Can We Live Together? Collective Memory and Its Discontents in Taiwan

Along with the waves of democratization and indigenization since the 1990s, there has emerged "memory booms" in Taiwan. Those repressed memories, forgotten times and unspeakable traumas during the authoritarian era are (re)discovered, remembered and (re)narrated. The 228 Incident, the White Terror in the 1950s, and the colonial memories of Taiwanese people under the Japanese rule are a few notable examples of such booms. Government agencies, politicians, scholars, cultural elites, grassroots activists, mass media and even businesses all rush to take part in constructing new memories about old times. Sometimes under the name of transitional justice, these memory booms involve not only the reconstruction of a new imagined community, but also a paradigm shift in the moral horizon. It challenges the orthodox in the past by generating much more diversified, most of the time bifurcating and contradictory, ways of remembering, (re)interpreting and (re)evaluating the past. In so doing, people thus involved have also attempted to establish a new paradigm that is intended to be more democratic, plural and inclusive. What effects may such memory booms have upon the future of Taiwan as a political community? Will the bifurcating memories make it more difficult for different groups of people, who tend to bear contradictory views about the past, to reconcile with each other? Drawing on the writings of Pierre Nora and Paul Ricoeur, among others, this paper explores the answers to the above questions by reflecting on three aspects of these memory booms: the phenomenology of memory, the epistemology of history, and the hermeneutics of the present. It is also argued that, in order to better assess possible answers, these memory booms should be understood not only in itself, but also in light of the regional and global contexts that Taiwan has been situated in.

Keywords: memory, Taiwan, transitional justice, transmission

Pouvons-nous vivre ensemble ? La mémoire collective et ses dérives à Taïwan

Avec les vagues de démocratisation et d'indigénisation commencées dans les années 1990, des «booms de la mémoire» sont apparus à Taïwan. Les souvenirs refoulés, les périodes oubliées et les traumatismes indicibles de l'ère autoritaire sont (re)découverts, remémorés et (re)racontés. L'incident du 228, la Terreur blanche des années 1950 et les souvenirs du peuple taïwanais sous la domination coloniale japonaise sont quelques exemples notables de ce phénomène. Les agences gouvernementales, les politiciens, les universitaires, les élites culturelles, les militants de base, les médias et même les entreprises s'empressent de participer à la construction de nouvelles mémoires sur les époques du passé. Parfois désignés sous le nom de justice transitionnelle, ces booms de la mémoire impliquent non seulement la reconstruction d'une nouvelle communauté imaginée, mais aussi un changement de paradigme dans l'horizon moral. Il remet en question l'ancienne orthodoxie en générant des manières beaucoup plus diversifiées, la plupart du temps divergentes et contradictoires, de se souvenir, de (ré)interpréter et de (ré)évaluer le passé. Ce faisant, les personnes ainsi impliquées ont également tenté d'établir un nouveau paradigme qui se veut plus démocratique, pluriel et inclusif. Quels effets de tels booms mémoriels peuvent-ils avoir sur l'avenir de Taïwan en tant que communauté politique ? La divergence des mémoires rendra-t-elle plus difficile la réconciliation entre les différents groupes de personnes, qui ont tendance à avoir des points de vue contradictoires sur le passé ? S'appuyant sur les écrits de Pierre Nora et de Paul Ricœur, entre autres, cet article explore les réponses aux questions ci-dessus en réfléchissant à trois aspects de ces booms mémoriels : la phénoménologie de la mémoire, l'épistémologie de l'histoire et l'herméneutique du présent. Pour mieux évaluer les réponses possibles, ces essors de la mémoire doivent être compris non seulement en eux-mêmes, mais aussi à la lumière des contextes régionaux et mondiaux dans lesquels Taïwan s'est inscrit.

Mots clefs : mémoire, Taïwan, justice transitionnelle, transmission

CAN WE LIVE TOGETHER?

