The Referendum and Taiwan’s democratization

---The application of symbolic interactionism with theatric analogy

L’Autre, n’est-il pas, pour longtemps, la partie de soi-même que l’on refuse désormais de reconnaître comme telle?

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1. Problematic

“For the first time in Taiwan, the whole world is watching.” This is right the slogan of DPP on the referendum in the presidential election of 2004. I would like to recall again the relation between presidential election and referendum, since the referendum would be the most important and controversial subject during the electoral campaign. However, after the end of the election, it is said that the referendum is nothing but a political strategy, and since it corresponds to the result of presidential election, seldom could it tell about the democratization of Taiwan. I don’t think it true, and on the contrary, perhaps it is right this phenomenon (highly political mobilization) that this referendum could reveal the deep structure of Taiwan’s society.

This paper aims at present the relation between the referendum and Taiwan’s democratization. However, it is not to build a causal relation between them, but to prove that the democratization and the referendum are two major axes, which mutually reinforce in Taiwan’s pursuit of his subject in regard to the modern world community. While KMT failed to have its mandate of China in the 1970s, the demand for a subject based on the Taiwanese consciousness, which in fact has rooted in the walk of modernization, begined to develop fast. On the one hand, it is regarding to the nation-building which aims at replacing the Chinese nationalism. On the other hand, the state-building means that the exercise of state should conform to the will of people living in Taiwan as well as to the de facto territoriality. However, it is rather difficult to identify that to what extent has the Taiwanese nationalism taken the place of Chinese nationalism as well as Taiwan’s democracy has consolidated, the referendum may be an indicator in this regard. Since, the referendum is by definition the manifestation of people’s will, who live in an identified territory.

In consequence, with an end to demonstrate the dynamic of nation/state-building with special reference to nationalism, democratization and referendum, it is necessary to take an approach more constructivist which is capable of integrating agency and structure on the one hand, and rational strategy and collective norm on the other hand. Four sections will compose this paper. After examining the existing theories on

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1 Robert Muchembled, L’invention de l’homme modern: Sociabilité, meurs et comportements collectives dans l’Ancien Régime, Paris, Fayard, 1988. The sentence could be translated into English as: “Other”, isn’t it, for a long time, right the part of oneself that one refuse to recognize as such?”
democratization, I will present a perspective based on Pierre Bourdieu’s generative epistemology in the first section. According to this perspective, I will further develop a symbolic interactionism with theatric analogy in order to analyze the democratization, nationalism and referendum in Taiwan. The second section is the prelude of this historical play, alias “search for Taiwan’s subject”, which will separate into two parts: the age before 1945, and the period of KMT’s regime. While the Taiwanese consciousness is generated in contrast to its dominant, the later part will focus on the establishment and collapse of “One China Doctrine”. This will offer the background of Taiwan’s political transition after the 1980s.

The third section will concentrate on the presidential election of 2004, which is the high tide of this play. With the help of referendum, the Taiwanese consciousness has come into scene legally and legitimately vis-à-vis the Chinese cultural hegemony in Taiwan. By answering some questions related to the referendum, I’ll explain why the referendum would be a milestone with regard to Taiwan’s democratization as well as to the building of modern Taiwanese nation-state. Entitled as ‘Bringing the political back in’, the concluding section will accentuate the ‘political’ thinking\(^2\) is important not only to the study of democratization, but also to the future of Taiwan.

I. Literature review and the application of symbolic interactionism

1. The major assumptions of this paper

“If we use the theatric analogy on Taiwan’s democratization, the legalization of the Referendum Law (and the following debates on its application in the presidential election) will be the high tide.” This is the assumption that I propose in the research project. The reason why this assumption works, it is because that in Taiwan, the referendum means not only an important indicator to the democratization, but also an affirmation with regard to the de facto territory of this political community, no matter what his name is. That is, Taiwan’s democratization is in itself related to the regime crisis as well as to the state crisis\(^3\). It is in this context that I assume that the referendum could be the high tide of the democratization in Taiwan, since, as I will prove later, the referendum is the critical moment when the “modern democratic Taiwanese political nationalism” meets the “traditional authoritative Chinese cultural nationalism” in the face of all the people of Taiwan.

