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1 Introduction

In 1949, the Nationalist Government (Kuo-min-tang 國民黨, KMT) fled to Taiwan after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took control of the Chinese Mainland in the civil war. Nearly one million mainland migrants came with the Government, among them some high and mid-ranking government officials, about half a million military personnel, and some civilians who preferred the KMT regime over the CCP.¹ Initially they did not plan to settle in Taiwan for long. The retreat was considered by the KMT regime and those who came with it to be a temporary one: They planned to re-take the Mainland by military force. The actual warfare across the Taiwan Strait during the early 1950s made credible to the people of Taiwan the regime's promise of returning to the Mainland. By 1958, however, the KMT leadership realized that the possibility of returning to China by military means was very slim after President Chiang Kai-shek [Chiang Chieh-shih] 蔣介石 (1887–1975) signed a Sino-American Joint Communiqué stating that the re-take of Mainland was to be achieved mainly through the realization of the “Three Principles of the People” rather than by military actions. The KMT regime nevertheless continued to reassure the people in Taiwan that it would re-take the Mainland and save the Chinese people from the tyranny of the CCP regime throughout the 1960s. At the same time, the KMT regime unrelentingly claimed that it was the only legitimate government of China, even after losing its seats in the United Nations and on the UN Security Council to the CCP regime in 1971 and most diplomatic ties with other nations by 1970.

Although the challenge from the opposition camp increased substantially in the early 1980s, this official stand in the national imagination did not change until 1991 when the KMT regime officially announced the end of the stage, the “Mobilization to Fight the Communist Rebellion”.

1 According to one demographer who used custom and airport records to estimate the numbers of people who came from the Chinese Mainland to Taiwan during 1949 and 1953, about 908,500 migrants came to Taiwan. See: Lee Tung-Ming 1969, 248. Taiwan already had a population of over six million before 1949. Thus, the mainland migrants constituted about 14% to 15% of the population of Taiwan.

Table 1 Number of countries with diplomatic ties with the ROC and the PRC, 1950–1992

Year	Total countries in the world	Number of ROC's diplomatic ties	Number of PRC's diplomatic ties
1950	87	37	18
1951	89	37	19
1952	89	39	19
1953	90	39	19
1954	91	39	20
1955	92	41	23
1956	95	41	26
1957	97	45	27
1958	97	44	30
1959	97	45	32
1960	114	53	36
1961	118	54	38
1962	125	59	40
1963	127	63	43
1964	129	59	48
1965	132	57	48
1966	136	62	45
1967	137	64	44
1968	141	67	44
1969	141	68	44
1970	143	66	47
1971	147	55	65
1972	147	42	86
1973	149	38	89
1974	150	32	97
1975	156	27	106
1976	157	26	111
1977	158	23	114
1978	161	22	116
1979	164	22	120
1980	166	22	124
1981	168	23	124
1982	168	23	125
1983	169	24	129
1984	170	25	130
1985	170	23	133
1986	171	23	133
1987	171	23	133
1988	171	22	136
1989	171	26	135
1990	170	28	135
1991	187	29	138
1992	189	29	152

Source: Kao Lung 1993, 52–53, and Kao Lung 1994, 78–79.

However, the same national imagination continued to appear in the official *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of China* (ROC) after 1992 when describing the national territory, as will be shown in this paper. It is only after 2004 that the ROC government under a DPP administration in its second term renounced the last piece of symbolic claim to sovereignty over the Chinese Mainland in this official document.

The long overdue transformation of the national imagination in the migrant regime is quite unusual, especially considering that Taiwan suffered a series of diplomatic setbacks in the 1970s and a democratic transition in 1987–1996, which effectively transformed an authoritarian state into a democratic one.² Not only was the migrant regime able to keep its version of the Chinese national imagination intact domestically in Taiwan for more than forty years after it lost control of the Chinese Mainland, and for twenty years after it lost international recognition from most nations for its claim to be the only legitimate government of China, it also managed to stay in power by winning democratic elections after democratization.³ This is somewhat puzzling considering that the sovereignty claim of the Chinese national imagination was not recognized externally by most members of the international community, and was challenged domestically by its rival as an ideology used by the KMT to justify the exclusion of the Taiwanese from meaningful participation in national politics, as will be discussed later in this paper. Yet, judging from the fact that the KMT regime survived the test of elections after democratization, most people in Taiwan seem to have accepted its Chinese national imagination without showing strong objection through their voting behaviors.

The long delayed change in the national imagination of the migrant KMT regime has significant political consequences for Taiwan in its struggle for a new national identity. This article tries to explore the reasons for the durability of the Chinese national imagination of the KMT regime by looking at the confrontations of two paradoxical views on the nature of the KMT regime in Taiwan over time. While the KMT regime considered itself to be a migrant regime in the last resort within the national territory with a mission to restore the rightful sovereignty of the nation, the opposition camp

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- 2 The democratic transition in Taiwan started in 1987 when the KMT regime lifted martial law, which had been in effect since 1949, and finished in 1996 when the first direct presidential election by popular vote was held. Lin Chia-lung further divided the transition into two periods: Liberalization (1987–1991) and democratization (1991–1996). Cf. Lin Chia-lung 1998, 46–58.
 - 3 The KMT presidential candidate Lee Teng-hui won the first presidential election by popular vote in 1996 with 54% of votes. The DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian won the 2000 presidential election by 39% of the vote due to a split in the KMT camp between two candidates.

saw it as an exilic regime that refused to face the reality of being in exile. The competition between these two views, which emerged after 1970s, was contested mainly in the domain of the national imagination.

Given that the KMT regime's rule over Taiwan would have been de-legitimized by openly admitting itself to be in exile, the reason why the KMT regime described itself as a migrant regime rather than an exilic regime was quite understandable.⁴ Maintaining the integrity of the Chinese national imagination among people in Taiwan was an important strategy in the political endeavor. The same strategy, however, was seen as one of prolonging the exile by those who were deprived of political rights under institutional designs on the basis of the Chinese national imagination. The question is: Why was the "migrant regime frame" able to get the upper hand over the "exile regime frame" among the general public for such a long time?

2 The National Imagination of the KMT Regime in Taiwan

When the KMT regime re-established its governing bodies in Taiwan, it followed the experience of a similar situation when the central government of China retreated to Chungking [Ch'ung-ch'ing] 重慶 in Szechwan [Ssu-ch'uan] 四川 province against the Japanese during the Second World War. Martial law was enacted in 1949 in Taiwan to cope with the national emergency. The cabinet embodied in the Executive Yuan (Hsing-cheng-yüan 行政院) resumed immediately after the move to Taiwan.⁵ When the acting President Lee Chung-ren [Li Tsung-jen] 李宗仁 (1891–1969) fled to the United States, Chiang Kai-shek, who had been forced to resign from the Presidency in 1949, resumed his office in 1950. The KMT regime also managed to get enough members of the National Congress embodied in the Legislative Yuan (Li-fa-yüan 立法院), about 380 legislators, to meet the statutory minimum requirements for the convention of a meeting in Taipei on February 24, 1950.⁶ In order to claim legitimacy to represent the whole of China, the regime ensured that every Chinese province had at least some representatives in the restored National Congress.⁷ When their terms ended in 1951,

4 I thank the editor for bringing this conceptual distinction to my attention.

5 The Cabinet meeting was held in Taipei on December 9, 1949 for the first time, signaling the official retreat of the KMT regime to Taiwan. See Hsueh 2001, 149.

6 The figure of 380 plus was mentioned in the brief history of the Legislative Yuan on its official website: www.ly.gov.tw/ly/01_introduce/0101_int/0101_int_02.jsp?ItemNO=01010200.

7 This was achieved by inviting legislators who were abroad to return to Taiwan or by granting the status of legislators to the runner-up candidates during the 1947 elections. According to a list of those who became legislators by filling the vacancies in an official

the KMT regime proposed a solution of letting the President ask the legislators to agree to a one-year extension on their own terms. This temporary solution was utilized twice more in the following years before the regime decided to settle the issue once for all by demanding that the Justices of the Constitutional Court in the Judicial Yuan (Ssu-fa-yüan ta-fa-kuan 司法院大法官) interpret the constitution in order to deal with this national emergency.⁸ In response, the Justices of the Constitutional Court issued “Interpretation No. 31” on January 29, 1954 stating that the incumbent legislators should extend their terms indefinitely pending the recovery of the Mainland when another national election could be held.⁹

Similar solutions were also adopted by the restored National Assembly (Kuo-min ta-hui 國民大會) and the Control Yuan (Chien-ch’a-yüan 監察院). A bureaucratic system of national government was established in Taiwan, employing more than 8,000 government employees, even though the population and the territory it actually ruled was almost the same as the Taiwan Provincial Government, except for the two Fukien [Fu-chien] 福建 islands Kinmen [Chin-men] 金門 and Machu [Ma-tsu] 馬祖 off the Chinese coast.

All these temporary political arrangements for the national institutions were constructed by the KMT regime in Taiwan on the basis of a national imagination encompassing the whole Chinese national territory. The national imagination of the KMT regime was best illustrated by how the nation’s territory and population were portrayed in the *Statistical Abstract of the Republic of China* (*Chung-hua-min-kuo t’ung-chi t’i-yao* 中華民國統計提要), which was published annually by the Central Government in Taiwan since 1955.

Prior to 1955, the ROC government under the KMT regime published only four issues of national statistics in 1935, 1940, 1947 and 1948 when it still ruled the Mainland.

document, a total of 107 runner-ups were granted the status. See *Chung-hua-min-kuo hsüan-chü kai-k’uang* (1984), 571–572. The total number of legislators was about 380–500 between 1950 and 1969.

