a dramatised society':

> For the first time a majority of the population has regular and constant access to drama, beyond occasion or season. ... It is that drama, in quite new ways, is built into the rhythms of everyday life. On television alone it is normal for viewers – the substantial majority of the population – to see anything up to three hours of drama, of course drama of several different kinds, a day. And not just one day; almost every day. This is part of what I mean by a dramatised society. In earlier periods drama was important at a festival, in a season or as a conscious journey to a theatre ... What we now have is drama as habitual experience; more in a week, in many cases, than most human beings would previously have seen in a lifetime. (Williams, 1983: 12)

Among the various genres of television dramas, the soap opera has produced particularly rich empirical evidence with reference to questions of cultural globalisation and local identity pertinent to the present research. In what follows, I therefore use the soap opera literature as the closest, if not perfectly equivalent, point of reference for Taiwan's television serial dramas.

A link has been noted between the classical Hollywood melodrama and the soap opera in the serial form (Feuer, 1984; Modleski, 1990: 193), a link which has encouraged film scholars to study television soap operas (Allen, 1989). Apart from analytic approaches derived from the tradition of film studies, other traditions have been significant in shaping soap opera studies: for example, the sociological tradition (Cantor and Pingree, 1983); the Latin America *telenovela* tradition (e.g. Martin-Barbero, 1988, 1993, 1995; Rowe and Schelling, 1991); the feminist approach (e.g. Ang, 1997; Brunsdon, 1995); and the ethnographic approach (e.g. Seiter et al., 1989). In addition, cross-cultural

reception studies of soap operas are also important in highlighting the variations of interpretation and reception of a soap opera among its international audiences (Ang, 1985; Katz and Liebes, 1987; Liebes and Katz, 1990). Equally important is the empirical examination of the genre (e.g. Geraghty, 1990) and its national and regional specificities (e.g. Liebes and Livingstone, 1998).

These studies of diverse research traditions generally point to some key characteristics of the genre which are also manifested in Taiwan's television serial dramas: *complexity*, the *centrality of characters*, *continuity* and *intimacy*. The first and second of these characteristics are closely related. To meet the needs of a continuing serial, multiple plots are required to combine a variety of narratives, conventions and central characters.

The third characteristic of soap opera is its continuity ('seriality'), which means having a unique narrative structure, giving no definite ending and immediate narrative closure, and requiring in the audience an historical sense of time which parallels his/her everyday life to that of the continuing serial (Feuer, 1984). Characters in the soap operas, like those in the television serial dramas in Taiwan, have memory and history. As Allen argues, 'the frequent viewer can recognise not only appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in a given character, but appropriate responses of a given character to another, based on the two characters' relationships in the show's past' (Allen, 1987: 151). This 'continuity' serves as a specific textual code for soap operas, so that 'tomorrow at the same time' (*Ming-tien tong yi shi-jian*) has also long been the conventional phrase in Taiwan about television serials that is used to address the audience at the end of every episode.

The fourth characteristic of soap operas is their intimacy. Soap operas (including television serial dramas in the Taiwanese case) are particularly capable of involving the viewers in a personal way. Derived from the predominant mode of studio production, which is employed to achieve higher efficiency for episodic presentation and economy of production costs (Allen, 1987; Newcomb, 1987), the sense of intimacy is achieved by (1) a combination of the genre's emotionally laden performance and (2) the television medium's transformation of its technical weakness into superiority. In relation to the first, soap operas are usually set in domestic locations, where personal relationships (e.g. conflict and love) among the characters are highlighted from a deeply moral perspective (Thorburn, 1987: 638). All these elements create a strong sense of audience

involvement -- 'a sense of becoming a part of the lives and actions they see' (Newcomb, 1987: 620). The second dimension of the quality of intimacy is the television medium's small frame -- a technical limitation that the soap opera transforms into an advantage because it reinforces the sense of intimacy (Allen, 1985; Thorburn, 1987).

*(2) Methodological considerations*

Content analysis has been chosen for the present study of Taiwanese television serial dramas for a number of reasons. In Taiwan, domestically produced television programmes have not generally been accessible for research. The researcher had no direct access to recordings of television serial dramas and could not offer an interpretation based on direct viewing of the programmes. Therefore, the analysis is based on the written descriptions of the television serial dramas collected from the print media.

There are some justifications for adopting the method of quantitative content analysis. Since the present study is retrospective and historical in nature, longitudinal data are essential. The longitudinal design is of great value in revealing the historical trends of Taiwan's prime-time serial dramas so as to understand the relationship between television representation and the formation of national identity. The content analysis serves this analytic purpose better than other methods (Riffe et al., 1998). Furthermore, content analysis can be complementary to a qualitative analysis (Curran, 1976). Thus, despite all its limitations, content analysis is the best, if not the ideal, method for application in this present study of Taiwan's television serial dramas.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods have their own advantages and disadvantages (Curran, 1976; Leiss et al., 1990). On the one hand, content analysis has distinctive advantages: it has the 'ability to supply some objective answers' (Leiss et al., 1990: 223). It is particularly useful in 'dealing with large amounts of data, patterns that otherwise are difficult or impossible to detect' (Leiss et al., 1990: 223). On the other hand, content analysis also has its weaknesses. In particular, it is less suitable than qualitative textual analysis for measuring meaning because of its focus on the manifest content (Curran, 1976; Leiss et al., 1990). There are difficulties in striking a balance between qualitative and quantitative analyses of the copious television serial dramas broadcast during a long period of time. One difficulty is the need for 'a trade-off between breadth and depth'

(Allen et al., 1997: 91). Given that a complementary in-depth analysis of television serial dramas over time is impossible in the case of the present study, a quantitative analysis -- biased towards 'breadth' -- will be followed by a textual analysis of two films released during the same period.

### 5.2.2 The (Con-)Textual Analysis of Popular Films

The second part of my empirical analysis (Chapter 7) aims to explore the question of how national identity has been discursively constructed in popular media texts at a given point in post-war Taiwan. As well as reconstructing the contexts in which the two films were produced (in the 1970s and 1980s), the analysis attempts to shed light on the ways in which the meanings of the national past were inscribed in two locally produced films (the 1976 film *Victory* and the 1989 film *City of Sadness*).

*(1) Premise: why analyse films?*

The premise of this analysis is that national identity cannot exist independently of the realm of cultural expression. This being the case, a textual analysis of popular texts should throw light on the relationship between identity formation and media texts.[2] Among the means of communication, the film is as important as television in representing national history (Landy, 1996), and this is particularly significant because the members of a nation are supposed to share a common past (Anderson, 1991; Hobsbawm, 1983). As Billig points out, 'nations not only have to be imagined, but also have to create their own histories, or interpretations of themselves' (Billig, 1995: 70). These national cinematic discourses, therefore, can be considered as part of what has been referred to as the 'narrative of nation' (Anderson, 1991: 204-205; Hall, 1992: 293), meaning

> A set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals which stand for or represent the shared experiences ... which give meaning to the nation. (Hall, 1992: 293)

[2] It has been argued that media texts have the potential to constrain audience activity and can reveal some characteristics of the society which produces and consumes them (Liebes and Livingstone, 1998: 155). Furthermore, textual analysis provides routes for scrutinising the possible operations of the dominant ideology in a given society and can serve as 'a necessary complement to audience research' (Joyrich, 1996: 12).

Furthermore, materials about the past have been constantly recycled in the production of fictional entertainment as well as news, where a meaningful link to the past is on offer. Indeed, it may be argued that the hitherto dividing line between history and news is becoming blurred (Dayan and Katz, 1992; Lang et al., 1989). The meanings of 'the present' and 'the past' are altered now that we live in a time-compressed world driven by the technologies of instantaneous and synchronic communication across space. The past is defined by the present-past relation, as is what is meant by the present (Duara, 1993). Screening the pasts otherwise inaccessible to many is thus related to the question of who has the power to (re)write history, particularly when we consider that the cinematic versions of the past can be technically made more *real* than the past in itself (McQuire, 1998: 145, emphasis in the original).

For these reasons, film inevitably constructs the past by selectively visualising the past to which only a limited (and decreasing) number of people have ever had access. As such, films construct the past through a process of selection, determining what sort of past is to be remembered (and/or forgotten). For instance, in film propaganda the past is constructed to be against 'them' and simultaneously for solidarity among 'us' (Taylor, 1998). The selective and sometimes exclusionary representations of the past, in turn, have implications for how a nation is imagined.

### *(2) Methodological considerations*

Drawing on the insights offered by these scholars, the textual analysis will examine how the two films in question narrated the national past and constructed historical memories. Both films set the historical scene in one of Taiwan's most turbulent eras – the transition from the period of Taiwan under Japanese colonial rule to that of Taiwan under the KMT. Hence, a comparative textual analysis of how the two films narrate the national past can complement what is generated from the content analysis of television serial dramas.[3]

Apart from the importance of film in its own right, film is selected for detailed investigation because no other systematic material in audio-visual form is available.

[3] It should be noted here that, since 'all the historical films are fictional' (Sorlin, 1980), the analysis will not naïvely subject films to the tests about evidence that are applied to written history; instead, it focuses on the ways in which the past were constructed by these films.

Despite difference between film and television in their aesthetic and industrial aspects (Ellis, 1992), the separation of film studies from 'television studies' is not useful.[4] Films have long been part and parcel of television programming. Viewers arguably have access to more films on television than in the cinemas (Gomery, 1983).

There are a number of reasons for selecting these particular films (*Victory* and *City of Sadness*) for a comparative analysis. They were the best-selling Taiwan-made films in the years of their release and have been screened on television several times since then.[5] Furthermore, both films were produced by companies which had substantial involvement in the television market. *Victory* was made by the CMPC, which remains the largest film company in Taiwan. Owned by the KMT, it was identical to the three national television companies in terms of ownership structure. The makers of *City of Sadness*, including the film's director, developed their professional life at the CMPC in the late 1970s. *City of Sadness* was produced by an independent production company (ERA International Ltd.), which had a fair share of Taiwan's television market through the company's connection with TVBS, one of the most popular satellite television channels in Taiwan.

Importantly, the two films are highly relevant to the question of national identity in Taiwan. Along with some other films made between 1971 and 1993, the two films were officially endorsed as among 'the most memorable' of the national cinema.[6] Setting the narrative scene in the locale of Taiwan, both films dealt with past events that 'actually' occurred and touched on the relations between the KMT and the 'native Taiwanese'.

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[4] Different cultural forms and programme types may still share some discourses as they are conditioned and circulated in the same society. As Tulloch and Lupton find in their research, different types of AIDS television texts including the health promotion advertisements and soap opera 'tend to draw on a similar stock of discourses' (Tulloch and Lupton, 1997: 12).

[5] Box-office statistics here cover the area of Taiwan's capital city Taipei, rather than the whole of Taiwan. In terms of the Mandarin films, the 1976 *Victory* fared only second to a Hong Kong martial arts film. For the 1989 *City of Sadness*, the box office revenue in Taipei alone was above NT$ 50 million, i.e. nearly double the revenue (NT$ 28 million) for the film in second place (*Imagekeeper Monthly*, December 1995, special issue no.1: 264).

[6] The other films included *The Everlasting Glory* (1974), *Eight Hundred Heroes* (1976), *In Our Time* (1982), Strawman (1987), *A Bright Summer Day* (1991), and *The Wedding Banquet* (1993), etc. The Taiwan Cinema Year, a film festival sponsored by the Government Information Office (GIO) in 1993, was intended to promote the national cinema. The GIO made a video compilation of clips from these films, with the National Anthem as its soundtrack. The video was aired on television and other outlets in an attempt to rejunvenate Taiwan's declining film industry.

In analysing the two films, I first contextualise them in their respective socio-political contexts and then conduct a textual analysis. It should be noted here that the term 'textual analysis' is often seen in the literature as the opposite of 'content analysis', and as covering a wide range of competing or overlapping approaches — such as those contained in the book *Channels of Discourse* (Allen, 1992) – drawn from diverse research traditions. I choose deliberately not to define the term 'textual analysis' but to focus on the ideologies registered in the narration process of the film. Thus, the focus of my analysis is not on the textual properties per se but on the ideologies as reflected in the cinematic texts.

### 5.2.3 In-depth Interviews with Viewing Families

Through two waves of in-depth interviews of 19 families, the third part of my empirical analysis seeks to explore a number of questions. First, it attempts to account for their past and present viewing experiences in the domestic context (see Chapter 8).

Secondly, it looks at how the families interpret the two films in question and furthermore, to map the range of viewers' receptions in relation to their sense of national identities (see Chapter 9). In her inquiry into viewers' representations of characters in two British soap operas, Livingstone argues that they arise from the communication between the text, the viewer, and the historical context which conditions both the text and viewers. She rejects 'the ideas of independently existing texts' on the grounds that 'one can have no independent access to texts prior to being read or to viewers ignorant of television texts' (Livingstone, 1988: 105-106). This suggests that audience interpretations of the two films from the course of the informants' lives would provide rich information about the intersection between text and reader.

*(1) Premise: why study viewing families?*

The reasons for including the viewing families in this project are straightforward: most people watch television with their families at home (Silverstone, 1994), talk about television with family members (see Baym, 2000: 14-15), and the family is a primary unit of socialisation. No other single medium has so far taken the place of television, occupying so much shared time spent by ordinary family members. Thus, television is very much a domestic medium and forms a vital part of people's daily routines

(Scannell, 1988: 25-26). Furthermore, the family can be seen as one crucial site where individuals acquire, and negotiate over, their sense of ethnic and national identities – it is one of the 'building blocks or key sites of nationalistic sentiment' (Sibley, 1995b: 108).

The symbolism required by national imagination is, more often than not, connected with the imagery of the familial. Indeed, the metaphorical link between the home and the nation is strong. As Morley argues, 'historically, what is at stake here was both the nationalisation of the domestic and the domestication of the national' (Morley, 2000: 107). But, the home (as well as the national home) itself is not always filled with care, happiness, harmony and warmth. The home is also replete with possibilities of domination and conflict between generations and genders, not to mention a gendered division of labour (Sibley, 1995a). The home is, as Neil Smith argues, 'both castle and prisonhouse, ... socially if not always physically walled, and access out as well as in is controlled in various ways' (Smith, 1993: 104).

The home is also the place 'where the global meets the local' (Morley, 1992: ch.13) as television facilitates intensive interactions between the familial, the local and the global. As some theorists have argued, cultural globalisation can be seen as being embodied in people's everyday lives. The ways in which people *experience* television, and *interpret* any particular television-mediated representation of the world (near or remote in time/in space) are crucial as to understanding how people actually make sense of their place in the world at large, namely, what *national identity* means for them.

### *(2) Methodological considerations*

In light of the metaphorical affinity between the biological family and the national family, and because the text-reader relationship is the focal point that this thesis attempts to explore, in-depth interviews with television families are necessary.

Based on depth-interviews with 19 viewing families, the audience analysis examines some of the ways in which television viewing might be related to audiences' sense of national identity. The data were collected by two waves of interviews with each family. The first wave focused on the informants' past and present television viewing experiences. The second wave looked more closely at the contexts within which their viewing experiences, in association with their social position, were articulated with their sense of national identities. To look for clues to the interaction between the *text* and the

*reader*, the opening sequences of the films (i.e. *Victory* and *City of Sadness*) were shown separately (on video) to the informants in the course of the interviews.

One of the key methodological questions in any audience research is: which segment of the audience is to be studied? This is question of great theoretical importance. As Garnham points out,

> The issue in dispute thus became not whether we had to see the audiences as socially constructed and any effects as socially mediated, but what in any given case were the appropriate social markers. Were they class, gender, ethnicity, age, geographical location, etc.? This is a problem that no audience researcher can escape, since unless the audience is conceived in terms of isolated individuals and any effects are conceived as entirely random, some structuring of the sample to be studied has to take place and such a structuring will, of course, be prescribed by one's hypothesis as to what the most relevant social structural mediations are likely to be. (Garnham, 2000: 127)

Garnham goes on to pinpoint the questionable way in which audience researchers determine their focus: 'if one is concerned with class power then class will be top of the list, if with gender relations then gender, and so on' (Garnham, 2000: 127). Worse still, he argues, is

> ... the apparent rich variation in actual audience interpretations and their theorisation as an active resistant audience then led ironically, in the name of an "ethnography" of the embedded audience, not just to the disappearance from research of the intervening social structural variables that the whole effects tradition had developed to explain variations in effects, but also... the disappearance of the audience as anything other than a random collection of individuals so embedded as to dissolve into the huge complexity of the everyday (Garnham, 2000: 127).

For the purpose of this study, the informants were recruited primarily from the segment of the urban, middle-class families who reside in the Sanchong district of Taipei County, where is separated by a bridge from the capital city, Taipei. To qualify as part of the sample, it was decided that all the families should be (1) equipped with colour television set(s), VCRs, and cable/satellite access; (2) nuclear in pattern; and (3) identifiable in terms of ethnic background. As a result, the sample consists of six 'Mainlander', six 'Hakka' and seven 'Hokkien' families.

The first criterion is set because one concern of the present study is with the interplay of the local and the global in terms of audio-visual consumption; and among the segments of the audience, families with television, VCRs, and cable/satellite access are more

likely to have richer experiences in this respect. This criterion inevitably precludes families with other class positions.[7] But it can be justified because 'there is an infinite range of [socio-demographic] factors' (Morley, 1992: 125) which are practically impossible to include in a single study such as the present one; and it is unlikely that 'all such factors would be of equal effectivity' (Morley, 1992: 125).

The second criterion, families in the nuclear pattern, is set because the nuclear family is predominant in urban Taiwan. The third criterion, ethnic background, is set because it is among the most important of a range of factors which are likely to mediate the sense of national identity in Taiwan. Taiwan was historically troubled by serious conflicts between the Hakka and the Hokkien, and in the early years of the KMT regime between the 'native Taiwanese' and the 'Mainlanders'. Ethnic background has been generally understood as one of the most salient factors in affecting one's political behaviour, e.g. in terms of voting and party allegiance in multi-ethnic Taiwan. Ethnicity remains a sociologically important factor today, but, because of inter-ethnic marriage over the last 50 years, the significance of ethnicity is in decline. This changing 'ethnoscape' thus complicated the recruitment of families on the basis of ethnicity. For the convenience of recruitment from groups of varied ethnic origin, only the youngsters' paternal grandfather was taken into consideration.[8]

Structured as such, the sample can at least be differentiated in terms of ethnicity, sex, and age. There is no lack of evidence in previous studies concerning the importance of one or more of these factors (e.g. Gillespie, 1995; Liebes and Katz, 1990). Thus, an

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[7] For Taipei County as a whole, the rate of colour television ownership was approximately 135 per 100 households. Cable television also spread through the majority of viewing families in the 1990s. Since the 1990s viweres have become less dependent on the VCRs to gain access to programmes unavailable on the terrestrial television channels. This might account for why the household ownership of VCRs sharply decreased during the same period. In the short period between 1992 and 1996, the proportion of households possessing VCRs dropped by 18 per cent (from 83 per cent in 1992 to 65 per cent in 1996). The national population as a whole reflected a similar trend. The proportion of households owning VCRs was 69.2 per cent in 1993 but subsequently decreased to 66.3 per cent in 1994 and to 62.2 per cent in 1995. (Directorate-General of Budget Accounting and Statistics, 1996.)

[8] The difficulties in recruiting informants were overcome with the help of my wife, a teacher at a middle school in Sanchong. She enabled me to contact roughly 60 of her former students from different grades (aged 17-19 when interviews were undertaken). Having made explicit the purpose of the research ('family television viewing'), more than half of these students agreed to take part in this project. In the end, 19 household interviews were arranged with the consent of the students' parents. This method of informant recruitment generally meets the demands of the research. On the one hand, these family viewers were unknown to me personally before interviewing, and thus granted me an appropriate distance with the informants. On the other hand, it also enabled me to acquire trust of the informants with whom the co-interviewer (my wife) had been familiar.

effort will be made to determine the relative importance/unimportance of these factors with respect to the families' past/present viewing experiences, interpretations of the two films in question, and sense of national identities. However, I intend to make no *a priori* claim to whether any of these factors is important or unimportant because, as Morley reflects, 'this is fundamentally a question which cannot be resolved on purely theoretical grounds, but has also to take into account empirical evidence' (Morley, 1992: 125).

## 5.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have considered the key methodological questions involved in this thesis, arguing for a critical synthesis of the dominant ideology thesis and the polysemy thesis, a synthesis that benefits from both research traditions but which does not rely on simplistic assumptions about the text-reader relationship. I also argue that the text-reader relationship, from a historical perspective that covers different time spans, should be approached by reference to multiple sources of data analysed by multiple methods.

The aim of the empirical analysis as a whole, therefore, is not to arrive at a single definitive answer to the question of television's role in national identity-formation in Taiwan. The analyses of separate sets of data conducted from different angles and by different methods should result in a range of complementary and/or inconsistent evidence. Since this thesis is concerned with the complexity of television, politics and audience in the long-term mediating process of national identity-formation, a methodological triangulation based on the multiple sources of data is intended to produce a range of the most reliable answers rather than a single definitive one.

# Part II
## Empirical Analyses

Part Two presents the results of the selected empirical case studies. In each chapter, analytical methods are discussed before the examination of the research data and the interpretation of the key findings. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are employed to examine the inter-relationship between media representation and audience reception.

Chapter 6 analyses the synopses of a sample of television serial dramas. The synopses are drawn from the available secondary data relating to prime-time television serial dramas – the programmes most popular with the viewers and vital to the advertising revenues of television in Taiwan – over the last three decades. The chapter seeks to assess the linguistic, generic, temporal and spatial attributes of television representations between 1971 and 1996, when the KMT exercised monopoly control of terrestrial television in Taiwan.

Intended as a complement to Chapter 6, Chapter 7 conducts a comparative textual analysis of two representative films of the national cinema (*Victory* and *City of Sadness*). The analysis focuses on how national past events which remain closely related to contemporary Taiwanese identity have been utilised in the media texts produced at different times. The premise of this comparative analysis is that a close examination of how the national past has been portrayed by the national cinema may explicate how media fictions engage in the ideological dissemination and discursive reconstruction of a national identity.

Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 are based on depth-interviews with 19 viewing families, looking into some of the ways in which television viewing might be related to the audience's sense of national identity. Informed by two waves of in-depth interviews with these families, the two chapters give details about informants' past and present television viewing experiences, interwoven with their personal biographies. The two chapters also explore the contexts within which the audience's viewing experiences were articulated with, or divorced from, their sense of national identity. On the basis of two separate sessions of co-viewing the opening sequences of the two films in question (*Victory* and *City of Sadness*), the analysis provides clues to the interaction between the text and the reader.

# 6.

# Taiwanese Television Serial Dramas

As noted in Chapter 5, some previous studies have pointed to the potential of television drama (widely defined) for shaping the sense of national identity among the viewers. The present chapter examines more closely the question of television representation in Taiwan by conducting a quantitative analysis of television drama synopses.[1] The aim is to map the terrain of Taiwan's television in terms of its temporal, spatial and linguistic attributes between 1971 and 1996.

The analysis provides quantitative evidence on the unique nature of television drama representation. Most importantly, the impact of the excessive 'presence' of Mainland China on Taiwan's television is considered. Since the early 1970s, Taiwan's television has placed an emphasis on China in terms of its temporal, spatial and other attributes. Taiwan's television serial dramas have been temporally and spatially located in the Chinese mainland, and have consistently provided a large proportion of representations that have linguistically privileged Mandarin over the local (Taiwanese) languages.

## 6.1 Television Serial Dramas in Taiwan

This section gives a historical account of Taiwan's serial dramas. The term 'television serial drama' is used because it is better than other terms (e.g. 'soap opera') for capturing the historical specificity of Taiwan's television fictions. The genre has always been called *lianxu ju* (literally, 'serial drama') by the television industry and its audience.

[1] The time frame of sampling the television serial dramas for this analysis is purposively selected: the period between 1971 and 1996, from the point at which television emerged as a nation-wide medium and Taiwan was no longer recognised as the representative of 'China' to the point at which the Taiwanese people elected the first native-born head of state by direct vote.

In terms of the supply, production and scheduling of terrestrial television in Taiwan, the proportion of imported programmes (mainly from the United States) has decreased significantly since the early 1970s. This is mainly due to the increasing commercial competition among television channels and the additional legislative constraints on the proportion of imported programmes. The 1976 Broadcasting Act limited the quantity of imported programmes to 30 per cent of overall television programming. The appearance of China Television Company (CTV) in 1969 prompted Taiwan Television Company (TTV) to decrease the proportion of imported programmes from the previous level of 33 per cent to 22 per cent. Similarly, after the launch of Chinese Television Service (CTS) in 1971, the other two channels reduced the proportion of foreign programmes further to about 17 per cent (Lee, 1987: 197). The legislative constraints imposed by the government were largely symbolic, since before the 1976 Broadcasting Act took effect all three television channels had already reduced the proportion of imported programmes.

Of the various kinds of television programming in Taiwan, television serial drama has been an integral and indispensable part since the inception of the first television service in 1962. As indicated in a comprehensive survey of Taiwan's television programming between 1962 and 1993 (Liu, 1996), before 1987 the serial drama was the most important type of programme on Taiwan's television, consistently constituting over 35-50 per cent of overall television programming. Though the proportion declined after 1988, the serial drama remained in second position in terms of its share of television output (after variety shows).

The average episode of a television serial drama lasted from 30 to 60 minutes in the 1970s. In 1977, the Government Information Office restricted the maximum number of episodes of a television serial drama to 60. The number was further reduced to 30 the following year. This limitation was later loosened to 40 episodes per television serial drama in the 1980s. The reasons why such trivial restrictions were imposed was never made clear, but it was certainly related to the vicious circle caused by the genre's popularity and commercial competition among television companies. In the early 1970s, television's overuse of the genre's popularity led to the saturation of evening television by serial dramas. For example, CTS once offered drama-only programming in the evenings, so that four television serial dramas were aired consecutively from 7 p.m. The

high level of supply also killed the creativity and originality of the genre on the production side. This in turn caused dissatisfaction among the audience. The government then started restricting the number of television dramas per evening and the number of episodes per drama.

Since the early 1990s, the limitation on the number of episodes has virtually ceased to exist in so far as some popular prime-time television serial dramas have contained more than 100 episodes. Usually an episode lasts one hour, including a total of 15-20 minutes for advertising, between 8 and 9 p.m. With respect to the genre's scheduling, all the three terrestrial channels have shared a high degree of homogeneity as they have all scheduled prime-time television serial dramas into the same television time slots on weekdays. Thus, the genre's high daily consumption rate has demanded highly efficient methods of television production.

As a result of the genre's fierce competition across channels and its vital importance in profit-making for the entire television industry (similar to the importance of the soap opera genre to the commercial broadcasting industry in the United States, see Allen, 1987), the serial drama in Taiwan has tended to have a larger budget than other types of programmes. Nevertheless, these factors have not always been associated with a high content quality. Competition across channels has generally led television companies to copy the 'secrets' of market success from one another, and this has resulted in the increasing homogeneity of the entertainment output of Taiwan's television. Because of the genre's homogeneity and lack of creativity, television serial dramas have been criticised severely by intellectuals but have continued to enjoy high popularity.

Another important feature of Taiwan's prime-time television serial dramas is that nearly all of them have been made in Taiwan. More often than not, they have attracted a larger audience than imported American serials and series (Liu, 1997). This supports the conclusion of Silj and others, who find that in the European context national fiction normally outperforms imported American series in the audience ratings (Silj, 1988). Taiwanese television serial dramas have also competed successfully with their Hong Kong counterparts for overseas Chinese markets in Southeast Asia and North America – an experience similar to that of Mexico and Brazil, where *telenovelas* have been very successful in both domestic and overseas markets (Rogers and Antola, 1985).

In short, the popularity of Taiwan's television serial dramas and their centrality for the television industry make them a good choice for closer investigation through an historical analysis of television representations. In terms of both television production and consumption, prime-time television serial drama represents a genre which successfully meets the demands of the industrial economy of its producers and the expectations of its audience. On the production side, the genre is said to provide a highly efficient way to 'control the tension between similarity and difference inherent in the production of any cultural product' so as to 'predict audience popularity' (Feuer, 1992: 142, 144). On the consumption side, the genre enables the audiences to choose, expect and comprehend what will be screened in a specific programme.

Reflecting many of the characteristics of the serial drama that have been identified in Chapter 5, Taiwan's television serial drama is emotionally laden with a focus on interpersonal and intimate relationships. But, unlike the soap opera in some Western countries, Taiwan's serial drama is a genre with a relatively clear ending since each series lasts only a few months but is broadcast on a daily basis, always in a prime-time viewing slot (Cai, 1994). The competition among different serial dramas and among television channels has always been fierce. For decades since the early 1970s, there have always been two or more serial dramas available at exactly the same time slot from different channels, and this has become increasingly common in recent years due to the multiplication of television channels.

## 6.2 Analysis of Television Drama Synopses

### 6.2.1 Sample Descriptions

The sample frame for the present research covers a 302-month period of prime-time television serial dramas included in Taiwan's television listings. This enables the researcher to adopt a multi-stage, systematic sampling to acquire the data for analysis (Krippendorff, 1980; Riffe et al., 1998). The sample months for 1971 were first purposively selected as November and December due to the fact that the third terrestrial television channel was launched on 31 October of that year. For the other 25 years between 1972 and 1996, 50 months were selected according to a systematic sampling of the total population of 300 months. The first sampling month randomly resulted in the

selection of April. Taking a sampling interval of five months, October was therefore chosen as the second sampling month. Accordingly, the same two months (April and October) were selected for each year between 1972 and 1996.

I then located the television listings for each of the sample months for each year. This produced a total of 61 days of television listings for each year and a total sample of 1,575 days of television listings for detailed analysis.[2] Then the prime-time television serial dramas appearing in each sample month's listings were identified. 'Prime-time' here refers to the time slot between 8 and 9 p.m. on weekdays (Mondays to Fridays), which has been called 'Golden prime time' by the television channels themselves. This is because advertising in that time period produces more revenue for the television stations than any other single time slot. In addition, the television audience between 8 and 9 p.m. is larger and more heterogeneous than at other times. Between 1971 and 1973, there was an amazing growth of serial dramas, which were broadcast every evening from Mondays to Fridays. Given that there was no typical serial lasting for one hour in that period, all of them were selected as long as they were broadcast between 7 and 9 p.m. on weekdays. The one-hour serial dramas at prime time in Taiwan have normally been scheduled between 8 and 9 p.m. on weekdays, and this schedule has been stabilised on all three terrestrial television channels in Taiwan since 1974, with the exception that between 1978 and 1981 CTV scheduled its one-hour serial dramas between 9.30 and 10.30 p.m. on weekdays. In this way, the researcher identified a sample of prime-time television serial dramas for content analysis. The total sample consists of 267 different serial dramas (see Appendix I for the full list) between 1971 and 1996. The vast majority of the serial dramas in the sample were made domestically, with just two being imported from Japan and Hong Kong.

### 6.2.2 Descriptive Synopses of the Television Serial Dramas

There is a lack of ready-made, adequate reference sources for the study of television serial dramas in Taiwan. Thus, for this study the descriptive synopses of the television serial dramas had to be prepared in advance before coding (see the example synopses in Appendix II). The main aim was to supply, for each selected television serial drama,

[2] Television listings for eleven days in April 1975 were excluded, since no regular programming was broadcast in the days following the death of Chiang Kai-shek on 5 April.

key information (concerning main characters, plot summary, setting, and broadcast language, etc.) obtained from the print media. The main sources used were the national newspaper *United Daily* and the *TV Guide* published by TTV). These provided programme information, publicity about actors and actresses, viewers' letters, programme reviews. Of course, the synopses, as composite accounts of fragmented programme information, are incomplete. However, they are still useful for understanding the key changes in the orientations of television serial dramas over the years.

### 6.2.3 Coding Procedure and Reliability

The descriptive synopses of prime-time television serial dramas were used for coding in the following way. After training two independent coders, the researcher took responsibility for pre-testing the reliability between the two coders and adjusting the categories for each variable in case the inter-coder reliability was not satisfactory.

The coding scheme was developed in accordance with the coding protocol (see Appendix III) for the purpose of exploring the sub-generic, linguistic and spatio-temporal preferences in the programming of television serial dramas in Taiwan. The categories for a number of variables were constructed on the basis of traditional principles of content analysis to be appropriate, exhaustive, mutually exclusive and independent, and they were derived from a single classification principle in order reflect the purpose of the research (Budd et al., 1967: 42-45; Holsti, 1969: 95-101). To achieve better reliability between coders, I devised categories for each variable in the coding scheme which were as simple as possible, because 'a large number of complex concepts increases the chances that coders will make mistakes, diminishing the reliability of the study' (Riffe et al., 1998: 107).

Six main variables are included in the coding scheme. The first variable, TIME-SPAN, is categorised as (1) 1971-1979, (2) 1980-1987, and (3) 1988-1996. These categories were constructed in order to examine the trends of Taiwan's serial dramas in different periods of time. The spans of time are divided by critical events concerning Taiwan's identity politics and television landscape. Thus, the appearance of three terrestrial television channels in Taiwan and the expulsion of the Republic of China (Taiwan's official name) in 1971 mark the beginning of the first time period. The recognition of

Beijing (and simultaneously the de-recognition of Taipei) by the United States in 1979, and the Formosa Incident of 1980 in protest over political reforms against the KMT, introduce the second time period. The political transition, the lifting of martial law, and the liberalisation of the press in 1987-1988 start the third time span. 1996 was the first year when the Taiwanese elected the head of state by direct vote and also the final year of the KMT government's monopoly of the viewing market for terrestrial television. After 1996, the KMT government still dominated the existing three terrestrial television channels. However, the appearance of two additional terrestrial television channels -- Formosa Television Company (FTV) and Public Television Service (PTS) -- in 1997 and 1998 respectively ended the KMT's monopoly of terrestrial television viewing markets.

The second variable, CHANNEL, is classified as follows: (1) Taiwan Television Company (TTV), (2) China Television Company (CTV), and (3) Chinese Television Service (CTS). Since all three television channels are owned by separate branches of the Nationalist government (the government, the KMT party, and the military), this raises the important question of whether they differ in their representations, given that they also compete with one another.

The third variable is LANGUAGE, and the following categories are used: (1) Mandarin, (2) Taiwanese (Hakka and/or Hokkien), (3) Mixed, and (4) Other (unknown). The unit of analysis is the predominant natural language dubbed or spoken by the main characters in the serial dramas, or, alternatively, a mixture of Mandarin and Taiwanese if neither is predominant.

The fourth and fifth variables are PLACE and TIME. Almost all of Taiwan's prime-time television serial dramas were locally made and had targeted the local market, hence television serial dramas were presumed to concentrate much more on Taiwan itself (in geographical and temporal terms) than any other places. This assumption is also based on the theoretical connection between spatio-temporal sensibilities and national identities (Anderson, 1991: 24; Morley and Robins, 1995: 72). This assumption, in relation to the case of Taiwan, suggests that it is revealing to ask whether the duality of the television industry – it is controlled by the KMT but is commercially run and financed by advertising – has resulted in the time-space preferences of television serial dramas.

The fourth variable, PLACE, assesses the geographical settings of television serial dramas. It consists of three categories: (1) the Chinese mainland, (2) Taiwan, (3) other (including unknown cases). This is useful for examining how Mainland-centred or Taiwan-centred Taiwan's television output is.

The fifth variable is TIME, which assesses the historical settings in television serial dramas. The categories for classifying this variable are (1) the remote past (defined as any time before 1949), (2) the recent past (defined as any time after 1949), and (3) other (including unknown cases). The dividing period between the remote past and the recent past is taken as 1945-1949. The year 1945 represents a moment of historical transition and, of identity confusion, when the Taiwanese people eventually escaped from the rule of an alien Empire (Japan) but found it equally difficult to embrace the maladministration of another externally imposed republic. A much more significant shift occurred when the Nationalist government moved from Mainland China to Taiwan in 1949. Suffice it to say that the period from 1945 to 1949 produced a state of uncertainty among the people, who had just experienced the impact of the transition from colony to republic. As already noted in Chapter 3, this moment of historical transition did not pass smoothly. It turned into a national trauma for the Taiwanese people when the government, newly arrived from the Chinese mainland, cracked down on the popular protest for political reforms on February 28, 1947.

The sixth variable, SUB-GENRE, seeks to explore whether there has been any shift in the generic location of television serial dramas. It uses the following sub-generic types: (1) romance/family, (2) action/martial arts, (3) history, and (4) other (including unknown cases. The categories for coding the SUB-GENRE variable in the formal analysis were achieved by combining eight categories previously used in the pre-test.[3] Each television serial drama was coded according to the information contained in the descriptive synopses, For example, as shown in Table 6.1, the television serial drama *Xing xing zhi wo xin* (TTV, October 1983) was coded as belonging to the romance/family sub-genre. The second and the third examples of serial dramas, *Yi dai*

[3] From the population of the synopses of 267 television dramas, a random sample which covered synopses of 74 television serial dramas was used for the pre-test. The number of cases for the pre-test was obtained by a formula, $n = [(N-1)(SE)^2 + PQN] / (N-1)(SE)^2 + PQ$, in which n = the sample size for the reliability check in the pretest, N= the population size (number of content units in the study), P= the population level of agreement (set at the level of 0.90 in the study), and Q= (1-P). See Riffe et al. (1998: 125).

*bao jun* (CTV, April 1974) and *Justice Bao* (*Bao qing tien*, CTS, April and October 1993), were coded as belonging to the history sub-genre. The fourth example, *Yi tian tu long ji* (TTV, April 1994) was coded as belonging to the action/martial arts sub-genre.

In the pre-test, two coders independently coded 74 cases (the synopses for 74 television serial dramas). Through the pre-test, coder training was completed, the coding scheme was adjusted, and the coding protocol was revised. A widely used coefficient of composite reliability was employed to measure inter-coder agreement and the category reliability of individual variables (Holsti, 1969: 140).[4] The reliability figures were as follows: reliability for variables TIME-SPAN or CHANNEL was judged to have reached the upper limit; 0.92 for variable LANGUAGE; 0.94 for PLACE; 0.89 for TIME; and 0.69 for SUB-GENRE. The reliability for coding variable SUB-GENRE between the two coders was judged to be unsatisfactory. Accordingly, the original eight categories for the variable SUB-GENRE (romance/family, action/war, martial arts, docudrama, history, fantasy, farce, other) were re-aggregated into four categories (romance, action/martial arts, history, and other). The two coders repeated the coding process according to the revised coding scheme. The result produced a much higher composite reliability co-efficient (0.89): of the 74 coding decisions each coder made, 66 produced agreement.