It is not difficult to understand why I contrast democratic/authoritative and Taiwanese/Chinese in this research, since it is wildly recognized that these two oppositions relate to Taiwan’s democratization. Meanwhile, the other two oppositions would not be easy to understand without referring to the special historical context of Taiwan’s international status and to the concept of modernity in regard to the nation-

\(^2\) Jean Baudouin, *Introduction à la Sociologie Politique*, Seuil, 1998, p. 307. The ‘political thinking’ concerns the relation between human being and his/her political community. In this regard, the cognitive, normative and symbolic dimensions would be emphasized.

state. Briefly, the territoriality situate in the center of nation-state⁴. While the territory of Republic of China (ROC) and the “One China Doctrine” of KMT do not correspond to the modern international norm at the beginning of 1970s, the “modern Taiwanese political nationalism” arises and aims at substituting the “traditional Chinese cultural nationalism”⁵. It is modern in that the Taiwanese nationalism corresponds to the modern international norm. It is political because the Taiwanese nationalism is not an ethnical nationalism, but politically constructed as long as the modernization of Taiwan’s nation-state⁶.

The Taiwan’s modernization history will be narrated on the second section. This section will concentrate on the theoretical issue, which will contribute to the framework of this analysis as well as the narration of Taiwan’s modern history.

2_ The literature review

Two types of approaches dominate the existing literatures on the study of democratization. The structure-based approaches emphasis the importance of the requisites that are conducive to democracy, and the agency-based approaches focus on the role of political actors and the influences of their behaviors⁷. The first explores the preconditions of democracy, which could be classified into four categories: economic wealth⁸, social structure⁹, culture factors¹⁰ and external contexts¹¹. While these perspectives are more or less structure-determinist, hardly could they answer the question of timing, and illustrate the dynamic of regime change, which are the central interests for the study of democratization. The later, in contrast to the first, focus on the strategies of political actors and their impacts on the regime change. However, this perspective contends that it is the elites who filter the structure factors, not the other way round¹². For lack of consideration on the structure factors, the agency-based orientation has been criticized as ‘heroic illusion’¹³. And this is right the reason why the political transition has been characterized with uncertainty. It is because that this

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⁵ About the reason why the Chinese nationalism is traditional, see Friedrich Kratochwil, ibid, p. 31.
⁶ Regarding to the comparison between political nationalism and ethnical nationalism, See, Brigitte Krulic, La Nation: Une idée modern, Paris, ellipses, 1999, Chapter I and II.
perspective sees the political actors behave in their own rational calculation. With little attachment to the structure, the interaction of elites during the democratization would be seen as chain reaction of atom.

Furthermore, these two approaches are both founded on the scholastic epistemology in that they dichotomize the structure and agency\(^4\). Not only structure but also the agency is regarded as something objectively ‘out there’. With an end to theorize these ‘objective facts’, structure as well as agency has been reified in order to obtain the pure and universal knowledge. Objectively and universally, the agency has been viewed as over-socialized with regard to structure in the structure-based approaches, and under-socialized in the agency-based approaches\(^5\). Neither could they offer a pertinent explanation about the dynamic of regime transition.

Also, democratization as well as democratic consolidation relates to the change of political culture. However, the structure-based approaches are incapable of treating the cultural change, and the agency-based approaches think the actors behave according to their rational calculation, which is nothing to do with culture. In consequence, even though it is wildly recognized that the regime change relates to the culture change, but we are rather passive on this subject. That is, we know that political culture influence democratization and the consolidation of democratic regime, but we don’t know how and who generates the culture change, and these changes are more feasible to what kind of people. The existing theories view the regime change by way of rationality and of interest, which are more or less related to the economic order.

3. The symbolic interactionism with theatri analogy

After examining the existing literatures on democratization, I would like to present a new approach that aims at eliminating the dichotomy between structure and agency on the one hand, and reducing the uncertainty on the other hand. Also, this approach would be capable of treating the culture change during the democratic transition. Based on the generative epistemology, this approach will develop a symbolic interactionism to analyze Taiwan’s democratization and referendum.

While this approach accentuates the role of meaning in human society, the analysis of symbol would be an access to understand the social interaction. As far as interaction to be concerned, *habitus* will be firstly defined as a key to understand the theory of human practice. According to Bourdieu, *habitus* could be defined as

a system of acquired dispositions functioning on a practical level as categories of perception and assessment or as classificatory principles as well as being the organizing principles of action\(^6\).