8 See: Hsueh 2001, 149–151.

9 The holding of the interpretation states that: “... our state has been undergoing a severe calamity, which makes re-election of the second term of both Yuans de facto impossible. It would contradict the purpose of the Five-Yuan system as established by the Constitution, if both the Legislative and Control Yuans ceased to exercise their respective powers. Therefore, before the second-term Members are elected, convene and are convoked in accordance with the laws, all of the first-term Members of both the Legislative and Control Yuans shall continue to exercise their respective powers.” Cf. www.judicial.gov.tw/constitutionalcourt/EN/p03_01.asp?expno=31.

The national statistics in these official documents, however, were neither accurate nor comprehensive given that no Chinese Government had ever obtained effective control over the whole Chinese territory.

Table 2 The National Population of China, 1947 (Source: *The Statistical Abstract of the Republic of China, 1947, 2-3*)

		表 2 . 全 國 戶 口					POPULATION		
地 域 別 Locality	戶 數 No. of Households	口 數 No. of Persons			每 戶 平 均 口 數 Average No. of persons per household	性 比 例 Sex Ratio	材 料 Period	時 期 Of Data	
		共 計 (1) Total (1)	男 Males	女 Females					
總 計 Total	84,456,377	455,592,065	236,297,698	215,572,306	5.4	110			
江 蘇 Kiangsu	7,503,749	36,160,417	18,833,459	17,326,958	4.8	109	三十五年十二月 Dec., 1946		
浙 江 Chekiang	4,529,832	19,657,551	10,479,455	9,178,096	4.3	114	三十五年九月 Sept., 1946		
安 徽 Anhwei	3,428,149	21,842,039	11,577,014	10,265,025	6.4	113	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
江 西 Kiangsi	2,714,355	12,836,619	6,670,778	6,165,841	4.7	108	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
湖 北 Hupeh	3,465,836	21,271,602	11,272,814	9,999,048	6.1	113	三十五年十一月 Nov., 1946		
湖 南 Hunan	4,778,559	26,171,117	13,693,880	12,477,237	5.5	110	三十五年十月 Oct., 1946		
四 川 Szechwan	8,539,586	47,088,591	24,154,393	22,934,198	5.5	105	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
西 康 Sikang	326,012	1,655,215	824,161	831,054	5.1	99	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
河 北 Hopei	5,197,000	28,529,038	15,375,365	13,153,723	5.5	117	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
山 東 Shantung	7,100,848	36,289,177	17,786,056	18,503,121	5.1	96	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
山 西 Shansi	3,004,861	14,725,102	8,077,302	6,647,800	4.9	122	三十五年五月 July, 1946		
山 東 Honan	4,128,023	26,994,209	13,864,769	13,129,440	6.5	106	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
山 西 Shensi	2,096,577	9,649,108	5,113,554	4,535,614	4.6	113	三十五年三月 Mar., 1946		
甘 肅 Kansu	1,234,497	6,765,744	3,514,111	3,251,633	5.5	108	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
青 島 Chinghai	203,039	1,317,364	666,510	650,854	6.4	102	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
福 建 Fukien	2,349,497	11,034,333	5,758,810	5,325,523	4.6	108	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
台 灣 Taiwan	1,000,597	6,336,329	3,194,209	3,142,120	6.3	102	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
廣 東 Kwangtung	5,622,893	29,128,924	15,492,215	13,636,709	5.2	114	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
廣 西 Kwangsi	2,778,387	14,543,528	7,641,614	6,901,914	5.2	111	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
雲 南 Yunnan	1,742,279	9,284,579	4,671,300	4,613,279	5.3	101	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
貴 州 Kweichow	1,888,113	10,528,293	5,250,403	5,277,884	5.6	99	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
遼 寧 Liaoning	1,938,843	11,204,074	5,889,409	5,404,665	5.8	109	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
安 東 Antung	587,374	3,297,219	1,821,448	1,475,771	5.6	123	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
黑 龍 江 Liaopei	686,909	3,990,591	2,106,840	1,883,751	5.8	112	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
吉 林 Kirin	1,123,917	6,430,590	3,393,495	3,037,095	5.7	112	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
江 蘇 Shungkiang	543,941	3,203,149	1,694,872	1,513,277	5.9	112	二十九年偽滿數 Puppert-Manchoukoo issued in 1940		
合 江 Hopkiang	285,350	1,683,552	889,424	794,128	5.9	112	二十九年偽滿數 Puppert-Manchoukoo issued in 1940		
黑 龍 江 Heilungkiang	258,255	2,563,234	1,440,754	1,122,480	9.9	128	三十五年十二月 Dec. 1946		
嫩 江 Nunkiang	238,520	1,405,068	742,324	662,744	5.9	112	二十九年偽滿數 Puppert-Manchoukoo issued in 1940		
興 安 Hingan	27,754	163,654	86,459	77,195	5.9	112	二十九年偽滿數 Puppert-Manchoukoo issued in 1940		
熱 河 Jehol	1,149,577	6,546,591	3,445,948	3,100,643	5.7	111	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
察 哈 爾 Chahar	415,214	2,032,994	1,119,296	913,698	4.9	123	三十五年十二月 Dec. 1946		
綏 遠 Suiyuan	427,264	2,037,753	1,142,081	915,672	4.8	125	三十五年十二月 Dec. 1946		
甯 夏 Ningsia	124,108	737,536	402,578	334,655	5.9	120	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
新 疆 Sinkiang	843,848	3,730,051	1,964,609	1,765,442	4.4	111	三十二年十二月 Dec. 1943		
西 藏 Tibet	...	3,722,061	十七年估計數 estimated in 1928		
南 京 Nanking	100,409	808,658	457,824	350,834	5.0	131	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
上 海 Shanghai	721,030	3,599,193	1,992,438	1,606,755	5.0	124	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
北 平 Peiping	317,915	1,688,335	991,892	696,443	5.3	142	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
天 津 Tientsin	322,667	1,716,180	1,007,399	710,781	5.3	142	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
青 島 Tsingtao	150,885	755,991	428,543	327,448	5.0	131	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
重 慶 Chungking	201,617	1,061,769	628,727	435,042	5.3	144	三十五年七月 July, 1946		
大 連 Dairen	113,203	600,000	348,954	251,046	5.3	139	三十五年估計數 estimated in 1946		
哈 爾 濱 Harbin	135,653	637,573	391,906	245,667	4.7	160	三十年八月偽滿數 Puppert-Manchoukoo issued in Aug. 1941		

資料來源：內政部統計處根據各省市呈報保甲戶口調查之材料編製，其中西藏為內政部估計數字。

Source: Compiled by the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Interior from data of the reports of population by "pao-chia" in various provinces and municipalities, except figures for Tibet which are estimated by the Ministry.

說 明：(1) 共計欄之總計係就數字各欄分別加總者，因西藏無男女細數，故男女兩欄與共計欄之總和不符。

Note: (1) The total is obtained by adding all the figures in the "Total" column. As Tibet has no figures for males and females, the sum of "Males" and "Females" columns is not equal to the total.

There was no exact figure for the whole Chinese population even in 1947 since the government was never able to conduct a nationwide census. The 1947 national statistics was published so that the government could calculate the numbers of legislators for each province based on the new Constitution effective after 1947. However, the quality of the population figures in each province varied: most were estimates rather than exact census figures reported by the local government,¹⁰ the periods of population estimates in the mainland provinces and municipalities range from 1928 to 1946.¹¹ These estimated population figures, however, became very important after 1955.

In 1955, the KMT regime published its first national statistics in Taiwan, which was mainly a preliminary countermeasure against a census result released by the rival PRC regime in 1954.¹²

2.1 The Territories of China

In the 1955 *Statistical Abstract*, detailed information about the Chinese territory was listed, including a description of the area of each province, municipalities, major islands, lakes, and rivers of China. The administrative divisions of 36 provinces and 12 municipalities were used as the basic statistical unit to present all manner of statistics. Except for Taiwan, all information about the rest of China was that of 1948, before the KMT regime moved to Taiwan.

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- 10 The only exception is Taiwan. The Japanese government conducted seven island-wide censuses during its colonial rule over Taiwan in 1905, 1915, 1920, 1925, 1930, 1935 and 1940 respectively. See *T'ai-wan sheng wu-shih-i nien lai t'ung-chi t'i-yao* (1946), 96.
- 11 See the "Period of Data" column in the original table of the 1947 statistics in Table 2. I have serious reservations about the accuracy of these population figures after comparing them to several other sources. In *Ko sheng-shih hsiang-chen pao-chia hu-k'ou t'ung-chi* (1946), another statistics published directly by the Department of Statistics of the Ministry of Interior, a much more detailed account of the dates of the figures was reported showing that of the 43 provincial and municipal population figures, one was estimated in 1928, 27 were estimated in the 1930s, only 15 were estimated in 1940s. Given the tension of rising civil war between 1946 and 1947, it is doubtful that any census was ever conducted by any local government. The 1947 figures, which were allegedly that of 1946 reported by the local government, were very likely just another set of armchair estimates based on those published in 1946.
- 12 In response to the PRC's census, the KMT regime in Taiwan also conducted its first population census covering the territory it effectively ruled in 1956. The Director of the census specifically stated that the census was conducted to "reveal the hypocrisy of the communist bandits" which just reported a "falsified" census result of China to the world, and to show the world how "practical and realistic" (*shih-shih ch'iu-shih* 實事求是) the KMT government was. See Wang Der-pu 1956, 2–3. For the KMT census report, see *Chung-hua-min-kuo hu-k'ou p'u-ch'a pao-kao-shu* (1959).