Collective Memory and Its Discontents in Taiwan*

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How can people construct an imagined community, when the imaginations of their past, present and future are incommensurable and incompatible with each other?[1] This paper uses Taiwan as an illustrative case to explore answers to the above question. Along with the waves of democratization and indigenization, there has emerged "memory booms" in Taiwan since the 1990s. Those repressed memories, forgotten times, and unspeakable traumas during the authoritarian era are (re)discovered, remembered, and (re)narrated. Government agencies, politicians, scholars, cultural elites, grassroots activists, mass media and even businesses all scramble to take part in constructing new memories about past times. Sometimes promoted under the name of transitional justice, these memory booms involve not only the reconstruction of a new imagined community, but also a paradigm shift in the moral horizon. It challenges preexisting orthodoxy by generating much more diversified, most of the time bifurcating and contradictory, ways of remembering, (re)interpreting, (re) evaluating, and even forgetting the past. In so doing, those involved have also attempted to establish a new paradigm that is intended to be more democratic, pluralistic, and inclusive. What effects may such memory booms have on the future of Taiwan as a political community? Will the bifurcating memories make it more difficult for different groups of people, who tend to bear contradictory views about the past, to engage in reconciliation?

Drawing on the concepts elaborated by Pierre Nora and Paul Ricœur, among others, this paper explores the answers to the above questions by examining changing landscapes of collective memory, along with the issues and controversies surrounding them in Taiwan. I shall first provide an overview of evolving mnemonic landscapes in Taiwan in terms of memory booms, shifting

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1. The terms "incommensurable" and "incompatible" are used to refer to different concepts. See the discussion in the following sections.

paradigms, and the emerging issues of transitional justice. In the second section, I shall examine the main issues and controversies surrounding collective memory and transitional justice in recent years by focusing on three aspects: the incommensurability and incompatibility of different paradigms, the China factors and the legacies of war, as well as the problem concerning transitional justice. In the concluding section, I shall bring up a few questions for future deliberation.

Changing Landscapes of Collective Memory in Taiwan since the 1990s: An Overview

Memory Booms: Diversity, Heterogeneity and Multiplicity

Ever since Pierre Nora published his acclaimed three-volume corpus *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,[2] the concept of "realms of memory" has become a buzzword in the field of memory studies. Memory does not exist in a temporal-spatial vacuum; it needs to be tied to a particular realm, or site, within a specific time frame. In this sense, memory is visible, no matter how imaginary it is. In the case of collective memory,[3] we can speak of "mnemonic landscapes" that are embodied in visible objects such as monuments, memorials, museums, heritage sites, ceremonies, films, dramas, images, written records and publications.

Along with social and political transformations since the 1990s, the landscapes of collective memory in Taiwan have undergone dramatic changes as well. What one observes immediately is what can be called "memory booms"—in the plural rather than singular form—unfolding along different waves of memory cycles (e.g., the anniversary of a particular event). These "booming" memories are primarily associated with political taboos and/or repressed memories during the authoritarian period, such as the 228 Incident

2. Nora, 1992.

3. As well noted by previous studies, the meaning of the term "collective memory" varies in different contexts (see Halbwachs, 1992; Olick, 2007). In the narrow sense, collective memory may refer to the memory of a certain collectivity, such as a family, a clan, a church or a village. In the broad sense, collective memory is more or less akin to Durkheim's concept of collective conscience, which refers to a general mnemonic framework of understanding the past commonly shared by the members of a collective community. It is through this second sense of collective memory that individual memory is formed and identity established. In this article, collective memory in its singular form is mostly used in its broad sense, whereas the plural form is mostly used in its narrow sense.

in 1947,[4] the White Terror during the 1950s-1970s, the Japanese colonial period and wartime experiences (such as World War II and the Chinese Civil War/Cold War).[5] All of these were either repressed or simply dismissed as irrelevant to Taiwan's collective memory in the period of the authoritarian rule under the Kuomintang (KMT) regime, but they have gradually emerged and received more and more attention during the course of social and political transformations since the late 1980s.