*Habitus* is, in its formation, the ‘internalization of externality’\(^7\). What are important about the *habitus* is where it comes from, how it presents an explanation capable of integrating both the objective and subjective elements of human practice,

and how the generative principles of human behavior, which it contains, interact with the world to produce practice. In this regard, *habitus* is a product of social structure, of the experience of conditions and conditionings that are particular to a given position in the social space. And the dispositions that make up *habitus* are ‘embodied social structures’, and are determined by social structure, by the conditions and conditionings experienced as a result of one’s position in the social space. By identifying the location of agency, we could not only understand his/her *habitus* but also his/her dispositions. In consequence, the dichotomy between structure and agency could be eliminated, and the uncertainty would be reduced, because it would be easier to understand the behavior of agency when we refer it to his/her location. In order to apply this generative epistemology to the study of democratization, I would go further by presenting a symbolic interactionism with theatric analogy:

a. Each participant enters a social situation carrying an already established biography of prior dealings with the other participants, or at least with participants of their kind; and enters also with a vast array of cultural assumptions presumed to be shared. This is, in Pierre Bourdieu’s term, the *habitus*.

b. The democratic transition, which is a social situation with special reference to political change, can be viewed as public dramatic performance, and this theatric metaphor address its handling of normative conflict, of the role of leadership, of the issue of persuasiveness, and of the connection between the public performance and private persona.

c. During this period, the interaction order is founded dynamically on the ‘sens *pratique* (feel for the game)’, which is a pre-reflexive level of practical mastery. While the *habitus* is realized in the *sens pratique*, it is a mode of knowledge that does not necessarily contain knowledge of its own principles and is constitutive of reasonable but not rational behavior.

d. The political elites play a central role in the scene during the democratization, since they stand on the crucial position with the capacity to persuade—and perhaps inspire—others. The strategy of political elites would be more effective and legitimate when it coincides with the *sens pratique*.

e. The control of the state would be the central issue for the political elites, since the state would facilitate the symbol of the governors. But this does not mean to say that there is no resistance, inertia and skepticism that would otherwise stymie them, while the state is in itself also an important part of structure.

By way of the symbolic interactionism, the democratization would be viewed as

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18 Christian Chauviré and Olivier Fontaine, *Le vocabulaire de Bourdieu*, ellipses, 2003, p. 44.
21 It is because agents never know completely that they are doing that what they do has more sense that they know’, Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge, Polity Press. 1990, p. 69.
normative conflict between the *ancien régime* and new democracy, and the consolidation of democracy will be the moment when people realize that it is time for the *ancien régime* to get off the scene, and the democracy is the only game in the stage. By narrating Taiwan’s modern history, the following section will illustrate the emergence of Taiwanese consciousness, which is the core value in contrast with the *ancien régime*, which is based on the ‘One China Doctrine’.

II. Modernity, Nation-Building and Democratization

1. Taiwan: perspectives on world history

“How to narrate the Taiwanese History?” This question might depend on who is the interpreter. KMT who took over the state after 1945 became the interpreter of Taiwanese history. In consequence, ‘Taiwan is one part of China’ had become the basic ideology. According to this Sino-centric perspective, Taiwan has long been one part of China since the Three Kingdom Period (220–265AD). However, Sino-centric thought did not correspond to the modern world order, which is based on the nation-state. Since this paper aims at explaining the referendum and democratization with regard to the building of modern nation-state, I would like to start Taiwan’s history from its entrance into the modern world scene, i.e. the era of navigation.

‘Ilha Formosa’ was Taiwan’s name in the world stage when the Portuguese sailed across the Taiwan Strait (1544 AD.). However, due to its geopolitical and economical factors, Taiwan was destined for a tragedian. The Dutch (1624 AD.) and Spanish (1626 AD.) settled in Taiwan respectively in the early colonial period. And Cheng Chen-Kung and his troops came to Taiwan after the Ming Dynasty collapsed (1662 AD.). In order to strengthen the coastal defense, the Mandarin Empire decided to occupy Taiwan in 1683. However, while the Western imperialism expanded to Far East, Taiwan was one of the first parts of Mandarin Empire, which opened the port under the western demand (1862 AD.). In 1895, according to the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Taiwan became the Japanese colony.