However, this increased reliability should be treated with caution owing to the weakness of the formula used for the reliability check. As Holsti warns, 'by chance alone, agreement should increase as the number of categories decreases'. For a more careful examination, I then adopted the Scott's *Pi*, an index specifically developed for coding data into nominal categories. The index of reliability (*pi*) is considered to be more correct than the formula for simply calculating composite reliability (Holsti, 1969: 140;

[4] In the formula *C.R. = 2M / (N1 + N2)*, M is the number of coding decisions on which the two coders agree, while N1 and N2 are the number of coding decisions made by the two coders respectively. Taking the variable PLACE as an example, each coder made 74 coding decisions, and on 70 of these there was agreement. By calculating 2(70)/74+74, the reliability co-efficient was then obtained as 0.94.

Riffe et al., 1998: 129-131).[5] The resulting index was computed as 0.83. This result should be acceptable, given that agreement between coders was particularly difficult to achieve when identifying genres (Allen et al., 1997, 1998).

After the pre-test, the two coders completed the entire sample of the synopses of 267 television serial dramas. Where disagreement occurred, the present author served as an additional coder to examine discrepancies and make a judgement between them by re-reviewing the original data in the print media to check for errors. The coding result was then statistically tested by using SPSS.

## 6.3 INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

Because the data used in this analysis are limited in terms of depth, there is clearly a danger that the results might be questionable. It has to be recognised that the content analysis undertaken here is in itself incomplete. It does, however, serve as a useful preliminary analysis for the subsequent in-depth examination of the available visual data (cinematic texts) and the viewers' interpretations.

### 6.3.1 The General Trends

It is found that that the representations of prime-time television serial dramas were generally consistent over time. As indicted in Table 6.1, this consistency holds for channels, broadcast languages, sub-genres, and historical as well as geographical settings over the three time-spans. Taiwan's prime-time television serial dramas, regardless of channels, tended to use Mandarin. They also highlighted a lot of Mainland and pre-1949 contents. Half of the television serial dramas were consistently devoted to the romance/family sub-genre. This general finding is based on the selected sample of

[5] The *Scott's Pi* formula is *Pi = ( % observed agreement – % expected agreement ) / 1 – % expected agreement.* The process of computing for the variable SUB-GENRE is briefly explained here. The expected agreement (about 35%) is obtained by first calculating the expected agreement by chance for each of the four categories. In this case, out of a total of 148 coding decisions (each coder coded the synopses of 74 television serial dramas), value 1 (romance/family) was used 51% of the time (i.e. 76 of the decisions were to select value 1 as the correct coding of the variable); value 2 (action/martial arts), value 3 (history), and value 4 (other) were used 23%, 15%, and 11% of the time respectively. So the expected agreement by chance alone would be $(0.51)^2 + (0.23)^2 + (0.15)^2 + (0.11)^2 = 0.3476$. Therefore, *Pi* is $(0.89 - 0.35) / 1 - 0.35 = 0.83$.

Taiwan's prime-time television serial dramas; however, it should be noted that daytime trends may differ.

**Table 6.1: Trends in prime-time TV serial dramas by time-span for other variables**

| TIME-SPAN | 1971-1979 N = 104 (100%) | 1980-1987 N = 81 (100%) | 1988-1996 N = 82 (100%) | Total N = 267 (100%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CHANNEL | | | | |
| TTV | 29 (28%) | 26 (32%) | 27 (33%) | 82 (31%) |
| CTV | 31 (30%) | 28 (35%) | 28(34%) | 87 (33%) |
| CTS | 44 (42%) | 27 (33%) | 27(33%) | 98 (37%) |
| LANGUAGE | | | | |
| Mandarin | 81 (78%) | 81 (100%) | 79 (96%) | 241 (90%) |
| Taiwanese | 21 (20%) | 0 | 0 | 21 (8%) |
| Mixed | 0 | 0 | 3 (4%) | 3 (1%) |
| Other | 2 (2%) | 0 | 0 | 2 (1%) |
| PLACE | | | | |
| Mainland China | 55 (53%) | 45 (56%) | 37 (45%) | 137 (51%) |
| Taiwan | 46 (44%) | 30 (37%) | 38 (46%) | 114 (43%) |
| Other | 3 (3%) | 6 (7%) | 7 (9%) | 16 (6%) |
| TIME | | | | |
| Before 1949 | 51 (49%) | 45 (56%) | 39 (48%) | 135 (51%) |
| After 1949 | 52 (50%) | 35 (43%) | 40 (49%) | 127 (48%) |
| Other | 1 (1%) | 1 (1%) | 3 (4%) | 5 (2%) |
| SUB-GENRE | | | | |
| Romance | 50 (48%) | 38 (47%) | 48 (59%) | 136 (51%) |
| Action | 27 (26%) | 27 (33%) | 11 (13%) | 65 (24%) |
| History | 17 (16%) | 11 (14%) | 13 (16%) | 41 (15%) |
| Other | 10 (10%) | 5 (6%) | 10 (12%) | 25 (9%) |

*Notes*: All historical differences by time-span except Language were insignificant (*chi-square tests*). Figures in parenthesis are rounded.

Television serial dramas have consistently constituted the major part of Taiwan's prime-time television output. There was little difference among the three television channels,

since they all adopted similar scheduling strategies. The television serial drama was, without few exceptions, a prime-time genre for all the three television channels.

Though the proportion of broadcast languages changed significantly from the first to the second and third time-spans, it remained consistent throughout the time-periods from 1980 to 1996, when Mandarin was clearly the predominant broadcast language of prime-time television serial dramas (see Table 6.1: between 1980 and 1987, all serial dramas were broadcast in Mandarin; and between 1988 and 1996, over 96 per cent of serial dramas were in Mandarin).

With respect to the geographical settings, television serial dramas tended to place greater emphasis on the Chinese mainland than Taiwan itself. As shown in Table 6.1, 137 out of 267, i.e. over 51 per cent of all serial dramas under analysis, set their narratives in Mainland China. That said, there is a noticeable drop in mainland content from 53 per cent to 45 percent. Though the difference between three time periods is not statistically significant, this nevertheless suggests a decline of interest in the mainland as a geographical setting on Taiwan television. In terms of the historical contexts of television serial dramas, the proportion of pre-1949 content was consistently about 50 per cent. The ratio of the pre- to post-1949 content changed very little across the three time periods (see Table 6.1).

The change in the composition of drama genres is also statistically insignificant. Romance/family was the most important sub-genre. This is not surprising, given that the representation of personal interactions within the familial context is one of the key characteristics of the serial drama. What is striking is that the action/martial arts (including kung-fu) and history sub-genres consistently constituted over 40 per cent of the serial drama genre in the first two time-spans, while the proportion decreased slightly to about 30 per cent during the third time-span (see Table 6.1). Though the composition of television serial drama genres showed no significant change, the sub-genres differed in their locations of geographical and historical settings. As Table 6.2 shows, the romance/family sub-genre was more likely to locate its geographical and historical settings in a post-1949 Taiwanese context, while the action/martial arts and history sub-genres tended to represent pre-1949 Mainland China.

**Table 6.2: Prime-time TV serial dramas by sub-genre for time and place variables**

| GENRE | Romance | Action | History | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TIME | | | | | |
| Before 1949 | 33 | 62 | 29 | 11 | 135 |
| After 1949 | 100 | 2 | 12 | 13 | 127 |
| Grand Total | 133 | 64 | 41 | 24 | 262 |
| PLACE | | | | | |
| Mainland | 33 | 60 | 36 | 8 | 137 |
| Taiwan | 94 | 3 | 4 | 13 | 114 |
| Grand Total | 127 | 63 | 40 | 21 | 251 |

*Note*: Figures do not include cases falling into the 'Other' category for both variables TIME (5 cases) and PLACE (16 cases). Both differences are significant at $P < 0.001$ on the chi-square test.

The aforementioned, apparent consistency of Taiwan's prime-time television serial drama, however, requires a more careful interpretation. I will now consider in more detail each of the main variables in turn: language, place and time.

### 6.3.2 Broadcast Language

It is indisputable that Taiwan's television serial drama output has given preference to Mandarin rather than Taiwanese. Although, during the first time-period (1971-1979), 20 per cent of prime-time television serial dramas were broadcast in Taiwanese, there was no single serial drama that was broadcast predominantly in Taiwanese at prime time over the two periods between 1980 and 1996.[6] All the prime-time television serial dramas ceased to broadcast in Taiwanese from 1974 onwards, except for a 1979 serial drama used for propaganda purposes at a time of national crisis when the U.S. de-recognised Taiwan. The serial drama in question was *Han liu* (Apr. 1979). It was produced by CMPC and co-broadcast by all the three television channels in the same

[6] No prime-time television serial drama in the Taiwanese languages appeared until 1997, when the fourth terrestrial television channel, FTV, was launched. The original three channels then followed suit.

time slot, and presented a traumatic story of Communist tyranny on the mainland. The most obvious reason for this pattern of language use is that the KMT government's linguistic policy on broadcasting favoured Mandarin. However, two points are worthy of note here. First, television broadcast a higher proportion of serial dramas in Taiwanese during the first period than during the later periods. In particular, from 1971 to 1974, many serial dramas in Taiwanese were broadcast at prime time. This is because the television market, previously monopolised by TTV, became fiercely competitive in a very short time when CTV appeared in 1969 and CTS joined the market in 1971.

Secondly, the three terrestrial television channels clearly acknowledged that many viewers had no command of Mandarin, a phenomenon that was especially true in the early years of the television service. This accounted for television's subtitled presentations, a routine service for any programme on television since the beginning of television broadcasting. After the three terrestrial television channels secured a large audience, they excluded all programmes in Taiwanese from prime-time television and began reducing the proportion of non-Mandarin programmes. It should also be noted that the policy of 'Mandarinisation' preceded the imposition of statutory linguistic restrictions on Taiwanese languages in the 1976 Broadcasting Act. However, three prime-time television serial dramas in mixed Mandarin and Taiwanese appeared on television in the third period (see Table 6.2, all in 1995), a previously unseen phenomenon. The reasons for this are: first, the linguistic restrictions on Taiwanese languages on television were finally abolished in 1993; secondly, the mixed use of both languages in Taiwan has been becoming common in everyday life. Predictably, Taiwan's prime-time television increasingly mixed the Taiwanese and Mandarin languages as a result of the KMT's policy changes. This unique form of language mixing might be interpreted as a sign that hybrid identities were becoming increasingly common.

### 6.3.3 Televised Place, Televised Time

Table 6.2 indicates that Taiwan's television output privileged Mainland China as a geographical setting for prime-time television serial dramas. In the first two time spans (1971-1979, 1980-1987) the spatial setting of serial dramas was predominantly Mainland-centred (52 and 55 per cent respectively). Despite a decline in the third time

span, Mainland-centred settings in the narrative of serial dramas remained prominent (45 per cent). This finding is of great interest: why did approximately half of Taiwan-made television serial dramas set their action on the mainland? Indeed, it is hard to imagine a case in which the proportion of television drama requiring geographically distant locations could be greater than it is in Taiwan, or in which the actual locations themselves could be further removed from the production base.[7]

As shown in Table 6.2, Taiwan's television serial dramas tended to look back in time. Television projected a significant proportion of serial dramas to the historical past. About half of all the serials over the three time periods were set in a time prior to 1949.

The above analysis, based on the separation of place and time, obscures an answer to the question: 'Whose past was represented?' We need to take into account both place and time together, as shown in Table 6.3. Thus, the pre-1949 past tended to be associated with the mainland settings within the television serial dramas. Of 131 dramas with historical settings in the pre-1949 period, the content of 127 was Mainland-based, while the content of only four was Taiwan-based. It thus appears that Taiwan itself, within the melodramatic world of prime-time television, had no history, or, at least, no pre-1949 history. In other words, television representations as such seemed congruent with the Nationalist view of history. After the Nationalist government moved to Taiwan in 1949, it tended not to highlight the past of Taiwan (or events occurring there) in isolation; nor did it unfold Taiwan's sensitive past, as revealed for example in the clash between the Taiwanese and the Nationalist government during the February 28 1947 Incident, an event often exploited by Taiwanese nationalists to appeal to the 'native Taiwanese'.

[7] For example, a 1954 study by Head of a series of dramas on U.S. television found that the setting was American in 88 per cent of cases (Fiske and Hartley, 1989: 28).

**Table 6.3: Trends in prime-time TV serial dramas by time and place variables**

| PLACE | Mainland | Taiwan | Row Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| TIME | | | |
| Before 1949 | 127 | 4 | 131 |
| After 1949 | 10 | 110 | 120 |
| Column Total | 137 | 114 | 251 |

*Notes*: Figures do not include 16 cases falling into the 'Other' category for both variables TIME and PLACE. Chi-square values after Yates' continuity correction for a 2 x 2 table show differences significant at $P < 0.001$.

Such uses of pre-1949 history in Taiwan's television might be explained in the following ways. First, the Nationalist government had good reasons to be nostalgic in order to keep alive the memories/images relating to the Chinese mainland among the populace, since it had vowed to recover the mainland as the sole legitimate ruler of all of China. Accordingly, the television industry tended to focus on the mainland and the pre-1949 history of China, thereby seeking to forge a sentimental link between the Taiwanese people and the rest of China across the Taiwan Strait. Secondly, given that the pre-1949 history of Taiwan was regarded by the Nationalist government as a highly sensitive issue, and that all television programmes except news bulletins were subject to prior censorship, the television industry was under a great deal of pressure to avoid this subject. By converting Table 6.3, the cultural geography of Taiwan's prime-time serial dramas can be mapped approximately as in Figure 6.1.

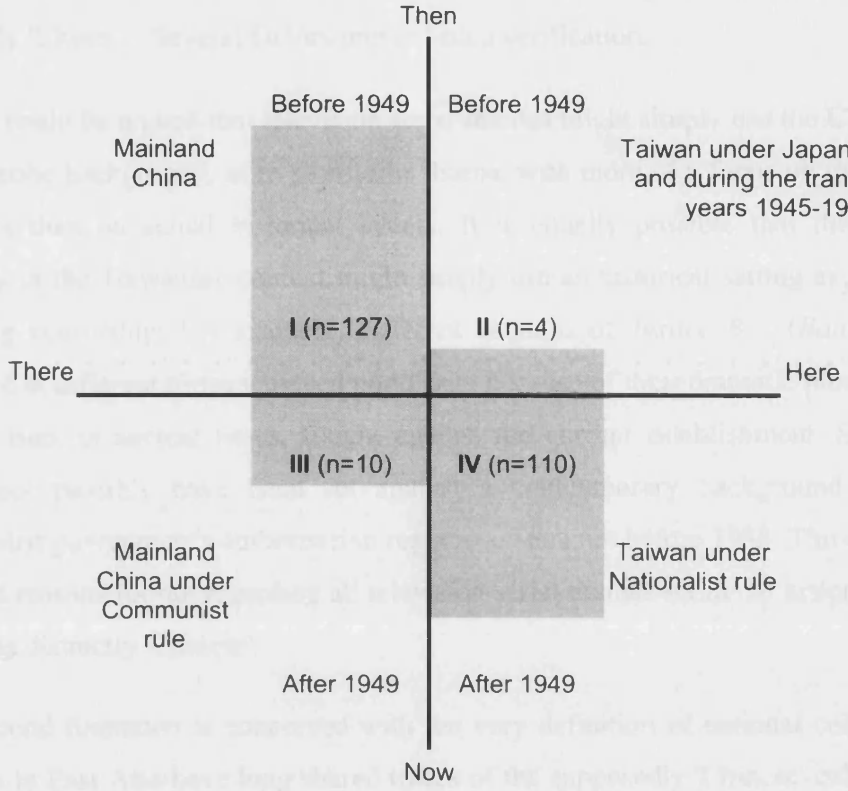


**Figure 6.1: Temporal and spatial attributes of prime-time TV serial dramas**

The discussion so far certainly suggests that Taiwan's television output was far from 'Taiwanese' in terms of the linguistic, geographical and historical settings of the melodramatic world of serial drama. Indeed, the Nationalist government deliberately sought to exploit television to serve the purposes of regime consolidation and nationalist indoctrination, as manifested in laws which stipulated that television should promote Chinese culture and support a national unification policy (see Chapter 4). Also, according to the Code for Radio and Television Program Production, "the themes of dramas should be *ideologically healthy*" (Government Information Office, 1997). Another production code for television programmes, which took effect in 1983, also prescribed that each terrestrial television channel must broadcast at least 90 minutes of Peking Opera (known as *guo jiu*, literally, national opera) (Government Information Office, 1997). This view might suggest that the return and growth of Taiwanese consciousness (see Chapter 3) was independent of television representations in Taiwan, or was perhaps due to a conscious resistance from the audience to those representations. However, this argument, if it is to be justified, requires much more evidence concerning

the extent of television's 'Chineseness'. In fact, it is much easier to falsify the statement that Taiwan's television was 'Taiwanese' than it is to verify the statement that it was distinctly 'Chinese'. Several factors prevent such verification.

First, it could be argued that television serial dramas might simply use the Chinese past as an exotic background, as in a costume drama, with more of a focus on interpersonal relations than on actual historical events. It is equally possible that the television industry in the Taiwanese context might simply use an historical setting as a means of avoiding censorship. For example, different versions of *Justice Bao* (*Bao qing tian*) screened at different times achieved popularity because of their dramatic plots, in which Justice Bao, in ancient times, fought against the corrupt establishment. Such a plot could not possibly have been set against a contemporary background under the Nationalist government's authoritarian regime, at least not before 1988. Thus, there may be good reasons for not regarding all television serial dramas set in the historical past of China as distinctly 'Chinese'.

The second limitation is concerned with the very definition of national culture. Many peoples in East Asia have long shared traces of the supposedly 'Chinese' culture. These include, for example, traditional classic, historical novels such as *The Tales of Three Kingdoms*; the Chinese script; the art of calligraphy; Confucianism, etc. Also, the past historical meaning of 'Chineseness' was very different from today's meaning (see Chapter 3). 'Chineseness' can be produced and consumed by anyone as a commodity and hence its nationalist meaning is altered. Some recent examples will illustrate this point. A Chinese legend was utilised to make *Mulan: The Legend of a Warrior*, the Walt Disney animation. Equally, the supposedly Chinese historical background on which *Crunching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (a Mandarin film made by the Taiwanese director Ang Lee) was based did not prevent if from being a very popular hit in the United States. Therefore, not all of the pre-1949 television output set in the Chinese past historically and geographically can be seen to conform to today's understanding of 'Chineseness'.

For all these reasons, the content analysis undertaken for this research cannot be used very easily to distinguish between the 'Chinese' and 'Taiwanese' pasts represented on television. Such a task calls for other sources of data and more qualitative methods. Thus, the question 'whose past was represented?' needs to be replaced by a rather

different question: 'how was the Taiwanese past represented in the locally produced media products?' In order to answer this question, it is necessary to supplement the television study by the analysis of cinematic texts expressive of the history of Taiwan since the Second World War.

## 6.4 CONCLUSION

To conclude this chapter, it is clear that Taiwan's television serial dramas have been characterised by predominantly Taiwan-made Chinese contents set against the background of Mainland China. This China-oriented focus has been consistent and has changed little in terms of broadcast languages and setting over the last three decades. This chapter thus offers quantitative evidence that a large amount of China-oriented television output was diffused by the KMT-controlled television system. However, the question of the 'Chineseness' of these programmes and its effects has not yet been answered. In other words, we can be quite certain that Taiwan's television did diffuse Chinese rather than Taiwanese national pasts and nationalist imageries over the last three decades, but there are key issues that require further exploration: What exactly was diffused? And how did the spectators construct their national identity through the consumption of these nationalist imageries?

In view of the perhaps unparalleled over-representation of the 'other place' (Mainland China, 51 per cent of 267 television dramas, see Table 6.1) in Taiwan's television dramas, it is tempting to argue that viewers might develop a national identity based on that prevailing in Mainland China. However, a substantial proportion of television dramas have been set in Taiwan (43 per cent of 267 television dramas, see Table 6.1) and these may have counterbalanced this presumed effect. Thus, to answer this question, it is necessary to examine both media representation and audience reception. With respect to media representation, the content analysis – though important in detecting manifest trends -- requires a complementary analysis that is more sensitive to the latent aspects of the media representations. This analysis will be presented in the next chapter.

# 7.

# Cinematic Construction of the Homeland

To complement the content analysis offered in the previous chapter, this chapter offers a comparative analysis which explores how nationhood was discursively constructed and how the pre-1949 Taiwanese past was articulated within two cinematic texts: *Victory* (1976) and *City of Sadness* (1989). First, I will examine the cultural geography of Taiwan under the KMT regime, of which the national cinema was a constitutive part. This is followed by a comparison of the socio-political contexts in which the two films were produced and an analysis of the film genres to which they belonged. Then, a detailed textual analysis focuses on how the two films provide an indispensable classificatory system of identities such as that of 'us versus them'. In the conclusion I will discuss the implications of the two films for the forging of national identity in Taiwan.

This chapter argues that both films can be seen as 'nationalist texts' which construct the national past differently, employing contrast narrative/discursive strategies and creating a strong sense of 'them' vis-à-vis 'us'. However, both films also convey implicit messages seeking to reconcile diverse ethnic groups in Taiwan. In their different ways, they have helped to shape a shared sense of national identity at different stages in the development of post-Second World War Taiwan.

## 7.1 Taiwan: Elusive Pasts, Contested Territories

Aimed at integrating Taiwan into a larger 'Chinese' cultural identity by weaving a seamless narrative of Chinese nationhood, the ruling KMT has emphasised Chinese

(over Taiwanese) history for decades since the inception of its rule.[1] In line with this practice, as the overview of the prime-time television serial dramas in the previous chapter has shown, a significant proportion of television representations were mobilised in Taiwan to preserve China as the presumed homeland and construct the spatial and temporal continuity across the Taiwan Strait.

By policing the mediated national culture in the locale of Taiwan, the KMT created an imaginary homeland (i.e. China) placed 'within an absent space [of China]' (Johnson, 1994: 239) and inserted 'into the lockstep seriality of absent Chinese time' (Johnson, 1994: 239). These measure were undertaken to make China the homeland and Taiwanese the nationals despite (or because of) 'the fact that the Republic of China on Taiwan exists without the crutch of national space' (Johnson, 1994: 239). The ways in which official KMT nationalism reconstructed cultural (but also political) geography/historiography exemplified the forms of what Anderson (1991: 183) termed 'political museumising' (i.e. of China) and 'organised forgetting' (about Taiwan).

The KMT regime in exile not only materialised the eternal presence of an absent China (as the homeland, the centre and the tree), but also naturalised the absence of an ever-present Taiwan (as a temporary base for returning to the homeland, a periphery and a leaf) in the time/space of post-Second World War Taiwan. In short, China as the homeland and Taiwan as the 'NoWhere' were substituted for Taiwan as the 'NowHere'. Johnson unequivocally pinpoints the operational logic underlying the cultural geography of the nationalist account. Official nationalism on Taiwan, as Johnson argues,

> stands as the extreme case, a nation-state existing in the absence of the national territory. [The] Arrival of the Republic of China (ROC) central authority on Taiwan was the reflex of its expulsion from China, and other states have come to recognise China as the People's Republic of China (PRC).... [The] Survival of the ROC as a nation-state within the island, however, hinged on denial: one of the most successful nation-states explicitly credited its achievements to its non-being. Taiwan is China, not Taiwan, and yet the condition of it remaining so was isolated from China – exactly the condition of its prior Japanese nationality. Like the Japanese, the ROC succeeded where the Ch'ing [Qing] had failed: they turned the Taiwan

[1] It is no wonder, then, that Chiang Kai-shek proclaimed that 'the promotion of civic education must pay special attention to the teaching of "Chinese History" and "Chinese Geography"' (Johnson, 1994: 184). Young pupils were required to memorise the historical and geographical details about China but not about Taiwan. Since the KMT claimed to be the legitimate government for the whole of China, the continuing reminder of Chinese history/nationhood was regarded as necessary for supporting its goals of recovering the mainland and reverting the indigenous Taiwanese people to 'genuine' Chinese.

> Straits into a giant moat and sealed out the Chinese. In this act of self-preservation, the state created a problem in space and serial incorporation, the coextension of China in time. (Johnson, 1994: 185)

The pasts of Taiwan in the colonial Japanese era and in the February 28 Incident of 1947 were regarded as taboos, and were prohibited by the KMT from circulating in the public realm. As Johnson points out, in the case of Taiwan, there are 'two aspects of national history that were organised into oblivion: the Japanese era and the February 28 Incident. From the official standpoint, this chronotope would call attention to the very object of forgetting' (Johnson, 1994: 207). In the field of anthropology, the concept of 'taboo' is defined as a kind of avoidance practice, by which societies under certain circumstances proscribe people, practices, topics and ideas. As Olick and Levy argue, this is certainly not morally neutral; rather, the proscribed object is treated as 'dangerous, disgusting, dirty, morally repugnant, contagious, degenerate, or as embodying some combination of these qualities' (1997: 923).

In this regard, it was unusual in the 1970s for the KMT to play an active part in recalling the forbidden past of colonial Taiwan, as it did in the film *Victory*. However, the taboo of the past, as Olick and Levin stress, under some circumstances 'is survivable, but not without some redemptive or cleansing effort' (Olick and Levy, 1997: 925). The taboo of the past is not unfolded without some purposes to serve. It is therefore not surprising that *Victory* made public Taiwan's previously proscribed colonial past (which as we have seen, does not figure in prime-time serial drama, see Chapter 6) while at the same time suggesting the correct ways to make sense of that past. Likewise, *City of Sadness* transgressed the taboo of screening the February 28 Incident, and, in calling for tolerance and accommodation, can be read as a response to the rising tide of Taiwanese nationalism. In short, the two films made use of the hitherto proscribed pasts in their different ways, either setting or changing the terms of discourse and the boundaries of identities in Taiwan.

## 7.2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE FILMS

A comparative analysis of two films, *Victory* (*Meihua*,[2] 1976, approximately 90 minutes) and *City of Sadness* (*Beiqing Chengshi*, 1989, 158 minutes) is useful for clarifying how national identity is constructed by the media. Both films re-enacted historical events in black and white, thereby enabling viewers to witness 'history in the making' (White, 1989: 284). Moreover, central to the question of national identity is the way in which both films represented the encounters between the incoming 'Mainlanders' and the indigenous Taiwanese in the late 1940s. The two films are comparable in terms of the historical time in which they were set, a particularly turbulent period in which Taiwan swiftly changed its status from a colony under Japan, through a restored part of China, to the last stand of the KMT government in exile. Taiwan at the historical juncture between 1945 and 1949 could be represented in different ways, depending on one's historical point of view: as a Taiwan joyfully returning to the embrace of the motherland or as a newly decolonised Taiwan which fell victim to yet another subjugation. In fact, *Victory* is closer to offering the former account while *City of Sadness* is closer to the latter. This sharp contrast of emphasis in the cinematic representations of the national past, at intervals of (merely) 13 years, testifies to the fact that 'national histories are continually being re-written, and the re-writing reflects [the] current balance of hegemony' (Billig, 1995: 71).

With respect to questions of historical representation and historical reception, the socio-political context is of critical importance (Staiger, 1992). The following analysis thus attempts to trace the socio-political contexts in which these films came into existence in the first place, and to examine how these films were publicly received.

### 7.2.1 *Victory* as a 'Policy Film'

The term 'Policy Films' refers to films which supported the KMT's policy and were produced by the Central Motion Picture Company (the KMT-owned CMPC, the largest film production company in Taiwan) and various independent production companies over the years between the 1950s and 1987. Hundreds of such films were produced in

[2] In Chinese, '*Meihua*' means 'Plum Blossom,' which was officially recognised as the national flower by the KMT government when the latter was the central government of Mainland China.

Taiwan -- from the anti-communist film *Awakening from a Nightmare* (*Er meng chu xing*, 1950) to the anti-Japanese war film *Flying the National Flag* (*Qi zheng piao piao*, 1987).

*Victory*, hailed as a patriotic film, came out in 1976 with remarkable market success. The film's director was Liu Jia-chang. Liu, who was born into a Chinese Korean family and went to college in Taiwan and settled there afterwards. The market success of *Victory* not only made Liu a household name in Taiwan almost overnight, but also popularised the theme song (entitled '*Mei-hua*', the same as the Chinese title of the film), presumably written by him as a 'Chinese patriotic song'.

Owned by the ruling KMT, the CMPC was required to promote official policy. It invested heavily in making Policy Films. The showing of these films at a time of national crisis promoted the success of these films at the box office. Most of the Policy Films employed specific genres such as war and espionage, and portrayed positive heroes who were loyal to the Chinese nation and were determined to fight the Communists and/or the Japanese. The Policy Films were intended not only to circulate in Taiwan but also to compete with the Communist propaganda in the overseas Chinese communities such as Hong Kong and those in Southeast Asia and North America. Schoolchildren were taken *en masse* to view these films. Also, Policy Films enjoyed full official support. For example, the availability of military personnel enabled the films to produce particularly spectacular presentations of war scenes.

In the early 1970s, the CMPC suddenly invested in making a number of films featuring the second Sino-Japanese war of 1937-1945. This move was unusual insofar as the CMPC had rarely featured the anti-Japanese theme in its post-Second World War productions. Several factors stimulated this change. First, Taiwan in the early 1970s suffered increasing diplomatic isolation as the KMT government was forced out of its UN China seat in 1971. This was followed by Japan's de-recognition of the ROC (Taiwan) in 1972. There was thus a potential market for Policy Films which capitalised on the anti-Japanese sentiment.

Secondly, Taiwan's increasingly difficult diplomatic relations were followed by the sudden death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1975. Under conditions of crisis from within and without, the KMT government was in greater need of popular support from below. But,

as Sibley point out, 'there is ... a particular history which is invoked in times of national crisis which is ... exclusionary' (Sibley, 1995b: 108-109). The anti-Japanese Policy Films thus served a three-fold purpose of continuously eradicating the cultural influence that Japan had left in Taiwan, consolidating the KMT rule, and promoting solidarity among the Taiwanese people by the creation of the national 'other' (in this case, the Japanese).

Thirdly, the overseas market also played a part in the shift of emphasis in Policy Films. As the KMT government lost its diplomatic battle with Communist China, China could easily boycott films with outright anti-communist themes in the overseas Chinese markets, especially Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Also, the Communist regime in Beijing was, at that time, boasting of its own contribution to the defeat of the Japanese invaders. As one of the main cultural arms under KMT control, the CMPC was obliged to fight back in the continued propaganda warfare with Communist China. In the struggle over the power to interpret history, the CMPC had to offer a KMT version of that history, insisting that the KMT forces under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek were the ones who actually fought and won the war against the Japanese.

All these factors accounted for the popularity of films with anti-Japanese themes in Taiwan in the 1970s. However, what is less clear is why some of these films – including *Victory* -- were set in Taiwan. *Victory* was the first CMPC-made anti-Japanese war film which set its narrative scene in Taiwan. In reality, there was no evidence of a direct military encounter between the Taiwanese and the Japanese colonial government during the war. On the contrary, more than 200,000 Taiwanese conscripts had been mobilised for Japan's war efforts in China, Indochina, and the Philippines. In this sense, *Victory* represented a rewriting of history in order to represent the 'native Taiwanese' as patriotic defenders of the Chinese nation, and to show the 'Chinese' people across the Taiwan Strait fighting together in the Second World War against the Japanese invasion (and, in the case of Taiwan, Japanese colonial rule).

This shift in portrayal of the Taiwanese native population was coterminous with a similar trend in the political arena. In the early 1970s, the KMT government began seeking support from within Taiwanese society. To compensate for the regime's loss of recognition from abroad, the KMT government was more concerned than ever with its internal legitimacy. The same political strategy could be found in the so-called

'Taiwanisation' policy, initiated by the then premier Chiang Ching-kuo. He had started recruiting some natives to take high-ranking positions as an exercise in political symbolism from 1972 onwards. It is not surprising, then, that Chiang Ching-kuo in 1976 suggested that everyone should see *Victory*.

### 7.2.2 *City of Sadness* as an Example of the 'Taiwan New Cinema'

In the early 1980s, the CMPC experimented with several low-budget films made by a number of young directors. In 1982, three directors made an anthology film, *In Our Time* [*Guang yin de gu shi*]. This was soon followed by another anthology film in 1983, *the Sandwich Man* [*Er zi de da wan ou*], which was co-directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien and others.[3] Both films were generally referred to as the first films opening up the so-called 'Taiwan New Cinema'. However, the actual term 'Taiwan New Cinema' gained currency much later, beginning in January 1987, when Taiwan was moving towards democratisation and 53 film practitioners issued 'the Declaration of Taiwan New Cinema' in one of the country's largest newspapers, *The China Times.* In contrast to Policy Films, Taiwan New Cinema adopted a more socially realist stance in the practice of filmmaking. It is argued by film scholar June Yip that Taiwan New Cinema 'contributed toward the definition of a distinctly Taiwanese "nation" through its groundbreaking attempts to construct historical representations of the "Taiwan experience" on film, to claim cinematic space for Taiwanese "popular memory"' (Yip, 1997: 140).

What remains unclear is why the CMPC in the early 1980s became the harbinger of Taiwan New Cinema. One plausible reason is that the box office gross receipts for Policy Films as a whole fell in the audience market of the early 1980s. The Taiwanese audiences seemed to be tired of the propagandistic Policy Films. As Deng Xiaoping rose to power and talked of a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue in the late 1970s, the psychological threat of a Communist invasion was significantly scaled down. In short, the socio-political context that had made Policy Films popular had now been transformed. In response, the CMPC recruited a group of new-generation filmmakers such as Edward Yang and Hou Hsiao-hsien and granted them more freedom to make

low-budget films. However, this change was far from being at the organisational level. The change was simply aimed at cutting costs and spreading risks, not to increase creativity and autonomy. As a matter of fact, the CMPC re-ran some Policy Films, including *Victory*, on television and at the chain cinemas in 1984 and continued to make Policy Films until 1987.[4]

The emergence of Taiwan New Cinema also owed much to the efforts of the young filmmakers themselves. They had initially worked for the CMPC before they came into prominence. They managed to produce, within the institution of the KMT-own CMPC, socially critical films which were centred on indigenous Taiwanese experience. Beginning with the release of *In Our Time* in 1982, Taiwan New Cinema received favourable comments from the cultural liberals. At the peak of this film-making movement in 1989, financed by an independent production company rather than the CMPC, the now world-renowned director Hou Hsiao-hsien made *City of Sadness*. Just as the production of *Victory* reflected the context of Taiwan in the 1970s, so the production of *City of Sadness* reflected the new socio-political context of Taiwan in the late 1980s. The film has often been identified as Hou Hsiao-hsien's 'post-martial law film' and his response to the dramatic process of democratisation that had steadily gathered momentum since the late 1980s. Taiwan in the years after the lifting of martial law was expected to continue its move towards political democratisation. Decades of strict censorship and tight control of the media by the government were loosened, allowing more open debates over social, cultural and political matters in the newspapers, magazines and other channels of the media. What made *City of Sadness* unique in the late 1980s was that it touched on some politically sensitive issues (especially the February 28 Incident of 1947) which had been previously prohibited and had never been included in any other films made in Taiwan. Such a film could not have been made prior to the 1987-88 political transition, which marked the beginning of a more

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[3] Most of the filmmakers who engaged in making 'Taiwan New Cinema' were born in Taiwan as part of the post-Second World War generation. Hou Hsiao-hsien, however, was born in China and moved to Taiwan with his parents before 1949.

[4] The once popular Policy Films fared poorly in their comeback showings at the cinemas. The once best-selling films attracted very little audience attention. For example, the 1976 *Victory* sold a total of only 676 tickets at the cinemas (with the box office gross receipts amounting to only NT$ 41,918) when it was shown again in 1984 at the cinemas (see Lu, 2000).

liberalised cultural environment, even though, at the time of the film's release, there was no clear indication that the KMT had relaxed its control of media content in Taiwan.[5]

Taiwan in the late 1980s was at the turning point of history in terms of political democratisation. However, the pace of democratisation moved back and forth. After decades of authoritarian rule, people's hope for a brighter democratic future was overshadowed by the fear of a conservative backlash. This was especially true in the wake of the violent regression that shut down the pro-democracy students in Beijing in June 1989. The shadow of Tiananmen Square loomed over Taiwan, as no one could be certain that the KMT government would maintain the process of democratisation. Under these circumstances, *City of Sadness* appeared and became the acid test of the KMT's political intentions.

Like the context in which the film was made, the nature of the film's historical setting was equally transitional. The historical period between Japanese colonisation and the KMT take-over of Taiwan saw a short-lived hope for political liberation being replaced by disillusion and bloody repression. In a way, therefore, the film, at a critical moment of political transition, seemed to be urging the KMT to learn from the past and not to act against the popular call for democracy. The metaphorical use of the past to engage with the politics of the present was exactly what made *City of Sadness* controversial. The film also reflected a renewed interest in the national past of Taiwan, as the film director Hou Hsiao-hsien, himself a second-generation 'Mainlander', disclosed in an interview: 'I have lived in Taiwan for over forty years, but only when I made *City of Sadness* did I begin to learn about Taiwan's history' (cited in *Cinemaya*, 21/1993: 4).

This section has addressed the respective socio-political contexts that prepared the way for *Victory* and *City of Sadness*. It demonstrates, to use Hogan's words, that 'national identity is a discursive imagining asserting the common values and the shared history and way of life of the people it addresses. This discourse is in constant flux, remaking itself in response to changing social conditions' (Hogan, 1999: 751). It is also true that the cinematic representation of the past is itself a cultural construction, 'reflecting social,

[5] Following the award of the Golden Lion at the 1989 Venice Festival, it was decided to release the film overseas before allowing general release in Taiwan. The international acclaim it received was undoubtedly a factor in overcoming KMT reluctance to exhibit a film which featured such a sensitive past to a Taiwanese audience.

political, economic, and cultural dynamics of the time' (Chambers II and Culbert, 1996: 10). Both films utilised the 'national' past to serve the needs of the present. The following analysis will therefore concentrate on the variations in the historical representations of nationhood offered by the films.