Phenomenal as they appear to be, these memory booms have been characterized by a number of features. The first is their diversity, heterogeneity, and multiplicity. Involving diverse themes, groups and historical periods, these memories have been seen from multiple perspectives and heard through heterogeneous voices. They have been presented in multiple forms, through various channels and media: they have been narrated in academic and non-academic publications (such as memoirs, oral history, and literature), reenacted in theaters, TV dramas, documentaries, films and even video games, and frequently exposed and widely circulated through mass media and pop culture.[6] In the public space, we have also seen changing landscapes in terms of commemorations, memorials, and monuments; some of them are proliferating (such as those related to the 228 Incident, White Terror, colonial sites and heritages), while some of the existing ones are less and less frequently celebrated or challenged (for example, the memorials and statues of Chiang Kai-shek). Last but not least, textbooks and curricula in schools are changing as well.[7] Although

4. The 228 incident refers to a tragic conflict between the government and the people in Taiwan on February 28, 1947, which caused thousands of causalities around the island as a result. As will be pointed later, it has become a symbol of collective trauma for certain people in contemporary Taiwan.

5. As I have pointed out elsewhere (see Wang Horng-luen, 2014a), the naming of war reflects different perspectives shaped by "frames of war." The term "World War II" is used for convenience sake as an umbrella term to include different wars from different perspectives to be discussed below.

6. At the risk of omitting important works, the following are just a few notable examples of such booms: Badai, 2010; Cheng Wen-tang (dir.), 2015; Chi Pang-yuan, 2009; Guo Song-fen et al, 2021; Lung Ying-tai, 2009; Ma Chih-hsiang (dir.), 2014; Sun Kang-i, 2003; Red Candle Games, 2017; Wei Te-sheng (dir.), 2011. For academic discussions of historical memory in Taiwan, see, for example, Chang Lung-chih, 2015; Denton, 2021; Liao Ping-hui and Wang David Der-wei (eds.), 2006; Lin Sylvia Li-chun, 2007; Stolojan, 2017. The above does not particularly included those mainly devoted to the memory of the 228 Incident because there are simply too many.

7. The change started with the introduction of a new subject called "Getting to Know Taiwan" (認識台灣) in 1997, in which Taiwan's modern history, especially from the Japanese colonial period to the postwar era, was first taught in detail in the middle school. Afterwards, the curricular guidelines prescribed by the Ministry of Education have undergone several revisions, laying more and more emphases on interpreting Taiwan's past history from local or global perspectives rather than a China-centered one. Such a paradigm shift in textbooks and curricula has had profound

they are not as visible as other "landscapes," so to speak, their influences on the formation of collective memory cannot be overstated.[8]

Shifting Paradigms and Contesting Narratives in Commemorations

Along with different tides of memory booms, we have also witnessed shifting paradigms and contesting narratives in commemorations, of which the 228 Incident can be said a typical example. During the authoritarian period, the 228 Incident was a political taboo that could be neither talked about nor studied. In 1987, Cheng Nan-jung (鄭南榕), who later sacrificed his life by self-immolation to protest against the KMT regime and is now remembered as a martyr of the Taiwan Independence Movement, co-founded with Chen Yung-hsing (陳永興) and other activists an organization to promote the commemoration of the 228 Incident.[9] Many other groups of politicians, activists, teachers, and students also pressured the government to take action. Consequently, the KMT government led by President Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) established a task force to investigate the incident, of which an official report was published in 1992. In 1995, President Lee, who was initially reluctant to deal with the 228 issues by stating that one should look forward rather than backward, conveyed an official apology on behalf of the government at the founding ceremony of the Monument of the 228 Incident in Taipei.[10] That same year, the government made February 28 a Peace Memorial Day and prescribed it as a national holiday the following year. Outside of Taipei, the monuments of the 228 Incident have been built on different sites all over the island, and we can observe public commemorations on different scales, from the central to local governments.