During this period, ‘Taiwanese’ did not represent as a social episteme for the people living in Taiwan. There were many ethnic groups living in Taiwan and the nation-building had not began yet24. But soon, the ‘Taiwanese consciousness’ had been formed on the one part by the discriminative treatment, and on the other part by the process of modernization under the colonial policies25. After the World War I, ‘the doctrine of self-determination’, which was proclaimed by Wilson, the President of the United States, encouraged the nation-building process in Taiwan. Little by little, the residents in Taiwan had formed the Taiwan nationalism with its opposition to the Japanese rule during the colonial era. However, when Japanese was conquered in 1945, the Taiwanese nationalism encountered another repressor, the Chinese nationalist government.

2. The Taiwan Consciousness under the ‘One China Doctrine’


“Taiwan has been one part of China from long time ago.” This is the claim that used by the Chinese nationalism to fight back the challenge of the Taiwanese nationalism. However, the reason why China took over Taiwan in 1945 was not due to either historical or cultural reasons, but owing to the geopolitical consideration of the United States vis-à-vis Japan in East Asia. But, this strategy had been revised after KMT was defeated in the civil war and the breakout of Korean War. The U.S supported KMT regime in Taiwan with an end to contain the communist world, and thanks to the recognition of the West, KMT regime secured its position in Taiwan at the early years of cold war.

Recognized by the occidental world and being representative of China in the UN, the KMT regime, or Free China, imposed authoritative rule on Taiwan, which is based on ‘One China Doctrine’. However, the ‘One China Doctrine’ is not only the Chinese Hallstein Doctrine in KMT’s foreign policy, but also the ideology to legalize and legitimize their rule in Taiwan. With an end to represent and reunify the whole China, KMT encapsulated Taiwan into the Chinese constitutional order. That is, the regular general elections have been suspended at the national level due to the Temporary Provisions, promulgated in 1948, while the local election continued. The ‘One China Doctrine’ has been safeguarded by this institutional arrangement, but it was still necessary to promote its cultural hegemony in order to facilitate mainlander’s dominance in Taiwan. By doing so, KMT regime has built an imagined community, based on the Chinese nationalism.

To maintain the stability of this imagined community, KMT imposed his Sino-centric worldview by way of the symbolic power, (ex. education, linguistic policy, mass media etc.), under the authoritative regime. In Ernest Gellner’s words, the Chinese culture has been viewed as ‘high culture’ in regard to the Taiwanese culture. Meanwhile, this ‘high culture’ became universal and even self-generative when it related to the symbol of modernization. In comparison, the Taiwanese culture was marked as an aggressive culture. These two types of culture crystallized the habitus of different person with different content and different impact. We could measure the obstinacy of Chinese cultural hegemony or of Taiwanese cultural consciousness in someone’s habitus according to his location of social space, for example, gender, age, habitat, ethnic group, level of education and of income… etc.

In face of the Chinese cultural hegemony, the Taiwanese consciousness was weak and the Taiwanese nationalists got to exile and organized their actions abroad. ‘Other’, in the imagination of Taiwanese nationalists, was transferred from the

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20 Christopher Hughes, ibid, p. 6.
29 Self-generative (auto-génératif) is a concept used by Alain Touraine in explaining the historicité. Since the modernization has been a important value in that age, that is, modernization has the ‘historicité’. In consequence, since the Chinese culture has been linked to the modernization, it would be promoted not only by the KMT state, but also by the social groups and individuals themselves.
30 Chang Maukuei and Wu Hsin-Yi, ibid, p. 163.
Japanese to the mainlander after 1945. However, it must be emphasized that the concept of ‘China’ was not constant in the opinion of the Taiwanese nationalists. While the PRC has obtained China’s chair in UN in 1971, the concept of ‘China’ was transferred gradually to PRC. In consequence, KMT regime started the ‘nativization policy’ by promoting the native Taiwanese young technicians into the national government to strengthen its legitimacy. Right after Chiang Kai-shek’s death in 1975, the definition of Chinese has changed from objective ethnic criteria to subjective identity. By referring to those who identified themselves as Taiwanese, this new perspective on the definition of Taiwanese has come. However, this subjective definition has shifted again to objective criteria, which accentuated on the territoriality, at the 1980s in that the diplomatic relation between PRC and U.S. has been established in 1978. In this regard, as long as the ‘One China Doctrine’ ruins in the world scene, the desire to build a nation-state based on the Taiwanese consciousness arises. Also, this diplomacy crisis has caused the softening of authoritative regime, and led to the democratization in the mid-80s.