## 7.3 Cinematic Representations Compared

### 7.3.1 Plot Structure

Both films firmly centred on the destiny of an extended family in Taiwan. *Victory* tells the story of an extended family who lived in an unnamed village during the period between Taiwan's subjection to Japanese colonial rule and Taiwan's reunion with China in 1945. The father is a member of the local gentry who abhors the Japanese colonisers and dreams about Taiwan's eventual return to the embrace of the Chinese motherland. His two sons, Juguang and Juyong, by fighting the Japanese in their different ways, eventually contribute to China's hard-won victory over Japan as well as Taiwan's restoration to Chinese rule. The complete plot summary for the film can be found in Appendix IV.

*City of Sadness* revolves around the fates of an extended family during the period beginning with the Japanese surrender in 1945 and ending with the February 28 Incident in 1947 and its aftermath. The only difference from the Lin family in *Victory* is that the family in *City of Sadness* falls victim to the Chinese Nationalist regime (KMT) rather than to the Japanese. The family patriarch, A-Lushi, has four sons and has lived most of his life under Japanese colonial rule. His eldest son, Wenxiong, has been head of a local gang, running a nightclub and shipping goods between Taiwan and the mainland. His refusal to work with the Shanghai gangsters to smuggle goods leads to him being murdered. Wensen, the second son, is a medical doctor who has never returned home after being sent by the Japanese to war in the Philippines. Wenliang, the third son, returns home shell-shocked and traumatised after being sent to Shanghai by the Japanese during war. The youngest son Wenqing is an intellectual who reads Karl Marx and a photographer who has been deaf and mute since childhood. Because of his involvement in the February 28 Incident, he is eventually arrested and executed by the KMT government. The film ends with the transplantation of the KMT government onto

Taiwan after its Communist rival eventually wins the civil war on the mainland. Appendix IV offers a plot summary (in chronological order) of the film.

### 7.3.2 Symbolic Systems of Classification

Table 7.1 sketches the symbolic systems of classification provided by the two films, indicating significant similarities and differences.

**Table 7.1: Systems of classification provided in the two films**

| | | *Victory* | *City of Sadness* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Languages in use** | | • Mandarin, Japanese | • Mandarin, Hokkien, Shanghaiese, Cantonese, Hakka, and the Wenzhou dialect, Japanese |
| **Narrated Time** | | • Roughly 1939-1945 | • 1945-1949 |
| **Narrated Place** | **Taiwan** | • Screened but unspecified village in southern Taiwan | • Taipei, Jiufen, Badouzi (mentioned and screened) |
| | **China** | • Screened but unspecified places in the Chinese mainland | • Nanking and Shanghai (mentioned but not screened). |
| **The 'other' (who are 'they'?')** | | • Japanese | • Mainland Chinese (the Nationalist government, Shanghaiese) |
| **Self-identification ('who are we?')** | **Taiwanese** | • Two characters (Juyong, Juguang) but only on two occasions | • Wenxiong, Wenqing, Kuanmei, Kuanrong and others |
| | **Chinese** | • Many (the father of the Lin family, Wenying, Juguang, a group of young pupils, and some other subsidiary characters) | • None |
| **Identity recognised by the 'other' ('who are 'we' in 'their' eyes?')** | | • Identity-mixing (sometimes Taiwanese and sometimes Chinese) | • Taiwanese (called by the Shanghaiese)/ Taiwanese compatriots (called by the Nationalist government) |

*(1) Languages in use*

In *Victory*, all the Taiwanese characters except for Juyong, who lived under Japanese colonialism, speak Mandarin. Juyong's use of Japanese in *Victory* functions as an exception proving the rule that other Taiwanese villagers are Chinese in nature. It thus emphasises homogeneity. In contrast to *Victory*, *City of Sadness* gives the viewers an imaginary Taiwan as being *un*-Chinese in the late 1940s. As opposed to Taiwan as a nearly monolingual society in the film *Victory*, *City of Sadness* represents the Taiwanese society of the 1940s as a multilingual one in which a range of mutually unintelligible languages was in use. The use of seven spoken languages of largely mutual unintelligibility in the film *City of Sadness* punctures the myth of congruence between the KMT and the Taiwanese people. These seven spoken languages (the Shanghai dialect, Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka, Japanese, Wenzhou dialect, and Mandarin) epitomise the immigrant and colonial character of Taiwan in the 1940s and thus emphasise heterogeneity.

The multilingual Taiwan of the late 1940s is clearly depicted in *City of Sadness*, as illustrated by the following conversation between Wenxiong and the Shanghai gangsters, which requires a translation between different spoken languages.

> (Framed by the Shanghai gangsters, Wenliang is arrested by the Nationalist soldiers for his involuntary involvement in fighting the second Sino-Japanese war between 1937-1945 on the side of Japan. Wenxiong goes with his subordinate A-Jia to seek help from the Shanghai gang).
>
> **Wenxiong** (in Hokkien, speaking to the Shanghai gangsters)**:** Sorry to interrupt you while you have fun here. The soldiers arrested Wenliang. Since you have good relationships with them and the [Chinese] New Year is approaching, please give us a hand to get him out of prison. ... Tell them (speaking to A-Jia)!
>
> **A-Jia** (in Cantonese)**:** My boss says that he needs your help to get Wenliang out of prison.
>
> **One of the Shanghai gang (as translator)** (in Shanghaiese)**:** His boss wants us to help rescue Wenliang from prison.
>
> **Head of the Shanghai gangsters** (looking surprised, speaking in Shanghaiese)**:** Oh, Wenliang was arrested. We don't know about it.
>
> **The translator** (in Cantonese, speaking to A-Jia)**:** We know nothing about it.
>
> **A-Jia** (angrily responds in Cantonese)**:** Fuck. His arrest was entirely set up by you. How can you pretend to know nothing?

**Wenxiong** (in Hokkien): Don't say these useless words to them! Tell them, I will reward them for helping Wenliang to get out.

**A-Jia** (in Cantonese): My boss says that he will pay you for your help.

**The translator** (in Shanghaiese, speaking to the head of the Shanghai gang): They say they will pay us for our help.

(The Shanghai gangsters look at one another in agreement.)

**Wenxiong** (puts the money on the table, speaking Hokkien): It's all here.

*(2) Narrated times and narrated places*

With partial coincidence in temporality, the narrative time of *City of Sadness* (between 1945-1949) continuously followed that of *Victory* (roughly between 1939-1945). Equally, both films set most sequences of story events as happened in Taiwan.

The Chinese mainland is represented in *Victory* as an *object of desire*, the unforgettable homeland from where *helpers* came to rescue the people of Taiwan from calamity under Japanese colonialism. By contrast, in *City Of Sadness* the Chinese mainland is represented to be more like an *object of fear*, the unfamiliar homeland from where *villains* came.

As portrayed in *City of Sadness*, against the backdrop of the Nationalist crackdown, a Taiwanese nationalist sentiment is particularly manifested in Kuanrong's total devotion to what he calls 'the beautiful future of our homeland'. According to Yip, though unspecified, the 'homeland' that Kuanrong refers to is not the Chinese mainland but Taiwan itself (Yip, 1996), as suggested by the film's excessive representation of Taiwan's landscape of silence in moments of political violence perpetrated by the KMT regime over the 'native Taiwanese' people. Moreover, in *City of Sadness* Kuanrong leads a guerrilla to fight against the incoming Nationalist troops. Thus, 'the homeland' referred to by Kuanrong is unlikely to the Chinese mainland.

*(3) Representing the 'other'*

In *Victory*, the Japanese are identified as the evil and bloodthirsty 'Other'. The Japanese are enemies of the main characters. In *City of Sadness*, by contrast, the Japanese are as vulnerable as the main characters; indeed, the departing Japanese are represented as friends of theirs. It is not the Japanese but the 'Mainlanders' (Shanghaiese and the

Nationalist government) who are represented as the 'Other' who lead the main characters into great loss and misfortune.

*(4) Self-identification*

The self-identification of the main characters in *Victory* is mixed. Sometimes they identify as Taiwanese but mostly as Chinese:

> (Wenying is teaching in class).
>
> **Wenying:** (singing the theme song of the film *Victory*) Meihua [literally, 'plum blossom'], meihua, all over the world. The worse the weather, the more it blossoms! Meihua is our national flower. ... No one should forget we are Chinese even though we are under alien [Japanese] rule.
>
> (A pupil looks tired and nods).
>
> **Wenying** (Look serious)**:** How can you be so mindless? We should be at every moment prepared for victory. Accordingly, you should influence your parents to strive for that goal.

In *Victory*, there are only two occasions when the protagonists identify themselves as 'Taiwanese': first, when he meets a Japanese girl, Juyong boasts that 'we Taiwanese can accomplish anything with our bare hands'; and secondly, when his brother Juguang encourages Taiwanese comrades who have joined the Chinese army to take the opportunity to 'honour us Taiwanese' by total devotion to the Chinese nation. The identity of 'Taiwanese' is positively positioned within, and seen as consistent with, the larger identity of 'Chinese'. Compared with the KMT's previously exclusive denial of 'Taiwanese' identity,[6] this amounts to a great effort by the KMT to use the identity to its advantage, and thus epitomises the regime's early attempt to incorporate the 'native Taiwanese' into the Chinese nation by means of sophisticated encouragement rather than mere suppression. The reasons for this shift are not hard to find. As analysed earlier in this chapter, the KMT regime found itself having to seek an alternative source of legitimacy when it rapidly lost international support for its survival in the early 1970s.

By contrast, the self-identification of the main characters in *City of Sadness* is more clearly Taiwanese. The sadness of being treated as *colonised* by people of the same blood pervades the narratives of the film, as instanced in Wenxiong's lament:

(Narrowly escaping arrest by the Nationalist soldiers, Wenxiong hides himself in his friend's house.)

**The Friend:** What happened?

**Wenxiong:** Fuck. The soldiers came to arrest me, saying that I am a traitor [to the Chinese nation].

**The Friend** (looks shocked, saying nothing)

**Wenxiong:** We islanders are among the most unfortunate: out with the Japanese, in with the Chinese. Everyone eats and rides on us but no one loves us.

Furthermore, in *Victory* 'we' (the self) in the eyes of 'them' (the 'Other') are mostly seen as 'Chinese':

(The Japanese soldiers arrest some villagers who are suspected of hiding Nationalist secret agents in order to protect them from arrest. One of the villagers, Zhang Yidao, rises up time and time again from being badly slapped down to the ground, still refusing to confess.)

**Japanese soldiers** (look confused)**:** Who are you?

**Zhang Yidao:** Chinese.

**Japanese soldiers** (look scared)**:** Who are you really?

**Zhang Yidao:** Chinese!

**All other prisoners** (rise to join him and answer in chorus)**:** Chinese!

**Japanese soldiers report to Ikeda** (Japanese military officer)**:** No one confesses.

**Ikeda** (speaking to the Japanese soldiers)**:** I told you so! Torture would never work on these Chinese people!

As opposed to this, in *City of Sadness* 'we' (self) in the eyes of 'them' (the 'Other') are uniformly called 'Taiwanese', as indicated in the film in a radio broadcast given by the Nationalist Governor-General of Taiwan:

Taiwanese compatriots -- Yesterday I declared temporary martial law again. Now with the utmost sincerity, I want to tell the vast majority of the good and virtuous Taiwanese people, that my declaration of martial law is entirely for your protection. You must not listen to the rumours of wicked people. You must not be suspicious or afraid. There shall not be the slightest harm to our law-abiding brethren. You must feel at ease. I have declared martial law again solely for the purpose of coping with the very small number of the desperate and rebellious. As long as they are not annihilated

---

[6] KMT's first Governor-general of Taiwan, Chen Yi, was reported in *Taiwan New Life Daily* (16 March 1947: 3) as saying that 'enemy agents and rebels exploit the term "Taiwanese" to provoke trouble and turn people against one another. We must not be fooled by this lie. We all come from the same root, and all of us are compatriots of the Republic of China'.

> there will be no peace for our virtuous brethren. Since the occurrence of the February 28 Incident, I have broadcast three times. (Broadcast speech by the Nationalist Governor-General of Taiwan, Chen Yi, quoted from the film *City of Sadness*, English translation adapted from Kerr, 1965: 295)

*(5) Gender roles in the two films*

In what follows a new theme for textual analysis is added in addition to those introduced in Chapter 6 -- gender roles within the film narrative.

Male characters in both films are more or less similar: they are characterised by their public roles, work, patriotism, activism, and so forth. For example, we may consider the case of Juyong, who is initially the least patriotic character of the film *Victory*. Juyong's reversion to the role of a Chinese patriot, like everyone else in the film, can be attributed to the mechanism of Confucianism, referred to here as a devotion to filial piety, respect for social authority, and etiquette in everyday behaviour.

Unlike everyone else, he is the only one within the family who is unable to please his patriarch father for his jobless idleness, Japanese-like behaviours (such as speaking Japanese and wearing Japanese slippers), and subsequent working with the Japanese at the power plant. Because of his unpatriotic 'collaboration' with the Japanese, his pariah-like father slaps Juyong in the presence of other people. Juyong is even condemned as 'nonhuman' for not being patriotic enough: his father calls him an 'animal' and Xiaohui urges him to behave like 'a man'. He does not receive recognition from anyone, and in particular from his desired 'bride', Xiaohui, until he performs the appropriate role of being 'Chinese' and 'patriotic'. Before that transformation, he is portrayed as useless to society, is condemned for neglecting his filial duties, and is described as not 'masculine' enough to be loved by Xiaohui.

Not until the beheading of his father by the Japanese military and his own condemnation by the villagers for failing to observe filial piety does Juyong change: he then bombs the Japanese power plant, a military target which the KMT secret agents dispatched from the Chinese mainland failed to destroy on a previous mission. The film's turning to Confucian tradition for assistance in moral regulation, especially in its emphasis upon filial piety, is actually a deliberate move to extend the solidarity feelings of the family to the level of the nation.

Because the two films represent males as being public, active and patriotic, the least patriotic character Juyong in *Victory* in the end turns out to be the most patriotic, and the deaf-mute Wenqing in *City of Sadness* turns out to be devoted to the resistance against the KMT. However, the female roles are represented very differently in the two films, as is shown in Table 7.2. The female characters in *Victory* are more public, active and patriotic, and are even eager to die for the nation, whereas in *City of Sadness* the female characters are more private, passive, and exhibit indifference to the national cause. Only in terms of motherhood do the females in the two films seem to have something in common. The question is how to explain these differences in the representations of female roles.

**Table 7.2: Female roles as represented in the two films**

| *Victory* | *City of Sadness* |
|---|---|
| **Public** (e.g., Wenying, Minzhu) | **Personal** (e.g., Kuanmei) |
| **Work** (Wenying, Minzhu) | **Home** (all female characters) |
| **Activism** (all female characters to varying degrees) | **Talk or silence** (all female characters) |
| **Individualism** (Xiaohui, Minzhu) | **Community** (all female characters) |
| **Martyrdom** (Wenying) | **Survivors** (all female characters) |
| **Patriotism** (all female characters to varying degrees) | **Patriotism** (irrelevant to all female characters) |
| **Motherhood** (Wenying, Xiaohui) | **Motherhood** (Kuanmei, and some other unnamed widows in the Lin family) |

I first examine the roles played by the female protagonist Wenying in *Victory*. The portrayal of Wenying expresses the typical image of national martyrdom that is often employed as a constitutive part of Chinese nationalist discourse. Duara points out that the notion of self-sacrifice is vitally important in the Chinese nationalist discourse: 'Martyrdom is the root sacrificial form ... The same mechanism may perhaps be at work in the national martyr, but the sacrificial action here also produces the authentic. (Duara, 1998: 299-300). In making Wenying a national martyr, the episode of self-sacrifice thus helps to rebuild Wenying's authenticity and inspires the other villagers in the film to make their own sacrifices for the nation.

Wenying supports the family after her husband Juguang has joined the Chinese army in the mainland. She is also the one who teaches pupils to be patriotic and saves pupils from conscription by the Japanese military. Yet she turns out to be suspected

(mistakenly) by the villagers of being unfaithful to her husband (and by implication to the Chinese nation) by having an affair with a Japanese military officer. Not until she commits suicide to prove her innocence do the villagers realise how patriotic, faithful and authentic she is. Wenying's self-sacrifice, in the film, inspires the villagers to fight because the Japanese are the ones they hold responsible for the rising death toll (including the deaths of Juyong's parents and Wenying). The sacrifice of Wenying in the film thus confirms Duara's observation that 'nationalist patriarchy in China sought to mobilise the weight of these historical representations to discipline women's bodies within the public sphere as figures of self-sacrifice' (Duara, 1998: 300).

Female characters in *Victory* not only assume the traditional responsibility of motherhood but also publicly devote themselves to the nation. In addition to Wenying, other females in the film also serve the 'nation' in various ways, as shown in the patriotic behaviour of Minzhu (and to a lesser extent, Xiaohui):

> (Minzhu is in the queue, signing-up as a volunteer battlefield nurse)
>
> **The solider:** What's your name?
>
> **Minzhu:** Jiang Minzhu.
>
> **Juguang** (now a military officer in the Nationalist forces) (speaking to the soldier)**:** No, she cannot sign up.
>
> **Minzhu:** Why?
>
> **Juguang:** Do you know where we are heading?
>
> **Minzhu:** I know. The frontline.
>
> **Juguang:** Good. So, you cannot go with us.
>
> **Minzhu:** Why?
>
> **Juguang:** Because you are a woman.
>
> **Minzhu:** Why can't women go? Aren't women allowed to be patriotic and fight the Japanese? ...
>
> (Juguang is amazed by her patriotic spirit and eventually agrees to her participation.)

On the matter of patriotism, it seems that no gender difference is registered in *Victory*. Instead, gender is constantly utilised in discourses of national identities and nationalism, confirming the validity of Hogan's argument that 'national identities are strongly gendered, and ... this gendering serves to anchor national identities in nostalgia and traditionalism' (Hogan, 1999: 745). As the analysis of *Victory* shows, the characters

Wenying, Xiaohui and Minzhu dutifully take up the traditional roles of motherhood but are also able – like men -- to serve the nation.

In contrast to the active, public and patriotic female roles in *Victory*, the females in *City of Sadness* are private and passive and embedded in the home, feeling indifferent to the national cause. An example is the main protagonist, Kuanmei, in *City of Sadness*. She is quiet, docile and vulnerable to the social disturbances around her. In writing her diary, she records her private feelings about her lover's (Wenqing's) arrest by the KMT:

> Wenqing's niece wrote me a letter saying that Wenqing has been taken away by the [KMT] soldiers. 'It is against the law of nature and doesn't make any sense,' complains Wenqing's father, that 'the [KMT] soldiers arrest a deaf-mute and charge him with the crime of treason.' I don't care whether God exists or whether there is the law of nature, I just want him [Wenqing] back.

However, positioned in the film as the most important 'implied narrator' (Kozloff, 1992), Kuanmei's private diary reveals many details about what is happening. All the female characters survive at the conclusion of the film while all the male protagonists have died (e.g., Wenxiong, Wenqing, Kuanrong) or have gone insane (i.e., Wenliang). Thus women function in the film as survivors and more importantly as witnesses to the tragic past.

### 7.3.3 Modes of Historical Narration

This section will focus on how the 'narrative of nation' (to use Benedict Anderson's and Stuart Hall's phrase, see Chapter 5) is constructed in the two films. The following analysis draws insights from John Rusen's typology of historical narration (Rusen, 1987). According to this typology, the traditional mode of historical narration lays emphasis upon the memory of origins that constitutes established forms of life, preserving a continuity (permanence) of originally constituted forms of life, forming an identity by affirming pre-given cultural patterns of self-understanding, and considering time in the sense of eternity. As opposed to the traditional mode of historical narration, the critical mode of historical narration privileges memory of deviations, not only problematising established forms of life but also challenging given ideas of continuity. By challenging the established identity, the critical mode of historical narration also creates a new identity. Moreover, its sense of time is that time is no longer considered as eternal but as being an object of judgement in the process of narrating the past.

The narrative of *Victory* matches the traditional mode of historical narration while the narrative of *City of Sadness* epitomises the critical mode of historical narration (see Table 7.3). In their different ways, both films function as national pedagogy and national allegory, suggesting what pieces of the national past should be remembered and what moral lessons should be learned.

**Table 7.3: Typology of historical narration in the two films**

| | Memory of | Continuity as | Identity by | Sense of time |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Victory*** | • *Origins* constituting present forms of life | • *Permanence* of originally constituted forms of life | • *Affirming* pre-given cultural patterns of self-understanding | • Time gains the sense of *eternity* |
| ***City of Sadness*** | • *Deviations* problematising present forms of life | • *Alteration* of given ideas of continuity | • *Questioning* given patterns of identity | • Time gains the sense of being an object of *judgement* |

Source: adapted from Rusen (1987: 91).

### *(1) Narrating the nation in Victory*

Despite the unusual inclusion of pre-KMT Taiwan in the film *Victory*, it does not seem to run against the official canon of Chinese nationalism. At the heart of its historical narration is the myth of a 'shared sacred origin' transcending ethnic and political realities, formulated as 'the various images of timeless harmony to the primordial past, despite the real history of dynastic upheaval, barbarian conquest and alien religious influences (Chun, 1995: 29). Rather than imagining Taiwan in the colonial era as exotic and Oriental, *Victory* presents it as identical to other parts of China, as if Taiwan were completely unchanged by half a century of Japanese colonialism. The film portrays the Taiwanese under colonial rule as being Chinese in character, patriotic to the Chinese nation and ready to answer the nationalist call to fight the Japanese. This portrayal is in stark contrast to the hitherto official attitude towards the Taiwanese, whom were regarded by the KMT regime as being tainted by Japanese colonialism and not authentically Chinese so that they need to be re-educated in Mandarin, Chinese History and in particular the orthodoxy of Chinese nationalism. This renewed portrayal of the Taiwanese under Japanese colonialism reflects, as mentioned in the preceding section, the KMT regime's greater need in the early 1970s to gain support from within

Taiwanese society. Only one of the Taiwanese characters (Juyong) in *Victory* is not patriotic because of his 'collaboration' with the Japanese. In the end, Juyong's sin of being unpatriotic can only be cleansed by his courageous self-sacrifice in his last-minute action when fighting the Japanese.

Each character of *Victory*, regardless of age, gender, and class differences, is represented as contributing to the eventual victory of the second Sino-Japanese war. The elders, in defence of the ancestors' tombs and wearing traditional 'Chinese' suits (symbolically suggesting their 'Chineseness'), defy the Japanese soldiers. As the village leaders, they set patriotic role models for the rest of the villagers. The very young, the Taiwanese schoolchildren calling themselves 'Chinese' in the film, fight their Japanese counterparts in the streets. The lower-class villagers sacrifice themselves to rescue the KMT secret agents.

To sum up, the film serves to glorify the nation's record of victory over the alien Japanese and therefore naturalises the 'Glorious Restoration' of the Chinese rule on Taiwan. The rhetoric of common ancestry, Confucian ethics and self-sacrifice in *Victory* is translated into a nationalist sentiment that sweeps away individual consideration, demanding that all the Taiwanese in the film are totally devoted to the Chinese nation. Not surprisingly, the family and the village in the film are portrayed as a miniature version of the Taiwanese society, whose fate is portrayed as inseparable form that of the whole Chinese nation. The Japanese, depicted as enemies of the Chinese nation, are directly or indirectly responsible for all the deaths of family members in the film. This is typical of nationalist narratives in the sense that there can be no 'us' without a 'them' (Billig, 1995: 78). All this implies that, as long as victory over the enemy is eventually achieved, the misfortune of the broken family can be compensated with the well being of the nation. The connection between the Taiwanese family and the Chinese nation is thus made explicit: one's obligation to the family should be extended to loyalty to the nation; more importantly, the family is vulnerable to the enemies if the nation is in danger.

### *(2) Narrating the nation in City of Sadness*

As explained in Chapter 3, the February 28 Incident of 1947 represented a Taiwanese consciousness that was distinct from Chinese nationhood. The repercussions of the

Incident have persisted over decades. The Taiwanese Diaspora in Japan and the United States who were in favour of the idea of Taiwan independence later exploited it. Not surprisingly, the Incident has been persistently labelled as a Communist-inspired rebellion by the KMT government. Ahead of any public discussion of the Incident, *City of Sadness*, made in 1989, was the first instance of cultural expression which transgressed the longstanding taboo and went so far as to visualise the Incident. It brought this highly sensitive event to public awareness.

*City of Sadness* metaphorically uses the deaf-mute character of Wenqing to indicate that though he cannot physically hear and speak for himself, he bears eyewitness to the events that occur around him. This, in a way, symbolises the way in which the silenced past will eventually speak aloud despite the KMT's efforts to keep it secret. Wenqing's disability also makes him appear vulnerable to the treachery of others and ultimately leads him to become a martyr to a heroic cause. The female characters are portrayed as survivors of victimhood who continue to narrate the tragic past in private regardless of the KMT's concealment of the historical truth. Kuanmei (Wenqing's wife), as the principal narrator of the film, reveals the buried past through her diaries and her letters to Wenqing's niece, suggesting the persistence of the private sphere vis-à-vis the policed public sphere.

As for the identity of the 'Taiwanese', *City of Sadness* goes further in its effort to give it embodiment. First, when misrecognised as a 'Mainlander' and besieged by the Taiwanese rioters, Wenqing reveals with difficulty his Taiwanese identity so that he narrowly escapes being killed by the retaliative action of the native 'native Taiwanese' against the 'Mainlanders' in response to KMT suppression:

> (Amidst the February 28 Incident)
>
> **Rioters** (with knives and sticks in their hands)**:** Where are you from? (in Hokkien)
>
> **Rioters** (looking impatient and aggressive)**:** Who are you? (in Hokkien)
>
> **Wenqing:** Taiwanese (speaking Hokkien with difficulty and almost inaudibly).
>
> **Rioters:** Where are you from? (in Japanese)
>
> (Wenqing does not know how to respond and is in danger of being hurt until Kuanrong comes to rescue him).
>
> **Kuanrong:** He has been a deaf-mute since the age of eight. How can he hear you? (blaming the rioters for attempting to hurt Wenqing) (in Hokkien).

This suggests that one could only act defensively in choosing to identify as either Taiwanese or Chinese in that turbulent era: the Taiwanese in the 1940s found/reaffirmed themselves as 'Taiwanese' because they suddenly realised that they were not treated as 'Chinese' by the KMT government.

Despite the representation of a Taiwanese nationalist sentiment arising from the disenchantment with official Chinese nationalism, *City of Sadness* nevertheless represents the Incident to the disappointment of Taiwanese nationalists. It exposes the violence exercised by the KMT government in a rather oblique way, as opposed to its direct address of violent Taiwanese mobs beating 'Mainlanders'. Moreover, it implies that the organised resistance to the KMT government was led by left-leaning intellectuals and thus echoes the official charge of the Incident being a communist-agitated rebellion. Moreover, by representing Kuanrong as the one who is heavily cultivated in Japanese culture, the film conveys a hidden message that conforms to the official account: if the Taiwanese were not so morally and culturally contaminated by their exposure to Japanese culture in the first place, the tragic Incident would not have happened.

However, the film still had implications for national identity in Taiwan as it encouraged Taiwanese society to define itself. *City of Sadness* exposed the February 28 Incident at a time when the Incident remained officially denied by the KMT government, and it initiated a series of public controversies over interpretations of the Incident. The call of the film for mutual understanding and reconciliation between different ethnic groups, and more importantly its stress on the need to learn from the tragic past, was prominent in the film. It conveyed a complex picture of Taiwan in the 1940s as heterogeneous in nature. On the one hand, it articulated some views commonly held by the Taiwanese nationalists in their representation of the KMT government as an alien regime doing violence to the 'native Taiwanese'. On the other hand, it also reminded viewers that not only the 'native Taiwanese' but also the 'Mainlanders' suffered during the Incident.

However, I maintain that the film remains a Taiwanese nationalist text, as opposed to a Chinese nationalist text such as *Victory*. In contrast to *Victory*'s objectifying Taiwan in a presumably Taiwanese past in line with the grand narrative of homogenous Chinese nationhood, *City of Sadness* no longer defines Taiwan exclusively through the lens of Chinese nationalism but as a place where people of heterogeneous cultures are in

conflict but have to share a common future. Last but not least, *City of Sadness* can be read as a 'national allegory' which is suggestive of socio-political and moral meanings (Tay, 1994: 153, 159). For example, even the most dedicated Taiwanese nationalist in the film, Kuanrong, is deliberately named as such to imply 'forgiveness' (*kuan*) and 'tolerance' (*rong*). The film clearly attempts to draw a moral lesson from the tragic past, trying to move beyond that past and creating a time/space for different ethnic groups in Taiwan to imagine the reality of the commonly shared 'Now Here'.

## 7.4 CONCLUSION

The above analysis has probed the nationalist ideologies inscribed in the two selected films, providing evidence on the questions of 'how relations of domination in the wider society underlie the media construction of relations and identities, how these processes take place in texts' (Fairclough, 1995: 127).

At first sight, the two films seem to differ from each other in every major respect. First, the two films narrate the national past differently. *Victory* employs a traditional mode of historical narration. *City of Sadness* employs a critical mode of historical narration.

Secondly, the two films adopt different discursive strategies. *Victory* adopts a discursive strategy of *assimilation*, aiming at the construction of national sameness. *City of Sadness* adopts a discursive strategy of *dissimilation*, aiming at the construction of intranational differences (de Cillia et al., 1999: 151). In *Victory*, there is a salient, harmonic correspondence of the two basic identities (Taiwanese and Chinese); there is no conflict between the two. However, in *City of Sadness*, contradictory relations between the two identities persist throughout the film.

Moreover, the importance of creating 'the other' can be applied to the cinematic construction of the national self. In *Victory* the Japanese are clearly referred to as 'the other' as opposed to 'us' (the 'Chinese'). In *City of Sadness* it is the Chinese 'Mainlanders' who have replaced the role of the Japanese. This clearly exemplifies the function of social categories in identifying who 'we' are and implying who 'we' are not (Tajfel, 1982) at the heart of any national imaginations.

It seems explicit, from the above analysis, that *Victory* is a Chinese nationalist film while *City of Sadness* represents a Taiwanese nationalism in embryo. Nevertheless, it is not impossible to see what *Victory* shares with *City of Sadness*. Both films explicitly or implicitly make a distinction between 'us' and 'them', and exploit martyrdom to stimulate a nationalist sentiment. Moreover, to varying degrees, both films seek to reconcile the existence of various cultures and diverse ethnic groups within Taiwan. *Victory* attempts to incorporate the 'native Taiwanese' into the grand narrative of Chinese nationalism and calls for solidarity at the moment of national crisis during the 1970s. Likewise, *City of Sadness* tries to make peace with the tortured past and calls for a mutual understanding and tolerance among the different ethnic groups. Taken together, in their different ways, they have helped to shape a shared sense of national identity at different moments in the development of post-Second World War Taiwan.

Feature films are unusual because they are viewed not only at the time of their original releases but also for many years afterwards. Hence, the ways in which the past is represented within films have become constitutive elements of public discourse concerning the past. Textual analysis of the films thus needs to be accompanied by an examination of how a past audience interpreted a text and how a current audience interprets a text that was produced in the past. In the following chapters, I will offer an analysis of contemporary family viewers with special reference to their uses of television (Chapter 8), their senses of nationhood, and the ways in which they have interpreted the two films (Chapter 9).

# 8.

# Families Watching Television

Drawing on informants' media-focused life histories, this chapter details the informants' past and present television-viewing experiences. Following a section on how the two waves of interviews with the viewing families were conducted, this chapter gives empirical substance to the following arguments.

First, with respect to their historical and current viewing experiences, the inter-family differences structured along ethnic lines are less salient than the intra-family differences structured by gender and age. Watching television has been a *national* activity transcending the family boundaries in a context in which the traditional rigid differentiation between 'native Taiwanese' and 'Mainlanders' has become increasingly blurred in Taiwan. Secondly, the very existence of television as a nation-wide medium since the early 1970s has contributed to the sharing of national cultural space by viewers around the island, and this shared viewing experience is marked in their collective memories. Thirdly, the increasing provision and consumption of global or transnational media in Taiwan has generally not weakened national identity.[1] On the contrary, as is most evident in the case of young informants, there has been greater access to foreign television programmes than ever before, but political identification with Taiwan has become stronger rather than weaker. Finally, the global or transnational media have not rendered national media marginal. That is to say, Taiwan's television landscape has changed dramatically, yet television remains a domestic (in both senses of the word) medium and the audience is not as segmented and fragmentary as is usually supposed.

[1] Although it may be argued that the sense of Taiwanese identity could have been stronger *but* for penetration of the global media, this argument is hard to verify by reference to the evidence obtained by the present study.

## 8.1 THE RESPONDENT FAMILIES

As was noted in Chapter 5, two waves of in-depth interviews with the same 19 families were conducted in the periods March to May 1998 and September to November 1999. All the families interviewed were nuclear in sociological pattern, were recruited from the urban middle class, and were equipped with colour television sets, VCRs and cable/satellite access. At the time of interviewing, all these families had gained access to cable/satellite television for several years, and 12 families had one or two additional television sets. Although the recruitment process was constrained by the practical issue of access (see Section 2 of Chapter 5 for a discussion of the methodological considerations involved), the sample nevertheless reflected a degree of diversity in ethnicity, gender and generation.

*(1) The sample*

Not all members of each family were present when the researcher entered their homes. The first wave of interviews consisted of 55 informants (19 aged between 17 and 18 and the other 36 in their 40s and 50s). The same families were visited the following year with a slightly different composition: the resulting sample included 57 individuals (24 young people and 33 parents in their 40s and 50s).[2]

To sum up, 62 informants were interviewed at least once, either on the first or second visits; 50 informants took part in both sets of interviews. More specifically, 24 informants were under 25 years old, 38 were between 40 and 60. There were 32 males and 30 females. In terms of occupation, the informants were, at the time of interviewing, 7 housewives, 5 professionals, 11 small-business owners, 15 semi-skilled workers, 4 unemployed persons, and 20 students. Many of them worked or studied in Taipei City. The sample, broken down by factors of ethnicity, gender and generation, is shown in Table 8-1 (see also Appendix VII for details of each family member differentiated by ethnicity, gender and age).

[2] Five of the original informants – all were youngsters' parents – were not available for interviewing on the second visits. At the same time, another seven informants who did not take part in the first interviews were present (five younger or older siblings of the 19 youngsters and two of their middle-aged parents).

**Table 8.1: Informants classified by gender, generation and ethnicity**

| | | Of 'Mainlander' families (n=19) | Of Hakka families (n=18) | Of Hokkien families (n=25) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male (n=32) | 10 | 9 | 13 |
| | Female (n=30) | 9 | 9 | 12 |
| **Generation** | Parents (n=38) | 12 | 12 | 14 |
| | Children (n=24) | 7 | 6 | 11 |
| **Ethnicity** | 'Mainlander' (n=14) | 12 | 2 | 0 |
| | Hakka (n=13) | 1 | 10 | 2 |
| | Hokkien (n=24) | 2 | 2 | 20 |
| | Mixed (n=11) | 4 | 4 | 3 |

It must be acknowledged that the families under study did not fully approximate the population at large, as the sample under-represented the largest Hokkien group and over-represented the families of Hakka and 'Mainlander' origins. Such an ethnic composition of the sample families was intended to maximise the range of variations in their viewing experiences.

*(2) The interviews*

The families were interviewed on weekday evenings in their homes.[3] All the interviews were carried out by the same two interviewers (my wife and I) acting in pairs. The interviews were undertaken in a semi-structured manner for reaching a trade-off between 'open' and 'closed' interviews (Lewis, 1991: 83-84): the informants were allowed setting the agenda that they considered relevant; at the same time, I were able to focus on some specific questions.

The informants were given a firm guarantee of anonymity. The tape-recorder was switched on as soon as the interviews started. Field notes of each interview were written after each interview was completed. In general, the interviews proceeded in a

[3] Considering youngsters might not be articulate in the presence of their parents in the homes, 19 youngsters had been assembled, before the first-wave interviews with the viewing families, to talk through their own biographies, identities, and viewing experiences.

comfortable and dialogical manner and the participant informants were free to leave or join in at any time. The interviews were mainly conducted in Mandarin, but occasionally the informants expressed ideas in the Taiwanese languages (i.e. Hokkien and Hakka).[4] Probes were carefully used in the interviews in order to maintain rapport.

**(i) The first wave of interviews.** A general topic guide (see Appendix V) consisting of questions related to personal background, viewing experience, and national identity was used in the first wave of interviews. Each interview lasted about one to one and a half hours.

**(ii) The second wave of interviews.** The second wave of interviews used a more focused topic guide (see Appendix VI). Each interview lasted approximately two to two and a half hours.

In addition, in the course of the second wave of interviews, two separate viewing sessions of the two films were arranged to examine the interaction between viewer and text. The two films were shown on video and questions about each film were posed separately. The 1976 film *Victory* was about 90 minutes in length while the 1989 film *City of Sadness* lasted about 3 hours. Because of time constraints, only the opening one-sixth of each film was shown: the first 15 minutes of *Victory* and the first 30 minutes of *City of Sadness*. It should be noted that this arrangement of film viewing was not exclusively intended to clarify how the audience members interpreted a particular film, but rather the aim was to explore viewers' reception of two representative Taiwanese film categories, namely 'Policy Film' and 'Taiwan New Cinema', produced in the 1970s and 1980s. Also, the film viewing sessions were intended to trigger their memories, helping them to recall aspects of the banal discourses and historical narration related to national identity in Taiwan of previous decades. As the previous chapter indicated, certain forms of nationalist discourse were embodied in the two films and spread over the national cinema.

[4] All informants were competent Mandarin speakers. Occasionally they responded to questions or defined the situation in the languages other than Mandarin (i.e., Hakka and Hokkien). The interviews proceeded very well since, I speak good Hakka and fairly good Hokkien and the co-interviewer a native speaker of Hokkien.