If the commemoration of the 228 Incident can be viewed as a paradigm shift, to put it in Thomas Kuhn's celebrated concept,[11] then we may as well say that there are similar paradigm shifts in the commemoration of other events,

impacts on what Maurice Halbwachs has called "historical memory" on new generations who received education after the changes.

8. The textbook problem in Taiwan can be seen as another kind of "historical consciousness" or "history perception problem" widely observed in East Asia. See Wang Horng-luen, 2014b.

9. The organization was called the "228 Peace Day Association" (二二八和平日促進會), of which Chen was the founding President who played an active role in promoting February 28 to be a Peace Day.

10. It was quite ironical that Lee Teng-hui, the first Taiwan-born president of the ROC, represented the ROC government in issuing the apology, since the 228 Incident has been widely interpreted as the suppression and massacre of Taiwanese people by the Chinese (KMT) regime.

11. Kuhn, 1962.

such as the commemoration of National Day, or the commemoration of war. Such paradigm shifts may not be said to be complete because the paradigm evolves whenever there is a change of the political regime, but we can clearly see different models or challenging narratives in commemorations. The commemoration of war in 2015 is an emblematic case in point.

The year 2015 marked the 70th Anniversary of the end of World War II, for which commemorations were held in different countries, albeit in various tones, around the world. Taiwan was no exception. However, in commemorating this historic event, very different scenes within Taiwan were observed. On July 7, the date officially marked as the breakout of the second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the government of the Republic of China (ROC), run by the KMT party at the time, held the official "International Conference on the Seventieth Anniversary of China's Victory in the War of Resistance against Japan," organized by Academia Historica (*Guoshiguan*, literally "Institute of National History"). The theme of the conference was "History and Memory of War," for which President Ma Ying-jeou delivered a special speech in the opening ceremony to emphasize the ROC's much-forgotten role in leading the Chinese people to defeat Japan during the war.

Accompanying the conference, a special exhibition on "Chiang Kai-shek and China's War of Resistance against Japan" was mounted at the same venue, in which some "precious" historical documents, such as the original Japanese instrument of surrender signed by the Japanese representative Okamura, were displayed. It was emphasized that these original documents were very rarely presented to the public, which also indicated the importance the ROC government attached to this event.

One month later, on August 15, the date when Japan surrendered to the Allies seventy years earlier, another conference of a smaller scale, titled "War and Taiwanese Society," was held in the National Museum of Taiwan History, Tainan. The conference was also about the history and memory of the war, but the themes and topics were dramatically different. Similarly, in complement to the conference, a special exhibition featuring "Taiwanese During World War II" was held in the same venue. The memory presented was in sharp contrast to the previous one in Taipei. Not only did the Taiwanese not participate in the War of Resistance against Japan, but they were, on the contrary, mobilized by the Japanese Empire to support or even take part in the so-called Greater East Asian War, which held the ROC led by Chiang Kai-shek as the enemy. One could view objects, items and narratives never to be seen in the ROC's official exhibition, such as the Japanese flag signed with blood to show loyalty, or "comfort bags" to support Japanese soldiers on the frontlines. These items were displayed not to promote Japanese nationalism, but to restore the historical reality to help people understand how Taiwanese people were mobilized and involved

in the war. Such efforts to "restore historical memory" were not meaningless, nor should they be considered as mere nostalgia for the colonial times. In fact, these efforts are meant to "save forgotten memory" by restoring historical memories of Taiwanese people during that time because school education during the authoritarian period under the KMT regime taught only the War of Resistance against Japan with little reference to the actual wartime experience of Taiwanese under Japanese rule, to the extent that many students mistakenly assumed that the Taiwanese were led by the ROC government to fight Japan. In other words, exhibitions of this kind were intended to "straighten out" the distorted collective memory in Taiwan.