2.2 The Population of China

The population of China reported in the 1955 *Statistical Abstract*, however, was a little bit awkward from a retrospective point of view. Although the population figure for Taiwan was that of 1953, the figures for the rest of the Chinese provinces and municipalities were those of 1948. A total national population figure of 465,547,415 was reported by totaling Taiwan's 1953 figure and the 1948 figures for the Chinese Mainland. This practice became standard procedure over the next 22 years. Each year, the figure for Taiwan's population would be updated and then added to the "fixed" 1948 figures for the rest of China to provide a "total national population of the ROC," which by 1977, when it was reported in this annual official document for the last time, had "increased" to 473,922,526.¹³ It was as if the population of the Chinese territory under PRC rule was "frozen" in 1948 and never increased after the KMT regime retreated to Taiwan. According to the editors, the main reason for this expedient measure of reporting the population of the Mainland was because the government could neither collect its own statistics nor trust the "exaggerated" figures released by the PRC, instead it would rather use the estimated figures from 1948.¹⁴

2.3 Other National Statistics for China

A similar procedure for adding the up-to-date Taiwan figures to the fixed 1948 mainland figures was also used in reporting other "national" statistics on arable land, numbers of farmers, agricultural products, industrial indexes, foreign trade, railway and highway kilometerage, post offices, civil aviation lines, etc., for all of China.

While it might seem quite unimaginable from a retrospective point of view for the KMT regime to put so much manpower and effort into publishing these seemingly senseless "national statistics," it actually makes some "sense" if we put these practices into their respective social and political contexts of the 1950s. They were not national "statistics" in the strictest sense of the term; they were, rather, "national" statistics. It would be better to look at the *Taiwan Statistical Abstract* (*Tai-wan-sheng t'ung-chi yao-lan* 臺灣省統計要覽)¹⁵ for demographic and other information about Taiwan and at the national statistics

13 Just to demonstrate how awkward this population figure was, the Chinese population reported by the PRC, was 949,737,000 in 1977. See *Chung-hua-jen-min-kung-ho-kuo jen-k'ou t'ung-chi tzu-liao hui-pien* (1988), 27.

14 See *Chung-hua-min-kuo t'ung-chi t'i-yao* (1958), 2.

15 The *Taiwan Statistical Abstract* had been published regularly by the Taiwan Provincial Government since it was ruled by the KMT regime after 1946. This was possible because the Japanese colonial government had already collected and published detailed statistics on Taiwan in its fifty-year rule over Taiwan.

published by the PRC for information about the Chinese Mainland. Both were real “statistics”. The *Statistical Abstract of the ROC*, on the other hand, was an official document intended to inspire and instill a particular kind of national imagination, one that treated the PRC under the CCP regime as a rebellious group that had unlawfully taken control of the Chinese national territory. The only legitimate sovereign government of China, according to this version of national imagination, was the KMT regime which was “temporarily” driven to Taiwan by the “rebels”.

It was of crucial importance for the KMT regime to maintain this version in these official documents to substantiate its claims of political legitimacy among other nations as well as among its supporters. In defending the continuing ROC sovereignty over the whole of China, the KMT regime in Taiwan simply would not recognize the existence of the PRC and hence all changes and developments on the Chinese Mainland occurred under the rule of the PRC. This was the rationale behind the preference for using a population figure collected at least seven years previously over an updated one released by a rival “rebellious political group” in the KMT regime’s 1955 national statistics.

Given that the KMT regime was still regarded by most countries in the world as the legitimate government of China before 1971 and that it had more diplomatic ties with other countries than the PRC,¹⁶ its national imagination encompassing an all-Chinese territory seemed a credible and convincing claim to most people in Taiwan. The provisional practice of reporting “national” statistics as shown in the *Statistical Abstract of the ROC* was, in the circumstances, still justifiable or even acceptable to some, though not satisfactory to most. As time went on, however, this practice became more and more difficult to justify.

In Table 3, the four major aspects of national statistics covering all of China, namely, territory, map, population, and ‘others’ as appeared in the *Statistical Abstract of the ROC* between 1955 and 2004 are coded to show the changes over time. As can be seen in Table 3, the *Statistical Abstract of the ROC* no longer reported national statistics other than territory, map and population after 1959. As the editors stated in the Introductory Notes to the 1959 issue:

Dynamic data pertaining to the entire country are omitted in this issue purposely on the ground that they are years old and they have been put in all previous editions, to which reference can be conveniently made.¹⁷

16 The KMT regime had more diplomatic ties with other countries than the PRC between 1950 and 1970. After 1971, however, the situation was reversed. Please see the Table 1 for more detailed information.

17 Please refer to “Introductory Notes” in *Chung-hua-min-kuo t’ung-chi t’i-yao* (1959).

Table 3 “Chinese National Imagination” in the *Statistical Abstract of the Republic of China, 1955-2004*

Year	Chinese				Important Political Events	
	Territory	Map	Population	Others+		
1955	*		*	*		
1956	*		*	*		
1957	*		*	*		
1958	*	*	*	*	Artillery warfare in Kinmen	
1959	*		*			
1960	*		*			
1961	*		*			
1962	*		*			
1963	*		*			
1964	*		*			
1965	*	*	*			
1966	*	*	*			
1967	*	*	*			
1968	*	*	*			
1969	*	*	*			
1970	*	*	*			
1971	*	*	*		Taiwan lost United Nations seat	
1972	*	*	*			
1973	*	*	*			
1974	*	*	*			
1975	*		*		President Chiang Kai-shek died	
1976	*		*			
1977	*		*		Chung-li Incident	
1978	*	*	*		Diplomatic ties with US ended	
1979	*	*	*		Kaohsiung Incident	
1980	*	*	*			
1981	*	*	*			
1982	*	*	*			
1983	*	*	*			
1984	*	*	*			
1985	*	*	*			
1986	*	*	*		DPP was formed	
1987	*	*	*		Lifting of martial law	
1988	*	*	*		President Chiang Ching-kuo died	
1989	*	*	*			
1990	*	*	*			
1991	*	*	*		End of national state of emergency	
1992	*	*	*		Election for all congressional seats	
1993	*	*	*			
1994	*	*	*			
1995	*	*	*			
1996	*	*	*		1st direct Presidential election	
1997	*	*	*			
1998	*	*	*			
1999	*	*	*			
2000	*	*	*		DPP won Presidency	
2001	*	*	*			
2002	*	*	*			
2003	*	*	*			
2004	*	*	*		DPP won Presidency	

*: Indicates the presence of information in the *Statistical Abstract*.

+: Includes: arable land, farmers, agricultural production, industries, foreign trade, railway and highway kilometerage, post offices, civil aviation lines, etc. for of all China.

These “national” statistical figures had lost all their practical usefulness given that they were historical rather than dynamic or up-to-date data. The same practical reasons can be given for the data on territory and population for the “entire country,” and yet they continued to appear in these official documents until 1978 (for population) and 2004 (for territory). This might have something to do with the symbolic significance of population and territory in the national imagination. After 1978, only the population of Taiwan and the Fukien area was reported. The procedure of combining 1948 figures for the mainland population with Taiwan’s current population figure to yield a total national population figure was no longer used. However, this major change was neither mentioned nor explained in the introductory notes to the 1978 issue. The national population statistics containing all the mainland provinces just quietly disappeared from the *Statistical Abstract* after 23 years.

Another change that is worthy of mention is that the map of the “entire country” was no longer shown after 1992. There were two important political developments in 1991 that might account for the changes: 1) President Lee Teng-hui [Li Teng-hui] 李登輝 (1923–) announced the end of the national state of emergency effective May 1st, which means that the ROC government no longer treated the PRC as a rebellious group;¹⁸ 2) in 1991, all seats of National Assembly were open to election by eligible voters in Taiwan for the first time since 1948. A similar change also applied to the election of Legislators in 1992, which meant that the National Congress would henceforward represent only people in Taiwan. Despite the strong advocacy by some members of the KMT leadership, the proposition of maintaining some seats representing each mainland province was not adopted in the final design of the new National Congress. These two events symbolized an important *de facto* change in the KMT regime’s official position in its national imagination: It had, in effect, relinquished its previous claim of being the only legitimate national government of all China. When President Lee Teng-hui announced the official end of the national state of emergency at a press conference in 1991, he also openly recognized the PRC regime’s sovereignty by stating that “we have to face the fact that the Chinese Mainland is currently controlled by the Chinese Communist regime,” and the PRC regime should be treated as a “political entity that controlled the Chinese Mainland” and will be referred to as “mainland authority” (Ta-lu tang-chü 大陸當局) or “Chinese Communist authority” (Chung-kung tang-chü 中共當局) accordingly.¹⁹ The ROC government in effect only claims sovereignty over the territory it now effectively ruled, i. e., Taiwan, Ponghu [P’eng-hu] 澎湖, Kinmen and

18 See *Lien-ho pao* 聯合報 (*United Daily News*), May 2, 1991, 1.

19 See *Lien-ho pao*, May 1, 1991, 1. The PRC regime was previously referred to as a “rebellious group” or “communist bandits” by the KMT regime in any official capacity.

Machu (T'ai P'eng Chin Ma 台澎金馬). The written description of the national territory containing the Chinese Mainland, however, continues to appear in the first section of the ROC statistical yearbooks until 2004; that is, after the DPP's Chen Shui-bian [Ch'en Shui-pien] 陳水扁 (1950–) had won the Presidential Election for a second term with a slim majority. In this sense, the change in 1992 was *de facto* rather than *de jure* because neither the KMT regime nor the PRC had officially acknowledged the change. Until now, the PRC still asserts that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China and that it has legitimate sovereignty over Taiwan. However, although the KMT regime no longer claimed sovereignty over the Chinese Mainland after 1991, it also never officially declared the independent sovereignty of Taiwan from China.