*(3) The transcripts*

All the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed in full in written Chinese. The transcript was numbered page by page and indexed by family. The codes (F1-F19) assigned to the families represent the order in which the taped interviews were transcribed rather than the chronological order of the original interviews: F1-F6 represent the six 'Mainlander' families under study; F7-F12 represent the six 'Hakka' families, and F13-F19 are the 'Hokkien' families. A problem emerged when transcribing those interviews that had involved the use of the colloquial Taiwanese languages other than Mandarin. The written Chinese characters fit Mandarin much better than the Taiwanese languages (i.e. Hokkien and Hakka). Thus, transcribing the interviews involving Hokkien and Hakka in written Chinese might reduce the subtleties that distinguish the Mandarin and Taiwanese languages. Being fully aware of this, some techniques were employed in the transcribing process to reduce any serious loss of the meanings the informants originally intended. These techniques involved listening to the tapes as many times as possible and consulting competent Hakka or Hokkien speakers.[5]

*(4) The presentation of the data*

Another important question concerns the presentation of the data. This is a contentious matter with qualitative interviewing data because it inevitably has ethical, methodological and theoretical implications. The aim of this research is to give voice to the informants as much as possible, yet a balance needs to be struck between using their actual spoken accounts and interpreting those accounts. The excerpts made from the transcribed texts are not claimed to be representative or typical of the informants' accounts. Inevitably, the excerpts are selective. The main aim of the selective presentation is to illustrate key aspects of viewing experience and national identity pertinent to the thesis.

The analysis drawn from the two waves of interviews is divided between two chapters. The present chapter focuses on the informants' past and present viewing experiences in the domestic context, while the next chapter centres on the questions of how they decode the two films and how they make sense of national identity.

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[5] Only the extracts used in the thesis were further translated into English. The translation eliminated pauses and other insignificant details.

## 8.2 TELEVISION HOUSEHOLDS IN TAIWAN

This section is concerned with the formation of television households in Taiwan. It is built around informants' recollections of television's entry into the living rooms. This is important because audiences need to be understood in the contexts in which they watch television in terms of both meaning construction and daily routines. The domestic and cultural context of viewing is of critical importance in the sense that people watch television in their homes and each individual/family has a specific history. What I wish to present is a snapshot of some aspects of their personal/family biographies drawn from their own accounts of their media-focused life histories.

### 8.2.1 Watching Television at the Advent of the Television Service

Interviewing the parent generation, who are in their 40s and 50s, helps to reconstruct the reception context of the historical audience. Compared with the pervious generation, they are more adaptive to Taiwan's Mandarin-centred television service. Unlike the present generation, who were born in a media-saturated environment, they have witnessed television's entry into their homes and have rich memories of early television in Taiwan. Their encounters with early television, as will be documented below, were similar to the experience of people in other countries (O'Sullivan, 1991; Spigel, 1990, 1992).

The introduction of a television service gave rise to the historical emergence of television households in Taiwan. Yet, at the inception of the television service in Taiwan, watching television was more a communal than a family activity. Many of the parents witnessed the coming of television service in their own years of adolescence and/or childhood. Watching television in the early years of television was an experience described by them as parallel to cinema going. The advent of the television age also seemed to bring *pleasure* to all and *prestige* to some. One woman from a relatively rich background recalled their impressions of early television:

> We had one of the first television sets in our neighbourhood. I remember it was a Hitachi television set. Made in Japan, you know. The television set was initially placed in the living room. Subsequently it was relocated high in the front area of the house because too many neighbours came for a look. It was fascinating to watch television in a crowd. In this sense, watching television was somewhat like going to the cinema. Whenever television was

> on, people from the neighbourhood always assembled in my home. (F4: Mother, Hokkien, aged 46)

People who were from relatively poor backgrounds confirmed this communal character of the early television-viewing experience. Although the television service started in Taiwan in 1962, the majority of the informants did not own a television set in their homes at that time. Many parents from relatively poor backgrounds recalled that they had often watched televisions owned by their neighbours. For some of them, the decision to buy a television set of their own was motivated by such an experience:

> Most people in the neighbourhood did not own a television set. Our landlord had one. His television set was always moved in and out of the house, *treating* neighbours to watching prime-time television serial dramas. (F11: Father, Hakka, aged 53; emphasis added)

> It's exciting to watch television with so many people at one's neighbour's. The children were jostling against one another for a better view while adults gathered to talk in front of the television. Very much like seeing a movie projected occasionally by a travelling exhibitor at the local evening market, you know, it was *free* to all in the neighbourhood. (F8: Mother, Hakka, aged 46)

> I bought my first television set partially out of rage. Our eldest child, then under school age, enjoyed watching something such as cartoons or *budaixi* at a neighbour's house. However, he sometimes came back in tears because the neighbour's children bullied him by threatening not to let him watch. (F16: Father, Hokkien, aged 53)

### 8.2.2 Television's Entry into the Living Rooms

Television's entry into the home not only accelerated the differentiation of domestic space but also brought a radical change to the organisation of domestic time. At the time of interviewing, the households were nearly all defended by burglar-proof doors and windows, and thus the *inside* was conspicuously segmented from the *outside*. As a result, the home was physically more separated than ever from the outside world. Modernity makes an ever-stronger distinction between the private and public spheres, but at the same time it allows an ever-closer link between the two through the media and television in particular.

In the early 1970s, when television sets could be purchased at more affordable cost, most of the parents interviewed witnessed television's entry into their living rooms. The

presence of television in the households had implications for the organisation of time and space in the home. These trends coincided with a period of profound social change. The family was becoming sociologically nuclear; domestic space was becoming differentiated; family members increasingly spent discretionary time in familial leisure activities in front of a television set. In what follows, I retrace what it was like when the television medium historically entered into the ordinary homes in the early years of television broadcasting in Taiwan.

In the first years following the end of the Second World War only immigrant 'Mainlander' families in Taiwan were nuclear families. Today, the nuclear family is the prominent family pattern in urban Taiwan. This prominence is the direct result of the industrialisation process that was initiated in the early 1960s and that accelerated in the 1970s. Industrialisation brought a radical change to Taiwanese society. A plethora of factories in labour- intensive manufacturing industry sprang up in the cities and surrounding towns. Vacancies for paid jobs were becoming open to young people and women, and subsequently these groups constituted the main source of cheap labour that sustained manufacturing industry.[6]

Against this background, an army of migrant labourers began moving from the rural to the urban and industrialised areas.[7] Urbanisation and industrialisation also gave rise to modern apartment buildings in Taiwan. The typical three- or four-room apartments were becoming commonly available in the urban areas.[8] It is obvious that these apartments would not have been built had the number of nuclear families in Taiwan not been on the rise at that time. Many of the parents who were interviewed had participated in this movement of internal migration. They had come to, and later settled in, the area

[6] Young people aged between 15 and 24 constituted half of the labour force employed by manufacturing industry at the beginning of the 1970s and women constituted 40 per cent in 1972 and the proportion was rising (Chen, 1992: 157-160).

[7] It was estimated that in the early 1970s more than 1.5 million rural residents relocated themselves in this way (Chen, 1992: 139).

[8] Before the typical three- or four-room apartments appeared, Taiwan's rural residents used to live in the 'lineage villages' which were inhabited by villagers who nearly all bore the surname of a single family (see also Cartier, 1996: 217). The residencies were crowded and the degree of privacy was limited.

surrounding Taipei some 20 to 30 years previously. They had moved out from their extended families in the rural areas and established nuclear families in Taipei.[9]

The majority of the 19 families interviewed had acquired television sets and other domestic appliances at the start of the 1970s. Most of them had bought a first television set (usually with a black-and-white picture) in the 1960s and early 1970s.[10] Television's entry into these families' homes coincided with a rapid differentiation of domestic space in which rooms for particular use were created. Since then, the modern division of domestic space has popularised, if not created, a functionally specific place known as *the living room* (or *Ke ting* in Chinese) in the Taiwanese home. For most of the interviewed families, the availability of the living room was closely intertwined with the appropriation of the television set. For some families, it is intriguing to note that the appropriation of a television set even preceded the availability of a living room and modern domestic furniture. Both the living room and the television set signified the insertion of modern life into the Taiwanese home.

> We never had a living room before we moved into an apartment. At the beginning, we didn't even know what to do with it. I was tempted to do something to fill the space, anyway. So we bought in stuff, you know, such as the television set. (F2: Mother, Hakka, aged 49)

This experience, recalled by a mother of Hakka origin, was common to the parent generation interviewed. One further example from a Hokkien family (F17) is given below:

> **Father (Hokkien, aged 50):** Two other families and us lived together with our landlord. The space was so limited that my wife and I had to dine and rest in the same room. We didn't have a separate kitchen, let alone our own living room! We didn't have a place like home until we bought our first apartment several years later.
>
> **Mother (Hokkien, aged 47):** A place of our own. That's exactly what motivated us to work hard.
>
> **The interviewer:** What was your first apartment like?

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[9] From 1960, immigrants from all corners of the island moved to Taipei County. More than 60 per cent of these internal immigrants were from outside the Taipei metropolitan area. In particular, Sanchong was the first of Taipei's satellite towns that was urbanised; it became one of Taiwan's 20 most populous towns as early as 1958 (Zhang, 1996: 253-254).

[10] It was estimated that by 1977, for the island as a whole, television had entered 88 per cent of households. From 1979, colour television sets gained prominence over black-and-white sets. By 1972, about 80 per cent of broadcast output concisted of colour television programmes (Lee, Thomas 1987: 256-257).

**Mother:** Much smaller than this one. However, at that time we were quite satisfied. At the very least, we had a place of our own, just like many other families.

**Father:** And a comfortable living room, at least.

**The interviewer:** When did you own your first television set, then?

**Mother:** Believe it or not, we bought our first television set even earlier than our sofas. Actually, we couldn't wait to buy one when we had our own apartment.

### 8.2.3 The Organisation of Domestic Space and Time

At the time of interviewing, the informants' air-conditioned homes were furnished with a variety of audio-video appliances surrounding the television set. On the walls were the posters of popular idols from home and abroad. In the corners of the living rooms were assembled a good collection of videocassettes and music CDs from different countries. Within easy reach of everyone in the living room, bottles of imported wine and a coffee maker were commonly seen, as well as the tea set used specifically for indigenous Formosan tea. The fact that five of the 19 families had a Japanesque parlour also testified to the colonial cultural legacy in contemporary Taiwan. In short, their living rooms exhibited a hybrid culture, blending the global with the local, in all its myriad forms. In most cases, the traditional place for the practice of ancestor worship had disappeared from the domestic scene.

In the early 1970s, television was an emergent leisure technology for family viewing. Even though domestic time was relatively scarce for those employed in the factories, they managed to use the newly bought television sets:

> Both of us worked in factories eight or nine hours a day in three shifts. More often than not, we did overtime to earn more money. ... When we did get together at home, we turned on the television and watched whatever was on. You know, you've just got to watch it, otherwise the cost of the television set would be a waste. (F19: Father, Hokkien, aged 52)

In the 1970s, a peculiar satellite family factory system, in which manual workers processed goods at home for central factories, emerged in Taiwan. Numerous households were incorporated into the overall picture of growth in Taiwan's export-oriented industry. Their living rooms were transformed into small production bases for large export manufacturers (Hsiung, 1996). In these circumstances, television was used by the audience to alleviate the hardship of life in an industrialising economy. However,

there was a constant tension between the desire to watch television and the necessity to work, as a man of 'Mainlander' background recalled:

> Our living room was once changed into a factory within which we processed goods for a large export manufactory. ... Radio or television was always turned on as it eases the laborious and boring working hours. ... But you could not watch television too attentively; after all, substantial work needed to be done at the end of the day. (F1: Father, 'Mainlander', aged 53)

### 8.2.4 Television, Modernity and Shared Memories

The informants were prone to call up memories of their early lives when asked to talk about their first encounters with television. They recalled rich experiences shared by their contemporaries, namely the transition to modernity that transformed the general living situation from poverty into wealth.[11] One informant expressed an experience that was shared by many other informants under study:

> We were once less affluent. For example, at that time, we could not afford apples, which were very expensive and all imported from abroad. ... My generation experienced Taiwan's transition from the times of scarcity to those of abundance. My children have no idea about the great hardships that we experienced, and perhaps none of them believes that these things ever happened. ... Television arrived just at about the same time as when making one's living in Taiwan was becoming easier. ... People began buying things, first a television set, then a refrigerator and then something else. Things unavailable and unimaginable to the earlier generation suddenly became things material to our life. We had to move with the times: we watched what others watched and lived a life as modern as others did. (F13: Father, Hokkien, aged 48)

#### *(1) National events televised*

The experiences of the audience themselves at moments of national crisis, e.g. during mourning or celebration, stands as strong proof of this television-mediated modernity. In the case of Taiwan, the television medium was capable of conveying messages – in the forms of signs, sound and images – across the physical and language boundaries to the historically emergent 'television households'. In particular, when it was televised, a crisis situation in Taiwan became *national* in terms of both its reach and intelligibility.

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[11] Watching television was once a luxury for some viewers of early television. The informants recalled that in the early years television sets had cost a fortune and therefore had to be used very carefully. For example, the 'doored' television set had to be closed after viewing, and when viewing, it was essential to switch channels as little as possible. There was even an awareness that television viewing might have to be limited in order to save electricity.

Thus, television is influential in making historic events instantly witnessed, commonly experienced and strongly felt in moments of national (as well as global) crisis. Nothing is more illustrative of this than the impact of live broadcast 'media events' (Dayan and Katz, 1992). For example, the informants' memory landscape included the 1969 Little League World Series Final in which Taiwan won the first of its seventeen Little League World Series championships. The game was broadcast live and was the first ever national media event to enchant a very large audience:

> Everyone stayed up watching the 1969 Little League World Series Final. The newly established baseball team from Taiwan defeated its super American rival and became the world baseball champion for the first time. This event mattered to us much more than the human landing on the moon around that time [in 1969]. People in front of television were excited. We were feeling on top of the world. Firecrackers were lit everywhere all the night through. I could never forget that night. (F10, Father, Hakka, aged 45)

This episode of 'victory over America and winning a world championship' was repeated nearly every year from 1969 to the 1980s. Williamsport (Pennsylvania, U.S.), where the Little League World Series was annually hosted, became a household place-name in Taiwan. To get there, Taiwan's baseball team had to defeat Guam, Japan and Korea in the qualifying contests in order to represent the Far Eastern region. All games were broadcast live to Taiwanese viewers. The Little League World Series served to ease the national frustrations caused by the worsening situation of diplomatic isolation. The national flag of the ROC was raised and the national anthem was played at these matches. When Taiwan won the world championship, national leaders (Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo) sent the players congratulatory telegrams, and these were read out aloud and verbatim by sportscasters to the viewers. On their victorious return from the United States, the young baseball players were saluted by a crowd and the ROC (Taiwan) was hailed by the media as *Bangqiu wangguo* (literally, 'the baseball kingdom'). At the time of interviewing, the 1970s live broadcasts of the Little League World Series remained within the living memory of the parents. More importantly, this was a memory that was collectively shared and which arose from the common experiences of the populace at a particularly crucial historical conjuncture for Taiwan.

A number of critical events, perceived by the Taiwanese people as indicative of the dangers that lay ahead, encroached upon Taiwan psychologically in the 1970s: the expulsion of the ROC from the United Nations (1971), U.S. President Nixon's visit to

Beijing and the bilateral Shanghai communiqué between China and the United States (1972), the oil crisis (1974), the death of Chiang Kai-shek (1975), the Vietnam War and the fall of Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). Then the U.S. recognised the PRC, terminated diplomatic relations with the ROC (Taiwan), and withdrew its military deployment on the island (1979-80). All these events had repercussions on Taiwan as a whole. Among these events, the death of Chiang Kai-shek deserves particular attention. Although today his reputation is a matter of contestation (largely in accordance with one's ethnic background and political stance), he remains the one historic figure to whom many in the present feel connected. Undoubtedly, in the 1970s viewers, regardless of their ethnic background, mourned over his death. On the one hand, the informants' recollections suggest that television had great power to frame this event. On the other hand, it is also clear from their reflexive oral accounts that people creatively interpreted this historic media event. One woman of 'Mainlander' origin recalled:

> The funeral procession of Grandpa Chiang was broadcast live on television. We mourned over his death and dressed in black. The death of Grandpa Chiang was particularly and unspeakably painful to my father. In effect, he lost his moorings and felt spiritually doomed because all his hope of returning to the homeland was gone with the death of Grandpa Chiang. (F1: Mother, 'Mainlander', aged 50)

Another woman (of Hokkien origin) reflected on her experience of weeping in front of the television.

> I was weeping in front of a black-and-white television when his funeral ceremony proceeded. ... Through the television screen, you saw mourners of all ranks. I couldn't help bursting into tears, and indeed, weeping with the television. It's never been clear to me, though, whether I really cried over his death. I just felt that everyone else in Taiwan was crying. I couldn't help it really. ... I did not cry over Chiang Ching-kuo's death, anyway. (F10: Mother, Hokkien, aged 42)

Other informants described a similar experience but also drew attention to what might be called 'the sense of ontological insecurity' (see Chapter 2 for Giddens's analysis discussion of this concept) which permeated Taiwan at that time:

> When the news of Chiang Kai-shek's death was heard, all the three television channels interrupted colour television programmes for a few days. Only sober, black-and-white images were broadcast; a sense of excessive sadness and mournfulness pervaded the island. I wept, too. ... In retrospect, it was not much about Chiang's death in itself, but about us, our misfortune. At that time, we felt like a child abandoned, you know, by everyone: the

> world [the UN], Americans, and Chiang Kai-shek himself. (F5: Father, 'Mainlander', aged 45)

> Every one mourned over the death of Chiang Kai-shek as if Taiwan were sinking without his leadership. Through all channels of the media, the government addressed the nation to unite together for the survival of the ROC in the spirit of immortal Grandpa Chiang. ... Seventies Taiwan was very different from Taiwan today. You wore a mourning band somehow or other. Schoolchildren were organised to pay their last respects around Chiang's coffin, weren't you? ... His remains were permanently preserved [in special chemicals] as if he was still alive with us. So was Chiang Ching-kuo. They had their remains preserved in the hope of being buried one day in the mainland, but recovering the mainland was a lost cause. (F17: Father, Hokkien, aged 50)

*(2) Memories of television serial dramas*

In addition to the historic media event, since the early 1970s national television in Taiwan has offered a great number of television serial dramas with predictable regularity. As noted by many scholars (Ma, 1995; Martin-Barbero, 1995), the broadly defined 'television dramas' have played a complementary role in moulding collective memories and binding the nation together.

As indicated in the interviews, decades of day-to-day encounters with television serial dramas have given substance to the collective memories of the viewers, especially the parent generation under study. For example, television serial dramas such as *Han liu* (TTV, CTV, CTS, April 1979), *Bao qing tian* (CTS, April 1974) and *Bao biao* (CTS, October 1974) were commonly remembered by the parents.

Among the previous prime-time television serial dramas recalled by the informants, *Han Liu* is particularly worthy of note. It was produced by CMPC (who also produced the 1976 film *Victory* and many other Policy Films) and co-broadcast by all the three television channels in the same time slot. The series dramatised the Communist tyranny on the mainland since 1949. Its widespread appeal among viewers deepened their fear and distrust of the Communist regime against the backdrop of the United States' de-recognition of Taiwan and the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's call for a dialogue between China and Taiwan on the subject of reunification. Virtually all the parents under study recalled that the serial drama had strengthened their determination to fight to the death should the Communists invade Taiwan. They also recalled that they had

voluntarily donated money for the cause of buying warships and fighter jets, and that they had felt at that time that any talks with the Chinese Communists would be *yu hu mou pi* (literally, 'negotiation with a tiger for the tiger's skin' [meaning 'naïve and dangerous']). The remnants of this mistrust of the Communist regime were still apparent among the respondent families at the time of interviewing, even among those who were in favour of eventual re-unification with the mainland (and among those who were more willing than ever to have stronger ties with the Chinese mainland).

## 8.3 Varieties of Current Viewing Experiences

I now turn to the current viewing experiences of the interviewed families, structured by time and programme genres. The analysis begins with a section on the activities of *family viewing*, focusing on the aspects of when family viewers collectively watch television and what they watch. It is then followed by an inquiry into the *solo viewing* experiences of individual family members.[12]

### 8.3.1 Family Viewing

The activity of watching television was identified by all the informants as something they did whenever they had spare time. However, freedom to watch television was first of all constrained by the extent to which they could release themselves from other activities. The time factor varied from person to person. The most convenient time for family members to watch television together was at prime time and/or at weekends. At other times, watching television was not a family activity. In general, the largest television set of the family remained in the living room. Families possessing additional television sets tended to place the additional television sets in the children's rooms, particularly if the younger generation had started to go to work or had enrolled in colleges.

[12] Morley rejects the individual-centred approach altogether and argues that 'the basic unit of consumption of television' is the family/household rather than the individual viewer (Morley, 1992: 139). But he admits that, in an actual study, this involves an analysis of the individuals who make up the unit (Morley, 1992: 4).

When they did get together around the television set, what they watched at weekends differed significantly from what they watched on weekdays. At weekends, when they were released from work and school, they tended to watch television until late in the evening in order to view 'variety shows' (which combined a game show, pop music, and comedy) and/or films on television or video. Among the variety shows, the most popular were produced and broadcast by the terrestrial channels. Mandarin-speaking films (of which a large part were produced in Hong Kong and Taiwan) constituted approximately half of their shared film viewing in their homes, with English-speaking films (which were mainly American productions) constituting the other half.

On weekdays, the families also tended to gather around the television in the living room between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. The family members who were at home would watch television together after their meal. The absent member(s) later joined in to watch television when they returned home. The television set had already been switched on and other family members were in place. The absent person(s), being 'late' in the first place, normally watched the programme which the other members of the family were already watching. In other words, he or she (or they) did not actively choose what to view but simply sat down with the other family members who were settled in front of the television.

The interviews revealed that the family member mostly likely to be late in starting to watch television was the head of the family. Thus fathers and husbands were most likely to watch what other family members were already viewing. Some fathers/husbands reported that it did not really matter to them what they were watching, since they just needed to rest for a while and be with their families. This conformity was also a reflection of the fact that the most popular television genre (prime-time television serial drama) was shown between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. Because these dramas had continuing story lines, it seemed inappropriate for fathers and husbands to suggest switching the television to another channel. Normally the genre's most attentive viewers – mothers and wives -- would supply the returning fathers/husbands with updated plots and details of new characters so that they (the fathers and husbands) could easily get themselves involved in what other family members were already enjoying. Interestingly, the fathers and husbands claimed that they did not particularly enjoy the serial dramas and insisted that they were not attentive viewers.

This appears to differ from the generalised finding of many previous studies, that in the domestic viewing context, father and husbands are more dominating, uninterrupted and attentive viewers (Morley, 1986). The present research suggests that for the fathers and husbands who were interviewed, co-viewing with family members was meaningful in its own right. The act of viewing, as a social activity in the home, mattered much more than the pleasure generated by the programmes. The male adults, as both fathers and husbands in their families, gained great pleasure from this passive act of viewing. They considered their conformative co-viewing with wives and children to be a befitting characteristic of being husbands and fathers. This perhaps corresponds to Confucian paternalism: being 'the ruler of virtue' in the home. I will illustrate this point by quoting some excerpts from what husbands and fathers said in front other family members (wives and children) in the course of the interviews:

> The prime-time serial drama seldom fascinates me. It only works for her [the man's wife]. She can even weep over the deaths or sufferings of the characters, who are not real to me; I never could. What I can do is to be with her, comfort her, and make her feel it's not the end of the world. (F17: Father, Hokkien, aged 50)

> I'm not the authoritative kind of man. I *let* them watch what they like. If I ask them to switch to other channels, they will kill me! ... After all, they know when my [favourite] programmes will be on. (F3: Father, 'Mainlander', aged 47; emphasis added)

This pattern of conformist viewing by fathers did not seem to be salient for young people. From time to time, youngsters were the ones who came home late for family viewing, but they did not behave in the same way as their fathers. They did not stay long in front of the television if they did really like the programme. They excused themselves from family viewing by pretending to do homework, or they just sneaked into their own rooms. About half of the young people interviewed had a television set of their own or shared one with siblings in their own rooms. When they found themselves in conflict with the viewing choices of other family members, it was not unusual for them to just stop watching or to go their own rooms and watched their preferred programmes instead.

In addition to the variety shows, films on television and/or on video at weekends, and prime-time television serial dramas between 8 and 9 p.m., the interviewees tended to co-watch television news, current affairs, and discussion programmes, particularly when

an important event occurred. Taiwan is a changing society in which individuals feel obliged to keep themselves up to date and to respond to the changes that are occurring. Young people in the transitional time of life between adolescence and adulthood are becoming more politically concerned about society as a whole. They thus maintain some of their previous viewing habits while becoming interested in other television programmes. In the viewing time available to them, they show a strong interest in informational programmes. They still watch what they used to watch when they were younger (e.g. cartoons, children's television, etc.), but they watch considerably more news, current affairs and discussion programmes. In co-viewing these programmes with their parents and/or siblings, young people not only feel more closely related to the society that they previously did not care very much about, but also comprehend better their parents' stances on major social issues. Most importantly, young people now find that their own voices are heard in their homes on serious issues, and parents are less dominant. It seems that once a shift occurs in the parent-children relationship at this stage in the family cycle, parents are surprised by their children's ability to express more mature opinions. Some forms of inter-generational political education actually take place reciprocally between parents and children, mostly in the talk generated by family television viewing, rather than by parents dominating their children's opinions.

One mother talked with delight about this shift in her children:

> With the passage of time, Taiwan is now really different from the Taiwan in which we grew up. ... Our parents told us not to get involved in politics, not even to talk about politics. We were taught [by the parents] to have ears but not mouths. They [the parents] were simply scared. ... Nowadays, children are really articulate. You know, sometimes he [the woman's son], stimulated by television news, really speaks like a college student. His knowledge about current affairs has overtaken us! I've got to be attentive to the news events so as to make sense of how reasonable his opinions are. (F9: Mother, Hokkien, aged 50)

The young people who were interviewed, for their part, also enjoyed sharing their opinions on social issues with their parents, as this indicated that their parents accepted them as independent individuals, and also served as an acid test for their opinions before they were expressed in public outside the home. As they gained more specialised knowledge in their work and/or in college, young people also took delight in exchanges of opinion with their parents. They were in a better position to converse with their parents when the latter seemed more tolerant of, and open to, what they said. Through

such subtleties in the shifting power relations between generations, the participants negotiated positions towards a variety of issues in the public sphere within the locales of their homes. This is a form of reciprocal political education between the parents and the young generation. One young interviewee recalled how his opinion contributed to his parents' voting choice in the county mayoral election held in 1997:

> They used to support the DPP in the county mayoral election. When the DPP candidate [named You Qing] for the first time defeated Li Xi-kun of the KMT and got elected, they were excited. But they felt disappointed at You's government of late and decided not to vote in the recent election. They simply felt disenchanted with the DPP. ... I watched discussion programmes on the issue of the electricity shortage with them. I told them if the DPP candidate Su Zheng-chang lost the county mayoral election, the KMT's mayoral candidate would certainly be worse, and the KMT would certainly re-start the abortive project of the new nuclear power plant. You know, we had two nuclear power plants that had already been built in Taipei County. My brother was with me on that matter. ... I urged them [the parents] to vote for Su Zheng-chang by saying I would do so if I had the right to vote. They did listen to me and went to vote for Su Zheng-chang at last. (F19: Daughter, Hokkien, aged 19)

Similar instances indicated that family viewing served as an important channel for the exchange of ideas between family members and enabled them to negotiate the meaning of citizenship. This kind of television-related (or television-induced) talk also functioned as an intermediate arena through which they engaged (or rehearsed their engagement) in the public sphere by means of conversation with their next of kin in the private sphere behind closed doors. Thus, researchers have argued that television has the potential for forging a link between the private sphere and the public sphere (Jensen, 1990; Morley, 1990). The interviews show that, on the one hand, television provided the needed stimulus for talk among members of the family, thereby overcoming the occasional uncomfortable state of silence. On the other hand, television co-viewing with family members also had moral implications. The exchanges of opinion on a particular television serial drama set the boundary of what moral values or points of view the family itself upheld. This confirms Lull's argument: 'A felling of family solidarity is sometimes achieved through television-induced laughter, sorrow, anger, or intellectual stimulation' (Lull, 1990: 39).

### 8.3.2 Solo Viewing

The activity of watching television does not always involve all the family members. Sometimes one family member is the sole viewer. Among the informants, housewives and young people were the persons who were most likely to have experience in solo viewing.

Full-time housewives (seven in 19 interviewed households) normally watched television alone in the daytime. They preferred the morning edition of television news because of its human interest and soft appeal together with the more 'useful' information related to bargain shopping and practical tips on homemaking. In the afternoons they also watched the re-runs of serial dramas that had originally been shown in the prime-time schedules. They did so either to see some sequences that they had previously missed or to watch serial dramas they had not actually seen before.

As for the young people, they showed great interest in a variety of programmes made in Taiwan and abroad. They tended to watch alone late in the evening when their parents were asleep. Between about 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. cable television channels were full of American films or Japanese serials which had the power to arouse interest among young people. They also managed to find time to watch television after school or on the days when they had no school. Those who had just been released from the pressure of getting a place at college were able to spare more time to watch television. Moreover, for those who were just becoming adults, their use of their time was subject to less regulation by their parents. In this phase, they were also more curious about other cultures, especially those of Japan and the United States. This led to shifts in their viewing preferences: they generally became more interested in watching foreign programmes via cable.

Young people were also interested in learning foreign languages (in particular, English and Japanese), since Taiwan was now more eager than ever to embrace globalisation and its historical dependence upon the United States and Japan. Also, Taiwan's urgent need to upgrade from labour-intensive to skill-intensive hi-tech manufacturing, coupled with its heavy reliance upon foreign trade, also presumed that benefits would be gained by learning 'the language(s) of advantage'. Accordingly, parents saw no particular reason to regulate young people's viewing of foreign programmes. The only regulatory intervention by parents was to urge their children to record programmes for viewing at a

later time. For young viewers who had television sets in their own rooms, the freedom to view television was even greater.

They spent much time enjoying Japanese television dramas and also *manga* (comics) translated from Japanese and 'J-Pop' (Japanese pop music), which were bought to fill personal collections.[13] These popular products were easily accessible via the channels of cable/satellite systems, exchanges between peers, or video rental shops. [14] They frequently watched Japanese television dramas such as *Tokyo Love Story* and *Terms for a Witch*. These were in urban settings and lasted for about 10 or more episodes, with the central plot of modern romance between good-looking male and female characters. These television dramas were also readily available on video from the local rental shops.

In addition to Japanese pop culture, these young viewers also showed greater interest in foreign films, especially those from America. At the same time, however, their interest in various forms of local culture was also aroused. Popular music in the Taiwanese languages (predominantly, Hokkien) began to gain more recognition from cultural elites. Popular singers such as Wu Bai had many fans among young people, particularly their albums sung in Hokkien. The local puppet drama, *budaixi*, a blend of traditional performance and modern audio-video production technology, had numerous fans among all generations of the Taiwanese people.[15] Some of the interviewed young people were themselves fans of the local pop music or the *budaixi*, or both. They possessed impressive collections of local music on CDs and also the puppets of the *budaixi*.

## 8.4 NOT YET A FRAGMENTED AUDIENCE

It is commonplace to say that media audiences have become more segmented and fragmented than ever as a result of the proliferation of television channels and other

[13] However, most of the young informants did not see themselves as belonging to the so-called *hazitsu*, meaning 'a tribe who ape everything Japanese from the latest hairstyles to the cut of their trousers' (*The Economist*, 20 July 2000: 68).

[14] For fear of offending China, Japan has not signed bilateral copyright protection agreements with Taiwan. This has helped to create a huge black market for Japanese popular culture in Taiwan.

leisure technologies. Segmentation is related to the fact that there is 'greater specialisation in media offerings' and there are 'greater opportunities to choose specific types of content from the many new distributors' (McQuail, 1997: 133). Fragmentation increases as audiences' discretionary time becomes more dispersed over various media sources. Yet the process of audience segmentation and fragmentation might be less dramatic than is usually supposed. McQuail cautions us that 'one should not underestimate the continuing collective and socially patterned character of "individual" consumption' (McQuail, 1997: 133), since 'the fragmentation and dispersal of audiences has so far only gone a limited way' (McQuail, 1997: 137).

Since 1990, the penetration rate of cable television in Taiwan has risen dramatically from 16.1 per cent in 1990 to 79.3 per cent in 1996 (Liu, 1997: 55). The number of commercial satellite channels available to Taiwan has increased to 219. Together with the five broadcast channels (inclusive of one public service television channel, the PTS), these cable and satellite services mean that most viewers, depending on the area in which they live, have some 60 to 80 channels to choose from. The spread of cable television in Taiwan has attracted the audience away from the main television networks, as can be seen from the ratings for individual programmes.[16] At first sight, all the above evidence suggests the existence of a segmented and fragmented audience in Taiwan. However, as I shall seek to show, this trend has not deprived the television media of a large and engaged audience on a national scale.

First, in terms of audience share rather than ratings, Taiwan's terrestrial television channels remain in a stronger position than most cable/satellite channels. They have retained much of their traditional advantage regardless of the growing competition from non-terrestrial channels. By June 1997, the three old terrestrial television channels still had more than half of the audience share. Since the mid-1990s, the rapid growth of cable television vis-à-vis terrestrial television (in terms of audience share) seems to have slowed down. The market share for the three old terrestrial channels dropped sharply

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[15] *Budaixi* was originally suppressed by terrestrial television because its performance was in Hokkien rather than Mandarin. In recent years, *budaixi* has not only launched a specialised satellite television channel (Pili Satellite Television) for transmission to home viewers via cable, but has also made the first puppet film, *Sheng Shi Chuan Shuo* (*The Legend of the Sacred Stone*). Its popularity confirms the growing appeal of a revived local culture.

from 64 per cent in 1994 to 55 per cent in 1995 (Liu, 1997: 131) but then stabilised at 51 per cent in 1996 and 52 per cent in 1997. [17]

Secondly, each respondent in the present study normally watched a handful of television channels on a daily basis, and as a family they had regular access to a limited channel repertoire.[18] That is to say, some channels to which they were frequently exposed tended to overlap. The most frequently watched television channels by the viewing families under study consisted of both terrestrial and non-terrestrial channels. The most commonly viewed channels are listed in Table 8-2. All these channels except for HBO are general interest and/or news and current affairs channels, addressing a national rather than special interest audience. Certainly, some other channels catering for special interests were watched frequently by individual viewers within a family, as shown below in the last section, on personal viewing. But, it is clear from the interviews that the terrestrial television channels retained their central place on viewers' commonly shared channel repertoire. In view of this shared television experience within and across the family boundary, and also the time spent in sharing television as demonstrated in the earlier discussion on family-centred viewing, viewers can be considered neither genuinely segmented nor fragmented.

Thirdly, the sheer explosion of television channels in the Taiwanese case should not be equated with the diversification of television programme formats. Among the channels distributed via cable there are at least five around-the-clock Mandarin-speaking news channels which are exclusively devoted to news and current affairs programmes. But the news output of these channels is homogeneous both vertically (within a single

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[16] A recent ratings survey by AC Nielson Taiwan indicated that the prime-time terrestrial television had decline in popularity: from a combined ratings figure of more than 80 per cent in the 1980s to 21.98 per cent of late (*The China Times Evening*, 28 June 2000).

[17] A similar trend can be seen elsewhere. For instance, in the case of the United States, as McQuail points out, 'the spread of cable ate rapidly and heavily into the audience share of the three main television networks, but this process halted and stabilised in 1993' (McQuail, 1997: 145). Equally, a long-term, large scale and empirical study of British audiences does not support the idea of the 'fragmentary audience' (Gauntlett and Hill, 1999: 288-289).

[18] This largely confirms the findings generated by recent surveys of viewing behaviours. One study found that a Taiwanese viewer who had access to both terrestrial and non-terrestrial television channels normally watched less than seven television channels on a daily basis (Zhong, 1996). Two other surveys found that more than 80 per cent of viewers frequently watched less than 10 television channels (see Liu, 1997: 318).

channel) and horizontally (across all the channels). The multiplication of news channels has not expanded the heterogeneity of programme content. This is also the case with other particularistic television channels and with the generalist channels.

**Table 8.2: Channels most frequently watched together by family members**

| Channels | Main broadcast languages | Signal transmission | Programming types |
|---|---|---|---|
| TTV | Mandarin | Terrestrial | General |
| FTV | Hokkien and Mandarin | Terrestrial | General |
| CTS | Mandarin | Terrestrial | General |
| CTV | Mandarin | Terrestrial | General |
| TVBS | Mandarin | Satellite via cable | General |
| TVBS-N | Mandarin | Satellite via cable | News |
| HBO | English (subtitled in Mandarin Chinese) | Satellite via cable | Films |
| STAR TV | Mandarin | Satellite via cable | General |
| FTV Satellite | Hokkien and Mandarin | Satellite via cable | News |
| CTN | Mandarin | Satellite via cable | News |

Fourthly, although there has been an increase in foreign programmes available to Taiwanese audiences, these are watched very selectively. In the early 1990s, among channels delivered over the cable systems, 30 per cent came from abroad. About 60 per cent of the other cable channels, although based in Taiwan, generally did not produce their own programmes but relied mainly on programmes purchased from foreign programme providers. Only 40 per cent of Taiwan-based cable/satellite channels produced programmes for their own output (Liu, 1997: 138-147). A significant proportion of these self-produced programmes were low-cost discussion programmes on issues of the day or talk shows using the phone-in format.

Access to foreign television programmes via the widely circulated cable systems is easy, but the viewers under study watched them rather selectively. For example, channels featuring foreign films were watched more frequently than foreign news channels. Programmes dubbed and/or subtitled in Mandarin Chinese were more likely to be

watched than those without dubbing or subtitles.[19] Language thus remains a barrier that is hard to cross for Taiwanese audiences. Even for a group of professionals under study, news bulletins broadcast by foreign channels like CNN did not fare well. They watched CNN only when something vitally important and/or relevant to Taiwan occurred. As one of the professionals among the family viewers explained, 'I don't remember exactly when I last watched CNN. Yes, I did when the disastrous earthquake hit Taiwan a month ago' (F15: Mother, Hakka, aged 44). Another professional who worked in Taipei City reported that he watched CNN occasionally when national elections were held or cross-Strait tension arose in order to find out 'how the outside world are seeing us' (F2: Father, 'Mainlander', aged 54).

Foreign news channels cannot compete effectively with domestic news channels on a day-to-day basis. Terrestrial television has secured itself a niche market, particularly in the area of television fictions and variety shows. Three popular Hong Kong-based satellite television channels (STAR TV Mandarin Channel, TVBS, and CTN) are cases in point. Some years ago, all of them radically localised themselves to cater for local audiences and secure their popularity in Taiwan. This strategy seems to have been successful, because most viewers under study were unaware that the channels were not Taiwan-based and did not see any differences between these 'foreign' channels and Taiwan-based channels.