3. The breakdown of ‘One China Doctrine’ and Taiwan’s democratization

“Having lived in Taiwan for over 40 years, I myself am a Taiwanese”, said Chiang Ching-kuo when he started the democratization policy in his later years. However, what is the relation between the Taiwanese identity and the democratization? In brief, it is because that these two dimensions are the two sides of the same coin. The search for Taiwan’s subject will lead to these two kinds of political transition.

After 1978, KMT regime realized that they got no choice but to carry out the liberalization and internationalization policy to maintain the international status of ROC. However, this strategy was limited since the world order is based on the nation-state on the one hand, and the economical activity can’t help but encounter the PRC on the other hand. Right after the establishment of the diplomatic relation with the U.S. in 1978, PRC has transferred his bellicose strategy to pacific policy toward Taiwan. With these changes in the world scene, people living in Taiwan acknowledged that they were not Chinese, since it is the people living in PRC who are viewed as Chinese in the world scene. And also, with the rise of interaction between the Taiwan Strait, the people of Taiwan are aware of their differences from the ‘authentic’ Chinese. In consequence, the Taiwanese identity arises quickly. And this

33 Li Kuang-chun, ibid, p. 135.
35 Kao Lang, ‘Study on the diplomatic competition between PRC and Taiwan: 1988-1997’,
is the reason why the definition of Taiwanese attaches to the territory this time, since the lack of national identity makes the people of Taiwan acknowledge the importance of territoriality, which situates at the central criteria of modern world order.

In late 1970s, KMT tried to quell the protestations, ex. the Formosa incident, organized by the Taiwan nationalists in the 10 December 1979. However, thanks to the human right policy of Carter government as well as to Taiwan Lobby who worked in the U.S. Congress, the hawkish policies of KMT weakened. The safeguard of ‘One China Doctrine’ has been constrained, and the Taiwanese consciousness has come to Taiwan’s society. The DPP, which is the major promoter of the Taiwanese consciousness, was established formally but illegally in 1986. While Chiang Ching-kuo situated at the center of the Chinese hegemonic group, his self-identity as a Taiwanese was more influential over the breakdown of ‘One China Doctrine’ than any Taiwanese nationalists. In 1987, the Marital Law was lifted, and Taiwan started the democratization.

4. Taiwan’s democratization and the discourses of Taiwanese consciousness

The search for Taiwan’s subject would encounter lot of structural constrains related to the ‘One China Doctrine’. In 1971, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has pronounced the ‘self-determination of the residents’, which was the first organizational challenge against the ‘One China Doctrine’ in Taiwan. ‘The right to self-determination’ was also the core subject in the Formosa incident, while ‘democracy, self-determination and save Taiwan’ was the slogan for Tangwai (outside the KMT party) in the election of 1983. In 1985, ‘the future of Taiwan should be decided by the whole residents in Taiwan’ has been the common political program of Tangwai during the electoral campaign. While the establishment of DPP in 1986, ‘self-determination of the resident’ has been the article I of electoral manifesto, and DPP went even further by promulgating the so-called ‘Taiwan independence article’ in his party manifesto, which ‘should be decided by plebiscite according to the whole residents in Taiwan’.

With the political transition in Taiwan, the search for Taiwan’s subject has been institutionalized step by step in the opposition Party. Meanwhile, the Party in power, KMT, went in the same direction36. As far as the Taiwan’s subject to be concerned, several concepts, for example the ‘life community (shengming gongtongtì)’, ‘destiny community (mingyun gongtongtì)’, ‘new Taiwanese’ and ‘Taiwan first’, have been presented by KMT. However, the Taiwanization of KMT does not go so smoothly as that of DPP. Scission in KMT corresponds to the ‘nation consciousness’, those who are for Taiwanese consciousness have been called as ‘mainstream faction’, since they were with President Lee Teng-hui. Those who were against Lee Teng-hui grouped as ‘non-mainstream faction’, and part of them have quitted KMT by founding ‘Chinese New Party’ in 1993. However the so-called ‘Lee Teng-hui complex’ means not only to the factionalism in KMT37, but also to Taiwan society, since it is a paradox at the