While the development of the national imagination in Taiwan between 1992 and 2004 is greatly influenced by the PRC's action, which is still undetermined in its final shape, the change in the national imagination of the KMT regime before 1992 was more a result of domestic political interaction than of "international" influence – in this case, the cross Taiwan Strait relation. It seems that the KMT regime's Chinese national imagination was well preserved in these *Statistical Abstracts* in terms of its description of the "national territory" and display of a "national map" long after it had lost its external international recognition in 1971. However, what remained were not just empty words in these official documents. The Chinese national imagination continued to be the underlying principle for organizing national political institutions in Taiwan after 1971, and only began to change after 1991. After 1987, the KMT regime was forced to take a series of politically reformative measures that came to be known as liberalization or democratization, which in effect gradually led to a transformation of the structure of the Central Government of the ROC from a China-based to a Taiwan-based design. The most important change in the political institutions, from the point of view of a national imagination, was the election of all seats in the National Congress in 1991 and 1992, and the first ever Presidential Election by popular vote in 1996.²⁰ The mainland provinces and their population under the PRC rule were no longer taken into consideration in these newly designed national political institutions. Despite these epoch-making changes, the KMT regime under the Lee Teng-hui administration still made the same Chinese national territorial claims in the *Statistical Abstracts of the ROC* as before. The discrepancy in the official statements on national territory and the actual limit on the exercise of routine democratic procedure reveals a reality of severe conflict between competing national identities in Taiwan.

20 Before 1996, the President of the ROC was indirectly elected by the delegates of the National Assembly from all provinces of China. Taiwanese delegates in the National Assembly never exceeded 20 percent of all delegates before all seats were opened to election in 1991.

3 The Political Consequences of Chinese National Imagination

The task of maintaining a convincing national claim was of crucial importance to the migrant KMT regime in gaining continual recognition from the international community in the battle for legitimacy against the PRC. It was also vital in reassuring the mainland migrants who had come to Taiwan with the KMT regime of its intention to recover the Mainland, as well as soliciting the support of Taiwan's residents in shouldering the national task. The Central Government of the ROC was re-built in Taiwan in accordance with the Chinese national imagination by the KMT regime after 1950 as the main governmental body, which consisted of several congressional organs and a national administrative bureaucratic structure. Since the central government represented all of China, its personnel, especially the high-ranking officials or National Congressmen were mainly Mainlanders from different provinces of China.²¹

In the same vein, Taiwanese representation in these national political institutions was proportional to its status as one of the 36 provinces in the framework of the national administrative division according to the ROC Constitution. For instance, Taiwan had 19 out of 3,045 statutory delegates to the National Assembly, and 8 out of 773 statutory legislators in accordance with the size of its population and the number of local administrative units in 1948 when these National Congressmen were elected to their first term.²² The outstanding numbers of delegates to the National Assembly was 1,572 and the numbers of legislators was 528 in 1955 after the KMT regime relocated to Taiwan. In other words, Taiwanese delegates and legislators constituted less than two percent of these National Congressional bodies in 1955. When members of the National Congress were exempted from re-election and their terms of services indefinitely

21 Detailed information on "original domicile" (*chi-kuan* 籍貫 or nativity) of government personnel were usually available in the roster (*chi-kuan t'ung-hsün lu* 機關通訊錄) published by different divisions of government organs before 1991. The Ministry of Civil Service also published detailed statistics on different ranks of government officials by their original domicile (in terms of the 36 Chinese Provinces and 12 Municipalities) in its annual Statistical Report. See, for instance, *Chung-hua-min-kuo ch'üan-hsü t'ung-chi* (1987), 22–35. As can be seen in Table 4, the percentage of Taiwanese among the government personnel typically decreased with rank. In 1986, only 17.6% of the highest government personnel rank (125 political appointed positions) were Taiwanese. The proportion of Taiwanese in the general population was about 86% at the time. The practice of reporting civil servants' distribution in terms of original domicile was dropped from government statistics after 1991 due to a major amendment to the law regulating registration of one's original domicile on the official Identification Card (*kuo-min shen-fen cheng* 國民身份證) and all official licenses and certificates. For more detail, see Wang Fu-chang 2005a.

22 See *Chung-hua-min-kuo t'ung-chi t'i-yao* (1955), 352 and 418.

extended by the KMT regime in 1954, the Taiwanese members were also included in the arrangement. All these provisional political arrangements seemed to make sense as long as the Chinese national imagination was not seriously challenged. The vulnerability of such practices, however, lies in its assumption of temporality as well as the KMT regime's claim to be a democratic regime or rather a "Free China," in contrast to the "Red China" under the control of the PRC.²³

After Taiwan was handed over by Japan at the end of the War, a tragic incident occurred on February 28, 1947, when the newly liberated Taiwanese's demands for political reforms against the corrupt local government sent by the Central Government of China to take over Taiwan were brutally repressed by the KMT regime.²⁴ After that, a series of political reforms allowing more political autonomy at the local level was implemented in response to the Taiwanese's demands during the incident. The Taiwanese were given rights to elect all public offices at different local government levels, except for the governor of the Taiwan Province who was assigned by the Central Government. These local elections became the KMT regime's showcase to the world as well as to the people of Taiwan of its commitment to building a democracy in Taiwan, which would be an exemplar for the rest of China when it recovered the Mainland. However, given that the election of a National Congress was suspended until the Mainland could be recovered, Taiwanese democratic participation in the political process was limited to the local level.²⁵ This was not acceptable to some Taiwanese political elites, especially those at provincial and local levels.

23 The KMT regime's claim to be a "Free China" began in 1949 when it retreated to Taiwan. After the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, Taiwan was incorporated by the US as part of an alliance against the spread of communism. The KMT regime in Taiwan under the name of the Republic of China became known among other nations as "Free China" as compared to "Red China" during the Cold War Era. As a symbol of the KMT regime's commitment to democracy, the *Free China* magazine (*Tzu-yu Chung-kuo* 自由中國) began publication in November 1949 in Taipei by ex-KMT liberals Lei Chen and Hu Shih 胡適 (1891–1962), with funding from the KMT regime. Ironically, the *Free China* magazine became a dissident magazine focusing on internal problems within Taiwan after 1954. It became even more critical after 1957 when the editors published a series of 15 editorials criticizing the KMT regime for using the unrealistic goal of a "return to the Mainland" as an excuse for maintaining one-party dictatorship in Taiwan. See Hsueh Hua-yuan 1996. The magazine was eventually banned by the KMT regime in 1960 after its publisher Lei Chen was arrested for harboring communist spies.

24 For information on this incident, cf. Lai, Myers, and Wei 1991 and Kerr 1965.

25 For more detail on the Taiwanese position in Taiwan politics in English literature, see Plummer 1970, Lerman 1977, and especially, Jacobs 1971.

Table 4 Government Personnel by Rank and Ethnic Background (Original Domicile), 1986

	Total	Taiwanese	% of Taiwanese
Special Appointments (特任)	125	22	17.6
Ranks	73,122	43,758	59.8
Selected (簡任)	3,158	924	29.3
Recommend (薦任)	17,776	8,670	48.8
Delegated (委任)	42,555	28,209	66.3
Employee (雇員)	9,643	5,955	61.8
Official Class (職等)	56,017	40,707	72.7
Class 10-14	1,530	591	38.7
Class 6-9	16,740	10,968	65.5
Class 1-5	37,746	29,146	77.2
Police (警察人員)	43,140	34,017	78.9
Inspector (警監)	73	4	5.5
Corrector (警正)	2,662	1,223	45.9
Sergeant (警佐)	40,405	32,790	81.2
Custom Official (關務人員)	3,991	2,932	73.5
Inspector (關務技術監正)	650	458	70.4
Technician (高級關務技術員)	1,177	919	78.1
Assistant (關務技術員佐)	2,164	1,555	71.9
Total	176,395	121,434	68.8

As the few Taiwanese national elites did not have to face regular election, as did their local counterparts, Taiwan's legislators and delegates to the National Assembly gradually lost their popularity and representativeness among the Taiwanese people, and became the first targets of political reform at the national level. Calls for the re-election of Taiwanese National Congressmen began to emerge in the 1950s. The proposed reasons for this included: 1) although the Mainland could not hold elections due to the Communist rebellion, Taiwan was still under KMT control; 2) according to the ROC Constitution, the number of Taiwan legislators should be increased after the local administrative units were re-divided, and following the increase in Taiwan's population; 3) the Taiwanese National Congressmen who were elected in 1948 had been out of touch with their constituencies.²⁶ As these reasons did not challenge the political representativeness of other national elites

26 These reasons were argued by Taiwan Provincial Councilmen Kuo Kuo-chi 郭國基 (1900–1970), Kuo Yu-shing [Kuo Yu-hsin] 郭雨新 (1908–1985), Hsu Shi-hsien [Hsü Shih-hsien] 許世賢 (1908–1983), Lee Won-chi, Lee Cho-yuan, and Lee Yuan-zen [Li Yüan-chan] 李源棧 (1910–1969) between 1954 and 1966. For detailed information, cf. Ch'eng and Li 2001.

from the mainland provinces, they were basically framed within the Chinese national imagination of the KMT regime.

Other more radical demands for reform of the National Congress were also proposed by Taiwanese oppositional elites during the 1950s and 1960s for different reasons. For instance, Taiwan Provincial Councilmen Lee Won-chi [Li Wan-chü] 李萬居 (1901–1966) and Lee Cho-yuan [Li Ch'iu-yüan] 李秋遠 (1921–) had proposed that all National Congressmen should be re-elected and that Taiwanese should make up 50% of seats in the new Congress.²⁷ The rationale behind this radical reformatory measure was that Taiwanese constituted about 80% of the population that the ROC government effectively ruled after 1950, and that they provided most of the taxes and manpower in the military service. However, these radical demands were largely contained within the Taiwan Provincial Council by the KMT regime because they were “national” issues and, hence, beyond the duties of “local” provincial councilmen.