On the same day, another commemoration took place in the plaza of the 228 Memorial Museum in Taipei. The ceremony, held by the Taiwan 815 Peace Forum formed by several localist (*bentupai*) associations, was intended to promote peace by remembering the lessons of war. Before they recited the Peace Declaration in six different languages—including Holo, Hakka, Mandarin, Amis, Japanese and English, to highlight the multicultural diversity of Taiwanese society—the ceremony began with the reenactment of the historic "Jewel Voice Broadcast" (*gyokuon hōsō* 玉音放送) by the Japanese Emperor Hirohito declaring the defeat of war at noon, the precise timing of the original broadcast, in an attempt to restore the historical memory of Taiwanese people who lived through that time.

As we can see, on the very same island, during and around the same time, there existed two paradigms of commemoration based on different, mutually contradictory, historical memories. There is a group of people willing to celebrate the victory of the war, and these people were those in control of the state apparatus at the time; on the other hand, another group of people was keen to commemorate the defeat/end of the war, because they thought it is more truthful to the historical experience of the people who lived on the island at that time. It is easily imaginable how difficult it is for these two groups of people to co-exist and produce a collective memory acceptable to both sides.

For the sake of convenience, I shall refer to these two paradigms of collective memory as "Blue" and "Green": the former is China-centered, whereas the latter Taiwan-centered. Some may contend that these two labels are too politicized because the colors represent two major political parties, namely the KMT and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), in contemporary Taiwan. However, this is precisely what the nomenclature here is intended to highlight: as I shall show below, collective memory in Taiwan has always been highly politicized from the outset, and the two paradigms can hardly be separated from the two political parties that promote them respectively.[12] Moreover, it is important

12. Indeed, these two paradigms should be better seen as ideal types on the two poles of the political spectrum. As will be made clear later, due to incomplete political transitions, the DPP

to keep in mind that the primary cleavage that divided these two paradigms has been along the line of partisan differences instead of ethnic origins (as is usually assumed). Specifically speaking, people who support the KMT or the pan-Blue camp, regardless of their ethnic background in terms of Taiwanese (*benshengren*) or mainlanders (*waishengren*), are more likely to subscribe to the Blue paradigm; likewise, people who support the DPP or the pan-Green camp, regardless of their ethnic background, tend to subscribe to the Green paradigm. In other words, although the two paradigms seem to stem from diverging historical experiences of different ethnic groups (particularly the mainlanders vs. the Taiwanese), it would be a mistake to assume that a certain ethnic group will "naturally" subscribe to a corresponding paradigm.[13] This will be further expounded in the following sections.

Transitional Justice: From Discourse to Practice, from Civil Society to the State

Along with the shifting paradigms of memory, an issue known as "transitional justice" emerged in Taiwan's landscape of collective memory. Intended to deal with the legacies left by the previous regime after the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, transitional justice includes many different aspects such as reparations for wrongs inflicted upon the victims under the authoritarian regime. Ultimately, it also involves how the past should be understood and remembered.[14]

The idea of transitional justice in Taiwan can be traced back to as early as the 1990s, although the very term "transitional justice" only gained popularity after 2000. As pointed out above, when the KMT government was pressured to deal with the 228 Incident by publishing government reports, issuing an official apology, providing compensation, and making it a national holiday to be commemorated every year, clearly the process towards transitional justice had already been initiated, although there was still a long way for it to be fully

has made significant compromises to the Blue paradigm by not overturning the ROC institution, while the KMT has also given in to the Green paradigm in various ways under the pressure of democratization. Besides, despite their ideological differences, both parties tend to move toward middle ground in order to win over as many votes as possible in elections.

13. The situation is somewhat similar to the relations between political party and ethnicity. Although there have been correlations, to a certain degree, between *waishengren* and the pan-Blue, on the one hand, and between *benshengren* and pan-Green, on the other, we can hardly predict a person's party support simply from his/her ethnic origin. A significant proportion of *benshengren* support the pan-Blue camp (otherwise the supporting rate of the pan-Blue should never exceed 13-15%, the approximate percentage of the population of *waishengren* on the island), while the pan-Green camp has won over the support from a good number of *waishengren*.