Last but not least, the characteristics of cultural identities -- such as indigenous tastes and cultural proximity -- are very important, particularly in relation to viewers' reception of home-made and imported television dramas. These factors have sustained the popularity of domestic soaps and offer an explanation of why television dramas imported from Hong Kong, Japan, China and even Korea generally enjoy greater popularity in Taiwan than those from the West. Moreover, the 'television ecology' (Cunningham and Jacka, 1996: 23-24) within which foreign programmes are aired and then viewed is just as important as cultural identity. Thus, according to the parents under study, the American soaps like *I Love Lucy* enjoyed great popularity in the late

[19] However, language is not the only barrier facing 'foreign' broadcasters who seek to attract Taiwanese viewers. A notable example is China's state-owned China Central Television (CCTV). Though CCTV's overseas service (CCTV-4) offers programming primarily in Mandarin and is legally accessible to the majority of Taiwan's television households, all of the informants stated that seldom watch it as they found its newscasts 'propagandistic' and its entertainment programming 'dull' compared to other television channels available to them.

1960s, when Taiwan had not yet developed its own drama tradition and offered only a single channel. But in the early 1970s, when a nascent multi-channel television system came into existence, the American series/soaps lost momentum. (On the dominance of domestic programming on Taiwan's television since the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Chapter 6). The ever-intensifying multiplication of television channels in recent years has (thanks to the penetration of cable/satellite television into Taiwanese homes) brought an increasing number of foreign programmes to Taiwanese audiences. But, paradoxically, foreign programmes like American series/soaps have never regained their former popularity in Taiwan. The viewers now have a plethora of domestic and/or imported series/soaps from neighbouring countries (such as Japan and South Korea) and they prefer these to the America programmes.

We therefore have a great deal of evidence to show that there have been limits to the fragmentation and segmentation of the television audience in Taiwan. The terrestrial television channels remain robust. Viewers continue to share a limited channel repertoire, in which national and generalist television channels remain prominent in viewers' day-to-day viewing activities. Four terrestrial channels – even if PTS (the newly established and only public service channel in Taiwan) is excluded – still hold an audience share as big as that as the cable/satellite channels. Foreign (as well as global) television channels only fare well when they meet the demands of the local audience.

On balance, the newly proliferated television channels have given viewers new horizons insofar as they have brought an expanded television experience unparalleled by those that were afford by early television. Yet we should not exaggerate the extent of audience segmentation and fragmentation: watching television remains a predominantly collective activity, shared by viewers within and beyond the instantaneous, domestic contexts. Terrestrial television remains 'national' in terms of programme provision and programme demand. The cable channels that are watched most frequently by a large audience are those with a generalist appeal. Television channels beamed from outside Taiwan have sought popularity by adopting a variety of localisation strategies that involve reducing their 'foreignness' to local viewers (e.g. STAR TV Mandarin Channel, CTN, TVBS) – for example by dubbing/subtitling programmes in the local languages or Mandarin Chinese. Thus, as two Australian researchers point out, 'television has always been and remains primarily a domestic medium. [...] Television remains a gloriously

hybrid medium, with a plethora of programming of an inescapable and essentially local, untranslatable nature' (Cunningham and Jacka, 1996: 12).

## 8.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued for the place of television since the early 1970s in the formation and sharing of Taiwan's (symbolic and mediated) national life for viewers dispersed in all corners of the island. As I have shown, the arrival of television exposed viewers to, and connected them with, the public realm and the world at large. By making this private-public connection, the television medium brings viewers into contact with worlds that are both near and remote (in time and in space) (see Silverstone, 1999b: 93). In this way, television has helped to bind space and compress time. It has created family viewers and viewing families by entering into domestic living rooms and penetrating people's daily routines. Most importantly, television introduced a sense of cultural modernity to Taiwanese audiences. The appropriation of national identity and viewers' fusion with modern society at large run parallel to the collective television experience. This socially shared viewing experience, particularly at moments of national crisis, celebration and mourning, has become deeply rooted in viewers' collective memories. It has become a part of their own personal biographies and intimate social interactions within and across the family boundaries. Moreover, as part of the national cultural space, television has helped to shape a knowable and communicable community among the Taiwanese people, who were previously divided by ethnic difference and the lack of a common language.

Despite the evident radical change in Taiwan's television landscape, I have argued in this chapter that television remains a domestic (in both senses of the word) medium, and that a segmented and fragmented audience has not yet superseded a national and engaged audience. Through occasions of family-centred viewing and talks invoked by such viewing, viewers still negotiate their multiple identities on the basis of a variety of actors such as ethnicity, gender and generation. On the one hand, television regulates and circulates public knowledge about the present and the past of the society to which viewers belong. On the other hand, television provides the audience with a common reservoir of popular culture in which television fictions – that are often emotionally invested and tell stories in the serial form – have a conspicuous presence. This fusion of

public knowledge and popular culture for the purpose of national consumption not only sustains but also constantly reconfigures the sense of an imagined national community.

# 9.

# Audience Reception and Mediated Nationhood

Having detailed the viewing families' past and present experiences with television in the preceding chapter, this chapter explores the audience's reception of mediated nationhood, especially as revealed in the ways in which the informants interpreted the nationalist texts of the two films (see the textual analysis in Chapter 7). This is followed by an analysis of the audience's multiple sense of nationhood with reference to what I shall call 'Taiwan-centred identity', an identity which encompasses hybrid modes of identification yet centres on Taiwan itself. The cultural context in which the informants have come to appropriate this identity can be explained by means of the concept of 'time-place sensibilities'. I use this term to refer to an ensemble of feelings that is structured along the lines of time and place and is in itself socially structured and culturally mediated.

The analysis presented in this chapter is informed by the two waves of interviews with the same 19 families. The results of the analysis support the following arguments. With respect to the audience's interpretations of the two particular films, viewers are constrained as well as empowered by the texts. This is manifested in, on the one hand, their shared sense-makings of the texts on the level of denotative meanings, and on the other hand in their various interpretations of the texts. Viewers not only employed interpretative frames from a myriad of textual and extra-textual resources but also took a middle course when these interpretative frames were at variance with one another. A related argument is that social positional factors such as ethnic background, age and gender differences contribute in varying degrees to the constitution of the primary interpretative frames that are adopted by the audience to decode the media texts. In particular, the viewers' interpretations of the films in question are affected (but not determined) by the social positional factors they occupy, as is most evident in the case of those who have a clear sense of ethnic identity. Furthermore, although there were

significant variations in the viewers' perceptions of nationhood, a predominant thread can be found in their sense of 'Taiwan-centred identity', a concept which helps to illustrate the ways in which they appropriated the sense of national identity along the 'continuum of hybridities' (Pieterse, 1995: 56). As will be shown in this chapter, most informants identified to varying extents with both Taiwan and China as their 'homelands' but invested each with different meanings. To understand this peculiar form of hybrid identity, I will further explore this double consciousness in relation to the 'time-place sensibilities'.

## 9.1 VIEWERS' INTERPRETATIONS OF THE FILMS

In the course of the second wave of interviews undertaken between September and November 1999, the opening sequences of the two films (i.e. the 1976 film *Victory* and the 1989 film *City of Sadness*) were shown to the informants with two aims: first, to stimulate discussion among the viewers; and secondly, to trigger their *memories* of the events in the historical fictions and the 'real' world (and also to stimulate their *expectations* of the story-lines of the films, because I did not show them the films in full). After showing the two films, the informants were asked to recall and reconstruct the central plots for each film as a whole,[1] but questions were carefully framed to reduce their instinctive feeling that this was a memory test. For example, informants were asked: 'How will you talk about the film to an absent friend/family member?' and 'How will you tell an absent friend/family member what the film is about?'

I have found that, despite differences in their evaluations of the films, individuals who occupied different social positions told similar stories. The film *Victory* was described by those who had viewed the film in an earlier period as a film about Taiwan's return to China following the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, and the film *City of Sadness* was described as a film about the victimisation of the Taiwanese people during the transition of power from the Japanese to the KMT. For example:

> It [*Victory*] is about people across the Strait fighting against their common enemy, the Japanese invaders. Ke Junxiong [the real name of the actor who

[1] In the field of media studies, scholars have employed similar techniques, asking interviewees to retell the stories they originally received from the media in order to examine what meanings had been received and constructed by the viewers (e.g. Kitzinger, 1993; Liebes, 1988; Livingstone, 1991; Philo, 1990).

played Lin Juyong in the film] sacrifices himself to free Taiwan from Japanese colonial rule. Taiwan is then restored to become part of the ROC [Republic of China] again. (F7: Father of Hakka origin, aged 47)

[*Victory* is] about China's eight-year resistance against Japanese invasion when Taiwan was under Japanese colonial rule. Some native Taiwanese and millions of Chinese were sacrificed to end Taiwan's status as a Japanese colony. (F4: Father of 'Mainlander' origin, aged 51)

It [*City of Sadness*] is about the February 28 Incident. In the midst of the Incident, thousands of native Taiwanese who defied the KMT were killed and the Taiwanese took revenge on some Mainlanders too. You know, at the time when Taiwan was returned [in 1945] to the ROC, there were many misunderstandings between the KMT and the native Taiwanese. (F1: Mother of 'Mainlander' origin, aged 50)

It [*City of Sadness*] is about the lack of trust between the KMT and the Taiwanese people. The Taiwanese demanded democracy and better administration but the KMT responded by ruthless suppression. Of course, during the February 28 Incident, not just the native Taiwanese but most people [including the 'Mainlanders'] suffered. (F15: Father of 'Hokkien' origin, aged 47)

As indicated above, with regard to the retellings of stories in both films, there is not much difference between people of different ethnic origins (cf. Liebes and Katz, 1990). The consensus over denotative textual meanings is widely shared between those interviewed. This confirms the view that narrative structure and other textual properties not only exist but also structure audience comprehension (Condit, 1989; Radway, 1988). However, in matters of interpretation differences do arise. In this respect, Livingstone makes a useful distinction between *comprehension* and *interpretation* (Livingstone, 1998: 174-184). This indicates that the text (with its textual properties and narrative structure) has the power to suggest what is to be read at the denotative level; but the reader also has power, by using textual and extra-textual resources, to interpret the text in various ways at the connotative level.

While acknowledging that the audience interpret the media text in various ways, I wish to stress here, on the basis of the above findings, that the text still has power. This power is not *determinate* in the sense that it inscribes a single dominant ideology, but rather it sets limits on the range of potentially indeterminate audience interpretations.

The analysis offered in this section echoes Nicholas Garnham, who advocates using the term 'determination' in the 'soft' sense:

> ... I here use the word determination in the 'soft' sense used by Raymond Williams ..., not as fixing a simple causal relationship, but as a setting of limits. It does not predetermine human action in any unilateral sense, but it does make some course of action more likely than others, if only because it makes some more difficult than others, and also acknowledges that there are, at any one time, certain absolute, often material, limits to the range of human action. Determination also implies that humans learn from their historical experiences in ways which create habits and thus inertia, and in ways which provides warnings against certain course of action and thus make such actions less likely in the future. (Garnham, 1990: 6)

The interplay between text and reader thus opens up a discursive space in which the meanings generated are located between the determinacy of textual closure and the indeterminacy of audiences' diverse interpretations.

Further questions raised in this chapter are as follows: To what extent and in what sense are viewers constructive or receptive? Is it typical or unusual for a viewer flexibly or even contradictorily to interpret a text by drawing from a variety of textual and extra-textual resources? How plausible is it to suggest that viewers share a certain degree of consensual interpretation despite all their divergent readings? Equally important is whether viewers' interpretations of a given text have evolved as the historical context (external to the viewer and the text) has changed. In what follows I will address these issues in turn by referring to the viewers' actual verbal accounts concerning the two films in question.

### 9.1.1 A Constructive and Receptive Audience

In this section I argue that viewers are both constructive and receptive in relation to the two films. This can be examined in terms of a major component of the two films in question: historical events. As explained in Chapter 7, *Victory* expresses Chinese nationalism while *City of Sadness* expresses a sense of 'Taiwanese nationalism' which implicitly considers the KMT as a repressive and alien regime. They represent different versions of the national past. Although viewers' interpretations of these historical films cannot be reduced to a matter of accuracy/inaccuracy, it is important to determine how viewers see historical causation in terms of who should be held responsible for (or what leads to) a particular historical event (Grindon, 1994). Viewers of these films can be

said to have experienced the 'presentness' of the past, which for them retains a strong emotional significance.

In this respect, the interviews revealed that the ethnicity-based interpretative frames are more pronounced than those derived from other social positions in shaping viewers' interpretations. In general, parents of Hokkien and Hakka descent are more likely to be in favour of the past as depicted in *City of Sadness* than the past described in *Victory*. That is to say, they feel sympathetic towards the 'native Taiwanese' who were oppressed by the KMT (as represented in *City of Sadness*). The reverse is true for parents of 'Mainlander' background, who are more receptive to the view that Taiwan was 'liberated' from Japanese colonial rule by China's hard-won victory over Japan at the end of the Second World War. Thus, the parents interviewed adopt a 'preferred reading' position, insofar as messages intended and inscribed respectively in the two films are received correspondingly. Needless to say, great care must be taken in generalising from their verbal accounts, but on the whole informants show that they are receptive to the media texts, which already place some limits on how the national past is interpreted.

However, viewers are also resistant and constructive in the sense that they are able to adopt 'oppositional codes' in decoding not only the films which presumably contradict with their own ethnic positioning, but also the films they generally evaluate more positively. For example, the suggestion that the Taiwanese contributed to the battle against Japan in the second Sino-Japanese war between 1937-1945, as *Victory* implies, is more likely to be questioned by parents from 'Mainlander' families. And 'native Taiwanese' viewers from 'Hakka' and 'Hokkien' families tend to protest over the reticence of the film *City of Sadness* about the role of 'Mainlanders' as 'wrongdoers' in exacerbating the sufferings of the 'Taiwanese' in the February 28 Incident of 1947:

> Taiwan's return to the embrace of China in 1945 was made possible only by China's eight-year battle with the Japanese 'ghosts' [literally, 'inhuman Japanese']. The Taiwanese themselves did very little to end Japanese colonial rule. The film [*Victory*] flatters the Taiwanese a bit too much on this matter. (F4: Father, 'Mainlander', aged 51)

> It [*City of Sadness*] only shows how Taiwanese 'rioters' used violence against ordinary 'Mainlanders'. But actually the reverse was the case. Backed by the Nationalist troops, it was the 'Mainlanders' who did violence to the Taiwanese. ... Besides, it makes Governor Chen Yi the scapegoat for crimes [i.e. the killing of thousands of Taiwanese and the imprisonment of

many more] committed by Chiang Kai-shek himself. (F16: Father, Hokkien, aged 53)

The analysis so far has revealed that viewers can be said to be both receptive and constructive, depending on their interpretations of events related to the films, as well as their interpretative frames associated with social positional factors, in particular ethnicity. Most importantly, we have seen that the same audience decodes the same text according to various interpretative codes/frames that range from the 'preferred' to the 'oppositional'. The above findings confirm the possibility suggested by Stuart Hall. Reflecting upon the original 'encoding/decoding model' he outlined in an earlier paper (Hall, 1980), he states that 'It's very possible for an individual or group at one moment to decode in what I call the "hegemonic codes" and at another moment to use oppositional codes' (Hall, 1994: 256). In what follows, I offer a more detailed account of the interpretative codes/frames that the viewers adopt in decoding the two films.

### 9.1.2 Interpretative Frames at Work and at War

As will be detailed below, in interpreting a text, viewers not only employ interpretative frames from a myriad of textual and extra-textual resources but also take a middle course when these interpretative frames are at variance with one another. Social positional factors such as ethnic background, age and gender differences are relevant to viewers' interpretations of the text. These factors constitute the primary interpretative frames that the viewers employ to decode the media texts.

On the one hand, the interplay of family ethnic backgrounds and personal biographies provided various interpretative frames/resources. On the other hand, informants had a certain degree of interpretative freedom in relation to social positional factors such as ethnicity, age, and gender. Interpretative frames can be seen as embodying a myriad of 'selves' (identities forged out of ethnic backgrounds, gender and age) that are activated by the viewers to construct the potential formation of 'ourselves'. However, more often than not some of these 'selves' are in a state of contradiction. There were numerous examples of this during discussions with family members about the two films. I will consider one example below from the interviews with a 'Mainlander' family (F2, see Appendix VII). It should be noted here that though the family is a 'Mainlander' family according to the children's paternal father, it actually displays a degree of diversity in

terms of individuals' ethnic backgrounds, as the family consists of the 'Mainlander' father, the mother of Hakka origin, and a daughter and a son.

*(1) Ethnicity-based interpretative frames*

Instances of verbal exchanges concerning *City of Sadness* and *Victory* among viewers from this 'Mainlander' family clearly demonstrate that different interpretative frames are not only always at work but are also constantly at war. Equally important is the fact that, when they were decoding, viewers often connected their interpretations of the films with a wider social agenda such as cross-Strait relations and the inter-ethnic relationship. I quote the exchanges of opinion among them at length:

> **Father** ('Mainlander', aged 54)**:** Hou Hsiao-hsien [the director of *City of Sadness*] is quite opportunistic because he makes the film to satisfy the rising tide of Taiwanese consciousness.
>
> **Mother** ('native Taiwanese' of Hakka origin, aged 49)**:** He is better than Liu Jia-chang [the director of *Victory*]. At the very least, he caters for the Taiwanese people rather than the KMT government. Mainlanders like you just cannot appreciate a film like *City of Sadness*.
>
> **Father:** I'm not speaking as a Mainlander. If he [Hou Hsiao-hsien] was not opportunistic, he would not have made the film after Lee Teng-hui assumed the presidency. I would still hold this view even if I were not a Mainlander.
>
> **Son** (aged 16)**:** Am I a Mainlander?
>
> **Daughter** (aged 18)**:** Of course not.
>
> **The parents** (responding in chorus)**:** Yes, you are.
>
> **Mother:** But, they [the children] identify with Taiwan more than you do. [Indicating the father]
>
> **Father:** How can I possibly not identify with Taiwan? ... People think you are [Mainlanders]. They judge you by your accent. Besides, you don't speak Hokkien.
>
> **Son:** How can I be a Mainlander? I was born here [in Taiwan]! Though I cannot speak Taiwanese [Hokkien], I can fully understand what they say in Taiwanese [Hokkien].
>
> **Daughter:** We're all 'Taiwanese', aren't we?
>
> **Father:** Yes, we are. But, we should not distance ourselves from other Chinese on the mainland. A film like *City of Sadness* is wrong, portraying people from the mainland as though they were all as dishonest as Shanghai gangsters.
>
> **Mother:** I am with you on this. But for people living through the early years of Nationalist rule on Taiwan, it's quite natural for them to take a dislike to the mainlanders. Don't you remember, my father strongly opposed our

marriage at the beginning. The elder 'Taiwanese' generation used to abhor the Mainlanders. *City of Sadness* does not exaggerate the case.

**The children** (responding with curiosity): Did he [the grandfather] really?

**Father:** Right. Yet he treated me nicely afterwards. ... Some Mainlanders did take advantage of the native Taiwanese during those years. But in regard to the February 28 Incident of 1947, how could you expect the KMT government to stabilise the disturbing situation without recourse to force? Just think about that. Those native Taiwanese spoke Japanese, attacked the security forces, and aimed for Taiwan Independence. Well, I admit that many of those killed were innocent.

**Mother:** The majority of them!

**Father:** OK. But you shouldn't hold all the Mainlanders responsible for that. My father came to Taiwan two years after the Incident.

**Mother:** The point is not about who should be held responsible but how different ethnic groups may see each other as equals.

**Daughter:** We're doing just that. Unlike your generation, one's ethnic background no longer concerns us. In my class, consisting of 40 boys and girls, you can't tell who is native Taiwanese and who isn't.

**Son:** That's right. We're all *new Taiwanese* [a catch-phrase coined by Lee Teng-hui].

**Father:** Yes, we should 'look forward' [another phrase coined by Lee Teng-hui]. But on the contrary *City of Sadness* is backward looking. It's counterproductive to lay bare the distant and unpleasant past.

**Mother:** We can always learn from the distant past, no matter how unpleasant it may be. Without the film, the Mainlanders would not have understood how unfairly the native Taiwanese were treated in the early years of KMT rule.

**Father:** I doubt that anything can be learned from it [*City of Sadness*]. We in Taiwan should stand together as one man rather than blame each other for the distant past.

**Mother:** Yes, particularly when we're living under the shadow of China's invasion.

**Father:** If there is ever a Chinese invasion, we Taiwanese will suffer a hundred times more painfully than in the February 28 Incident of 1947. We do not want to have the tragedy repeated.

**Daughter:** So we Taiwanese shouldn't divide ourselves into ethnic groups that are hostile to one another.

**Father:** Yes, that's exactly what I mean. If people of different ethnic origins in Taiwan cannot make peace with the past and live in harmony with one another, how can we possibly confront the Chinese communists?

The above extracts[2] show interpretative frames at war with one another. As Storey argues, following Morley, 'the text-reader encounter does not occur in a moment isolated from other discourses, but always in a field of many discourses, some in harmony with the text, some which are in contradiction with it' (Storey, 1999: 79). This applies to the audience as individuals and as a family. Reflecting their ethnic backgrounds, the father tended to view *City of Sadness* more oppositionally than the mother did. Their opinions diverged particularly when it came to depicting and assessing the 'bygone and unpleasant' past depicted in *City of Sadness*. While the father tried to evade it, the mother acknowledged that the revelation of the past by the film made a positive contribution towards mutual understanding between ethnic groups. Interestingly, their exchange of opinions about the film turned to the potential threat (felt and/or imagined) from China. The film was mobilised by them to imagine the catastrophic consequences that might occur if China waged war upon Taiwan.

The distinction between 'Mainlanders' and 'native Taiwanese' (the Hakka and Hokkien people) remained explicit for the parent generation. Nevertheless, whilst distancing himself (or being excluded by his wife, who is of Hakka background) from the essentialist category of '(native) Taiwanese', the father of 'Mainlander' background could still endorse the idea of the 'new Taiwanese' and was comfortable to use the phrase 'we Taiwanese'. Interestingly and somewhat contradictorily, both the father and the children were referred to by the mother as 'Mainlanders'. But she distinguished between the father and the children according to her own judgement of the degree of their identification with Taiwan. The father, on his part, claimed his identifications with Taiwan while protesting against the ethnicity-based social exclusion he had experienced.

### *(2) Generation-based interpretative frames*

The children were less concerned than their parents with the distinction based on ethnicity, refusing to see themselves as 'Mainlanders' and counterbalancing the father's claim with their own lived experiences. Despite differences in their interpretations of

[2] The extracts are all in one section. Without any prompting by the interviewer, the family members continued to discuss the films they had just viewed. Afterwards, they apologised to the interviewer and explained that they were accustomed to having that kind of media-activated discussion/debate among themselves. Similar situations occurred in the course of interviewing other families.

the issues related to the film, all members of the family called for solidarity among people whom they referred to as 'we in Taiwan' or 'we Taiwanese'.

The children were more conscious than their parents of the mediated nature of cinematic representations. Relatively less bound by previous viewing of the old films, they were more media-conscious in so far as they viewed the films as films. For example, the son said, 'I wasn't sure at first if the film [*Victory*] is set in Taiwan, or if it is in China. ... Yes, it is in Taiwan! Something depicted by the film occurred in Taiwan.' Or, as the daughter said, 'both films used black-and-white footage to make us believe that these things did happen to Taiwan.' More details about how these young people regarded the two 'old' films will be offered later in this chapter.

*(3) Gender-based interpretative frames*

In contrast to the ethnicity- and generation-based interpretations of the films, the gender-based interpretations seemed less salient in their assessment of the films related to national identity. But, as indicated below, it seems tenable that the gender-based interpretative frames have a greater influence than others in their representations of characters in both films. Differently put, viewers' representations of characters are not necessarily consistent with their general attitude toward the film. For example, despite his generally negative evaluation of *City of Sadness*, the father of 'Mainlander' background did not conceal his preference for Wenxiong (a Taiwanese gangster in the film) over the 'Mainlanders' (the Shanghai gangsters in the film). Wenxiong was seen by him as more moral, conscientious, sociable and even more 'masculine' (he described Wenxiong as behaving 'like a man') than the Shanghai gangsters. It can also be argued in this case that viewers' general interpretations of the films did not prevent them from taking pleasure in viewing them. Equally, the paternalist elements reflected in both films were resisted by the female viewers. For example, the mother of 'native Taiwanese' background was not happy with the frequent scenes (in *City of Sadness*) in which women characters never dined with the males around the dining table:

> Women suffered more than men in old times. You see, they [the female characters in the film] talk little but do much [for men]. Yet they are not even allowed to dine with men at the same table. (F2: Mother, Hakka, aged 49)

And, as is evident in the following divergent representations of one character (Winying in *Victory*) by the children, viewers' character representations were related to their moral judgements, which in turns were usually gendered. The character Winying in *Victory* is a schoolteacher who asks her Japanese friend (Ikeda) to rescue her young pupils from being recruited to fight the war for Japan. Yet rumour has it that she has an affair with the Japanese military officer she asks for help. As a result, she falls victim to the shame and exclusion imposed by the villagers. Upon hearing of these disgraceful events, Winying's mother-in-law immediately commits suicide because she feels ashamed about Winying's alleged infidelity. Deeply shocked by her mother-in-law's sudden death, Winying proceeds to drown herself in order to clear her own name.

> She [Winying in *Victory*] should not have committed suicide, because she did nothing wrong. Her mother-in-law's suicide is unreasonable or even ridiculous to me. Winying didn't have an affair with Chitian [Ikeda in Japanese, a Japanese military officer in the film]. Even if she had, her mother-in-law had no business to commit suicide. (F2: Daughter, aged 18)

> As far I am concerned, she [Winying in *Victory*] seems to be a plausible yet improbable figure. She acts like a saint, sacrificing herself for her family, pupils and others in the community. Yet how could she leave her young child untended and recklessly commit suicide? ... It's no wonder that others would suspect her of infidelity; she shouldn't have met Ikeda in private in the first place. (F2: Son, aged 16)

Viewers' varying interpretations also extend to the characters in the films. In this respect, gender plays an important part. The informants interviewed are emotionally charged with moral judgement towards the various characters of the two films. The male viewers identify with the male characters Juyong (in *Victory*), Wenqing and Wenxiong (in *City of Sadness*); but the female viewers are sympathetic to the female characters like Winying, Xiaohui (in *Victory*) and Kuanmei (in *City of Sadness*). Most strikingly, in the course of interviewing, viewers made no reference at all to the fact that the characters they were talking about were fictional and not 'real'. For example:

> He [Wenqing in *City of Sadness*] is somewhat alienated from his family and society. After all, he is a different sort of man from his father and brothers. A deaf-mute intellectual born into a gangster family, you know. No one, not even his wife [Kuanmei in *City of Sadness*], really understands him. ... He is weak but brave, for what he does requires moral courage. I would do what he does [i.e. in *City of Sadness*, Wenqing finances the forces opposing the KMT troops and comforts the victims' families] under the same circumstances. (F18: Father, Hokkien, aged 49)

> I'm particularly sympathetic to her [Kuanmei in *City of Sadness*]. She is never consulted in any situation but has to endure all the painful consequences caused by her brother's and her husband's 'resistance' to the KMT. If I were her, I would persuade Wenqing not to get involved in politics; after all, you cannot fight the KMT troops with bare hands. (F15: Mother, Hakka, aged 44)

> She [Xiaohui in *Victory*] pretends not to have fallen in love with Juyong. But in fact, I know she cares for Juyong in her heart. What a pity that Juyong is too insensitive to feel her love. (F6: Mother, 'Mainlander', aged 49)

> Juguang [in *Victory*] unforgivably develops a romantic relationship with a Chinese girl in the mainland while Wenying is left alone to take care of the family in Taiwan. Many businessmen who invest in the mainland are just like that. [The informant refers here to some of the Taiwanese businessmen who invest in the Chinese mainland and have mistresses there]. (F10: Mother, Hokkien, aged 42)

As instanced above, a variety of interpretative frames employed by viewers to interpret the films were always at work and sometimes at war. Reflecting their differences in ethnic background, generation and gender, viewers within a family made divergent readings in relation to the films. Furthermore, a particular viewer might read a film in ways which were *prima facie* contradictory. For example, the father read *City of Sadness* in an oppositional manner but emotionally identified with the main characters of the film. By contrast, the mother's reading of the significance of the events in *City of Sadness* was close to the 'preferred reading position' as intended in the narrative of the film. Yet she particularly felt sympathetic to the female characters and was not happy with how the Taiwanese women had suffered in the traditionally paternalistic Taiwan society. Nevertheless, this did not prevent viewers from reaching a range of consensual interpretations of the films. Some aspects of the textual meaning (denotative or connotative) could still be shared through television talk among the family viewers. This point is substantiated by that fact that the family members affirmed a commonly shared 'identity' in relation to the 'nation' (as framed in their accounts of 'we in Taiwan',

'we Taiwanese', or 'new Taiwanese'),[3] despite all the other differences in their interpretations of the films.

### 9.1.3 The Evolution of Viewers' Interpretations of the Texts

This section traces the historical evolution of viewers' interpretations of the two films in order to reveal variations in their identifications with the nation. Janet Staiger suggests two methodologically complementary solutions to the question of the historical reception of films. The first employs the available historical evidence to resituate viewers' reception within the specific contexts in which films were produced and exhibited; the second is to undertake an interview with members of the current audience who had viewed the films in previous periods (Staiger, 1992: 87). Thus, in Chapter 7, by means of some historical information and public discourse related to the films, I examined both the representation and reception of the two films in their respective historical contexts. Here I will apply the second approach.

Bound by the historical contexts in which they were respectively produced, *Victory* and *City of Sadness* offer competing versions of the national past available to the viewing population. It is intriguing to explore how an audience might, in different socio-political contexts, perceive the two films. Differently put, the analysis is not only concerned with how audience members perceive the films differently, but also with 'how people through the struggle over memory experience the presentness of the past' (Walkowitz, 1998: 56). This *struggle* leads to the different ways in which viewers position themselves vis-à-vis a given text. As the snapshot offered below shows, they shift their positions from moment to moment.

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[3] As indicated earlier in the thesis, 'national identity' is taken in this thesis to mean 'an abstract collectivity' or 'a specific form of collective identity'(see 2.2.1 section 3 for a definition) with an emphasis on its fluid, discursive and relational character. Expressions such as 'We in Taiwan', 'We Taiwanese', or 'new Taiwanese' are indicative of an emerging collective identity which is still in the process of discursive construction. It should also be explained here that this identity is not necessarily a 'national' identity, if the term 'national' is to be associated with the desire to establish (or the establishment of) a *de jure* independent Taiwanese state. Yet, I am hesitant to characterize this identity as a 'post-national' identity devoid of nationalist implications because it is an identity made possible by the interpenetration of Chinese nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism.

*(1) 'Everyone watched it, so did I': conformist viewers*

Most parents reported that they had seen the films when they were first released in 1976 and 1989. It is intriguing to ask why they viewed these films in the first place. It seems that there was a detectable need for them to engage with the national social life through viewing these films. For example, in response to a question about this, many answered in ways similar to the reply of a 'Mainlander' woman:

> I don't know. *Everyone watched it, so did I.* ...You just went to see the films. ... Everyone you knew was talking about these films, as if they were worth viewing. As for *Victory*, Chiang Ching-kuo [Chiang Kai-shek's son, then premier] recommended that people should see the film. Singers in the variety shows sang its theme song. I remember, correct me if I am wrong, a military march was even adapted from it. ... As for *City of Sadness*, it soon achieved prominence. Newspapers talked of it being Taiwan's pride. It gained an international award before its release in Taiwan. It soon became a required movie for viewing. One couldn't wait to view how good it actually was. (F11: Mother, 'Mainlander', aged 52, Italics added)

*(2) 'But Taiwan has changed': reflexive viewers*

Regardless of gender, many parents admitted that they had wept or witnessed others who were weeping when they first saw *City of Sadness* and/or *Victory*. However, at the time when the interviews were undertaken, they tended to distance themselves from the film(s) while still justifying their earlier acceptance of, or resistance to, the film(s):

> Few people did not weep when they saw the film [*Victory*] at that time. *But Taiwan has changed now*; ...the film only makes me laugh today. It's full of KMT propaganda, which no one would believe as much as it was believed in the 1970s. It's hard for one who did not live through those years to imagine how the film could possibly move the viewers. It touched the right chord! At that time, people just needed patriotic films to lift their spirits when Taiwan was faced by a demoralising reality as well as an uncertain future. (F10: Mother, Hakka, aged 45, italics added)

> I saw both films when they were released. To be honest, I was bored by them. But I never saw either film afterwards. I didn't want to. Above all, both films were heavily invested with extreme political ideologies. While *Victory* is ridiculous in every respect, *City of Sadness* makes you feel psychologically burdened. I admit that *City of Sadness* is of artistic value, but I'd rather see Hollywood movies, which are more entertaining. (F5: Father, 'Mainlander', aged 46)

These memories related to the historical period in which the narratives of the films were set and which shaped and re-shaped their attitudes toward the films. Their memories

about the national past, transferred from the last generation before them, served to counter the narratives embedded in the films. For those who were convinced that they knew about the past as it actually was, through the exercise of a 'reality check' on the historical details as represented in the films they were capable of subversive decoding:

> Amid the February 28 Incident of 1947, my uncle 'disappeared' after he was arrested by the KMT soldiers. Just like Wenqing [the main character in the film]. Even today no one knows where he is buried. Those who survived the Incident suffered as much as those were killed. Every time my uncle was mentioned, my father was filled with anger. He refused to learn Mandarin and never trusted 'Mainlanders' throughout his life. *City of Sadness* did belated justice to what my uncle, my father, and his contemporaries had suffered. But *City of Sadness* should have made their sufferings more explicit if it wanted to tell the historical truth. We cannot blame *City of Sadness* for that. Above all, it was made in 1989, when the KMT government was still authoritarian and tried to cover things up. Now we should have another film which speaks out on the subject more honestly than *City of Sadness*. (F19: Father, Hokkien, aged 52)

> The story of *Victory* was entirely made up. The ['native'] Taiwanese did not act, dress or talk like that during the 1940s. All the characters except Juyong were more like 'Mainlanders'. The film made us believe that these characters were ['native'] Taiwanese who collaborated with the KMT government, fighting for the latter's nationalist cause. Nothing like that ever happened in Taiwan! So the film dared not show us where the events took place. Throughout the film, the alleged patriotic village was unnamed! (F16: Father, Hokkien, aged 53)

Compared with their early encounters with the films under study, there was a shift in viewers' attitudes toward the films. In general, all of the viewers modified and/or moderated their previous responses. In particular, viewers who had previously favoured *Victory* proved to be more critical of the film; and those who had once negated *City of Sadness* became more sympathetic. Most strikingly, viewers seemed to be capable of adapting themselves to the change of political climate in Taiwan, as revealed in the discrepancies between their earlier and later attitudes to the films:

> With the government's seal of approval, it was no time before *Victory* became popular. Just like its predecessors such as *Everlasting Glory*, *Victory* praised patriotic sentiment and was thus endorsed by the government. Its soundtrack [a song entitled *Mei-hua*, written by the film's director] was played excessively on television and the radio. Everyone I knew could sing the song. I can still sing it today! Can you? ... You can say we felt empowered by the film at that time. (F18: Father, Hokkien, aged 49)

> I heard that the government once attempted to ban the film [*City of Sadness*] from being shown. It turned out that the government did not take that excessive action. This prompted me to watch the film when it was on release. I wanted to know how the film dealt with the February 28 Incident of 1947, which was compared to the Tiananmen Square Massacre by the press. I was disappointed, however. The film did not say much about the Incident itself. To be fair to the film, it did contribute to the public discussion of the Incident, as a flood of relevant information came to light thanks to the film's release. On its release, you could feel that a great transformation took place in Taiwan. I mean, Taiwan was no longer enclosed by the KMT's ideological dogma as it was in earlier times. (F13: Mother, Hokkien, aged 46)

> I was reluctant to see the film when it was on release in 1989. I was told it was about the February 28 Incident of 1947 in which the Taiwanese were killed by Mainlanders. You know, a Mainlander like me would not be too happy about such a film. When I did see the film some years later, it was not as bad as I had previously thought. To be sure, the past, however unpleasant, needs to be remembered. Having said that, the Taiwanese need to leave their sense of suffering aside and should not revenge themselves on the Mainlanders. (F6: Father, 'Mainlander', aged 54)

*(3)'My interest in Taiwan's past has been increased': purposive viewers*

For various reasons, many of the parents interviewed turned down my offer to leave the films on video for them to view at full length. This was partly because of their limited time, but also because they reported some dissatisfaction with one or both of the films, usually because of ethnic considerations. In general, the children showed a greater interest than their parents in the films, especially *City of Sadness*.

About half of the young informants had not previously seen *City of Sadness*. They were keen to retain the videotape in order to view the whole film. One young viewer responded to my offer, 'it's nice to view it at full length. *My interest in Taiwan's past has been increased*' (F11: Daughter, aged 19, italics added). Others responded in similar ways: 'we should know more about what happened to this piece of land [Taiwan]' (F16: Son, Hokkien, aged 21). With the past being more remote from their own personal experiences, the young viewers seemed more open to the films' representation of the past. However, they were also more media-conscious insofar as they considered the films as just one of many sources that enabled them to formulate their own interpretations of the past. About half of the young viewers had viewed *City of Sadness* before interviewing. They generally acknowledged the artistic and historical value of

this film, but they showed little interest in keeping the video for re-viewing. They declined to accept the offer because 'It's too long' (F5: Daughter, aged 18) or 'It's a good film but you'll feel sad after viewing it' (F8: Son, Hakka, aged 19). However, the film was considered by young people to be worth recommending for others to view on the grounds that 'it brings *our* past back' (F1: Son, 'Mainlander', aged 19).