Nevertheless, the disclosure of incidents of power abuse for personal profit, as well as ignorance of public opinion by the life-term National Congressmen in the late 1950s and early 1960s added to the frustration of the Taiwanese.²⁸ The mounting pressure for the re-election of the National Congress during the 1960s forced the KMT regime to agree to a supplementary election to add several new members to the aging National Congress in 1969, twenty-two years after the first term was elected in 1947. The number of seats open at this election was calculated on the basis of Taiwan’s population increase and the adjustment in local administrative units over the past twenty years, in accordance with the regulations specified in the ROC Constitution. In this supplementary election, eight delegates to the National Assembly and eleven legislators were to be elected. The newly elected members were added to the original members and together they formed the National Congress. This was achieved following exactly the same logic and rationale of adding the current population figure for Taiwan to the “frozen” 1948 population figure for the rest of the country to come up with a total population of the ROC in the *Statistical Abstracts* as discussed in the previous section. In other words, the supplementary elections for the National Congress were held without compromising the KMT regime’s Chinese national imagination. Even though the KMT regime decided that it would not nominate

27 Lee Won-chi proposed this in June 12, 1959 and Lee Cho-yuan’s similar proposition was brought forth in August 1960. See Ch’eng and Li 2001, 142, 177–178, and 183.

28 The incidents referred by the Taiwan Provincial Councilmen include: 1) the legislators passed a revision of the Publishing Law against popular opinion in June 1958; 2) a law passed to allow the legislators to practice law as attorneys; 3) a law passed to exempt their own children from paying tuition fees; 4) a much-needed law regulating political autonomy at the local and provincial level was postponed for more than ten years. See Ch’eng and Li 2001, 177, 244

candidates of mainland background in this election and that all new members of the congress would be Taiwanese, the representation of Taiwanese in the National Congress was still less than 2% after the 1969 election.²⁹

In short, even though Taiwanese constituted the numerical majority of the population that the ROC essentially ruled over post-1949, they were effectively excluded from exercising meaningful power in the national political arena due to the political institutions constructed according to a blueprint arising from the Chinese national imagination. This became one of the most important sources of political discontent among the Taiwanese elite during the 1960s. Most Taiwanese who witnessed the KMT regime's repression of the February 28th Incident and its aftermath in 1947 were, nonetheless, too pessimistic and apathetic about politics to act on their discontent. In fact, more of the Taiwanese local elite abandoned politics after the 2/28 Incident of 1947 than following 1945, when Taiwan experienced regime change.³⁰ Most Taiwanese political newcomers who ascended to fill the positions vacated after 1947 chose to co-operate with the KMT regime politically to take advantage of a local monopoly on economic interests and, indeed, became part of the KMT's regime system of patronage.³¹ The few daring Taiwanese elites who dissented were tolerated by the KMT regime in order to showcase their democracy. They were effectively contained within the local political arena and their opinions on national politics were essentially ignored by Central Government and by the mass media until 1970.

Taiwanese people, however, were not the only group excluded from meaningful participation in national politics by the political arrangements of the Chinese national imagination. Except for a minority of privileged National Congressmen and high-ranking government officials, most mainland migrants who had come to Taiwan with the KMT regime were also deprived of their political rights to run for public office or to vote in the national political arena, as their Taiwanese counterparts did. Moreover, Mainlanders were also under-represented in Taiwan's local politics, since the KMT regime did not actively support Mainlanders' participation at the local level due to the policy of local self-government by the Taiwanese.³² Except for some dissenting liberal intellectuals,³³ however, this was not a significant problem for most mainland migrants

29 According to Chen Shao-ting, Taiwanese representation in the National Congress was still less than one-seventieth after 1969. See Chen Shao-ting 1971, 14,

30 See Wu and Chen 1993.

31 See Wu and Chen 1993. See also Wu Nai-teh 1987.

32 See Jacobs 1971 and Wei Jung 1976.

33 The most notable group consisted of liberal scholars who gathered around the *Free China Magazine* (1949–1960) to promote democracy in China and to criticize the KMT regime.

who came to Taiwan with the KMT regime until after 1970.³⁴ Most mainland migrants had only very limited experience of a democratic system; democracy was, in fact, an entirely new concept for most before they came to Taiwan. They were also severely intimidated after arriving in Taiwan by the White Terror when the KMT regime imposed strict laws targeting “communist spies” during the state of national emergency, which led to tens of thousands of arrests and imprisonments.³⁵ After the KMT regime had crushed the *Free China Magazine* (*Tzu-yu Chung-kuo* 自由中國) group’s attempt to organize the Chinese Democratic Party (Chung-kuo min-chu-tang 中國民主黨) in 1960 by arresting two prominent Mainlanders, Lei Chen 雷震 (1897–1977) and Fu Cheng 傅正 (1927–1991) on charges of spreading rumors on behalf of the Communists³⁶ and harboring communist spies, most Mainlanders became more conservative about openly voicing their criticisms of the KMT regime.³⁷

The most famous figures in this group included: Hu Shih, Lei Chen, Ying Hai-kuang 殷海光 (1919–1969), and Fu Cheng. See Tien Hsin 1996.

- 34 A good indication of this is that Mainlanders’ under-representation in Taiwan’s local politics did not surface in the public domain as an issue before 1970. The open discussion of this issue began to emerge among some mainland scholars after 1970, such as Wei Jung [Wei Yung] 魏鏞 (1936–2004) or Lung, Kwan-hai [Lung Kuan-hai] 龍冠海 (1906–1983). Cf. Wei Jung 1971 and Lung Kwan-hai 1971.
- 35 White Terror in Taiwan typically refers to the KMT regime’s application of legal or illegal means to suppress political dissenters in the name of purging “communist spies” or “Taiwan Independent promoters” during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. A narrow definition of the White Terror period refers to 1950–1954; see Lan Bo-chou 1993. A broader definition of the White Terror period would extend to 1991 when the last case of state violence against a prisoner of conscience was resolved by a successful protest and led to an amendment to the law. The exact number of White Terror cases and victims remains unknown. According to the White Terror Compensation Foundation, a government-funded organization, there were 13,000 victims in 8,500 cases filed for application for compensation for wrongful imprisonment or execution by court martial in the White Terror era between 1999 and 2007. However, another human rights report quoted a source from the judicial body and estimated that there were 60,000–70,000 political cases and some 200,000 victims; see Wei Ting-chow 1997, 2).
- 36 The “rumor” was “the hopelessness of re-taking the Mainland through military means in the near future” (*fan-kung wu-wang lun* 反攻無望論) as appeared in one editorial article in the *Free China Magazine*; see Yin Hai-kuang 1957.
- 37 The only dissident magazine *Wen Hsin* (文星, literally “cultural star”) published by mainland liberals during the 1960s was more cultural than political in its basic orientation. Instead of criticizing the KMT regime directly, *Wen Hsin* primarily challenged Chinese traditions. See Lee Hsiao-fong 1987, 87.

The younger generation of Taiwanese and Mainlanders who were born after the late 1940s and grew up in postwar Taiwan, however, had very different experiences and motivations compared to the previous generations. Besides the Chinese national imagination and patriotism, they were also taught by the KMT regime to believe in the democratic system and in their inalienable political rights as part of the KMT Government's propaganda promoting itself as a democratic regime, or "Free China," in contrast to the totalitarian CCP regime. Their reactions to the national crises of 1960s and 1970s were much stronger and more involved than those of older generations.

In 1969, United States' President Richard Nixon began to seek to establish some level of contact with the PRC after 19 years of a US embargo on trade with Communist China. On July 15, 1971, President Nixon announced that he was to visit China to seek normalization of relations with the PRC. The alteration of US foreign policy toward the PRC signaled a major change in the ROC's status in the international community. At the end of 1971, the ROC delegates were forced to give up their seat at the UN to the delegates of the PRC regime. In reaction to the increasingly unfavorable atmosphere for the ROC's diplomatic competition with the PRC in the international community during the late 1960s, a group of young intellectuals and elites, encouraged by the KMT regime, joined the newly reformed political comment magazine, *The Intellectuals* (*Ta-hsüeh tsachih* 大學雜誌) in 1970 and demanded more domestic political reforms.³⁸ They reacted very strongly to the national crisis following the 1971 UN incident. The highly sensitive issue of the re-election of all seats in the National Congress was brought out into the open by the editor-in-chief of *The Intellectuals*, Chen Shao-ting 陳少廷 (1932–2012) in 1971,³⁹ and heatedly debated later in front of a large audience on the campus of the National Taiwan University.⁴⁰ Chen stated that the congress of the ROC in Taiwan at the time was totally out of touch with the general public as they had held the offices for more than two decades without being subjected to election. Instead of ethnic injustice, the congressional re-election issue was framed by Chen mainly as a case of generational injustice: Those who were under the age of 43 in 1971, about two-thirds of the country's current population, had never had the chance to choose their congressmen through voting. The strategy of framing the issue in terms of generation rather than ethnicity was adopted mainly because this group of young intellectuals was made up of Taiwanese as well as Mainlanders who had direct or indirect ties with the KMT regime.⁴¹ For the same reasons,

38 See Lee Hsiao-fong 1987, 90–93.

39 Chen Shao-ting 1971.

40 See: T'ai-ta fa-yen 1972.

41 In this context, "Taiwanese" includes those who's original domicile (*chi-kuan* 籍貫) was the

the discussion of the congressional re-election issue in the early 1970s never really went beyond the basic framework of the Chinese national imagination. The re-election of all congressional seats was suggested as a reformatory measure to improve political efficiency and to achieve a better, clean government. It was proposed primarily for practical rather than ideological reasons. Chen Shao-ting and his colleagues at the *Intellectuals Magazine* were very outspoken in their support of the national goal of unification of China. Through their criticism and suggestions for political reforms, they strived to make Taiwan a paradise for all Chinese around the world to yearn for, especially for their fellow countrymen behind the iron curtain on the Chinese Mainland.⁴²

In response to the rising calls for political reform, the new Premier (Head of the Executive Yuan) Chiang Ching-kuo 蔣經國 (1910–1988) implemented a series of new policies, including promoting more Taiwanese young people to some high-profile government and party positions and allowing some supplementary seats to be added to the National Congress through regular elections after 1972.⁴³ However, Taiwanese participation in the central government was still more symbolic than substantial. Of the ten ministers in the Cabinet, only two were Taiwanese after Chiang Ching-kuo became Premier in 1972.⁴⁴ The 29 newly elected supplementary legislators served a three-year term, while the 430 plus (including the nine elected in 1969 in Taiwan) legislators representing all other provinces in China served life-terms. Hence, these reformatory measures in promoting more Taiwanese to high posts and in restructuring the National Congress were still designed and carried out by the KMT regime without compromising the most important element in the Chinese national imagination: That Taiwan is an inseparable part of the Chinese nation.