14. Teitel, 2000.

implemented. In 2000, when the opposition DPP first won the presidential election to end the KMT's 55-year rule on the island, it was considered good timing to engage in transitional justice because the regime change can be seen as a complete transition from authoritarian rule to full democracy. However, then president Chen Shui-bian did not take much initiative in this regard, paying little more than lip service to transitional justice during his two terms.[15]

Growing restless under these circumstances, many scholars and activists started to promote transitional justice in their public discourse. In 2006, Wu Nai-teh (吳乃德), a scholar at Academia Sinica, published an article titled "Transitional Justice and Historical Memory: The Unfinished Task of Taiwan's Democratization".[16] In this oft-cited article, Wu, drawing on works of Jon Elster, and Samuel Huntington,[17] among others, along with famous cases such as South Africa and Germany, argues that transitional justice is vitally important for the consolidation of democracy for newly democratized countries such as Taiwan. He also criticized both the KMT and the DPP governments for not endeavoring to implement transitional justice, which he characterizes as "the unfinished task of Taiwan's democratization."

In order to perform such a task left unfinished by the state, Wu became one of the founders of the Taiwan Association for Truth and Reconciliation (TATR) in 2007. Their founding statement asserts that transitional justice ought to be pursued for the following reasons: First, it will help to build a peaceful democratic culture by adopting universal values such as democracy, justice and humanity; second, it will help people learn the lessons of dictatorship by presenting the truth of history to the public; and thirdly, it will help to bring reconciliation between victims and perpetrators by unveiling the covered-up past of the authoritarian era.[18] Over the years, the association has made laudable efforts to preserve the memories of the victims of the White Terror and made significant contributions to the promotion of basic human rights and transitional justice in Taiwan, embodied in publications such as *The Wills That Cannot Be Delivered* (*Wufa songda de yishu* 無法送達的遺書) and the three-volume set *Struggles Between Remembering and Forgetting* (*Jiyi yu yiwang de douzheng* 記憶與遺忘的鬥爭).[19] The former is a selected collection of unlawfully forfeited letters by political prisoners sentenced to death during

15. The reason why Chen was unable to pursue transitional justice was obvious: He needed cooperation from the KMT to consolidate his power. This issue involves the "incomplete political transitions" that I shall discuss below.

16. Wu Nai-teh, 2006.

17. Elster, 2004; Huntington, 1991.

18. Taiwan Association for Truth and Reconciliation, 2019.

19. Lü Cangyi et al., 2015; Taiwan Association for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015.

the 1950s and the 1960s, which remained uncovered until 2011 when the TATR intervened, and the latter is a phase report by the TATR, in which the tasks of transitional justice, both finished and unfinished, are outlined.

After the DPP regained power when Tsai Ing-wen won the presidential election in 2016, they devoted more efforts to transitional justice in keeping with the DPP's pledge made during the election. In May 2018, the Transitional Justice Commission (TJC) was set up by the government as an *ad hoc* independent organization. According to the Act on Promoting Transitional Justice (*Cujin zhuanxing zhengyi tiaoli* 促進轉型正義條例), the mission of the TJC includes opening up political archives, removing authoritarian symbols, preserving sites of injustice, redressing the unlawfulness of the judiciary, restoring historical truth, promoting social reconciliations, and addressing the handling of improperly acquired party assets, amongst other aims.

However, ever since its very burgeoning, the TJC has been marred by organizational problems and political controversies, which, to a great extent, have affected the functioning of the commission. This will be further examined in a later section.