The case of *Victory* was different. None of the young informants had ever viewed the film before interviewing. When the video was shown to them, they did not find it entertaining. For various reasons, including their lack of familiarity with the actors and actresses, they tended to distance themselves from the film. For example, during the co-viewing session young viewers made comments such as 'This film is so old-fashioned that my generation would not pay to watch it' (F7: Daughter, aged 18). One young viewer sang its theme song but mischievously changed its lyrics: '*Mei-hua, mei-hua...* it's *not* my national flower' (F12: Son, Hakka, aged 18). Many of the young viewers declined the offer to keep the video so they could watch the whole film. However, some were mere positive: 'I want to know what a policy film of the 1970s was like' (F3: Daughter, aged 18), 'I like to get a sense of the times in which my parent grew up' (F13: Daughter, Hokkien, aged 18).

## 9.2 Taiwanese Identity and Its Hybrid forms

Having illustrated the complex interactions between media representation and audience reception, the following analysis examines how the informants locate themselves in regard to the question of national identity. It is clear from the informants' verbal accounts that their sense of national identity is at once ambivalent and dynamic. It is ambivalent in the sense that it is characterised by a mixture of contradictory feelings between being Chinese and being Taiwanese. The sense of national identity held by the informants is ambivalent in the sense that they simultaneously have, in varying degrees, a double national consciousness. The peculiar sense of national identity inhabits two (lived and/or imagined) 'homelands': on the one hand, Taiwan is home to them and more than merely a province (of China); on the other hand, the Chinese mainland is the place with which they maintain a close sentimental link. It is also dynamic, marked by continuous social change, political action and geopolitical conjunctures. Despite hybrid modes of identifications with the national community, the identity to which informants

have subscribed can be summed as 'Taiwan-centred identity'. In what follows I will first map this hybrid form of national identity and then consider the extent to which the informants actually exhibit this double consciousness.

In the interviews for the present research, a higher proportion of informants (virtually all of the parents and some of the youngsters) more or less identified themselves as 'both Taiwanese and Chinese'. I do not wish to generalise this high degree of Taiwan-centred identity to the whole of the Taiwanese population. As shown in the systemic opinion polls conducted by pollsters since the early 1990s, at least 32.7 per cent and at most 49.9 per cent of the Taiwanese people have identified themselves as 'both Taiwanese and Chinese'. Those identifying themselves as 'Chinese only' range from 10.1 per cent to 48.5 per cent, and generally this response has declined in frequency. Those identifying themselves as 'Taiwanese only' range from 16.7 per cent to 45 per cent, and this response has increased in frequency.[4]

This Taiwan-centred identity has continuously influenced the Taiwanese people as they have had to cope with the realities unfolding around them. Many of them have a more massive fund of personal knowledge about the Chinese mainland than other places, including Taiwan. Nevertheless, such identification is not equal to the narrowly defined 'hybridised identity' in the sense that the component identities are no longer distinguishable and have equal weight. That is to say, although the Chinese mainland has never been relegated to a place to which they feel indifferent, a sense of belonging to Taiwan as a political community has increasingly been placed at the heart of national identity. The hybrid character of national identity in Taiwan has thus remained strong, but the priorities and hierarchies of the two (or more) component identities have constantly been rearranged. For some young informants, this is particularly true, as they have given priority to their Taiwanese identity, favouring the self in relation to Taiwan over the self in relation to China.

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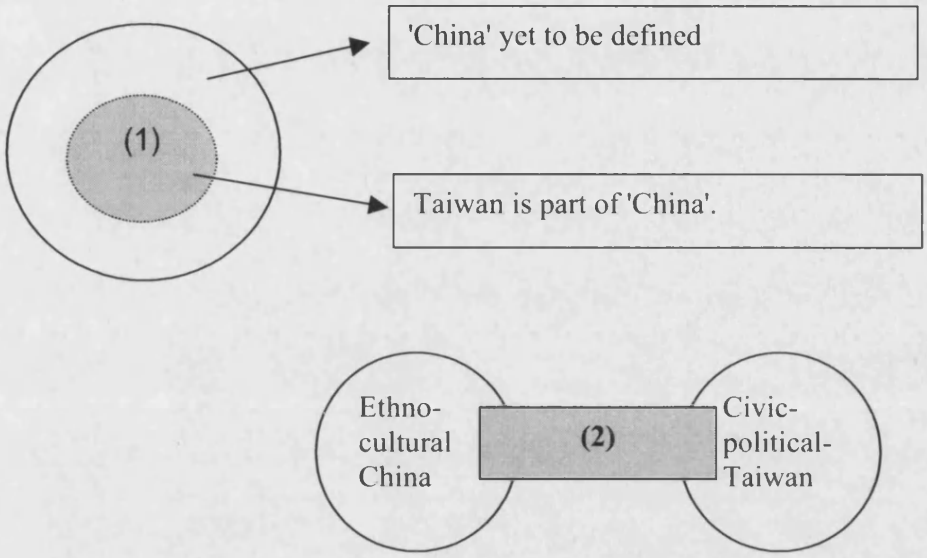
[4] Mainland Affairs Council (April 2000). Retrieved November 21 2000 from http://www.mac.gov.tw/mlpolicy/pos/p8905c_1.htm. In broader terms, the present analysis suggests that a higher proportion of people identify themselves as 'both Taiwanese and Chinese' than has been suggested by previous polls. There are various explanations for this discrepancy. My sample is small (with a total of 62 individuals) and there might also be a geographical bias (all the interviewed families are residents in Sanchong, Taipei). However, previous polls may also have had some limitations, for example because all but one of them were conducted by telephone rather than by in-depth interviews. Such telephone surveys allow little room for the audience's open interpretations.

At the analytical level, Taiwan-centred identity can be differentiated into two types (see Figure 9.1). The numbers in the Figure correspond to areas in which Taiwan-centred identity may be located.




**Type (1)** applies to those 11 out of 62 in the sample: F1 (father, mother), F2 (father), F3 father), F4 (father), F6 (father, mother), F7 (mother), F9 (father, mother), F12 (father).

**Type (2)** applies to the majority of the sample (44 out of 62): for example, F2 (mother, son, daughter), F4 (son), F5 (Father, mother, daughter), F7 (daughter), F8 (son), F9 (son), F10 (mother), F11 (father, mother, daughter), F12 (son), F13 (father, mother), F15 (Mother), F16 (father, mother, and two sons), F17 (father, mother), F18 (father, mother), F19 (father, mother).

**Exceptions to both types**: Informants who identify themselves as 'Taiwanese only' and reject Chinese identity in both the cultural and political senses (7 out of 62), including F10 (daughter), F13 (daughter, son), F14 (daughter), F17 (son), F19 (son, daughter).

**Figure 9.1: Mapping Taiwan-centred identity.**

Type (1) in the Figure 9.1 represents a sense of Taiwan being part of China, although what is meant by 'China' and 'Taiwan' to the informants is largely undetermined. (What is clear is that Taiwan is more than the place where they live.) Informants who possess this kind of Taiwan-centred identity hold that Taiwan should eventually re-unite with the Chinese mainland. But, for them, the pursuit of a *de jure* independent Taiwan is no

option for a variety of reasons. Moreover, re-unification should be realised on 'our' terms, e.g. China must be a democracy devoid of communist dictatorship.

Type (2) represents a 'third space' between a China in the ethno-cultural sense and a Taiwan in the political-civic sense. Informants who possess this kind of Taiwan-centred identity tend to see Taiwan as a *de facto* independent state. They are open to the options of both *de jure* independence and re-unification with the Chinese mainland. This second type of Taiwan-centred identity is more hybridised than the first type. On the one hand, it has a more clearly defined boundary between what is meant by 'China' and what is meant by 'Taiwan'. On the other hand, it remains open to the further development of meanings afforded by this 'third space'.

For informants whose sense of national identity is akin to either type (1) or type (2), the consensus they nevertheless share is the maintenance of the status quo, which is seen to be in the interest of Taiwan. At the empirical level, their differentiated subscription to a Taiwan-centred identity suggests the intersection of various interpretative resources/frames associated with social positional factors among which ethnicity and generation are most manifest. Both ethnicity and generation, as will be illustrated below, structure informants' sense of national identities to varying degrees. By comparison, gender seems to be of less significance.

*(1) Differences between ethnic groups*

First and foremost, ethnic background is an important interpretative resource in relation to one's sense of national identity in Taiwan. Taiwan's population is divided into two broadly defined ethnic categories, namely, the 'Mainlanders' and the 'native Taiwanese'. The terms 'Mainlanders' normally refers to the Chinese immigrants (and their offspring) who followed Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime into Taiwan between 1945 and 1949. The term 'native Taiwanese' refers to people of Hokkien and Hakka origins (whose ancestors settled in the island for centuries). It should be noted that such a

categorisation of ethnicity is problematic and artificial.[5] Yet, despite a decline in its significance, the categorisation of ethnicity retains much of its social importance with regard to popular attitudes toward the issue of Taiwan's present and future relations with China.

**'Mainlander' families:** Taiwan-centred identity is less prevalent in some of the mainland-born 'Mainlanders' over the age of 50, many of whom have come to feel threatened by the rapidly advancing Taiwanese consciousness in contemporary Taiwanese society. As one 'Mainlander' woman remarked, 'I think we're Chinese and Taiwanese at the same time. ... They [native] Taiwanese [here, she refers to the Hokkien-speaking Taiwanese] used to call us Mainlanders and did not see us as *Taiwanren*' (F7: Mother, 'Mainlander', aged 47). In a similar vein, another 'Mainlander' father protested, 'the native Taiwanese call us Mainlanders, while people on the mainland call us *Taibao* [literally, 'Taiwanese compatriots'] on our visit to the mainland. We are not treated as locals everywhere' (F6: Father, 'Mainlander', aged 54). His wife (F6: Mother, 'Mainlander', aged 49) readily agreed with him.

Some of the 'Mainlander' parents also strongly oppose the idea of Taiwan declaring formal independence from China. Not only do they fear a Chinese invasion, but they also consider the loss of Chinese identity to be quite unacceptable. They hold an ambivalent attitude toward their identities of being Chinese and Taiwanese. The different ways in which they employ the term Taiwanese is also worthy of note: the same person talked of 'we Taiwanese' and 'they Taiwanese' at the same time. As one 'Mainlander' father said to the interviewer:

> They [native] Taiwanese are unrealistic, dreaming about Taiwan independence. As soon as Taiwan declares independence, the Chinese Communists will attack Taiwan. We will all be killed! The Taiwanese nationalists can go to the United States but we have only the sea to jump into. ... Unification is not at all bad as long as we insist on not uniting with the mainland right now. ... You see, sooner or later China will certainly

[5] As was suggested at the beginning of the thesis (see Note on Romanisation and Terminology), like the 'Mainlander' group, the Hakka and Hokkien groups are of Chinese descent. The Hakka do not share 'a mother tongue' with the Hokkien. As for the aborigines, they have nothing in common with the other 'Taiwanese' groups (the Hakka and Hokkien) in terms of descent ties, ethnic tradition and mother-tongue languages. The conventionally defined ethnic category of 'Mainlander' is even more problematic. 'Mainlanders' came to Taiwan from vastly different parts of the Chinese mainland. Moreover, most 'Mainlanders" in contemporary Taiwan, including the 'Mainlander' informants under study, are themselves second-generation immigrants. They were born and/or reared in Taiwan rather than in the mainland itself.

> become a superpower that can match the United States. At the end of the day, Taiwan and the mainland will be re-united. Why do we refuse to be great *Zhongguoren* [literally, 'Chinese'] and insist on being little Taiwanese? We Taiwanese should not be so short-sighted. As the Chinese saying goes, 'Don't stand against your destiny'. (F2: Father, 'Mainlander', aged 54)

This informant's wife added, 'Great or not, it is wise to maintain the status quo: no independence and no unification. Then, we can have the best of both worlds: being Taiwanese and Chinese' (F2: Mother, Hakka, aged 49).

However, there are exceptions. For example, one father of 'Mainlander' origin (himself a second-generation 'Mainlander') recalled his experience of returning to the mainland years ago. During his stay in the hometown where his father lived before the Communist take-over of the Chinese mainland, he sensed many differences between Taiwan and Mainland China. The excitement of meeting relatives turned sour as he found that there was a gap between them in terms of social values, moral judgement, and alike. He said to the interviewer that 'they are too greedy, always requesting more [money] from us'. This trip became a journey of self-discovery: 'during my two-week stay with many relatives there, I realised that we are of common ancestry, but fortunately of different citizenship. I told myself at that time, "Anyway, I will be *home* [Taiwan] soon." ... And, I like things to be kept like that' (F5: Father, 'Mainlander', aged 46).

**'Native Taiwanese' families:** Many parents in the 'native Taiwanese' families are also anxious about a possible Chinese invasion if Taiwan declares its independence. Nevertheless, they consider this issue in a variety of ways. Two of them are worried because 'we justify it as long as we dare not tell the international society that Taiwan is already an independent state' (F13: Father, Hokkien, aged 48) and 'our government still says that we want to be united with the mainland. In so doing, we're committing political suicide' (F18: Mother, Hakka, aged 48). This does not mean that the non-'Mainlander' parents do not accept their Chinese identity. A typical response in the discussions was: 'I'm first and foremost *Taiwanren*. But I'm also *Zhongguoren*.' Meanwhile, some parents are more reflexive when identifying themselves as such. For instance:

> Being educated under the KMT and bombarded by its media, I found it difficult not to associate myself with Chinese identity. I cannot declare that I am no longer *Zhongguoren* [literally, 'Chinese'] from now on. ... However,

> if my memory serves me, my parents never called themselves *Zhongguoren.* ... They did not speak Mandarin at all ... throughout their lives. They felt themselves sentimentally closer to Japan than the mainland. (F9: Father, Hakka, aged 51)

In response to the question of whether they preferred to call themselves *Taiwanren* or *Zhongguoren*, almost all of the informants immediately had a lively or even contentious discussion on the subject. The discussion swiftly moved to the issue of 'unification versus independence' without any follow-up probes, as is exemplified in the debate among the members of a 'native Taiwanese' family of Hokkien origin (F16):

> **The interviewer:** Do you see yourself as Chinese or Taiwanese?
>
> **Father:** I'm really bored by the debate over 'unification' and 'independence'. The same issue has been debated on television for many years. Of course, I'm *Taiwanren.* The ongoing debate over 'unification versus independence' seems unnecessary to me. Taiwan has been separated from the mainland for a century. There is already an independent Taiwan!
>
> **Mother:** No. This is nothing but self-deceit. We [*sic*] still bear the name of the Republic of China, which does not exist in the international system.
>
> **Father:** Who says it doesn't exist? Whatever it is called, we nevertheless have a country of our own. Besides, nearly 30 countries still diplomatically recognise us regardless of pressures from China.
>
> **Mother:** That doesn't work. They are all small nations of little importance.
>
> **Son** (aged 21)**:** We have spent lots of money buying their diplomatic recognition. ... Our government should spend that money in developing our own economy. ...
>
> **Son** (aged 18)**:** Sooner or later we should change the official name of our country from ROC to the Republic of Taiwan.
>
> **Mother:** It's of no use. No country will recognise us.
>
> **Father:** At least those who currently recognise us will do so.
>
> **Mother:** So it is completely unnecessary to rename our country as the Republic of Taiwan since the number of countries recognising us will not increase.
>
> **Father:** What matters even if no country recognises us is that we still have a country of our own. I still carry the ROC passport when I travel around the world.
>
> **Mother:** It matters.
>
> **Son** (aged 21)**:** Don't forget China will certainly invade Taiwan if we go for the Republic of Taiwan.
>
> **Father:** Indeed, China always reacts unreasonably. If they can kill their own students in Tiananmen Square, they will never be soft on us.

**Mother:** That's exactly why I don't support the idea of declaring Taiwan's formal independence.

**Son** (aged 18)**:** It seems that the maintenance of the status quo is the best choice for now. Above all, what matters is that we can go on being *Taiwanren* without taking any risk of war.

*(2) Differences between generations*

Generation provides an interpretative frame that is particularly sensitive to the passage of time. While the young generation tends to separate citizenship from ethnic origins, parents seem to have a more ambiguous national identity. To some extent, parents, regardless of their gender, possess a stronger sense of what I have referred to as 'Taiwan-centred identity'. They maintain a sentimental link with the Chinese mainland, although they see themselves as Taiwanese citizens. Young informants, regardless of their gender and family ethnic backgrounds, see themselves as less 'Chinese' than the generation of their parents.

The following exchange of opinions among the informants in one family (F19) exemplifies how the sense of national identity is negotiated between generations. It is clear from their verbal accounts that the media do have an impact on national identity.

**Father:** My parents used to call the Mainlanders 'A-San' [translated from Hokkien, literally 'people from Tang Mountain']. 'Tang Mountain' was what they used to call the mainland. ...

**Mother:** 'Tang Mountain' refers to the Chinese mainland, as opposed to Taiwan, an island [on the sea].

**Father:** Possibly. I'm curious what my parents would call themselves. Certainly not *A-San*, though our ancestors were also from the mainland.

**Daughter:** How many generations have we been here?

**Father:** I'm probably the 10th generation since our ancestors came from the mainland to Taiwan. And you are the 11th.

**Son:** We think we're *Zhongguoren* but actually we're not. The paper we read is called the *China Times*. The television we watch is called the China Television Company (CTV). That's why we take it for granted. ...

**Daughter:** And the media still call China 'the mainland' rather than 'China', as if Taiwan was part of China.

**Son:** China or not, I'd rather call myself *Taiwanren.*

**Mother:** Or *Shin-Taiwanren* ['New Taiwanese'], perhaps? You may not know [speaking to the interviewer] that that's the media's buzzword, coined by President Lee Teng-hui during last year's election.

> **Daughter:** Absolutely. We should stop calling ourselves *Zhongguoren*. We should learn from my Malaysian classmate, who is studying with us as an overseas Chinese student. She does not call herself *Zhongguoren* but *Huaren* [a broader term than 'Chinese'; it refers to those who are Chinese by descent but who do not necessarily have Chinese citizenship] instead. Equally, we Taiwanese are *Huaren*, rather than *Zhongguoren*, because the latter only refers to citizens of the PRC.

Among all the viewers, the sense of being Taiwanese is growing. But this is more evident in the young generation than their parents. The phrase 'we Chinese' still came out somewhat unconsciously, from time to time, in the parents' talk when they were interviewed. The young people, on the contrary, seemed to use the phrase 'We Chinese' far less frequently.

However, with respect to matters of political significance, the majority of them used the phrase 'we Chinese' with qualifications and quite consciously. The young people asserted that they are less 'Chinese' than their parents: 'the idea that Taiwan must be re-united with China belongs to the older generation' (F4: Son, 'Mainlander', aged 19), and 'I'm Chinese by birth but Taiwanese by choice' (F9: Son, 'Taiwanese', aged 19). The sense of national identity remains bound up with aspects of ethnicity and citizenship, but there is a general trend for young people to lay a greater emphasis on the latter. On the one hand, the youngsters who were interviewed dismissed the significance of ethnic differences in their everyday lives. On the other hand, they seemed to see themselves as 'Chinese' in general ethnic and cultural terms while distancing themselves from the other people of Chinese descent outside Taiwan. Some young informants made this explicit by saying: 'We live here, they don't. We're Taiwanese of Chinese descent, just like Singaporeans who are only Chinese in blood' (F12: Son, aged 18), or 'I might be called a second- or third-generation "Mainlander", but I'd like to see myself as a first-generation "Taiwanese"' (F2: Daughter, 'Mainlander', aged 18).

## 9.3 THE TAIWANESE STRUCTURE OF FEELING: TIME-PLACE SENSIBILITIES

The section draws together the findings gained from this and previous chapters to discuss the text-reader intersection from a broader perspective. Moving forward from seeking to understand how an audience interprets a particular text, in what follows I will

consider the reciprocal circularity between encoding and decoding, as summarised in Figure 5.1.

There seems to be a certain degree of correspondence between the spatio-temporal attributes of Taiwan's television serial dramas as a whole and the Taiwan-centred identity held by the audience. This correspondence may be merely coincidental. But I wish to argue for their interrelation by proposing the concept of the 'time-place sensibilities'. Before clarifying this concept, I will first evoke another concept, that of the 'structure of feeling', which was originally developed as early as 1954 by Raymond Williams in an analysis of dramatic texts (Eldridge and Eldridge, 1994). Williams introduced this concept in an attempt to go beyond orthodox Marxist cultural analysis and its separation of base and superstructure (Higgins, 1999; Wallis, 1993). For him, the structure of feeling that defines dramatic conventions is 'widely experienced' as 'living processes' (Williams, 1977: 133)

The structure of feeling manifested in dramatic conventions 'covers both *tacit consent* and *accepted standards*' (Williams and Orrom, 1954: 15, emphasis in the original), and the very existence of these conventions suggests a close interrelation between the text and the audience in a given society. As Williams argues, 'the dramatic conventions of any given period are fundamentally related to the structure of feeling in that period' (Williams and Orrom, 1954: 21). For him, a structure of feeling is 'a social experience which is still *in process*' (Williams, 1977: 132, emphasis in the original).

As Eagleton elaborates, the structure of feeling as a concept mediates 'between an historical set of social relations, the general cultural and ideological modes appropriate to them, and the specific forms of subjectivity (embodied not least in artefacts) in which such modes are lived out' (Eagleton, 1996: 110). It is this interrelation that Williams attempts to characterise by the term 'structure of feeling':

> It is as firm and definite as 'structure' suggests, yet it is based in the deepest and often least tangible elements of our experience. It is a way of responding to a particular world which in practice is not felt as one way among others – a conscious 'way' – but is, in experience, the only way possible. ... It is accessible to others ... [by] a form and a meaning, a feeling and a rhythm – in the work of art, the play, as a whole. (Williams, 1987: 10)

How can the television dramas with a lasting pattern in terms of their temporal and spatial attributes (as analysed in Chapter 6) and the contrasting cinematic

representations of 1940s Taiwan (as analysed in Chapter 7) be related to a specific form of social consciousness ('Taiwan-centred identity')? It seems that this identity cannot be separated from the banality of nationhood as represented in the media, which constitutes a map by which people locate/identify themselves. Edward Shils highlights the importance of one's image of the world in foregrounding one's distinct identity:

> Every person has a 'map' in his [*sic*] head. It is a more or less vague image of the 'world' which is significant to him. It is one of the ways in which he 'locates' himself; it helps him to establish his own essential quality by contrast and identity which with the objects of *his* environment. It is a cognitive map but it is not an emotionally neutral matter. It is a map which not only classifies but locates in a spatial sense. (Shils, 1972: 356, emphasis the original)

Informed by Williams's 'structure of feeling' and Shils's map metaphor, I wish to propose a focused concept of 'time-place sensibilities', a peculiar form of 'structure of feeling' which has been embodied and experienced in the process of cultural reproduction (production and consumption) throughout Taiwan's television age. The concept of 'time-place sensibilities' originates from our empirical analysis of Taiwan's television dramas, and helps us to account for categories of similarities and differences that relate media representation to the perceptions of national identity. By 'time-place sensibilities' I refer to a multiple sense of feeling structured along the lines of time and place, one which is associated with the ideas of national territory ('homeland') as well as national past ('history'). The concept is of particular relevance to the idea of national identity because a certain sense of past/place (time/space) is required to form historical consciousness of, and geographical attachment to, the imagined national community (Friedman, 1994: 142; MacCormick, 1999:193).

To be sure, the time-place sensibilities one possesses have gained from, and been mediated by, multiple sources ranging from formal pedagogy to lived experience and media exposure. They can be roughly divided, along the axes of time and space, into four types as indicated in Figure 6.1, but I have modified this representation into a new Figure (i.e., Figure 9.2) on the basis of my analysis of television serial dramas in terms of their temporal and spatial attributes.

Considering the longstanding structure of Taiwan's television representation, and using the concept of the time-place sensibilities analytically, it can be assumed that the marked area of Figure 9.2 is perhaps shared by the informants and the majority of the

Taiwan-born people. They are relatively poor in Types II and III sensibilities as opposed to their relative richness in Type I and Type IV sensibilities. However, the distribution of time-place sensibilities varies in practice from person to person and is uneven among individuals who occupy different social positions (e.g. in terms of ethnicity, gender, generation, class, etc.). The temporary balance, at a given point in time, of one's own time-place sensibilities is subject to a constant reorganisation. As John Thompson points out, mediated experience is gaining momentum – though lived experience remains fundamental – in the process of self-formation (Thompson, 1995: 233). Against the background of a media-saturated environment, time-place sensibilities are related more closely than ever to the television-mediated experience. The televised stories about places and places beyond are important, as Thrift argues, since 'first of all, they tell us which places and people we belong to and care about or, to put it another way, which community (or communities) we can claim to be a part of. Second, they tell us whether and how we care about other places and people' (Thrift, 1997: 164). Needless to say, television has been one of the key spaces in which stories about China and Taiwan have been frequently told to the Taiwanese people.

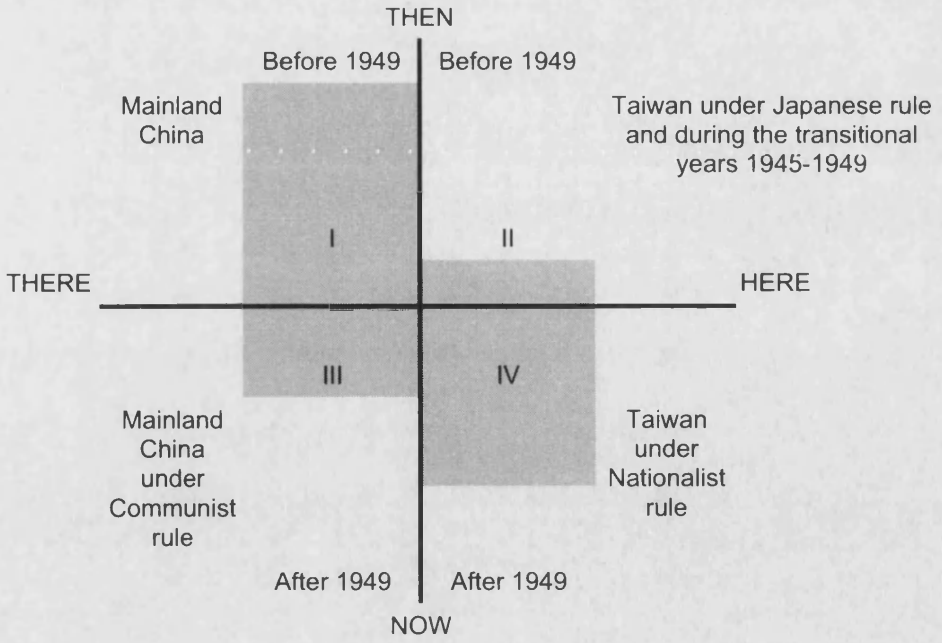



**Figure 9.2: The time-place sensibilities (in relation to national identity)**

The possession of time-place sensibilities does not necessarily have to accord with one's class position; nor is it hierarchically distributed. The concept of time-place sensibilities is close to what has been called 'cultural cognition' (Hoijer and Werner, 1998), which refers to the socially shared activities in which audience members make sense of themselves, the media, and the world where they inhabit. This is also closely related to an area of concern cutting across the line between the 'public knowledge project' and 'the popular culture project' proposed by John Corner (Corner, 1991: 268).[6] The concept of time-place sensibilities is intended to blur the division of 'public knowledge' and 'popular culture' by embracing both the cognitive and affective dimensions. Analytically, therefore, time-place sensibilities can be further divided into two major patterns: cognitive time-place sensibilities and affective time-place sensibilities. In both patterns, the time-place sensibilities are socially possessed and performed.

We may further differentiate the concept. People's time-place sensibilities in relation to national identity are constituted along two conceptual axes: one axis represents the continuum from the collective to the personal; the other axis represents the continuum from the cognitive to the affective. This enables us to distinguish between four subcategories: (1) common knowledge about China/Taiwan; (2) common allegiance towards China/Taiwan; (3) personal knowledge about China/Taiwan; (4) personal allegiance towards China/Taiwan. Thus the concept of the time-place sensibilities is flexible enough to deal with contradictions and temporary priorities as illustrated by the ways in which the informants identified themselves with the hybrid range of Taiwan-centred identity. In short, these subcategories of time-place sensibilities may either reinforce or contradict one another, bur they ultimately suggest how members of Taiwanese society might subscribe to a particular sense of national identity.

This categorisation can be applied to the analysis of media representation. The media play a particularly important role in conveying common knowledge about, and developing a common allegiance towards, China/Taiwan. They thus reinforce the cognitive and affective dimensions of time-place sensibilities. As demonstrated in

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[6] Many have argued for the linkage between, rather than the separation of, journalism and popular culture (see, in particular, the chapters collected in Dahlgren and Sparks (1991). Some scholars have tried to take into account both dimensions: the aesthetic/affective aspects of television news and the cognitive dimension of television fictions (e.g. Liebes and Katz, 1990; Livingstone, 1988, 1991).

Chapter 7, *City of Sadness* is salient in conveying both a higher degree of 'common knowledge' and 'common allegiance' towards Taiwan than Mainland China, while *Victory* retains knowledge and allegiance towards the Chinese mainland.

The other subcategories of time-place sensibilities on the individual level may be termed 'personal knowledge' and 'personal allegiance'. By 'personal' I do not mean that these two subcategories of time-place sensibilities arise independently of the broadly defined media. But it is plausible to assume that there is a certain experience that is not addressed or articulated by the media on a regular basis (such as the idea of seeking Taiwan's *de jure* independent statehood). In short, the media may have the potential to encroach on the personal, but the two do not merge into one. This further differentiation of the time-place sensibilities has implications for national identity in relation to audience reception. For instance, as previously discussed in this chapter, some informants possess a great deal of historical knowledge about (Mainland) China but resist identifying with China politically; and some identify with Taiwan politically but at the same time feel unable to sever their sentimental attachment to China as the homeland.

To sum up, the media can be considered to have served as one of the principal vehicles for transmitting and structuring the interpretative resources, including the time-place sensibilities, among the audience members. The resulting distribution and possession of the time-place sensibilities among the audience members is uneven and is inevitably mediated by one's social positioning (e.g. in terms of ethnicity, gender and age). Likewise, one's possession of time-place sensibilities, in turn, affects one's reception of the mediated content. The time-place sensibilities, in constant interaction with one's social positioning, shape the ways in which the audience members make sense of a particular media text, which is itself already temporally and spatially structured. It is because of this ongoing and context-dependent text-reader interaction that one should take television's role in mediating national identity seriously.

## 9.4 CONCLUSION

The relationship of the viewers to the two popular texts under study (*Victory* and *City of Sadness*), each of which is heavily invested with nationalistic implications and with its own endorsed version of the national past, can be summarised as follows.

On the one hand, viewers are constrained as well as empowered by the texts and by the culture they share; thus they are capable of sharing the texts on the level of denotative meanings. The power of the media (text) should be stressed not on the grounds suggested by the dominant ideology thesis, but because it is the media (texts) which make available particular 'reading positions' among the possible infinite identifications and disseminate particular forms of knowledge/sentiments among the audience.

On the other hand, the audience are knowledgeable and resourceful agents who possess 'already-constituted cultural knowledges and competences which are drawn on at the moment of interpretation' (Moores, 1990: 14). They interpret the texts in various ways, not only by employing interpretative codes/frames from textual and extra-textual resources (Livingstone, 1998) but also by their ability to accommodate various interpretative codes/frames that are sometimes at variance with one another. As has also been emphasised in this chapter, viewers' relations with particular interpretative frames derived from social positional factors such as ethnic background are not fixed (for instance, a person of 'Mainlander' origin may still interpret *City of Sadness* with sympathy). Overall, in the course of interpreting a text, a viewer not only makes use of various interpretative frames, but also occasionally distances himself/herself from these and other interpretative frames. Of particular importance in this respect is the way in which the Taiwan-centred identity shared by the informants is socially structured and cultural mediated.

Based on the text-reader intersections analysed above, we have suggested that the media have provided commonly shared interpretative resources (e.g., the time-place sensibilities) in mediating between the double senses of national identity. Thus, the viewers' interpretations of the texts in question are always context-dependent. As we have seen in our discussion of the ideas of the hybrid yet centred Taiwanese identity and the time-place sensibilities, the intersection between media representation and audience interpretation has both shaped and been shaped by viewers' sense of national identity. In

the final chapter that follows, the discussion will move back to the general level by integrating all the empirical evidence and connecting it with the broader theoretical agenda.

# 10.

# Conclusion: Mediating National Identity

Having completed the empirical analyses, I now return to the key research question of how – if at all -- the media, in particular television and the cinema, have contributed to the formation of national identity in Taiwan. To answer this question satisfactorily, it is necessary to address the paradox raised at the beginning of this thesis, which is this: that despite two factors which might least be expected to favour it -- on the one hand, decades of top-down media control aimed at promoting a unified Chinese identity and, on the other, a high level of penetration of foreign programming by cable/satellite television -- a Taiwan-centred identity has effected a significant (re-) emergence and development.

In order to resolve this paradox, we need to consider the relationship between media and national identity as one of necessarily *conjunctural mediation* between media representations and audience receptions of nationhood. I adopt the idea of conjunctural mediation because it builds on the strengths of – but also goes beyond -- the diffusionist vs. constructivist (Sahlins, 1989), transmission vs. ritual (Carey, 1989), and powerful media vs. active audience approaches to the intersection of mass media and national identity. What is stressed here is that that these polarising views in the nationalism and communication literature should be considered as complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

In this chapter, a summary of the main empirical findings will be followed by a discussion of the nature and scope of the aforementioned paradox, and a consideration of why the dominant perspectives in the literature fail to resolve the paradox. With the empirical evidence in hand, we will then move forward to discuss how the idea of conjunctural mediation can overcome this explanatory barrier and help to clarify the role of the media, and television in particular, in shaping national identity in Taiwan. Finally, I will consider the implications of the thesis in terms of two broad concerns of

media studies: (1) the superiority of the 'mediation' model over the 'transmission' model; and (2) the importance of a media perspective within theories of nationalism and the analysis of national identity.

## 10.1 The Main Empirical Findings of the Study

*(1) The Prime-Time Television Serial Dramas*

The empirical analysis of television serial drama synopses between 1971 and 1996 suggests that Taiwan's television was characteristically *Chinese* (but not always *Chinese nationalist*) in terms of its spatial, temporal and linguistic attributes. There are two persistent patterns: (1) China as the centre and Taiwan as a periphery; (2) China with a long history and Taiwan with no pre-1949 (non-Chinese) history of its own. The quantitative analysis of the television serial drama synopses between 1971 and 1996 (see Chapter 6) found that Taiwan's television serial dramas gave priority to Mainland China over Taiwan itself. The presence of Mainland China – as measured by spatial and temporal attributes -- has persistently exceeded that of Taiwan in Taiwan's television serial dramas.

This China-oriented representation manifested in the prime-time television serial dramas was even more salient in relation to the political and educational institutions which under-represented the ethnic majority of Taiwan and marginalised local expressions. As I pointed out in Chapter 4, the KMT deliberately sought to promote Chinese nationalism, popularise a (unified) Chinese identity and suppress any separate Taiwanese identity, and therefore directly controlled all the terrestrial television channels, strictly enforcing a policy of 'Mainlanderisation', 'Mandarinisation' and 'fortification'. The vital importance of the media was tied to the *diasporic* character of the KMT regime, which fled to Taiwan after defeat by its communist rival in 1949 and sought to do everything it could to return to Mainland China. Everything about Mainland China was deliberately preserved in Taiwan by the KMT while Taiwan itself was relegated to a peripheral position in the KMT's conception of the nation. Sensitive traces of Taiwan's past, including Taiwan's colonial past under Japan (1895-1945) and the February 28 Incident of 1947, were rendered invisible in the public domain. The comprehensive dominance of the KMT in Taiwan's national life therefore constituted a

specific cultural geography by symbolically creating in Taiwan the *absent presence of China* as well as the *present absence of Taiwan* (see Section 1 of Chapter 7). For the purpose of promoting Chinese nationalism, very little of Taiwan's historical past (especially that before Taiwan became a refuge for the KMT in flight) has been represented on Taiwan's television.

*(2) Two 'nationalist' films*

Until 1989, in the rare cases where some traces of Taiwan's pasts were represented, they were made to fit neatly into the narrative of Chinese nationalism. As indicated in the textual analysis of two Taiwanese films in Chapter 7, the 1976 film *Victory* represented the KMT as the saviour ('hero' in the film narrative) who put an end to the Japanese rule under which the 'native Taiwanese' had suffered for half a century up to 1945. And throughout the narrative of the film *Victory*, the Taiwanese under Japanese colonial rule were represented as very patriotic towards the Chinese nation. People on both sides of the Taiwan Strait were represented as fighting hand-to-hand against their common enemy -- the Japanese (the 'villain' in the film narrative). The sameness between the 'Mainlanders' and the Taiwanese were emphasised, and Taiwanese identity was represented as naturally subordinate to Chinese identity. Not until 1989, after the lifting of martial law, did another film -- *City of Sadness* -- tell a different story. In that film, the incoming KMT was represented not as a *saviour* but as a *villain* who victimised the Taiwanese amid the February 28 Incident of 1947, whereas the departing Japanese were represented as much more like *friends* than *enemies* to the Taiwanese. Interestingly, though, while *City of Sadness* marked a notable shift in representations of the nation, we did not detect any such shift in the prime-time television serial dramas by 1996.

In many respects, the two films stand in stark contrast in terms of their construction of the nation: *Victory* is Chinese nationalist in character, whereas *City of Sadness* offers a counterpoint to the long sanctioned Chinese nationalist account of Taiwan's past. However, there are some similarities between the films: (1) both films create a boundary between 'us' and 'them', and exploit martyrdom to mobilise a nationalist sentiment; (2) they both seek to reconcile the existence of various cultures and diverse ethnic groups within Taiwan. As I argued in Chapter 7, both films sought to bond the nation in response to national crises that threatened Taiwan (in the 1970s and the late 1980s respectively). *Victory* attempted to incorporate the 'native Taiwanese' into the grand

narrative of Chinese nationalism, and called for solidarity at the moment of national crisis during the 1970s when Taiwan was at risk of losing its international status and identity. Similarly, *City of Sadness* incorporated 'Mainlanders' into Taiwanese identity and tried to make peace with the tortured past. By showing that 'Mainlanders' also suffered during the tragic Incident, *City of Sadness* functioned as a kind of mass therapy, calling for mutual understanding and tolerance of different ethnic groups at a time when Taiwan was embarking upon democratisation in the shadow of the Tiananmen Square Massacre in Mainland China. In their different ways both films helped to shape a shared sense of national identity in Taiwan.