When *The Intellectuals* editorial group parted company in 1973,⁴⁵ some Taiwanese members joined the political opposition camp and published the first Taiwanese politi-

Province of Taiwan, “Mainlanders” were those with other Chinese provinces as their original domiciles. According to the Household Registration Law (*Hu-chi fa* 戶籍法), people inherited their fathers’ original domicile. This official distinction was also a very important principle of social, economic and political organization among general public in their daily life. See Chang Mau-kuei 1994.

42 Chang Chin-han 1971, 1.

43 The numbers of seats open for the legislator election of 1972 was 29 and 37 in 1975. For the number of seats open for election during 1969–1992, please refer to Table 2-1 in Wang Fu-chang 2005b, 68.

44 Before 1972, there was only one Taiwanese minister in the Cabinet at the most, usually the Minister of the Interior. Chiang appointed two Taiwanese as the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of the Interior after he assumed the premiership in 1972.

45 The dissolution of *The Intellectuals* editorial group was triggered by the radicalization of some

cally critical magazine, *The Taiwan Political Review* (*T'ai-wan cheng-lun* 臺灣政論) in 1975.⁴⁶ A new generation of political opposition gradually emerged to challenge the KMT regime and demanded democratic reforms. In 1977 the opposition camp under the banner of Dangwai (Tang-wai 黨外, literally: “those outside the [ruling] party [i. e. the KMT]”) won an unprecedented number of seats in the local elections which encouraged them to take further steps in organizing their efforts to challenge the KMT regime.⁴⁷ After the US terminated its diplomatic relations with the ROC and established formal relations with the PRC as of January 1st 1979, the KMT regime postponed an upcoming legislator election to deal with the most severe national crisis since its move to Taiwan. In response to this changing political environment, the opposition camp further escalated their challenge by publishing another political commentary magazine, *Formosa* (*Mei-li-tao* 美麗島) in 1979 and began to establish a quasi-political party by establishing local offices for the magazine.⁴⁸ The wave of political activities by the opposition camp during the second half of the 1970s was put to a sudden end when the International Human Rights Day march in Kaohsiung [Kao-hsiung] 高雄 organized by the *Formosa* magazine met with violent repression on December 10, 1979, which came to be known as the *Formosa* or Kaohsiung Incident.

The demands of the political opposition camp at this time, as shown in the political commentaries published in the *Taiwan Political Review* and *Formosa*, were also limited to democratic reforms and did not openly advocate an alternative national imagination. A national imagination that included only Taiwan was obviously a political taboo that the opposition knew the KMT regime would never tolerate at the time. Thus, although some authors had proposed quite radical notions of holding a re-election of the entire congress in the two political dissident magazines – some even addressed these demands in formal congressional sessions – their proposal always contained some form of special arrangement for the representation of the mainland provinces in the new congress, either by doubling their seats according to their proportion of the population in Taiwan, or by reserving a minimum of two seats for every Chinese

political demands that led to internal conflict. The most important was a proposition demanding that the KMT regime allow college students to organize student movements during 1972, which was severely suppressed by the KMT regime in the mass media. See Chen Kuying 1972.

46 The magazine was banned by the KMT regime after just four issues.

47 Lee Hsiao-fong 1987, 125–127.

48 The local offices of the magazine were listed on the back cover of every issue of the magazine. The last issue (No. 4) of *Formosa* (1979) listed the address and the persons in charge of the 11 local offices throughout the island. See also Huang, Fu-shang 2001.

province.⁴⁹ Although the opposition's proposition of a special arrangement for the Mainlanders in the re-elected congress may have been a practical strategy to ease Mainlanders' sense of insecurity about radical reform, the message it sent out was quite different. In such proposals by the opposition camp, mainland migrants and their children in Taiwan were, in some ways, still seen as political representatives of mainland provinces in Taiwan, rather than just part of the Taiwanese population as was consistent with the national imagination of the KMT regime. In this particular context, the Chinese national imagination of the KMT regime was still intact even among its most critical political challengers.

It was not until the early 1980s that the opposition camp began to put forward an alternative national imagination. After the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident in which most of the prominent opposition leaders were arrested and sentenced to prison by court martial, a new group of young Taiwanese elites stepped up to fill the vacancy of leadership left by the imprisoned leaders in the early 1980s.⁵⁰ Reflecting on the setback the opposition camp suffered after the 1979 incident, some opposition leaders realized that they needed to attack the backbone of KMT's rule in Taiwan directly, that is, the Chinese national imagination. To uncover the truth behind the KMT regime's legitimizing myths, they began to delve into history to expose the real story behind the important elements of the Chinese national imagination that the KMT held so sacredly. By exposing the true chaotic circumstances of the election back in 1947 held under the shadow of an escalating Chinese civil war – for example, how the KMT arranged some stand-ins to meet the minimum number for convening a meeting in Taiwan, and also how old these life-term congressmen really were in the 1980s – they effectively challenged the legitimacy of the National Congress. These “historical studies” and the latest status reports of the National Congress were published in a series of books, which, not surpris-

49 For instance, Chang Chin-han 1975, 12, and Fei, Huang, and Kuang 1979.

50 The imprisoned leaders included: Huang Hsin-chieh 黃信介 (1928–1999), Lin Yi-hsiung [Lin I-hsiung] 林義雄 (1941–), Chang Jun-hong [Chang Chün-hung] 張俊宏 (1938–), Shih Ming-der [Shih Ming-te] 施明德 (1941–), Chen Chu [Ch'en Chü] 陳菊 (1950–), and Annette Lu [Lü Hsiu-lien] 呂秀蓮 (1944–). The newly emerged leaders consisted mainly of two groups: 1) young writers who published and wrote for dissident magazines, such as Chiu Yi-ren [Ch'iu I-jen] 邱義仁 (1950–), Lin Chou-shui [Lin Cho-shui] 林濁水 (1947–); and 2) the lawyers who defended the imprisoned leaders, such as Chen Shui-bian, Frank Hsieh [Hsieh Chang-t'ing] 謝長廷 (1946–), Hsu Chen-chang [Hsü Chen-ch'ang] 蘇貞昌 (1947–), You Ching [Yu Ch'ing] 尤清 (1942), and Chang Chuan-hsiung [Chang Chün-hsiung] 張俊雄 (1938–).

ingly, were immediately banned by the KMT regime upon their publication.⁵¹ However, they became very popular among the inner circle of the opposition camp and were frequently quoted by opposition candidates during campaigns and thus reached a wider audience. The strategy of publishing books and magazines became a common practice among the opposition camp. It was very common for them to publish a new magazine under a different and yet related title after the KMT regime had banned the previous one. It was estimated that at least 50 different series of political dissident magazines and well over 200 books were published between 1973 and 1989 by members of the political opposition.⁵²

In 1983, all the Dangwai candidates for the supplementary legislators put the proposition of self-determination as the first of their ten common campaign platforms: "The future of Taiwan should be jointly determined by all its residents."⁵³ The re-election of the entire congress was also listed as the third issue on the platform. These were the first open and collective statements by the opposition camp that suggested treating Taiwan, rather than the imagined China as a sovereign political system. The same self-determination proposition was brought forth again as the first of the twelve common campaign platform issues in the 1985 local election, and in the 1986 legislators' election after the DPP announced its establishment.⁵⁴ Furthermore, along with the re-election of the National Congress, the demand for a direct presidential election was proposed for the first time as part of the 1986 common campaign platforms. Prior to this, the highest level of public office that the opposition camp had demanded to be made open to election was the Governor of the Taiwan Province. These developments clearly indicated the change in the national imagination among the opposition camp that they were willing to propose in 1986.⁵⁵ Along with these new strategies of challenge, the opposition camp began to openly characterize the KMT regime in Taiwan as a "foreign regime" (*wai-lai cheng-ch'üan* 外來政權).⁵⁶ In the heyday of the first open

51 For the series of books by Lin Chou-shui et. al. which were published by the Wide Perspectives Publishers (Po-kuan ch'u-pan-she 博觀出版社), cf. the references to this article.

52 See Chen Tsui-lien 2004, and Pong Lin-song 2004.

53 See Lee Hsiao-fong 1987, 191.

54 For the 1985 platforms, see Lee Hsiao-fong 1987, 216; for the 1986 platforms see Chuang Tien-shi 2004.

55 Although most of these statements or demands for Taiwan Independence had been proposed by overseas Taiwan Independence groups, such as World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI, established in 1970), long before the 1980s, they only became an open demand of the opposition camp inside Taiwan after 1987. Overseas activists of the WUFI began to return to Taiwan after 1991. See Chen Ming-chen 2000, 83–89.

56 The idea of treating the KMT as a "foreign regime" was first proposed by Shi Ming [Shih

discussion of the Taiwan Independence issue in Taiwan during 1987, one DPP legislator even went on record in the congressional session to request that the KMT regime should accept the fact that Taiwan had already been independent of China for forty years.⁵⁷ However, it took another five years before the KMT regime decided to allow a re-election of Congress in 1991, and ten years before the presidential election was actually held in 1996.