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37 Regarding to relation between KMT’s factionism and national identity, see Steven J. Hood, ‘ Political Change in Taiwan: The Rise of Koumington Factions’, Asian Survey, Vol. 36, No. 5, May
historic conjuncture\textsuperscript{38}. Lee Teng-hui himself was the chairman of KMT and the President of ROC, who was the most powerful man in the center of Chinese hegemonic group in Taiwan. However, he was also for Taiwanese consciousness as to say that KMT is a ‘foreign regime (\textit{wailai zhengquan})’, and this is the ‘sorrow of being born Taiwanese (as not being able to have their own government)’. In consequence, Lee Teng-hui was not only the incarnation of the Taiwanese consciousness and wildly recognized by the Taiwanese, but also the most important strategic alliance for DPP during the political transition. This transition concerns the democratization as well as the redefinition of relation between PRC and Taiwan. In 1999, interviewed by German Voice, Lee Teng-hui proclaimed that the Sino-Taiwan relation is a ‘special inter-state relation’. This could be the most radical view of KMT until nowadays.

5. “Taiwan as a subject” as a historic mission

Historic mission in itself is not a personal or partisan career, but intrinsically related to the ‘\textit{historicité}’\textsuperscript{39}. As far as Taiwan’s search for a subject to be concerned, it is sure that the political elites do play an important role to exercise the Taiwanese consciousness. However, what is more important is to understand why these exercises work. The reason why these exercises work, it is because they inspire the residents in Taiwan by the language which is corresponding to their \textit{sens pratique}. So long as the territoriality is the basic element of modern nation-state and Taiwan(ese) can’t help but participate in the world scene, it is undoubted that a national identity is needed when they interact with the other countries or people. No matter it is in name of Taiwan or of ROC, this national identity would self-generate by creating a national consciousness according to its \textit{de facto} territory.

The awkward feeling of not having a national identity in world scene has been accelerated after the establishment of official relation between PRC and US. This happens not only to the Taiwanese who go abroad, but also to the residents in Taiwan when they acknowledge anything concerning Taiwan’s relation with PRC or with the world in their daily life\textsuperscript{40}. For lack of national identity, Taiwan is isolated from the world politics, and even socio-economic affaires. According to the Chinese nationalist dogma, alias ‘Taiwan is part of China’, Taiwan could not have the access to international organizations without the ‘permission’ of PRC. This kind of humiliation is the major reason for the rise of Taiwanese nationalism\textsuperscript{41}. In consequence, the Taiwanese nationalism is self-generative, and the political elites are the mediators\textsuperscript{42}.

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\textsuperscript{39} Alain Touraine, \textit{La voix et le regard}, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1978, p. 82.


\textsuperscript{42} Pierre Muller, \textit{Les politiques publiques}, puf, 4\textsuperscript{e} édition, 2000, p. 50.
III. The referendum and the presidential election of 2004

After illustrating the structural background, which is in favor of the self-generation of Taiwanese consciousness and of the pro-Taiwan political elites, this section aims at explaining the referendum and democratization by way of the symbolic interactionism.

Before starting the main argument, I would like to recall firstly that the political change in Taiwan contains two major transitions, the political regime and national identity. These could be integrated into a framework composing two contrast references\textsuperscript{43}, i.e., ‘modern democratic Taiwanese political nationalism’ vis-à-vis ‘traditional authoritative Chinese cultural nationalism’. The reason why the first repertoire is modern, it is because that it fits into the modern world order, which is based on the territoriality. And since it fits into the world order, the Taiwanese consciousness would be politically self-generated in accordance with its territory. This nation/state-building is in accordance with the searching for Taiwan’s subject.

1. Why comes the referendum?

So, why comes the referendum? The most direct answer is that President Chen Shui-ban lanced it according to the Referendum Law. As said the Alliance KMT/PFP, ‘kidnapping the presidential election by referendum’, I don’t question that Chen Shui-ban maneuvers the referendum by his own dispositions. However, this is just part of the answer, and in fact, the other part of the answer has been responded right by KMT/PFP themselves.