*(3) Watching television and audience reception*

Through two waves of in-depth interviews with 19 nuclear families, I examined the ways in which the audience appropriated the quintessentially modern sense of nationhood. The examination concentrated on (1) viewers' past and present experiences with television; (2) viewers' interpretations of the two films in question. I provided evidence in Chapter 8 to underline the importance of television in bonding the nation together. The emergence of television as a nation-wide medium from the early 1970s was vitally important in forming a shared cultural experience for viewers dispersed in all corners of the island by connecting them with the public realm and the outside world. Central to the findings is that the shared viewing experience, particularly at times of national crisis, celebration and mourning, has deeply penetrated the viewers' collective memories, thereby giving rise to a knowable and communicable community for the Taiwanese people, who were previously divided, not least by the lack of a common language. In addition, as I argued in Chapter 8, terrestrial television has continued to play a key role in maintaining national identity in contemporary Taiwan. Despite a radical change in Taiwan's television landscape, television remains a 'domestic' (in both senses of the word) medium. The national and engaged audience has not yet been replaced by a fragmented audience.

The analysis in Chapter 9 showed that viewers are socially structured by the texts and the culture they share. They are able to share the texts on the level of denotative meanings. It is the media (texts) which make available particular 'reading positions' among the possible infinite identifications and which disseminate particular forms of knowledge/sentiments for the audience. However, we should not lose sight of the fact

that audience members are knowledgeable and resourceful agents who interpret media texts in various ways. To grasp the full meanings of the text-reader relationship, I have argued that a balanced position should be taken to avoid both textual determinism and sociological reductionism. Intersections among viewers' social positional factors (especially ethnic and generational background) were found to be important in structuring the audience's reception of the two films in question. However, when interpreting a text, viewers' relations with particular interpretative frames derived from social positional factors such as ethnic and generational background are not fixed. In the course of interpreting a text, viewers not only make use of various interpretative frames, but also occasionally distance themselves from this or that interpretative frame.

## 10.2 The Limitations of the Two Dominant Perspectives

The research evidence points to the paradoxical presence of two seemingly contradictory forces: one is the supposedly *centripetal* force realised by the national media (and television in particular), and the other is the *centrifugal* force afforded by the transnational media (and television in particular). These two forces influencing the relationship between the media and national identity in Taiwan are captured in the two dominant theoretical perspectives in the literature: the diffusionist view of national identity-formation and the transmission view of communication. However, as we have seen, neither of these two approaches can resolve the paradox.

- As explained in Chapter 3, there was a surge of Taiwanese consciousness (or *Taiwan Yishi* in Chinese) from the early 1970s onwards. Expressed through the political opposition and nativist literature movements, Taiwan-centred identity steadily gathered popular support and ultimately provided the impetus for Taiwan's political democratisation of 1987. This is confirmed by both the historical overview (Chapter 3) and the empirical research evidence, which reveals the wide range of the informants' national identifications (Chapter 9).

- Apart from most radio broadcasting resources and the largest film studio (CMPC), the KMT directly owned all of Taiwan's terrestrial television channels until 1996. By means of its Mandarinisation, Mainlanderisation and fortification strategies, the KMT has mobilised the media to promote Chinese nationalism and suppressed

virtually everything that might indicate a distinct Taiwanese identity (see Chapter 4). For the last three decades the national media (and especially television) representations have persistently been Mainland-focused (in terms of their spatial and temporal attributes), predominantly Mandarin in their use of language, and – in ideological terms -- Chinese nationalist. The content analysis of Taiwan's television serial drama synopses (Chapter 6) between 1971 and 1996 and the textual analysis of the 1976 film *Victory* (Chapter 7) clearly demonstrate these persistent characteristics of Taiwan's audio-visual media representations.

- Since the late 1980s there has been an unprecedented influx of foreign audio-visual programmes (via Taiwan's cable/satellite television systems) that could hardly be expected to promote Taiwanese identity. Like the majority of television households in Taiwan, all of the respondent families have for many years had access to cable/satellite television, whose programming has been mainly from outside of Taiwan (Chapter 8).

Despite decades of top-down media control aimed at promoting a unified Chinese identity, and the increasing influx of foreign programming via the country's high level of penetration by cable/satellite television, Taiwan-centred identity has (re-)emerged and grown. This apparent paradox can be resolved if we apply the concept of 'conjunctural mediation' to fully grasp the dynamic complexity of the media-identity relationship in the Taiwanese case. The concept of conjunctural mediation is used here to emphasise that, first, the formation of national identity is an ongoing process involving historical conjunctures which are specific to Taiwan; and secondly, the media constitute the national discursive space in which text (representation/encoding) and reader (reception/decoding) intersect. In the later sections of the chapter, I shall further demonstrate the usefulness of the concept in understanding the Taiwanese case, especially with respect to the relationship between the media and national identity. Suffice to say here that the employment of the concept means going beyond the limitations of the two dominant perspectives: the diffusionist view of national identity-formation (Sahlins, 1989: 8) and the transmission view of communication (Carey, 1989: 15).

First, as the explicit rationale behind modernist theories of nationalism, the diffusionist holds that national identity is built from the centre outward in the process of nation

building by extending the control of the state to the peripheral areas. According to this view, the formation of national identity is tantamount to a process whereby 'a local sense of place and a local identity ... must be superseded and replaced by a sense of belonging to a more extended territory or nation' (Sahlins, 1989: 8). However, the Taiwanese case contradicts this diffusionist view. Although the KMT government relocated itself from the presumed centre (Mainland China) to the periphery (Taiwan) and a version of Chinese nationalism was imposed from above, 'Taiwanese' as a supposedly local identity was in effect not replaced by the supposedly central, national identity (i.e. a unified Chinese identity). Instead, the predominant sense of national identity in Taiwan has been Taiwan-centred.

Secondly, as a dominant perspective which underpins the arguments of development communication, media imperialism and the like (see Chapter 2), the transmission view of communication posits a powerful, one-to-many, uni-linear method of communication. Communication is seen by the transmission view as 'a process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people' (Carey, 1989: 15). The most extreme reflection of this line of argument is that of the determinist cause-and-effect model, according to which the media, as Morley and Robins summarise, are seen as 'the active and determining forces, whilst culture and identity are passive and reactive. Communications technologies are the causal forces, and identities are the effect, shaped and modified by the "impact" of the technologies' (Morley and Robins, 1995: 71). In opposition to this transmission view of communication, and despite the impact of the national and global media, the Taiwan-centred national identity has steadily grown in importance. The Taiwan-centred identity was clearly expressed in the *samizdat* press (including the KMT government-suppressed political magazines, see Chapter 3) throughout Taiwan's authoritarian period and on the local radio stations broadcasting in the Taiwanese languages since the lifting of martial law in 1987. Of particular importance is the fact that, despite the KMT's enormous power to buy votes in rural areas, there has been a striking increase in the number of voters supporting the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which has now taken control of most of Taiwan's county mayoral offices. Chen Shui-Bian (the presidential candidate for the DPP), hailed by the DPP supporters as a 'Son of Taiwan' and elected to become President of Taiwan in 2000, was careful to balance in his inaugural speech the symbolic declaration that 'the Taiwanese people have stood up'

with a reference to the importance of normalising cross-Strait relations. It appears from such political developments that whilst Chinese nationalism has conspicuously failed, Taiwanese nationalism has not conspicuously succeeded. Indeed, both nationalist currents are under transformation in a way that leaves room for their convergence.[1]

The inability of both the diffusionist and transmission approaches to resolve the paradox concerning the case of Taiwan reflects their more general failure to account for the complexity of the national identity-formation process not just in Taiwan but in other parts of the world (for cases beyond Taiwan, see Collins, 1990a; Waisbord, 1998). Both views provide only a partial account of national identity-formation, oversimplifying the relationship between the media and national identity and blinding us to the fact that the media are not only carriers of identity diffusion but also sites of identity construction. Moreover, both views represent a top-down perspective that fails to recognise the mediating process between media representation and audience reception.

Despite the fact that Taiwan's national television was under KMT control for a long time, it did not successfully create or maintain a greater Chinese national identity among the Taiwanese. Rather, it provided the conditions in which the Taiwan-centred identity could develop, particularly in the period from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. This identity has been increasingly institutionalised and consolidated since the political transition of 1987. Thus, the classic Gellnerian congruence of national culture (taken for the purposes of this study to be media representation) with national identity cannot be sustained in the case of Taiwan, where national television culture has neither fitted the Taiwan-centred identity nor created a unified Chinese identity of its own.

Furthermore, in the case of Taiwan, the thesis that an 'invasion' of foreign culture by means of cable/satellite television has weakened national identity is also untenable. The effects of the media as they are perceived by critics of 'media imperialism' are not far removed from those anticipated by the pioneer development communication theorists,

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[1] Chen Shui-Bian's election to power - with only 39% of the electorate behind him - was most likely the result of a combination of factors. Most significant among these were, on the one hand, his ability to detract from the radicalism of Taiwanese nationalism by promising not to declare Taiwan independence if he got elected and, on the other, the division of the KMT campaign into two competing camps (both of which, however, were prepared to appeal to the idea of 'Taiwan first' and/or the identity of 'new Taiwanese').

the main difference being that while the former are seen as negative, the latter are seen as a positive contribution to nation building. Though it may be plausible to suggest that Taiwanese identity might have been stronger but for the influence of the global media, this possibility is hard to verify empirically. The available evidence points to the fact that the influx of transnational infotainment via cable/satellite television has not weakened the Taiwan-centred identity.

In responding to the inadequacies of the diffusionist and transmission views, one might argue that Taiwan represents a unique case where no congruence between national identity and media representation is required. However, I wish to argue that there is a certain link between media representation and the audience's reception of nationhood, but the two dominant perspectives lose sight of it. That is why I adopt the alternative viewing that national identity-formation is a process of conjunctural mediation between media representation and audience reception.

## 10.3 The Process of Conjunctural Mediation

### *(1) Why Conjunctural?*

In seeking to make sense of the Taiwanese case, we first need to locate the case within its shifting historical conjunctures. The Taiwanese nation is in itself a contingent formation; there was no indication of its existence until a century ago. In its recent and equally contingent formation, it was forged out of specific historical conjunctures conditioned by both external and internal forces.

As explained in Chapter 3, externally, the (re-)emergence of Taiwanese nationalism was tied to the increasingly unbearable diplomatic isolation of the ROC, starting from 1971 with its loss of UN membership and culminating in U.S. de-recognition of ROC in 1979. Internally, at the same time, Taiwan became a major economic and trading power. The growth of income and the extension of nine-year compulsory education gave rise to a Taiwan-born middle class whose support was increasingly needed by the ruling KMT in order to compensate for its loss of external support. The rise of the previously illegal organised political opposition from the second half of the 1970s kept pushing the limits of the KMT's endurance. In response to, and as a result of, these external and internal

changes, the KMT had to make concessions that gradually distanced itself from the hitherto stringent Chinese nationalism and softened its nationalistic policies in the political democratisation process. Against this backdrop, the KMT reluctantly engaged in a symbolic re-interpretation of its long-held 'One China' policy. What is historically *new* in post-Second World War Taiwan is the co-existence of Taiwan *as a part of* and *as apart from* 'China', which is interpreted variously as a cultural 'China', a political 'China', a 'China-ROC' and a 'China-PRC'.

Taiwan has been an independent state in all but name; however, its statehood has remained ambiguous. Political democratisation since 1987 has put an end to the half-century of authoritarian rule under the KMT. The pro-Independence candidate, Chen Shui-Bian, was elected in 2000 as Taiwan's President by direct vote. Yet the nation's official name is still the Republic of China (ROC), a designation which was originally formed in Mainland China after the collapse of the Qing Empire (when Taiwan had already become part of Japan in legal terms). The ROC is not a member of the United Nations and is currently recognised by less than 30 small nations.[2] From across the Taiwan Strait, the People's Republic of China (PRC) regards Taiwan as an inseparable part of China and threatens to unify with it by force if necessary. Despite (or because of) the ambiguity of Taiwan's statehood, the sense of national identity among the population with Taiwan itself has been growing. This trend has been expressed in the 'Taiwan First' slogan that has been used in election campaigns in recent years by all the major political parties including the KMT, and was previously expressed in the 1970s student *Geshin Baotai* (literally, 'Reform for defending Taiwan') Movement (see Li, 1987), which arose in reaction to Taiwan's diplomatic setbacks.

It is thus clear that national identity in Taiwan has been formed under certain specific conjectural conditions. Moreover, national identity-formation should be seen as a mediating process between media texts and audience members.

[2] Faced with impending expulsion, the ROC left the UN in 1971 when the admission of the PRC to the UN was becoming inevitable.

*(2) What mediations?*

The term 'mediation' is defined by Raymond Williams as an 'active' process of relations between 'different kinds of being and consciousness' which are 'inevitably mediated' (Williams, 1977: 98):

> We should not expect to find (or always to find) directly "reflected" social realities in art, since these (often or always) pass through a process of "mediation" in which their original content is changed. (Williams, 1977: 98)

Williams thus rejects the notion of 'reflection' and favours the term 'mediation' to account for the complexity of social reality. But he also cautions that 'mediation' denotes 'constitutive' and/or 'constituting' rather than 'intermediary' (Williams, 1977: 99-100). That is to say, we should consider the media as the constituting part of the mediation process, rather than as an intermediary between two parties (e.g. the state and the nation, or the people and national identity).

Jesus Martin-Barbero also uses the term 'mediations' to denote 'the articulations between communication practices and social movements and the articulation of different tempos of development with the plurality of cultural matrices' (Martin-Barbero, 1993: 188). He discusses the idea with reference to the complex process involving racial mixture, modernity and tradition, and the blending of 'social structures and sentiments' (Martin-Barbero, 1993: 2) in Latin America. He argues that this complex process should be considered 'more as a process of mediations than of media, a question of culture, and therefore, not just a matter of cognition but of re-cognition' (Martin-Barbero, 1993: 2). He goes on to stress the importance of studying 'reception', meaning 'the resistance and the varied ways people appropriate media content according to manner of use' (Martin-Barbero, 1993: 2).

Following the recommendations of these authors, I employ the idea of conjunctural mediation in my analysis of the Taiwanese case. I thus seek to go beyond the limits of the 'transmission' and 'diffusionist' perspectives and offer an alternative account of the relationship between the media and national identity. The key propositions are as follows:

> *1. Television has contributed to the historical creation of a national community out of signs, sounds and images in the territory of Taiwan. In this way, television has played a timely role in binding together 'the nation at risk'.*

Together with the introduction of nine-year compulsory education (in Mandarin only) in 1968 and the civil service's widespread use of Mandarin, the emergence of television as a nation-wide medium from the early 1970s onwards gave further impetus to the rise of a single national community of communication (sociability) in Taiwan, whereas the population was previously divided, not least by differences in spoken language. The crucial difference in the age of television was that it became possible to create in Taiwan a community not merely out of signs (i.e. the written Chinese script) but also out of sounds (i.e. Mandarin) and images. A Taiwanese nation bearing the name of the Republic of China was already in place and became a reality for the Taiwanese people who lived there.

Furthermore, the everyday presence of television broadcasting since the early 1970s, offering viewers of different ethnic origins a shared time and space (symbolic commonalties), has enabled them to imagine a community of common destiny. The backdrops against which this community of common destiny became imaginable were, among others: China's threatening presence (though there has been no war between Taiwan and China since 1958), Taiwan's diplomatic setback, and America's abandonment of formal ties to Taiwan and decreasing military support. Television has also bound members of this community together, particularly in moments of national celebration, mourning and crisis. As revealed in the recollections of the informants, the national events of the 1970s (for instance, the annually held Little League World Series baseball contests, Chiang Kai-shek's funeral ceremony, and America's abandonment of Taiwan) were broadcast live and watched by virtually every television household in Taiwan. What matters here is not only that viewers watched the same programmes, but also they felt the same sense of pride, sadness, anger or uncertainty (see Chapter 8). This confirms that the search for the sense of ontological security, as elaborated by Giddens (1990), was at play in making a nation out of the Taiwanese people.

> *2. Television has contributed to flattening difference and diluting antagonism among ethnic groups. Watching television has long been a national activity that transcends the family boundaries in a context in which the traditional rigid differentiation between 'native Taiwanese' and 'Mainlanders' has become increasingly indistinct.*

In contrast to such romanticised definitions of solidarity as 'forms of sharing and co-operation which are genuine and not enforced, that is it implies supportive tolerance and solidarity rather than control' (Barker, 1999: 154), the sense of solidarity that initially took root in post-war Taiwan was based more on necessity than will. Notwithstanding the estrangement between the 'Mainlanders' and the islanders in the early years of KMT rule, the Taiwanese people of disparate ethnic origins found that they were all 'in the same boat' in the face of a military threat from the mainland, a sentiment which was also exploited by the KMT to consolidate itself on Taiwan.

On the basis of these observations, I conclude that Taiwan as an 'actually' existing and imaginable national community of common destiny -- in Anderson's sense of an 'imagined community' (1991) -- has been developing since the early 1970s. This robust sense of national identity has in part arisen from, and been reinforced by, the 'everyday presence' of television and 'togetherness' of television watching. The role of television in mediating the sense of national identity since the early 1970s has been profoundly important. The political community practically imagined as the nation was already *there* in Taiwan: national television (and cinema) not only helped to shape it but also became a constitutive embodiment of it.

> *3. From the start, the KMT tightly controlled the media for the purpose of regime consolidation and the promotion of Chinese nationalism, yet the media have not represented a seamless web of meanings. A popular text, regardless of its hegemonic or commercial purpose, is not encoded in the manner of complete ideological closure, for this contradicts its aim of reaching as large an audience as possible.*

Ideological closure in the sense that a popular text conveys a single, dominant ideology is not borne out in the analysis. As I have argued in the synthesis of the dominant ideology thesis and the polysemy thesis (see Chapter 5), there is no such a thing as the ideological closure of the text. Thus, to state that media representation under KMT control was an expression of Chinese nationalism is not entirely accurate. National television is almost entirely funded by advertising, and by virtue of that, ratings are important (see Chapter 4; on the importance of the television serial drama for the finance of national television, see Section 1 of Chapter 6). Yet the audience market was principally constituted by the 'native Taiwanese', and with the passage of time the term

'Mainlander' is losing its historical significance as a meaningful social marker in Taiwan. Therefore, no text intended to promote a unified Chinese identity could ignore how it might be received by the audience. As we have found in the textual analysis of *Victory*, despite the film's emphasis on Chinese nationalism, it could only gain popularity among the 'native Taiwanese' who were the majority of the population by offering some positive roles for the 'Taiwanese' characters. Similarly, *City of Sadness*, though endorsing a sense of Taiwanese nationalism, conveyed a pedagogic message transcending the ethnic antagonism between 'Mainlanders' and the 'native Taiwanese'. At the very least, in both films, no one of disparate ethnic origins could be offended as long as a positive message of solidarity was on offer. In both films the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' relied on a broad definition of 'us' that encompassed inhabitants of disparate ethnic origins in Taiwan.

> *4. The audience should not be seen as a 'tabula rasa' but consists of knowing agents who draw on textual and extra-textual resources to decode what is represented. They interpret the texts in various ways, not only employing but also accommodating various interpretative codes/frames which are sometimes at variance with one another.*

As I explained in Chapter 9, viewers are positioned in relation to socio-demographic factors such as ethnicity, gender and age. They are able to draw interpretative resources from textual and extra-textual sources for themselves and utilise several (at times contradictory) interpretative frames to read the text. They can be conformist to some extent but are mostly reflexive and purposeful in relation to the media texts.

More importantly, the readings of the text, like the production of the text, socially structured. Through interactions with their family members, viewers come up with similar if not always consensual conceptions of *the state (society) they (or 'we') are in.* Despite gaps between *meanings as inscribed and intended* and *meanings as received and constructed*, a temporal attachment to 'the nation' (i.e. in territorial terms, Taiwan) is strengthened from moment to moment via the mediation process between media representation and audience reception. In this sense, it does not really matter whether a text is inherently Taiwanese or Chinese in nationalistic terms; the social behaviour of 'collective' viewing is more crucial to the formation of national identity.

*5. The global media, although accessible, have not replaced the position of national media, and national television in particular, in terms of regular viewing patterns. Rather, the global media have localised themselves to become popular in Taiwan, and the audience use the global media from a local perspective.*

As we found in Chapter 8, national television (both terrestrial and non-terrestrial) remains the prime source of audio-visual infotainment for the Taiwanese viewers. The cable channels watched most frequently by a large audience are those with generalist appeals. Besides, in order to gain popularity, television channels beamed from outside Taiwan have adopted a variety of localisation strategies by reducing their 'foreignness' to local viewers. There is also a localised use of global media such as CNN among the informants: they watch CNN mostly at times when there are local events with regional or global implications (e.g. Taiwan's 1995-1996 missile crisis, the 1996 presidential election, and Taiwan's earthquake in September 1999, etc.). Thus, the national audience in Taiwan has not yet become 'balkanised'.

*6. A structure of feeling, or 'time-place sensibilities' in the Taiwanese case, sustains a hybrid sense of national identity incorporating 'a Taiwan in the present with Chinese pasts'. In turn, this underpins a Taiwan-centred identity.*

Billig's theory of 'banal nationalism' (Billig, 1995) is of use in theorising the persistent mode of Taiwan's television representation: the banality of the nationalism that pervades Taiwan's television representation provides the symbolic resources for national imagination. Although the KMT deliberately sought to make invisible the Taiwanese past (especially the pre-1949 past), television unavoidably represented much of 'Taiwan in the present tense'. On the other hand, 'Mainland China in the present tense' was rendered insignificant on television, although the Chinese past in both the ancient and pre-1949 eras were always on television (see Figures 6.1 and 9.2). This was accompanied by other conjunctural factors that helped to forge a nation in Taiwan that was separate from the Chinese people on the mainland under conditions of *ignorant isolation from the other* (Mainland China in the 'present' tense). Or, to use Meyrowitz's phrase, they can be said to have been 'isolated together' (Meyrowitz, 1985: 143) in the same place of Taiwan. Ironically, this was to KMT's credit. These other conjunctural factors may be summarised as follows:

- The KMT's anticommunist propaganda, customarily demonising the Communist regime (as represented in the repeatedly co-broadcast television serial drama *Han Liu*, which was watched and is still vividly remembered by the informants under study; see Chapter 8).

- Prolonged military confrontation and antagonism across the Taiwan Strait.

- A lack of trust, contact and understanding between China and Taiwan, which have stood in mutual isolation for half a century.

Thus, ironically, the KMT has made its Communist rival virtually invisible to the Taiwanese people (who were expected to re-unite with Mainland China). Yet this invisibility has posed a psychological threat to the Taiwanese people, thereby alienating them from political identification with China.

The prime-time television serial dramas, as analysed in Chapter 6, have provided a unique *cultural geography* for Taiwanese viewers: 'A Taiwan in the present tense with Chinese pasts'. The Chinese mainland has been constantly evoked, though in an imaginary way, in these dramas, whereas Taiwan has been deprived of its past (i.e. the pre-1949 past). As the interviews with the informants revealed, this has formed a peculiar 'structure of feeling' (to use Raymond Williams's term), or 'time-place sensibilities' in the Taiwanese case, which in turn have underpinned the hybrid sense of national identity. As we saw in Chapter 9, the majority of the informants located themselves somewhere *in-between*, seeing themselves as politically Taiwanese but culturally Chinese -- an overlapping allegiance which is summed up in the term 'Taiwan-centred identity'.

On the one hand, as indicated in the interviews with the informants (Chapter 9), the trajectory of national identity-formation in Taiwan constitutes neither reversion nor replacement. Thus, what is assumed to be the current national identity is not merely the return of the previously repressed; rather, Taiwanese consciousness has itself been transformed in the process of accommodating the state known as the Republic of China. On the other hand, the sense of China as the homeland is further detached from the political (Taiwan *as apart from* China), whilst at the same time the sense of China as a cultural homeland is more or less retained (Taiwan *as a part of* China).

Furthermore, the informants' sense of national identity exhibits both certainty and ambiguity. On the one hand, the informants are in favour of maintaining *the status quo*; for them neither unification with nor formal independence from China is currently an option. On the other hand, they regard Taiwan as a *de facto* independent state and see cross-Strait relations as a *special state-to-state* case, while keeping open both options (of formal independence and unification with China). In other words, national *identity as being* for them is located in somewhere *in-between* what is politically Taiwanese but culturally Chinese. As for national *identity as becoming*, the viewers tend to adopt a pragmatic attitude that may be seen as a kind of deferral. Even those respondents who believe that Taiwan should be reunited with the mainland (11 out of 62 informants, see Figure 9.1) hold an attitude of 'unification but *not now*' and 'unification under some kind of political arrangement on *our* own terms'. In other words, this is still a 'Taiwan-centred identity'.

## 10.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

It has been the purpose of this thesis to explore the relationship between the media (and television in particular) and national identity by reference to concepts derived from the fields of nationalism, media studies and cultural studies as well as the debates over questions of cultural globalisation and hybridity. I shall first consider the implications of the research for an understanding of Taiwan's national identity. Then I shall turn to the broader implications for situating the role of the media in theories of nationalism and the analysis of national identity.

First, in line with the expectations of modernist theories of nationalism, both the Chinese and Taiwanese nationalisms in Taiwan are of relatively recent origin. It is a principal contention of this thesis that at the root of Taiwan's transition to democracy was a significant transfer of power from Chinese nationalism to Taiwan-centred nationalism. At the same time, this shift should not be seen simply as the return of what was previously repressed. In other words, Taiwanese identity of late and the 'authentic', 'essentialist' form of Taiwanese identity dating back to the colonial era are *not one and the same*. Rather, national identity in Taiwan is a social product, interwoven with changes in relations of gender, ethnicity and generation that have created a space in which the hitherto antagonistic nationalist discourses could converge. Nationalism in

contemporary Taiwan is becoming more *civic* than *ethnic* in character: ethnicity as a social marker is less significant than ever, and politicians playing the ethnicity card are publicly condemned.

Secondly, national identity in Taiwan has assumed a hybrid form; it has absorbed and adapted to external cultural influences. Historically, as the periphery of the Qing Empire and as a colony of imperial Japan, Taiwan was subsequently overwhelmed by Chinese nationalism and the anti-communist ideology sanctioned by the KMT state. The hybridised national identity (for which the term 'Taiwan-centred identity' may be used as a shorthand expression) was itself shaped by complex power relations between the media and the audience, between the state and the citizenry, and between forces of the local and the global. As opposed to the conventional conceptions of cultural hybridisation, I argue that the hybrid identity in Taiwan has two key characteristics: (1) the make-up of that hybrid identity is in part determined by the mass-mediated 'time-place sensibilities'; (2) the hybrid identity is not an undifferentiated entity in the sense that its components are of equal weight; rather people give one or another component priority and invest each with different meanings according to the particular context. Furthermore, I have found that a clear sense of belonging to Taiwan and an emphasis on Taiwanese citizenship have become increasingly important features of this hybrid identity.

Thirdly, the formerly rigid boundaries between Chinese and Taiwanese identities have been destabilised. There is of course no way of going back to the essentialised and romanticised identities asserted by radicals among the Chinese and Taiwanese nationalists. Both identities were, in extreme fashion, regressive forms of identification: (1) Chinese nationalism was a violent though 'inclusionary' force which allowed no room for a distinct Taiwanese identity; (2) Taiwanese nationalism asserted a victimised yet 'exclusionary' identity which regarded Chinese culture as something that had to be resisted altogether. Because of the relational nature of national identity, it can be said that remnants of 'Chinese' identity such as the politically institutionalised and socially performed loyalties to the *de facto* independent Republic of China (ROC) have become part of contemporary Taiwanese identity. Different modes of identification with the nation do not compete in zero-sum terms but may result in an inter-penetration of competing senses of national identity. In the case of Taiwan, however plausible it may

have been to see national identity as a singularity imposed from above in the early years of authoritarian rule, the singular, unified Chinese identity (if it was ever established and sustained) lost momentum in the course of societal transformation. However, this process was not simply a matter of one particular strand of nationalism being superseded by another.

Fourthly, globalisation in terms of trans-border cultural flows has broadened the cultural horizon, but Taiwan's national identity remains robust. This challenges the conventional thinking that the consumption of the global media will necessarily result in a weakened local/national identity. In fact, the pace and scope of cultural globalisation has not prevented the growth of a sense of belonging to Taiwan. Indeed, cultural globalisation in association with the continuing importance of national media might inculcate in the people of Taiwan 'a progressive sense of place' (Massey, 1993), meaning that it is possible to have allegiances to both 'the place' and 'places beyond'. Two forces specific to Taiwan seem to have contributed to this trend. The first is Taiwan's democratisation, which resulted from the rising tide of Taiwanese consciousness, as discussed in Chapter 3. The second force is the cross-Strait linkage driven by the force of globalisation. Through Taiwan's heavy investment in the mainland, the economic ties between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have become stronger than ever and have put an end to decades of mutual isolation between the two sides. As this interdependence grows, the Taiwanese people's sense of national identity assumes an increasingly pragmatic form, emphasising the need to avoid any radical move to declare formal independence and to maintain Taiwan's *de facto* independence. At the same time, this pragmatic consciousness is changing the perception of the 'national self' in relation to the broadly defined 'other'. Democratisation allows more balanced and up-to-date information about Mainland China to circulate in Taiwan, and globalisation increases the degree of economic interdependence across the Strait. This is increasingly nurturing among the Taiwanese people a growing willingness to engage with 'others', especially those in the Chinese mainland, and also a growing awareness of having to come to terms with the 'others' who are located across the Strait. They will have to find a way to negotiate over their remaining conflicts of interest on the basis of mutual respect and recognition. This suggests that for the Taiwanese there is a real prospect of 'having the best of both worlds by being both Taiwanese and Chinese' (to use a phrase akin to that used by the informants, see Chapter 9).

On a broader level, the research has implications for our understanding of the place of media in the theories of nationalism and the analysis of national identity-formation. Although this formulation – national identity-formation as a process of conjunctural mediation between media representation and audience reception – will undoubtedly require further amendment according to the contingent particularities of any given case, I believe that it offers a useful tool of analysis in media studies beyond the Taiwanese case. It is likely to be especially useful in studying the relationship between the media and national identity in cases where issues of territorial 'unification' versus 'independence' are of importance. Grounded in empirical evidence, this thesis argues that both the transmission view of communication and the diffusionist view of national identity-formation should be replaced by the more sophisticated formulation of a conjunctural mediation process between media representation and audience reception (and between the powerful media and the active audience). From this perspective, this thesis has identified the main ways in which the mass media, and especially national television, have contributed to the formation of national identity in Taiwan.

# Appendices

## APPENDIX I: THE LISTS OF TELEVISION SERIAL DRAMAS

1. *Xiu ling* (TTV, Nov. 1971)[a]
2. *Da di chang qing* (TTV, Nov. 1971)[a]
3. *Jin qua shi* (TTV, Nov. 1971)[a]
4. *Xiu ling* (TTV, Dec. 1971)
5. *Da di chang qing* (TTV, Dec. 1971)
6. *Xiao cheng gu shi* (TTV, Dec. 1971)
7. *Jin qua shi* (TTV, Dec. 1971)
8. *Hu tu da jian ke* (TTV, Apr. 1972)
9. *Gan guo bao guo Taiwan* (TTV, Apr. 1972)
10. *Shen Chou hao xia zhuan* (TTV, Apr. 1972)
11. *Gu chu lei* (TTV, Apr. 1972)
12. *Min jian gu shi: Giu lan ke* (TTV, Apr. 1972)
13. *Qing chun gu wang* (TTV, Oct. 1972)
14. *Yan cheng gu zhang* (TTV, Oct. 1972)
15. *Fo zu* (TTV, Oct. 1972)
16. *A shui mu yu a mu shen* (TTV, Apr. 1973)
17. *Da jiang ying hao* (TTV, Oct. 1973)
18. *Ye lang gu* (TTV, Oct. 1973)
19. *Song gong mi shi* (TTV, Apr. 1974)
20. *Fa zhou* (TTV, Oct. 1974)
21. *Yu pi pa* (TTV, Apr. 1975)
22. *Jin yu yuan* (TTV, Oct. 1975)
23. *Rou qing wan lu* (TTV, Apr. 1976)
24. *Dan qing yuan* (TTV, Oct. 1976)
25. *Yu mian dan xin* (TTV, Apr. 1977)
26. *Yi jian wan lu qing* (TTV, Oct. 1977)
27. *Da di fei long* (TTV, Apr. 1978)
28. *Da di er nu* (TTV, Oct. 1978)
29. *Han liu* (TTV, Apr. 1979)[b]
30. *Tie xie zhuang yuan* (TTV, Apr. 1979)
31. *Bi yuan tian* (TTV, Oct. 1979)
32. *Qi zhong qi* (TTV, Oct. 1979)
33. *Jin pu sha* (TTV, Apr. 1980)
34. *Mang nu shen long* (TTV, Apr. 1980)
35. *Xia ying xiang zong* (TTV, Oct. 1980)
36. *Jin feng yuan* (TTV, Apr. 1981)
37. *Cai yun fei* (TTV, Apr. 1981)
38. *Jiang shan wan li qing* (TTV, Oct. 1981)
39. *Ba li ji chang* (TTV, Apr. 1982)
40. *Xia gu rou qing lei* (TTV, Apr. 1982)
41. *Jin se de gu xiang* (TTV, Oct. 1982)
42. *Han jiang feng yun* (TTV, Apr. 1983)
43. *Ming yue tian ya* (TTV, Apr. 1983)
44. *Xing xing zhi wo xin* (TTV, Oct. 1983)
45. *Xiang tai yang tiao zhan* (TTV, Oct. 1983)
46. *Tie xie yang jia jiang* (TTV, Apr. 1984)
47. *Yi qian ge chun tian* (TTV, Apr. 1984)
48. *Leng yue gu xing jian* (TTV, Oct. 1984)
49. *Wei zhen si hai* (TTV, Oct. 1984)
50. *Xiao ao jiang hu* (TTV, Apr. 1985)
51. *A lang yu bin bin* (TTV, Apr. 1985)
52. *Xin jian* (TTV, Oct. 1985)
53. *Xing xing yue liang tai yang* (TTV, Oct. 1985)

54. *Yang gui fei chuan qi* (TTV, Apr. 1986)
55. *Feng yun ren wu* (TTV, Apr. 1986)
56. *Xin jue dai shuang jiao* (TTV, Oct. 1986)
57. *Zuo ri meng yi yuan* (TTV, Apr. 1987)
58. *Yong zhe de fen dou* (TTV, Oct. 1987)
59. *Huang jin kong que* (TTV, Apr. 1988)
60. *Zi se de meng* (TTV, Apr. 1988)
61. *Ba yue gui hua xiang* (TTV, Oct. 1988)
62. *You chai zong shi an dui ling* (TTV, Apr. 1989)
63. *Shei sha le da ming xing* (TTV, Apr. 1989)
64. *You jian you chai lai an ling* (TTV, Oct. 1989)
65. *Xin ti xiao yin yuan* (TTV, Oct. 1989)
66. *Ci ke lie zhuan* (TTV, Apr. 1990)
67. *You chai san du lai an ling* (TTV, Apr. 1990)
68. *Mo dai er nu qing* (TTV, Oct. 1990)
69. *Xue shan fei hu* (TTV, Apr. 1991)
70. *Jiang hu zai jian* (TTV, Oct. 1991)
71. *Ban sheng yuan yi shi qing* (TTV, Apr. 1992)
72. *Ying xiong shi jia* (TTV, Oct. 1992)
73. *Ren jian tian tang* (TTV, Apr. 1993)
74. *Ying xiong shao nian* (TTV, Apr. 1993)
75. *Xi shuo qian long* (TTV, Oct. 1993)
76. *Chu lian san shi nian* (TTV, Oct. 1993)
77. *Yi tian tu long ji* (TTV, Apr. 1994)
78. *Liang ge yong heng: Xin yue ge ge* (TTV, Oct. 1994)
79. *Tang tai zong Li Shimin* (TTV, Oct. 1994)
80. *Taiwan Shui hu zhuan* (TTV, Apr. 1995)
81. *Xiang shuai chuan qi* (TTV, Apr. 1995)
82. *Qing ai hong chen* (TTV, Oct. 1995)
83. *Qing jian shan he* (TTV, Apr. 1996)
84. *Xin long men ke zhan* (TTV, Oct. 1996)
85. *Hua luo hua kai* (TTV, Oct. 1996)
86. *Mu qing* (CTV, Nov. 1971)[a]
87. *Qin shi cun* (CTV, Nov. 1971)
88. *Da luo da gu* (CTV, Nov. 1971)[a]
89. *Mu qing* (CTV, Dec. 1971)
90. *Da luo da gu* (CTV, Dec. 1971)
91. *Long jiang en chou* (CTV, Dec. 1971)
92. *Sheng nu ling mo niang* (CTV, Apr. 1972)
93. *Hai yan* (CTV, Apr. 1972)
94. *Mang jian ke* (CTV, Apr. 1972)
95. *Tai shan hong yan* (CTV, Apr. 1972)
96. *Wu ming huo* (CTV, Oct. 1972)
97. *Da lu* (CTV, Oct. 1972)
98. *Jia you jiao qi* (CTV, Apr. 1973)
99. *Ku qing hua* (CTV, Oct. 1973)
100. *Yi dai bao jun* (CTV, Apr. 1974)
101. *Wu sheng guan gong* (CTV, Oct. 1974)
102. *Xin niang yu wo* (CTV, Oct. 1974)
103. *Ai xin* (CTV, Oct. 1974)
104. *Jia you jiao qi* (CTV, Oct. 1974)
105. *Yi dai hong yan* (CTV, Apr. 1975)
106. *Da di feng lei* (CTV, Oct. 1975)
107. *Na li lai de mo sheng ren* (CTV, Oct. 1975)
108. *Chi di* (CTV, Apr. 1976)
109. *Xiao nu xing* (CTV, Apr. 1976)
110. *Tain nu* (CTV, Oct. 1976)
111. *Mi qing* (CTV, Apr. 1977)
112. *Da jie* (CTV, Oct. 1977)
113. *Jiang shan wan li qing* (CTV, Apr. 1978)
114. *Quan lei da* (CTV, Oct. 1978)
115. *Ji fan feng yu ji fan qing* (CTV, Oct. 1978)
116. *Han liu* (CTV, Apr. 1979)[b]
117. *Yi xi qing sha wan lu qing* (CTV, Oct. 1979)
118. *Ai zhi ge* (CTV, Oct. 1979)
119. *Qin chai da ren* (CTV, Apr. 1980)
120. *Qing suo* (CTV, Apr. 1980)
121. *Ming ri zou tian ya* (CTV, Oct. 1980)