4 Reasons for the “Prolonged Exile”

Why was the KMT regime able to sustain the Chinese national imagination and its corresponding national political institutions for such a long period of time after it had lost one of its most important symbols of legitimacy, namely, the UN seat in 1971? A typical answer to this question is that the KMT regime was able to maintain repressive control over Taiwanese society to sanction any opinion it deemed threatening to its rule, and to impose its version of the national imagination on the general population through education, mass media and cultural industries. The repressive measures and the indoctrination of the official national imagination were, of course, important factors. Such an answer, however, overestimates the capacity of the government in the imposition of national ideas on the general public. The process of imposing the national imagination was, in fact, a process of both indoctrination and persuasion. The indoctrination was very successful because it made sense, not only to the mainland migrants, but also to the Taiwanese. Most Taiwanese were convinced that they were indeed Chinese.

The fact that most Taiwanese were descendants of Han Chinese from the southern provinces of the Chinese Mainland during the Ch'ing Dynasty was widely accepted among Taiwanese throughout the Japanese colonial rule between 1895 and 1945. This can be seen from the way in which the Taiwanese were counted in the Japanese population censuses and their responses to these categorizations. In the seven regular population

Ming] 史明 (1918–), a Taiwan Independence activist in Japan, in his *Four Hundred Year History of the Taiwanese*, (1962 Japanese edition, 1980 Chinese edition, published in California). It was widely used by the overseas Taiwan Independence activists in the 1960s and 1970s. It began to emerge in the public domain in Taiwan after 1987 when the issue of Taiwan Independence was made public by the DPP. See, for instance, *Lien-ho pao*, January 17, 1987, 2, for the first instance of the DPP's use of the term “foreign regime” in that particular newspaper.

57 Hsu Rong-shu [Hsü Jung-shu] 許榮淑 (1939–) made the inquiry on November 3rd, 1987. See the transcript of Hsu's statements in the Legislative Yuan in *Min-chin pao* 民進報 (*Democratic Progressive News*) 37 (November 7–13, 1987), 2.

censuses conducted by the Japanese colonial government in Taiwan between 1905 and 1944, Taiwanese were typically categorized into four groups according to their ancestral lineages: Han people of Fukien (Fu-chien hsi 福建系) Han people of Kuang-dong (Kuang-tung hsi 廣東系), plain aborigines (*pingpu tsu* 平埔族), and aborigines (*kaosha tsu* 高砂族).⁵⁸ When the Japanese government conducted a special census of the Han Taiwanese in 1926 to register in more detail their family origins in the two southern Chinese provinces, they were still able to report the location of the ancestral home of the Han Taiwanese in terms of the administrative units of Fu (府) and county (Chou 州).⁵⁹ Taiwanese people, therefore, were quite used to the idea that they were a people different from the Japanese within the Japanese empire or nation before 1945. Although some Taiwanese elite began to emphasize Taiwan's modernization experience during the Japanese rule as a condition for maintaining local autonomy to prevent Taiwan from being caught in the civil war in the Mainland after 1945,⁶⁰ they never denied their Chinese inheritance. In fact, most Taiwanese elite strongly resented the accusation of Taiwanese Japanization by the Chinese officials of the KMT regime, and hence, emphasized the Taiwanese national spirit as displayed in their numerous revolts against their Japanese rulers and their whole-hearted welcome of Chinese rulers in 1945.⁶¹ Even after the February 28th Incident of 1947, when some of the Taiwanese elite went abroad and began to demand Taiwan independence, the strong attachment of the Taiwanese general public to their Chinese ancestral lineage in their cultural practices was still the most difficult challenge for those who proposed the alternative national imagination for the Taiwanese. To this date, most Taiwanese people still carve the names of their ancestral homes, typically the name of a county of a province in the Chinese Mainland, on their tombstones to show their family lineage if they are buried in the traditional way.⁶² The books of family lineage (*chia-p'u* 家譜, *tsu-p'u* 族譜) among the Taiwanese also usually trace their family origins back to ancestral homes on the Chinese Mainland.

58 See *T'ai-wan sheng wu-shih-i nien lai t'ung-chi t'i-yao* (1946). A similar categorization scheme was adopted by the KMT regime when it conducted its first census in 1956. The category of "plain aborigines" however, was dropped by the KMT regime in this census.

59 *Taiwan zaiseki Kan minzoku kyōkan-betsu chōsa* (1928).

60 See Philips 2003, 8–10.

61 For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Chen Tsui-lien 2002.

62 In 1971, the former Speaker of the Taiwan Provincial Council, Huang Chow-chin [Huang Ch'ao-ch'in 黃朝琴 (1892–1972), and Vice-speaker Lin Ding-li [Lin Ting-li] 林頂立 (1908–1980) publicly suggested that Taiwanese people can always find out about the location of their ancestral homes in China from their ancestors' tombstones, ancestral tablets (*shen-chu pai-wei* 神主牌位) and books of family lineage if they need to. See *Lien-ho pao*, July 25, 1971, p. 2.

These factors of historical experience and memory may account, at least in part, for the success in instilling the Chinese national imagination amongst the Taiwanese by the KMT regime. Yet, this was only part of the picture. The KMT regime's version of the Chinese national imagination also entailed an assumption equating the cultural and/or ancestral lineage boundary to the political institution of national boundary. The national boundary established as such was deemed sacred and not subject to any negotiation or discussion. Those who tried to change the national boundary were considered to be ungrateful or to have forgotten their origins, and therefore, were considered an enemy of the nation.⁶³ The real challenge for the oppositional camp in promoting democratic reform in Taiwan, in this sense, was to undermine the unspoken assumption relating ancestral lineage and culture to the political institution of a nation embedded in the Chinese national imagination.

It was not an easy task for the opposition camp to promote an alternative national imagination given the dominance of the Chinese national imagination and regime of the KMT in Taiwan. Ironically, what eventually led to the emergence of an alternative national imagination was not the breaking down of basic elements in the original national imagination, that is that Taiwanese are all Chinese and that Taiwan is an inseparable part of the Chinese nation. It was, rather, the unintended political consequence of the temporary national political institutions designed under the Chinese national imagination that created an opportunity for Taiwan to challenge its rival. The sense of being discriminated against systematically under the temporary political institutions was especially unbearable for the younger generations who truly believed in the democratic values as preached by the KMT regime's state apparatus of ideological indoctrination. After the 1969 election for the supplementary seats of the National Congress in which the KMT did not nominate or support any Mainlanders to run on its ticket,⁶⁴ many

63 The typical accusation of those who propagated Taiwanese independence or the idea that "Taiwanese are not Chinese" is that they were *shu-tien wang-tsu* 數典忘祖, literally, "ungrateful or forgetting one's own origin". This term became widely used in the news media and became known among the public especially after the 1979 Formosa Incident, in which the leaders of the opposition camp were charged with treason for propagating Taiwan independence. See, for instance, an open statement "Pao min-tsu ch'ien-ch'iu te ming-mai, yao tzu-sun wan-tai te hsing-fu, wo-men tui 'Huang Hsin-chieh teng-jen pan-luan-an' te k'an-fa" 保民族千秋的命脈、要子孫萬代的幸福、我們對「黃信介等人叛亂案」的看法 (Our Opinions on the Rebellious Case of Huang Hsin-chieh and his Colleagues), which was signed by 801 university and college professors. See *Lien-ho pao*, June 2, 1980, p. 3.

64 The reason for not nominating Mainlanders was that the "KMT leadership decided that the Mainlanders had had their elections in 1947–1948 and now it was the turn of the Taiwanese" (Jacobs 1971, 142).

young Mainlanders began to voice their sense of political deprivation.⁶⁵ The sense of ethnic injustice among young Taiwanese and Mainlanders, though somewhat contradictory in their identification of who the “political minority” was in Taiwan, gradually converged in the demand for reform of the national political institutions to reflect the territorial and demographic reality of Taiwan. The early signs of convergence appeared in the early 1980s in the publicly voiced concern of the younger generations about how to deal with the problems of “regionalism” (*ti-yü kuan-nien* 地域觀念), which was considered the root or cause of the antagonism between Taiwanese and Mainlanders. In an open forum organized by the *China Tribune* (*Chung-kuo lun-t’an* 中國論壇) magazine in 1982, some scholars pointed out that the overdue temporary arrangement for the national representative bodies was the key to ethnic tension between Taiwanese and the Mainlanders.⁶⁶ On September 8, 1987, the DPP announced in a press conference that it would promote the re-election of the National Congress as a priority in its political agenda.⁶⁷ A special committee consisting of prominent leaders from the opposition camp was formed to promote the issue the following day.⁶⁸ To launch their campaign, the committee organized an island-wide torch relay (*sheng-huo ch’uan-ti ch’ang-p’ao* 聖火傳遞長跑) in November 1987.⁶⁹ A mass rally and demonstration promoting the cause organized by the DPP was attended by over four thousand party members and a

65 They were referring to the fact that Mainlanders were underrepresented in Taiwan’s local politics and that the KMT regime under the new leadership of Chiang Ching-kuo had begun to recruit more Taiwanese young people to the higher positions in the government or in the party after 1971. For instance, Lung Kwan-hai argued that “due to the special position of Taiwan in the struggle against the Mainland Communists, and being natives of the island, (Taiwanese) are in a more favorable position, and have more advantages and privileges than the evacuees from the Mainland” (Lung Kwan-hai 1971, 19). Similarly, after showing “evidence” of Mainlanders’ unfavorable economic and political positions in Taiwan (i. e., Mainlanders’ representation in the Taiwan Provincial Assembly), Wei Jung warned that “if the financial situation of younger generations of Mainlanders does not improve and their opportunities for political participation remains limited for an extended period of time, it may create undesirable political consequences which are no less serious than the disaffection of the Taiwanese.” (Wei Jung 1971, 268).