Firstly, while KMT/PFP condemn DPP, ‘kidnapping the presidential election by referendum’, we may tell that KMT/PFP acknowledge that the presidential election could be kidnapped by the referendum in the first place. Secondly, the referendum isn’t a simple policy, like universal health assurance or any other policies, but it is the incarnation of Taiwanese consciousness, which has been an imperative that no Party dares to prevent its realization before and during the presidential election. In this regard, the referendum is capable of ‘kidnapping’ the presidential election, and even worse for the KMT/PFP, it is a subject that they can’t fight with. In November 2003, they can’t help but legalize the referendum. Though the functioning of referendum is severe blocked according the Referendum Law, President Chen Shui-ban decided to present the referendum by his legal power (article 17). The critics arrived at the legal cause, but not the referendum itself or its content. In this regard, we could again affirm that the Taiwanese consciousness has prevailed.

While nation is daily plebiscite\textsuperscript{44}, holding a referendum would even be in favor of DPP by recalling the nationalist sentiment. ‘Love Taiwan’ has been an undoubted imperative during the electoral campaign, while ‘Chinese’, on the contrary, has been a stigma. But this kind of nationalist sentiment does not go without resistance. The 28 February, in name of ‘Hand in Hand, Protect Taiwan’, more than a million people linked a 500 km human chain in order to oppose China’s deployment of missiles


against Taiwan. Two weeks later, titled as ‘Change the President, save Taiwan’, KMT/PFP lanced a manifestation by grouping another million people. While in the first movement, President Chen, the ‘Son of Taiwan’, was the incarnation of Taiwanese nationalism, he has been characterized as Hitler in the later. That is, on the one side, vote for Chan Shui-ban to protect Taiwan, on the other side, vote against Chan Shui-ban to save Taiwan. Standing at the center of stage, Chen Shui-ban did use his dispositions to lance the referendum. But it is far from truth that Chen Shui-ban was the only factor that made the referendum work. Nor was the DPP. It is necessary to go beyond the individualist approach to analyze the referendum.

2. Why is it a ‘defensive referendum’?

Referendum has long been seen as a step toward Taiwan independence. However, the declaration of Taiwan independence will encounter lot of resistance. And, as we have seen in the two manifestations mentioned above, independence is not consentient in Taiwan as well as in the world scene. Generally speaking, a sovereign state, which is based on an identified territory, will not be guaranteed until it reaches two objects: the first, the inner ethnical conflict could be limited with no separatist intention; the second, foreign forces respect its sovereignty with no desire to intervene. However, Taiwan, as well as the other countries of so-called ‘third wave of democratization’, encounters more or less this predicament.

Taiwan’s geopolitical location has made it difficult to be free from the international intervention. And this is even true after 1945, not only in the age of cold war, but also in the post-cold war era. As far as the relation between the Taiwan Strait to be concerned, even through PRC has become the ‘significant other’ in regard to Taiwanese nationalism, and the socio-economical interaction makes the Taiwanese aware of their differences from the Chinese, but it is impossible to deny that the economical interdependence matters to Taiwan. By the way, even though we can tell that the Chinese military menace makes Taiwanese away from being Chinese instead of searching his or her own national identity, but we can’t take for granted that everybody in Taiwan will uphold Taiwan independence at the risk of war45.

Politics/policy in itself, is not for everybody, but good for someone, and bad for another one. Even though it is good or bad for someone specific, it is not necessary all good or totally bad for this one specific. And it is also truth that KMT regime has made everyone in Taiwan more or less habituate to be a ‘Chinese’. With the political transition in Taiwan, the Taiwanese reference emerges in contrast to the Chinese one. But these are only ideal types. It is not identity (ideal type) that organizes our world, but the meaning/sens pratique, which comes from the interaction of our everyday life does46. During the political transition, people with different habitus in regard to different references (Taiwanese/Chinese), will perceive different meaning/sens pratique in regard to Taiwanese nationalism and to the relation between Taiwan and PRC. Though, the modern world order is in favor of the Taiwanese reference, but this is not to say that the Chinese side will disappear suddenly and withdraw without resistance. Furthermore, excepting this intermediate ‘nation’, Taiwan’s geopolitical

complicity makes it also an intermediate ‘state’⁴⁷ In face of this intermediate situation, which is severely structured by the internal/external factors, a radical or offensive referendum, i.e. Taiwan independence, is far from possible. This is the reason why comes the defensive referendum.

3. Does the content of defensive referendum matter?

Surely, it matters, but not to the real policymaking. As said respectively Tsai Yin-wen (the chief of Mainland Affair Council) and Tan Yau-ming (the Minister of Department of Defense), even if the referendum fails, the ‘equal negotiation’ and the ‘reinforcement of national defense’ will continue.