122. *Yi jia zhi zhu* (CTV, Oct. 1980)
123. *Zhan guo feng yun* (CTV, Apr. 1981)
124. *Wang shi zhi duo shao* (CTV, Apr. 1981)
125. *Xiang jian shi nan bie yi nan* (CTV, Oct. 1981)
126. *Shi yue fen fang* (CTV, Oct. 1981)
127. *Bi xie rou qing* (CTV, Oct. 1981)
128. *Chun nong qing geng nong* (CTV, Apr. 1982)
129. *Ku hai yu sheng* (CTV, Oct. 1982)
130. *Xiang si wan li xin* (CTV, Oct. 1982)
131. *Mei hau te gong dui* (CTV, Apr. 1983)
132. *Shao nian shi wu er shi shi* (CTV, Apr. 1983)
133. *Da zhi fa* (CTV, Oct. 1983)
134. *Cheng gong ling shang* (CTV, Apr. 1984)
135. *Ai he bi shuo zai jian* (CTV, Apr. 1984)
136. *Shu jian qian giu* (CTV, Oct. 1984)
137. *Wu suo nan yang* (CTV, Apr. 1985)
138. *Ta shi wo ma ma* (CTV, Apr. 1985)
139. *Xin sheng lei hen* (CTV, Oct. 1985)
140. *Da jiang jun xiao feng xian* (CTV, Oct. 1985)
141. *Shang cuo tan tang tou cuo tai* (CTV, Apr. 1986)
142. *Yi dai gong zhu* (CTV, Apr. 1986)
143. *Wo jin wo de shou* (CTV, Oct. 1986)
144. *Jia he wan shi xing* (CTV, Oct. 1986)
145. *Yi dai ge hou* (CTV, Apr. 1987)
146. *Chang jiang yi hao* (CTV, Oct. 1987)
147. *Qi wang* (CTV, Apr. 1988)
148. *Wu ren xing* (CTV, Apr. 1988)
149. *Wang zhao jun* (CTV, Oct. 1988)
150. *Diao chan* (CTV, Oct. 1988)
151. *Yan zhi kuo* (CTV, Apr. 1989)
152. *Tian shi zhi ai* (CTV, Apr. 1989)
153. *Chu tou bo shi* (CTV, Oct. 1989)
154. *Xin xi you ji* (CTV, Apr. 1990)
155. *Ta li de nu ren* (CTV, Apr. 1990)
156. *Xi wang zhi ge* (CTV, Oct. 1990)
157. *Jin se shi guang* (CTV, Apr. 1991)
158. *Zhang guan hao* (CTV, Oct. 1991)
159. *Po xi guo zhao yi jia qing* (CTV, Oct. 1991)
160. *Qing qing he bian cao* (CTV, Apr. 1992)
161. *Jun guan yu shu nu* (CTV, Oct. 1992)
162. *Zai shi qing yuan* (CTV, Oct. 1992)
163. *Huang tu di wai de tian kong* (CTV, Apr. 1993)
164. *Xi shuo ci xi* (CTV, Apr. 1993)
165. *Mei gui hao qing* (CTV, Oct. 1993)
166. *Mei hua san nong* (CTV, Oct. 1993)
167. *Yang nai wu yu xiao bai cai* (CTV, Apr. 1994)
168. *A xin* (CTV, Oct. 1994)
169. *Ai zai ta xiang* (CTV, Apr. 1995)
170. *Tian shi zhong kui* (CTV, Oct. 1995)
171. *Guan shi yin zhi ma zu bai quan yin* (CTV, Oct. 1995)
172. *Yi lain you meng* (CTV, Apr. 1996)
173. *Duan zhang shun niang* (CTV, Oct. 1996)
174. *Tian gong teng hao ren* (CTV, Oct. 1996)
175. *Guo zi yi* (CTS, Nov. 1971)
176. *Yan shuang fei* (CTS, Nov. 1971)[a]
177. *Wan jia sheng fo* (CTS, Nov. 1971)[a]
178. *Da di zhi chun* (CTS, Nov. 1971)[a]
179. *Xing fu chuan* (CTS, Nov. 1971)[a]
180. *Xing fu chuan* (CTS, Dec. 1971)
181. *Yan shuang fei* (CTS, Dec. 1971)
182. *Wan jia sheng fo* (CTS, Dec. 1971)
183. *Da di zhi chun* (CTS, Dec. 1971)
184. *Jia qing jun yu wang de lu* (CTS, Dec. 1971)
185. *Du yuan yang* (CTS, Dec. 1971)
186. *Xiong di ying hao* (CTS, Dec. 1971)
187. *Xi yan* (CTS, Apr. 1972)
188. *Xi luo qi jian* (CTS, Apr. 1972)
189. *Ma zu zhuan* (CTS, Apr. 1972)
190. *Sheng li zhi lu: Fu yu zi* (CTS, Apr. 1972)
191. *Qi shi fu qi* (CTS, Apr. 1972)
192. *Bai he hua* (CTS, Oct. 1972)
193. *Xi luo qi jian* (CTS, Oct. 1972)
194. *Sheng long he hu* (CTS, Oct. 1972)

195. *Feng shan hu* (CTS, Oct. 1972)
196. *Yan yang tian* (CTS, Oct. 1972)
197. *Feng we wei* (CTS, Apr. 1973)
198. *Dong gang a chun* (CTS, Apr. 1973)
199. *Xiao xiong di* (CTS, Oct. 1973)
200. *Piao paio yu* (CTS, Oct. 1973)
201. *Hun yin de gu shi* (CTS, Oct. 1973)
202. *Yan zhi hu* (CTS, Oct. 1973)
203. *Long hu er nu* (CTS, Apr. 1974)
204. *Bao qing tian* (CTS, Apr. 1974)
205. *Bao qing tian* (CTS, Oct. 1974)[a]
206. *Bao biao* (CTS, Oct. 1974)
207. *Bao biao* (CTS, Apr. 1975)[a]
208. *Hong xi guan yu Fang shi yu* (CTS, Oct. 1975)
209. *Ying xiong* (CTS, Apr. 1976)
210. *Shen feng* (CTS, Apr. 1976)
211. *Hu dan* (CTS, Oct. 1976)
212. *Long hu feng yun* (CTS, Apr. 1977)
213. *Feng huang yu fei* (CTS, Apr. 1977)
214. *Yu fu rong* (CTS, Oct. 1977)
215. *Chun hui* (CTS, Apr. 1978)
216. *Jia zai Taibei* (Home in Taipei) (CTS, Oct. 1978)
217. *Chun feng da di* (CTS, Oct. 1978)
218. *Han liu* (CTS, Apr. 1979)
219. *Pian pian chun yang pian pian qing* (CTS, Apr. 1979)
220. *Feng yun hui* (CTS, Oct. 1979)
221. *Xin you qian qian jie* (CTS, Oct. 1979)
222. *Chun yu zhao yang* (CTS, Oct. 1979)
223. *Huan fei hua wu hua man tian* (CTS, Oct. 1979)
224. *Jiang nan you* (CTS, Apr. 1980)
225. *Xia ke* (CTS, Oct. 1980)
226. *Jin pai mi shi* (CTS, Oct. 1980)
227. *Jiang nan chun* (CTS, Oct. 1980)
228. *Wu tu wu min* (CTS, Apr. 1981)
229. *Chang jiang yi tiao long* (CTS, Apr. 1981)
230. *Chun wang* (CTS, Oct. 1981)
231. *Tang san wu jie* (CTS, Oct. 1981)
232. *Lei ting qian li* (CTS, Apr. 1982)
233. *Huo yuan jia* (CTS, Apr. 1982)
234. *Wan jia deng huo* (CTS, Oct. 1982)
235. *You jian qian shou* (CTS, Apr. 1983)
236. *Hu shan xing* (CTS, Apr. 1983)
237. *He chu shi er jia* (Where is my home?) (CTS, Oct. 1983)
238. *Xiang gang* (Hong Kong) 1952 (CTS, Apr. 1984)
239. *Qi huan ju chang* (CTS, Apr. 1984)
240. *Tian can zai bian* (CTS, Apr. 1984)
241. *Si qian jin* (CTS, Oct. 1984)
242. *Da di chun lei* (CTS, Apr. 1985)
243. *Hong fen jia ren* (CTS, Oct. 1985)
244. *Lan yu hei* (CTS, Oct. 1985)
245. *Yang gui fei* (CTS, Apr. 1986)
246. *Hua yue zheng chun feng* (CTS, Apr. 1986)
247. *Yan yu meng meng* (CTS, Oct. 1986)
248. *Chang xiang yi* (CTS, Oct. 1986)
249. *Xin meng li jun* (CTS, Apr. 1987)
250. *Xi cong tian jiang* (CTS, Oct. 1987)
251. *Jiang hua yan yun* (CTS, Apr. 1988)
252. *Ming yun de suo lian* (CTS, Oct. 1988)
253. *Shuang mian you xia* (CTS, Oct. 1988)
254. *Hai ou fei chu cai yun fei* (CTS, Apr. 1989)
255. *Bu liao qing* (CTS, Apr. 1989)
256. *Liu zhuang shi* (CTS, Oct. 1989)
257. *Liu ge meng: San duo hua* (CTS, Apr. 1990)
258. *Yang zi bu jiao shei zhi guo* (CTS, Apr. 1990)
259. *Da bing ri ji* (CTS, Oct. 1990)
260. *Ji du chun feng ji du shuang* (CTS, Oct. 1990)
261. *Shao nian zhang san feng* (CTS, Apr. 1991)
262. *Jia you xian qi* (CTS, Apr. 1991)
263. *Jing cheng si shao* (CTS, Oct. 1991)
264. *Yuan* (CTS, Apr. 1992)
265. *Yi nan wang* (CTS, Apr. 1992)
266. *Biao mei ji xiang* (CTS, Oct. 1992)
267. *Shu jian en chou lu* (CTS, Oct. 1992)
268. *Bao qing tian* (CTS, Apr. 1993)
269. *Bao qing tian* (CTS, Oct. 1993)[a]

270. *Ba wang hua* (CTS, Apr. 1994)
271. *Huan xi lou* (CTS, Apr. 1994)
272. *Lu chang qing geng chang* (CTS, Oct. 1994)
273. *Xiong di you yuan* (CTS, Apr. 1995)
274. *Quan shi xi fu* (CTS, Oct. 1995)
275. *Shi jian fu qi* (CTS, Apr. 1996)
276. *Guan gong* (CTS, Oct. 1996)
277. *A zu* (CTS, Oct. 1996)

Notes:
[a.] Repeats on the same channel in the same year were not included for coding.
[b.] Repeats across channels were included for coding.

## APPENDIX II: EXAMPLES OF TELEVISION DRAMA SYNOPSES

| Drama Title | Synopses |
|---|---|
| *Xing xing zhi wo xin* (TTV, Oct. 1983) | Set in Taiwan in the 1970s, this is a TV drama focusing on the difficult situation facing an ill widow (played by Wu Jingxian). She loves her five children very much and works hard to raise them. However, her worsening illness prevents he from working. Her eldest daughter Xiu-xiu (played by Shi Anni) is still a secondary schoolgirl but manages to help her mother to look after the four younger children. The fifth child Bing-bing (played by the child actor Bing-bing) also plays an important role in the drama. The widow is conscious of how serious her illness is and she makes a painful decision to give away all of her children. She does everything she can to make sure that all her five children are adopted by good foster parents as soon as possible before her death. The five children are finally adopted by five different families and they have to separate from their mother and from one another. However, for better or worse, they maintain a strong sentimental link with their mother and with each other. The central themes of the drama are as follows: the eldest daughter's filial piety, the widow's maternal love, and the close relations among the five children. The critics describe the drama as heart-warming and moving – one which calls viewers to come together in front of the television as it has higher ratings than other competing television dramas broadcast on CTV and CTS at the same time. This is a TV drama in Mandarin with Chinese subtitles, though one of the subsidiary characters (the foster mother of the fourth child) speaks Hakka occasionally. |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Yi dai bao jun* (CTV, Apr. 1974) | The programme dramatises the life of Qin Shih-huang (Yin Zheng), the first Emperor of the Qin Dynasty. He emerges as the successor of one of the kingdoms and defeats six other kingdoms. Thus, China becomes unified for the first time in history. However, the Emperor is tyrannical, and, fearing that his Empire will be endangered by the remaining forces of the defeated six kingdoms, he establishes a terrorist regime. He murders the intellectuals and burns all written materials except for those dealing with medicine and agriculture. He also confiscates all metals to prevent them being used to make weapons that could be used against him. His tyranny, however, does not last long. People rise in protest against his rule. Shortly after his death, his Empire collapses and is finally overthrown. The drama is broadcast in Mandarin with Chinese subtitles. |
| *Justice Bao* (*Bao qing tien*, CTS, Apr. and Oct. 1993) | Justice Bao (played by Jin Chao-qun) is the magistrate of the capital city of the Song Dynasty (960-1279). He enforces the law fairly and regardless of social class. He even brings the son-in-law of the Emperor to justice. He is always fighting for justice against villains, the aristocracy and the powerful. According to one comment, it seems as if the whole of Taiwan is watching TV as the drama of *Justice Bao* unfolds over more than 100 evenings in 1993. According to *Asiaweek*, the Taiwan-made TV drama *Justice Bao* 'captivated audiences around Asia with its passionate depiction of justice during the Song Dynasty' (*Asiaweek*, March 20, 1998: 36). The drama is shown in Mandarin with Chinese subtitles. |
| *Yi tian tu long ji* (TTV, Apr. 1994) | The drama is drawn from the historical novel of the same name written by Jin Yong. Set in China under the Mongols during the Yuan Dynasty (1280-1368), it describes an innocent orphan Zhang Wuji (played by Liu Dekai) who happens to have unmatchable martial art skills. He wins the respect of members of secret societies which are trying to oust the Mongols from China and subsequently becomes leader of these societies. Several female characters cannot help but fall in love with Zhang Wuji, who is a fine man. Because of his unselfishness, he is framed by a member of his own staff, the vicious Zhu Yuanzhang. He finally leads the Han people to tear down the Mongol Empire and secludes himself and his lover from society and power, whereupon Zhu Yuanzhang becomes the Emperor of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The drama is shown in Mandarin with Chinese subtitles. |

## APPENDIX III: CODING PROTOCOL FOR PRIME-TIME TELEVISION SERIAL DRAMAS

INTRODUCTION
This protocol aims to assess the generic, linguistic, spatial (geographical) and temporal representations in the prime-time television serial dramas which were broadcast on the three terrestrial television channels between 1971 and 1996.

PRIME-TIME TELEVISION SOAPS
This refers to prime-time television serials broadcast during the sample months between 1971 and 1996.

PROCEDURE
Before coding a programme from the descriptive synopses of television serial dramas, read carefully the instructions for the definitions of the variables (V stands for variable) described below.

V1. IDENTIFICATION NUMBER OF THE PROGRAMME.

V2. YEAR
The date when the programme is broadcast (year and month).

V3. TIME-SPAN
1= 1971-1979 2= 1980-1987 3= 1988-1996

V4. CHANNEL: 1=TTV, 2=CTV, 3=CTS
The channel on which the programme is broadcast.

V5. BROADCAST LANGUAGE
The language used by the characters in the programme.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 = Mandarin | Mandarin is the sole or predominant language used by the characters in the programme. |
| 2 = Taiwanese (Hokkien and Hakka) | Taiwanese is the sole or predominant language used by the characters in the programme. |
| 3 = Mixed | Both Mandarin and Taiwanese are used by the characters but neither Mandarin nor Taiwanese is predominant. |
| 4 = Unknown | |

V6. PLACE OF SETTING
The geographical (spatial) setting of the narrative of the programme.
1 = Mainland China
The central plot of the programme takes place in Mainland China.
2 = Taiwan
The central plot of the programme takes place in Taiwan.

3 = Other

V7. TIME OF SETTING
The temporal location of the narrative of the programme.
1 = Remote Past
The central plot of the programme takes place before the Nationalist government fled to Taiwan in 1949.
2 = Recent Past
The central plot of the programme takes place after the Nationalist government fled to Taiwan in 1949.
3 = Unknown

V8. GENRE
The genre of the programme.
1 = Romance/Family
The plot turns on central themes of familial relations and romance between main characters, with an emphasis on filial piety, heterosexual love, or regard for authority as social norms.

2 = Action/Martial arts

*Either* (1) constantly uses physical violence with primary focus on the causes or consequences of illegal activities, or of conflicts with a hostile army or country. Central figures include criminals, victims and those who work in the criminal justice system (e.g. private eyes, amateur detectives, police, courts, and gangsters). Diversionist activities in wartime, or peacetime spying, against the enemies are also included in this category.
*Or* (2) *kung-fu*/ martial arts. The *kung-fu* or martial arts dramas usually set the narrative scene 'historically' in the remote Chinese (or Taiwanese) past. Sometimes there is no explicit spatio-temporal setting, but there are usually clues (e.g. the costumes) to suggest the Chinese mainland (or Taiwan) and the era of dynastic China. The characters are mainly fictional.

3 = History

*Either* (1) serials with a story adapted from well-known Chinese (or Taiwanese) history, whose plots often centre on historic figures. This often overlaps with Martial Arts and Romance/Drama, as it often includes 'historic figures' with a talent for martial arts, or who are involved in (un)recorded romance. The central figures are presented as historically 'true'.

| | |
|---|---|
| | *Or* (2) the situation is portrayed in a 'realist' narrative with explicit or implicit reference to a particular historical/social event, exposing the dark side of a society (such as the sufferings of the people in Communist China) or touching on a sensitive/controversial issues pertinent to a society (such as interethnic conflict, social inequality, or political taboo). |
| 4 = Other | The generic type of programme is judged from the information contained in the descriptive synopses to be something other than any of the above. For example, Farce, Fictional Fantasy, etc. The descriptive synopses of the TV serials do not provide sufficient information for assessing the programme's generic type. |

## APPENDIX IV: PLOT SUMMARIES OF THE FILMS

### *(1) Plot Summary of Victory*

Somewhere near a village supposedly located in southern Taiwan, two boys and two girls play among the plum trees of the woods. The boys are brothers: the elder is Juguang and the younger Juyong. Two girls, Wenying and Xiaohui, are attracted by Juguang. By contrast, Juyong is unattractive to, and disliked by, the two girls. Juguang later marries Wenying. They have a baby boy named Jixian. Juyong's marriage proposal is persistently refused by Xiaohui. Captain Ikeda (Chitian in Chinese), head of the Japanese military police and classmate of both Juguang and Wenying, comes to greet the couple on the birth of their son. The celebratory scene immediately turns sour, and the gentry, in particular, show their antagonism towards Ikeda. Ikeda himself is aware of being uninvited and so leaves soon afterwards. Before he leaves, he leaks an official secret to Juguang about the plan of the Japanese military to build a power plant by the dam. For this plan to proceed, the Lin family's ancestor's tombs (by the dam) will have to be removed. Juguang strongly opposes the plan, knowing that his father will fight to the death to defend the ancestors' tombs, but both Juguang and Ikeda know that the Japanese military are determined to carry the plan forward.

Because he is jobless and idle, Juyong finds it hard to please his father and Xiaohui. Since he is trained as an electrician, he accepts an offer to work for the Japanese to build the power plant. His father is clearly enraged by this and slaps him in public. Juyong cannot understand why his father is not pleased that he has got a job. Later, the father is excited to learn that Chiang Kai-shek has just declared war against Japan. In desperation, he looks for his radio receiver to confirm the news. He finally finds the receiver, already dismantled into pieces, in Juyong's room. He is angry and again slaps Juyong. The father does not appreciate that Juyong was trying to fix the radio receiver for him. Inspired by Chiang Kai-shek's battle against the Japanese invasion, the father goes with three other old men to defend the ancestors' tombs. For this act of resistance, they are brutally beheaded by the Japanese soldiers. The local people denounce Juyong for his failure to fulfil his filial duties. With the repaired radio in hand, Juyong visits his father's

tomb and vows to seek revenge. In the meantime, Juguang leaves for the mainland with several other young men to fight against the Japanese invasion.[1]

Wenying is left alone to look after the extended family and takes up teaching in the middle school where her husband used to be a teacher. In class, Wenying urges the pupils to 'Remember to be Chinese!' She also teaches them that plum blossom is 'our national flower, symbolising the Chinese national spirit'. She urges them to 'follow this nationalist spirit' and 'to influence your parents and to prepare for the coming victory.' In the meantime, Juyong pursues the daughter of the Japanese power plant manager. Xiaohui, the woman with whom Juyong is actually in love, shows contempt for Juyong's efforts to achieve promotion by becoming romantically involved with the daughter of the Japanese power plant manager. Xiaohui even laughs at him: 'Your sister-in-law is teaching in school. You should return to school to learn how to behave like a man!'

Juguang joins the KMT army on the mainland and is soon promoted to the rank of military officer. On the battlefield he encounters a volunteer nurse, Minzhu, whose parents have been killed by Japanese troops. They immediately like each other. Chitian comes to warn Wenying that the Japanese military plan to recruit her pupils for the military campaigns in Southeast Asia. Wenying asks Chitian to save the pupils from conscription. Not realising her intention, however, the pupils and villagers suspect Wenying of having an affair with Chitian. Wenying is misunderstood by her pupils and humiliated by the villagers. Shamed by her alleged infidelity, her mother-in-law commits suicide. Even her young son is ashamed of her. Wenying can see no way of clearing her name and commits suicide by drowning herself in the river by the dam. Chitian succeeds in saving Wenying's pupils from conscription but he blames them for doubting their teacher's motives. The pupils and villagers assemble to pay tribute to Wenying. They all move slowly towards the power plant, carrying plum blossom and singing the 'Plum Blossom' song in chorus as they pay their last respects to Wenying.

Ever since Jixian became an orphan, Xiaohui has looked after the child as a surrogate mother. Wenying's death arouses patriotic fervour among the villagers. The

[1] The film sequences summarised up to this point were shown to the family viewers in the course of the research interviews.

schoolchildren go out to fight Japanese children, shouting 'Hit the little Japanese dogs!' Four of Juguang's Taiwanese comrades are dispatched as secret agents by the KMT military on a mission to destroy the power plant. Before their departure, Juguang encourages them to 'grasp the opportunity to show the patriotism of the Taiwanese to the fatherland.' They then sneak back to Taiwan and urged Juyong to work with them. Juyong turns them down because he is pessimistic about the success of the mission. In fact, the mission fails and the Japanese kill three of the four secret agents; the fourth escapes with injuries. The villagers provide shelter for the wounded agent and send him back to the mainland. For this, several villagers are arrested, tortured and executed by the Japanese authorities. On the way to the execution, all the villagers assemble again to sing the 'Plum Blossom' song as a farewell to the patriots whose sacrifices saved the KMT agent. Xiaohui asks Juyong to 'see what these people are doing and reflect what you have done!'

Juguang is physically handicapped after saving Minzhu's life on the field of battle. The KMT secret agent returns to the mainland. Knowing that his brother, Juyong, did not join the mission, Juguang feels angry and ashamed. He is informed of his wife's death and Minzhu comforts him. The romance between them grows and eventually they are married. Juyong himself plans in secret to destroy the power plant. Ignorant of this plan, Xiaohui remains distant from him. Juyong successfully destroys the power plant with dynamite, but he is seriously injured and dies in prison. Juyong's act of patriotic self-sacrifice earns Xiaohui's love and recognition.

Chitian commits suicide after Japan has lost the war. The film ends with China's hard-won *Victory* over Japan. On their arrival in Taiwan, the KMT armies are warmly welcomed by the villagers. Juguang returns to Taiwan with his new wife. The family is reunited. At Xiaohui's suggestion, Jixian calls Minzhu 'mother', but rather hesitantly. Xiaohui, disappointed to see Juguang already married to Minzhu, gets ready to leave the village. As she leaves, we hear Jixian's cries of 'mother'.

### *(2) Plot Summary of City of Sadness*

*City of Sadness* begins with the agonising cries of Wenxiong's mistress in labour. The dark house is lit up as the electricity is restored. The disembodied voice of the Japanese Showa Emperor on the radio announces that Japan has surrendered to the Allies.

Wenxiong's illegitimate son, symbolically named Guangming (literally, 'the light') is born. This is followed by titles that read: 'On 15 August, the Japanese Emperor announces an unconditional surrender. Taiwan escapes from the 51-year rule of Japan....' Wenxiong renames his nightclub 'Little Shanghai'. Wenqing, Wenxiong's youngest brother, meets his friend Kuanrong's sister, Kuanmei. He discloses in writing to her that during the war two of his brothers, Wensen and Wenliang, were dispatched by the Japanese military to the Philippines and Shanghai respectively. He is concerned to know if they have returned home safely.

Wenqing is host to Kuanrong and a group of intellectuals in his photographic studio. They talk about Taiwan's difficult adaptation to a new regime. For example, the Taiwanese do not even know how to fly the 'national flag' correctly. They turn from mocking themselves to criticising the KMT government for maladministration. Wenliang returns from the mainland, shell-shocked and traumatised. There seems to be little hope that the second son, a medical doctor, has survived the war. Kuanrong's circle of intellectuals meets in Wenqing's studio. They agree that an upheaval will be unavoidable if Chen Yi's misadministration (including ethnic discrimination against the Taiwanese, economic exploitation, etc.) continues.

Wenliang recovers from his psychological trauma. In the meantime, Kuanrong's Japanese friends are about to be deported by the KMT government. There is an unfulfilled romance between Kuanrong and a Japanese girl, Jingzi (or Ogawa Seiko in Japanese). Sadly, Kuanrong discloses to Wenqing and Kuanmei his sentimental link with the Japanese national spirit that is symbolised by cherry blossom. A group of Shanghai gangsters visit Wenliang and propose a plan to smuggle rice out of Taiwan and bring drugs back in. Wenliang agrees to the proposal. In the studio, Kuanrong and other intellectuals continue to criticise the KMT government for exploiting the Taiwanese people. Social unrest, caused by inflation and unemployment, worsens in Taiwan as the KMT government's misadministration continues and the civil war on the mainland escalates. Kuanrong calls for a popular struggle against the KMT government. Wenxiong discovers and calls off the deal between Wenliang and the Shanghai gangsters. Wenxiong and Wenliang fall victim to the retribution of the Shanghai gangsters. A local gangster, a collaborator of the Shanghai gangsters, stabs Wenliang. Then both Wenxiong and Wenliang are accused of being traitors to the nation by secret

witnesses (presumably the Shanghai gangsters), who accuse him of being involved in the Japanese occupation in Shanghai during the war. The KMT soldiers search the family's house and arrest Wenliang. Hidden by his mistress, Wenxiong escapes arrest. Wenxiong hides in a friend's house and complains that 'We islanders are among the most misfortunate: out with the Japanese, in with the Chinese. Everyone eats and rides at our expense but no one loves us'.[2]

Wenqing's friends' attempt to have Wenliang released from prison by law fails. As the lunar New Year approaches (by custom this signifies the union of the family), Wenxiong bribes the Shanghai gangsters because they have a good relationship with the KMT government. Wenliang is then released but is traumatised again after being tortured in prison. The Governor-General, Chen Yi, declares a state of emergency under marital law. Witnessing the February 28 Incident, Kuanmei notes in her diary that 'the Taiwanese and the "Mainlanders" are killing each other. We are worried that one war has just finished, but another war is immediately beginning.' Wenqing and Kuanrong visit Taipei in order to find out what is happening in Taipei. In front of the hospital where Kuanmei works, a group of Taiwanese beat a 'Mainlander' and shout 'Kill him!' The doctor stops their violence and treats the injured 'Mainlander'. In a disembodied voice-over, Governor Chen Yi calls for calm and promises to lift martial law and release all the arrested Taiwanese. Wenqing returns from Taipei and faints in front of Kuanmei. Chen Yi's disembodied voice-over is heard again: he declares martial law again and asserts that 'only when the government destroys a handful of the rebels will society ever be secure.'

Wenqing tells Kuanmei that he saw many people die in Taipei. He also recalls that he narrowly escaped being beaten by a Taiwanese mob because they suspected him of being a 'Mainlander'. When confronted by the mob, he tried very hard to say 'I am Taiwanese' in Hokkien. Fortunately, Kuanrong saved him from being killed by explaining to the mob that Wenqing was a deaf-mute. Kuanrong is wounded when he comes back from Taipei. His mother reveals that the military came to search their house because of his involvement in the uprising. His father beats him and tells him that he cannot stay in the house. Kuanrong goes to the hills with his comrades and builds a

[2] The opening sequences of the film summarised up to this point were used for co-viewing with the interviewees.

guerrilla-commune. Wenqing's friends and then Wenqing himself are arrested by the military. Some of his friends are shot, but Wenqing is released. He takes responsibility for passing on his friends' last words to their widows and children. The last words written in blood (by one of his friends executed by the KMT) read: 'Father is not guilty. You must live with dignity.'

Because of the Incident, Wenxiong's nightclub closes. In the meantime, Wenqing visits Kuanrong's commune and says that he wants to stay with Kuanrong to 'fight for the dead', but Kuanrong dissuades him by asking him to look after Kuanmei. Wenxiong is assassinated by the Shanghai gangsters. The funeral is followed by the wedding between Wenqing and Kuanmei. Kuanmei writes in her diary that she feels happy with her husband and child, regardless of all the turbulence in the outside world. They also secretly gave financial support to Kuanrong's guerrilla-commune to 'fight for their ideals.' Subsequently, Kuanrong marries a woman who has joined the guerrilla-commune. Wenqing and Kuanmei receive a letter from Kuanrong, affirming Kuanrong's determination to dedicate himself to 'the beautiful future' of an unspecified 'homeland'. Shortly afterwards, Kuanrong is arrest by the KMT military. Wenqing expects the military to come at any moment and arrest him. Initially, Wenqing and Kuanmei try to escape but eventually they return home because they have nowhere to go. They have their picture taken together. As expected, Wenqing is arrested by the military. It turns out that only the handicapped, the elderly, females and the very young members of the extended Lin family survive the Incident. The film ends with the titles that read: 'In December 1949, the mainland falls into the hands of the Communists. The KMT government relocates to the temporary capital, Taipei.'

## APPENDIX V: TOPIC GUIDE FOR THE FIRST-WAVE INTERVIEWS

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS: age, ethnic background, occupation, etc.

TELEVISION-RELATED QUESTIONS

- Media-focused life stories
- Watching television in the earlier stages of their lives
- Current experience of watching television
- Experience with terrestrial television and cable television
- Television drama experience
- Channel repertoire
- Programme preference

IDENTITY-RELATED QUESTIONS

- The context and the extent to which they feel Taiwanese or Chinese
- Attitude toward other ethnic groups in Taiwan
- Party allegiance
- Thoughts on the issue of independence/reunification with Mainland China
- Expectation of future cross-Strait relations

## APPENDIX VI: QUESTIONS FOR THE SECOND-WAVE INTERVIEWS

Aim 1: To find out more about their personal/family biographies.

Aim 2: To find out about their experience with television (terrestrial and cable) and the cinema. Concentrate on the 'what' and the 'why' with respect to their appropriation of cable, television viewing preference, choice, and habits (past and present).

- Would you recommend that I should subscribe to cable television? What is the advantage of having access to cable television? Would it do me any good to subscribe to cable television?
- Why did you have cable installed in your home? How much do you value cable television? Is it worth the monthly subscription fees? What do you get from cable television?
- Why do you still watch terrestrial television? Can you talk about the differences between what is offered on cable and terrestrial television?
- There are so many television channels available from cable and terrestrial television; can you share your experiences in making good use of them?
- Can you help me to choose which channels/programmes to view?
- Which channels/programmes do you watch on a daily basis?
- Do you watch the national cinema? Through which media (video, cable, terrestrial, movie theatres) do you watch national cinema?
- How much do you like/dislike the national cinema? Why?

Aim 3: To find out how they interact with television fictions, particularly the prime-time television serial dramas, examining their experience with different sub-genres of serial dramas that contain a range of historical and geographical settings. Ask them to talk about the serial dramas they are currently watching.

- What makes serial dramas a viewing 'must' for you and/or your family?
- Since you watch serial dramas every day, what would you do if you were not at home this evening (e.g. at work, at cramming school, etc.)? Is it important to know what's on this evening's episode? How do you catch up with the latest developments in a particular drama?
- If you had the opportunity to act, which character in the drama would you like to play?
- Have you ever viewed the serial dramas exported from the mainland? Are there any differences between the Taiwan-made and Mainland-made television dramas?

Activity: Show them the film(s). The first one-sixth length of each film (i.e. the first 15 minutes of *Victory* and the first 25 minutes of *City of Sadness*) in order to trigger their memory. Then, ask them to reconstruct the story.

Aim 4: To trace the historical evolution of the meanings of each film to them. Is there a shift in the meanings of each film? If so, is such a shift correlated with their own biographical relationship with the media?

- Could you please reconstruct what *Victory* is about to an absent friend/family member? Could you please reconstruct what *City of Sadness* is about to an absent

friend/family member?

- Can you recall how you felt about these films when you were younger, if you saw them before?
- (In case no one within the family has previously seen the films, another question should be asked): What's typical of a 1970s film and what makes *Victory* a 1970s film? What makes *City of Sadness* a post-Martial law film? How are films like *City of Sadness* different from 1970s films like *Victory*?
- Why did the government want everyone to watch 1970s films like *Victory*? (Consider policy, content, etc.) Do you think *City of Sadness* deserved to win the first prize at the Venice Film Festival?
- Would you like me to leave the film(s) so that you can view it/them at full length? Do you think it is/they are worth further viewing? Would you recommend the film(s) to someone who has never seen it/them?

Aim 5: To find out about their 'historical knowledge' and 'popular memory' in relation to the national past depicted in the films, and to determine the extent to which historical imagination affects/interacts with their reception of a popular fiction set in history.

- What makes you like/dislike, and approve/disapprove of, what is depicted in *Victory* and *City of Sadness*?
- What comes to your mind when someone mentions the Incident of February 28 1947?
- What comes to mind when you think of what Taiwan was like when it was under Japanese colonial rule before 1945?
- What was Taiwan like under the Chiangs?
- How and in what respects has Taiwan changed since 1987?

Aim 6: To identify the national identities of the respondents (similarities and difference).

- Do you regard yourself as Taiwanese or Chinese? Why?
- Do you think one can be both Taiwanese and Chinese? When do you feel Taiwanese? When do you feel Chinese? Can you give me an example?
- Can you help a Westerner to understand what 'Taiwanese' means? Can you explain to a foreigner the difference between 'Chinese' and 'Taiwanese'? What do you mean by 'Taiwanese'? What makes you feel different from the Chinese on the mainland? Do you think that being Taiwanese means being less 'Chinese' than the people in the mainland? What is the distinctiveness of being Taiwanese?
- Have you always thought so? If not, since when? What did you think before? How would you describe your change of mind? What made you change your mind?
- Did you vote in the 1996 presidential election? Will you vote in the 2000 presidential election? Which candidate would you most like to be our next President, and why? Which candidate do you least want to be our next President, and why?
- What are your ideas/opinions about the unification/independence issue?

## APPENDIX VII: INFORMANTS UNDER STUDY

| Family | Members | Ethnic origin | Age (in 1999) |
|---|---|---|---|
| F1 | Father[1] | 'Mainlander' | 53 |
| | Mother | 'Mainlander' | 50 |
| | Son | 'Mainlander' | 19 |
| F2 | Father | 'Mainlander' | 54 |
| | Mother | Hakka | 49 |
| | Daughter | Mixed | 18 |
| | Son[2] | Mixed | 16 |
| F3 | Father[1] | 'Mainlander' | 48 |
| | Mother | Hokkien | 48 |
| | Daughter | Mixed | 18 |
| F4 | Father | 'Mainlander' | 51 |
| | Mother | 'Mainlander' | 46 |
| | Son | 'Mainlander' | 19 |
| F5 | Father | 'Mainlander' | 46 |
| | Mother | Hokkien | 45 |
| | Daughter | Mixed | 18 |
| F6 | Father | 'Mainlander' | 54 |
| | Mother | 'Mainlander' | 49 |
| | Son | 'Mainlander' | 19 |
| F7 | Father[2] | Hakka | 47 |
| | Mother | 'Mainlander' | 47 |
| | Daughter | Mixed | 18 |
| F8 | Father | Hakka | 49 |
| | Mother | Hakka | 46 |
| | Son | Hakka | 19 |
| F9 | Father | Hakka | 51 |
| | Mother | Hokkien | 50 |
| | Son | Mixed | 19 |
| #10 | Father[1] | Hakka | 45 |
| | Mother | Hokkien | 42 |
| | Daughter | Mixed | 18 |
| F11 | Father | Hakka | 53 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Mother | 'Mainlander' | 52 |
| | Daughter | Mixed | 19 |
| F12 | Father[1] | Hakka | 46 |
| | Mother | Hakka | 42 |
| | Son | Hakka | 18 |
| F13 | Father | Hokkien | 48 |
| | Mother[2] | Hokkien | 46 |
| | Daughter | Hokkien | 18 |
| | Son[2] | Hokkien | 20 |
| F14 | Father[1] | Hokkien | 45 |
| | Mother | Hokkien | 45 |
| | Daughter | Hokkien | 18 |
| F15 | Father | Hokkien | 47 |
| | Mother | Hakka | 44 |
| | Son | Mixed | 19 |
| | Daughter[2] | Mixed | 16 |
| F16 | Father | Hokkien | 53 |
| | Mother | Hokkien | 50 |
| | Son | Hokkien | 18 |
| | Son[2] | Hokkien | 21 |
| F17 | Father | Hokkien | 50 |
| | Mother | Hokkien | 47 |
| | Son | Hokkien | 19 |
| F18 | Father | Hokkien | 49 |
| | Mother | Hakka | 48 |
| | Daughter | Mixed | 19 |
| F19 | Father | Hokkien | 52 |
| | Mother | Hokkien | 50 |
| | Daughter | Hokkien | 19 |
| | Son[2] | Hokkien | 22 |

Notes:
[1] Only took part in the first-wave interviews.
[2] Only took part in the second-wave interviews.

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