66 See Lee Hong-shi 1982, esp. 13–19, with statements of Lee Hong-shi [Li Hung-his] 李鴻禧 (1949–), Chen Shao-ting and Yang Kuo-shu 楊國樞 (1932–)

67 See *China Times*, September 9, 1987, 2.

68 The formal name of the committee was the “Kuan-ch’è kuo-hui ch’üan-mien kai-hsüan wei-yüan-hui” 貫徹國會全面改選委員會 (Committee for Promoting the Re-election of the National Congress). See *Lien-ho pao*, September 10, 1987, 2.

69 See *Min-chin pao* 39 (November 21–27, 1987), 1 and 3.

further twenty thousand protesters on December 25, 1987.⁷⁰ During the following two years, the DPP held at least thirty public speeches and rallies all around the island to further promote the cause.⁷¹ This sustained campaign seemed to have had a significant effect on popular opinion on the issue, especially among the younger generations. By March 1990, when the student movement rose to protest against the National Assembly for passing resolutions to extend their own power, the convergence of consensus on the necessity for democratic reforms among the younger generations from different ethnic background was evident in their statements and demands, which were to:

- 1) dismiss the National Assembly immediately
(*li-chi chieh-san* Kuo-min ta-hui 立即解散國民大會)
- 2) abolish the provisional law of national emergency
(*fei-ch'u lin-shih tiao-k'uan* 廢除臨時條款);
- 3) call a national meeting to discuss important national issues
(*chao-k'ai kuo-shih hui-i* 召開國民國是會議), and
- 4) draw up a specific timetable for future democratic reforms
(*t'i-ch'u wei-lai chü-t'i te min-chu kai-ko shih-chien piao* 提出未來具體的民主改革時間表).⁷²

Additionally, in response to the KMT regime's continuing repression of the Taiwan independence issue, the DPP began to openly promote the right to assert Taiwan's independence after 1987. Due to the political sensitivity of the issue, DPP leaders could not persuade many of their members to agree to an open stand on asserting Taiwan independence in 1987. However, when Hsu Chow-der [Hsü Ts'ao-te] 許曹德 (1937–) and Tsai You-chuan [Ts'ai Yu-ch'üan] 蔡有全 were charged with treason for openly advocating Taiwan independence in 1987, the DPP decided to support them in the name of freedom of speech.⁷³ On April 7, 1989, Cheng Nan-rong [Cheng-nan-jung] 鄭南榕 (1947–1989), a Mainlander DPP member, burned himself to death when the KMT regime tried to arrest him on a charge of treason for publishing a document advocating Taiwan independence in

70 See *Min-chin pao* 44 (December 26, 1987–January 1, 1988), 1.

71 See Wang Fu-chang 1993.

72 See the "Chung-cheng chi-nien-t'ang ching-tso hsüeh-sheng 3-yüeh 19-jih sheng-ming 中正紀念堂靜坐學生三月十九日聲明" (March 19 Statement of the Sit-in Students in the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall), in Ho Chin-san 1990, 142–143. The first election of all delegates to the National Assembly was held the next year.

73 The DPP passed a resolution at its second national convention on November 11, 1987, stating that, "People have the freedom to advocate for Taiwan independence" to be added to the Party Outline. See *Min-chin pao* 38 (November 14–20, 1987), 1

a magazine that he edited.⁷⁴ Two years later, the DPP passed a resolution advocating Taiwan independence in its 'Party Outline' just before the first election of all seats in the National Assembly in 1991. The first proposition in the DPP Party Outline stated that,

Taiwan should establish an independent country according to the reality of its sovereignty, and draw up a new Constitution to establish a legal and political system that fits into Taiwan's reality," and the second asserted that, "Taiwan should redefine its national sovereignty, territory, and its people in accordance with the reality of current sovereignty.⁷⁵

A Taiwanese national imagination had thus formally emerged and had become a contending national identity and organizing principle for the re-structuring of national political institutions.

Although the KMT leadership did not accept the alternative in a *de jure* sense, and even tried to suppress it, most political reforms of the national institutional structure in the 1990s seemed to follow the new propositions in the different national imagination in a *de facto* manner eventually. The 1991 congressional re-election symbolized the first step in a re-organization of the national political institutions taken by the KMT regime under the new leadership of Lee Teng-hui, who succeeded Chiang Ching-kuo after he passed away in 1988. This was followed by several important reforms over the next few years, including six revisions of the ROC constitution to accommodate the political reality of Taiwan. When the direct presidential election by popular vote was finally held in 1996, in which the incumbent Lee Teng-hui won by a majority, the structure of the national political institutions in Taiwan was totally changed to represent only the population within the territory that it effectively ruled since 1949. To the KMT regime, Taiwan was no longer a place of temporary retreat for a migrant regime, but rather a place of exclusive national sovereignty, *albeit* still in a *de facto* sense. A prolonged period of the KMT acting like a migrant regime finally came to an end after more than forty years since its relocation to Taiwan.

74 Cheng published Hsu Shi-kai's [Hsü Shih-k'ai] 許世楷 (1934–) "Draft of the Republic of Taiwan Constitution" (T'ai-wan kung-ho-kuo hsien-fa ts'ao-an 台灣共和國憲法草案) in his *Tzu-yu shih-tai chou-k'an* 自由時代週刊 (*Freedom Times Weekly*) on December 10, 1988, and was immediately charged with treason. He refused to be arrested and warned that he would burn himself to defend his freedom of speech. He stayed in his office for 71 days until the police tried to take him. See *Tzu-li wan-pao* 自立晚報 (*Independent Evening News*), April 8, 1989.

75 This resolution was passed on October 13, 1991, during the DPP's fifth national convention. See *Min-chu chin-pu-tang tang-chang tang-kang* (1995), 11.

5 Concluding Remarks

The emergence of a Taiwanese national imagination in the political arena during the early 1990s marks the beginning of another epoch of political competition in Taiwan. The pressure of an alternative framework for a national imagination had led to some elements of the old version of KMT's Chinese national imagination, in particular the claim of sovereignty over all of China, to be quickly discarded in the 1990s when the KMT regime announced the end of the national state of emergency. Whether it admits it or not, the re-structuring of Taiwan's national political institutions to accommodate Taiwan's actual sovereignty by the KMT regime was, in many aspects, consistent with the intentions of the opposition camp proposed in its Taiwanese national imagination. The Chinese national imagination of the KMT regime, however, did not fade away altogether; it was modified after the mid-1990s. Despite the modification, the most important feature is that it still firmly rejects the idea of establishing an independent country for Taiwan, and continues to pursue the goal of unification with China.⁷⁶ This basic position is accompanied by two other related ideas. First, the historical conviction that Taiwan has been an inseparable part of China since ancient times, in the old version of the Chinese national imagination, is still the central element in the "modified version," and has become a heatedly debated subject in the interpretation of Taiwan's history since 1997.⁷⁷ Second, the preference for Taiwan to have closer ties or more formal relations with China in the near future, which has also become the focus of debates over mainland policies since the 1990s.⁷⁸ The result, not surprisingly, is a highly divisive state of conflict in national identity among the general public in Taiwan.

The competing aspects of national identity in contemporary Taiwan were further complicated by the emergence of the real "Chinese factor". After the resumption of cross Taiwan Strait relations in 1987 due to humanitarian considerations for the aging mainland migrants who had not been allowed to visit China since 1950, and the change in government policy on allowing Taiwanese nationals to invest and to work in China later, another dimension of the Chinese factor was added to the already chaotic internal disputes over national identity in Taiwan. The ascendance of China as a powerful nation in

76 A committee of National Unification was established by the KMT regime on October 7, 1990, after the end of the national state of emergency to declare its intention to pursue unification with China. Lee Teng-hui openly stated in the inauguration ceremony of the committee that Taiwan independence was not a plausible option. See *Lien-ho pao*, October 8, 1990, 2.

77 See Wang Fu-chang 2005b.

78 Examples are debates over whether Taiwan should recognize degrees from Chinese universities, lowering the restrictions on Chinese spouses of Taiwanese in obtaining citizenship, and allowing more Chinese tourists and regular direct flights between Taiwan and China.

the world and its insistence on pursuing Chinese unification with Taiwan at all costs, including by military means, were interpreted very differently by the proponents of different national imaginations in Taiwan. Whilst supporters of the Taiwanese national imagination strongly resent the threat of hundreds of missiles on the Chinese coast designed to put Taiwan within the firing range in recent years, they are even more concerned about the lack of strong reaction to the threat from their fellow nationals in Taiwan who hold with the Chinese national imagination. Supporters of the Chinese national imagination typically attribute the Chinese military threat to the “irresponsible” propagation of Taiwan independence by their rival camp. According to a recent poll commissioned by the Mainland Affairs Council on popular attitudes towards future relations between Taiwan and China, very few people in Taiwan now favor the extreme positions of either immediately unifying with China (2.1%) or declaring Taiwan independence (8.2%). Most people prefer maintaining the *status quo* (51.8%) – although their definitions of what the *status quo* is can be quite different – or a more gradual approach toward an eventual unification (12.9%) or independence (15.4%).⁷⁹ Forming a consensus on national identity from the competing national imaginations is perhaps the most difficult challenge for people in Taiwan.

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79 The poll was taken on April 20–22, 2007 by the Election Studies Center, National Chengchi University (Cheng-chih ta-hsüeh hsüan-chü yen-chiu chung-hsin 政治大學選舉研究中心). The distribution of preferences has been quite similar over the past five years. Before 2001, more respondents preferred eventual unification to eventual independence. See the historical trend of the data on the official website of the Mainland Affairs Council: www.mac.gov.tw.

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