It matters, not only as an electoral strategy in Chen Shui-ban’s favor, but also and more important as a demonstration for the search of Taiwan’s subject. In order to be a subject in the world scene, Taiwan is necessitated to negotiate equally with PRC, as well as to strengthen his national defense vis-à-vis PRC’s missile menace. However, what is worthy of noticing is the use of symbol during the electoral campaign. In comparison with the opinion related to referendum, answered by Hao Bo-chun, the then Premier Minister in 1991, we can see that the discourse about the referendum changes. In Hao’s perspective, the referendum is equal to Taiwan independence, and that is war. ‘ The bulletin of vote can’t fight against the bullet of war’, said Hao. However, not to mention that this opinion did not appear during the electoral campaign, only could we hear that ‘the referendum is for peace, and aims at protect Taiwan’. This means not only that the DPP has taken the strategic position to legitimate the Taiwan’s subject, but also more importantly, that Taiwanese consciousness has been mature and firm.

3. Referendum and the democratic consolidation

As mentioned above, the play of nation/state-building for Taiwan is in itself a tragedy. Taiwan is destined for a nation-state to participate in the modern world, but this leads him to revolting against his ‘father’, i.e. China. This ‘China’ means PRC as well as the Chinese culture. The search for Taiwan’s subject means that Taiwanese don’t want to be subject to China. In this regard, the political transition of Taiwan aims at getting rid of the ‘One China Doctrine’. And with Taiwan’s own subject, it is no long truth that ‘Taiwan is part of China’, but on the contrary, the Chinese culture is part of Taiwanese culture.

The reason why I identify the referendum as the high tide of this play, it is not to say that this referendum is the final battle between the Taiwanese reference and the Chinese reference in Taiwan. As I have mentioned above, the intermediate situation of Taiwan is severely structured by the internal/external complicity, this kind of conflict would not come to end in the near future. Through the referendum, people in Taiwan has come to realize that this play is not something objectively ‘out there’, but directly related to his or her personal experience with reference to the political community.

This political community, no matter what its name is, corresponds to its de facto territory. The (defensive) referendum, by definition, reaffirms this de facto territory on

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the one hand, makes people in Taiwan feel this historical tragedy on the other hand. Since, this is a tragic play, what is important is not to condemn who should be to blame. While the people in Taiwan are aware of Taiwan’s tragic destiny, and of that this territory are their common home, the culture of tolerance and mutual recognition, that is, the ‘politics of recognition’ in Charles Taylor’s term, will develop. And, there comes a consolidated democracy.

**IV. Conclusion: Bringing the political back again**

“Man is by nature a political animal. “, said Aristotle. Political life refers to the relation between human being and his or her political community. However, the existing literatures on democratization are founded on “Homo economicus”, by reifying the agency (human being) and structure (the political community) on the one hand, and simplifying human motivation into ‘(economic) interest’ on the other hand. This leads to the incapacity in illustrating the dynamic (the structure-based approaches), and in presenting an insightful perspective to comprehend the dynamic (the agency-based approaches). The uncertainty may be the intrinsic character of political transition, but this perspective exacerbates the difficulties in comprehending the uncertainty during the democratization. In this regard, the symbolic interactionism, which is based on the generative epistemology, contribute not only to study the dynamic of democratization, but also to present a comprehensive perspective with the help of the concept, *habitus*. Furthermore, emphasizing on the symbolic power and *sens pratique*, the symbolic interactionism has the advantage for studying the democratic consolidation, which is intrinsically related to democratic value.

In this regard, the case of Taiwan’s political transition has well demonstrated this approach. By illustrating the two references, the ‘modern democratic Taiwanese political nationalism’ and the ‘traditional authoritative Chinese cultural nationalism’, this paper presents the dynamic between agency and structure, the central conflict during the political transition as well as the importance of symbolic power and the reason why certain symbols work. However, I would like to say, the case of Taiwan is not a special case, but on the contrary, an intensive case in regard to the political transition of the countries of ‘third wave of democratization’, since more or less, these countries encounter the geopolitical complicacy as well as the ethical conflict during the political transition. While the struggle for interest would only lead to exacerbating these conflicts, it would be better to emphasize on the importance of meaning by the ‘politics of recognition’. Being aware of that the building of modern nation-state is in itself a tragedy is the way to see a comedy.

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