Main Issues and Controversies

Behind changing landscapes in collective memory, we can identify three driving forces that have been shaping political, social and cultural transformations simultaneously in Taiwan in the past few decades: namely, democratization, indigenization and commercialization. Democratization has made Taiwan transition from authoritarianism to democracy, indigenization from a China-centered to a Taiwan-centered polity, whereas commercialization has led to the development of a consumer society, in which memory, along with nostalgia, has been consumed as a commodity for personal pleasure in popular culture. While these driving forces have been intersecting and intertwined in shaping mnemonic landscapes in Taiwan, they should be disentangled and separated for the sake of analysis and should not be conflated. Another critical factor that affects the changing landscapes of collective memory in Taiwan stems from its demographic composition. While the older generations who bear the memory of historical events of previous periods (such as the Chinese Civil War and the Japanese colonial era) are dying out, the new generations simply do not have direct memory of such events. Besides, the increasing number of new residents (*xin zhumin* 新住民), especially those immigrants from Southeast Asia, have very different collective memories from those of other groups.[20] In the following,

20. I thank Wu Jieh-min for bringing up the issue of new residents to me.

I shall focus mainly on the former two forces, namely, democratization and indigenization, by examining three main issues and controversies they have involved: namely, the incommensurability and incompatibility of different paradigms, the China factors and the legacies of war, and finally, the problem concerning transitional justice.

Uses and Abuses of Memory: Incommensurability and Incompatibility

In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, the last major work of his lifetime, French philosopher Paul Ricœur discussed three kinds of uses and abuses of memory: blocked memory at the pathological-therapeutic level, manipulated memory at the practical level, and obligated memory at the ethico-political level.[21] At the intersection of the use and abuse of the exercise of memory lies a very thin line that can be easily crossed, whether wittingly or unwittingly. As a matter of fact, the process of building the collective community known as "nation" today necessarily entails the use and abuse of memory, which can be observed all over the world throughout history. It is only in this light can we understand why "making history wrong is part of being a nation," as Ernest Renan stated:

> Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for [the principle of] nationality. Indeed, historical enquiry brings to light deeds of violence which took place at the origin of all political formations, even of those whose consequences have been altogether beneficial. Unity is always effected by means of brutality; the union of northern France with the Midi was the result of massacres and terror lasting for the best part of a century.[22]

In this oft-cited passage, two kinds of violence have been involved, both of which are necessitated in nation-building (and hence nationalism): On the one hand, there is physical violence, through which the nation has been united or born "by means of brutality." On the other hand, there is symbolic violence, which makes people "misrecognize" the reality, to put it in Bourdieu's terms, through forgetting and/or historical error.[23]

It thus comes as no surprise that all the three kinds of blocked, manipulated, and obligated memories can be found in different paradigms of collective

21. Ricœur, 2004, p. 68-92.

22. Renan, 1996, p. 45.

23. Bourdieu, 1990.

memory in Taiwan. In fact, in contemporary Taiwan, where the nation-state and nationhood have been highly contested, the problem is not so much about the (ab)uses of memory as about incommensurability/incompatibility of different paradigms. To put it in Kuhn's terms, the two paradigms are incommensurable in that the rules (of judging true or false, for instance) in one paradigm cannot be applied to the other. However, they are also incompatible in that they cannot co-exist in a given community.[24] What one group wants to remember is what the other wants to forget. In other words, the "blocked memory" in one paradigm is often the "obligated memory" in the other. The politics of memory involving the struggles between two paradigms have also impacted public monuments, of which the decapitation of public statues is a case in point.

In recent years, we have seen an increasing number of cases of vandalism of Chiang Kai-shek's monuments, such as destroying his statues or smearing his mausoleum and memorial hall. Considering Chiang Kai-shek a dictator who slaughtered Taiwanese people and repressed democracy during his authoritarian rule, the vandalizers contend that such a dictator should not be publicly commemorated in democratized Taiwan. Many of these acts of vandalism took place after 2016 when Tsai Ing-wen had just won the presidential election. In the two most famous cases, one statue in the Park of Yangming Mountain (*Yangmingshan gongyuan* 陽明山公園) was decapitated, while the other in National Chengchi University had the leg of the horse that Chiang rode cut off. The students involved in those acts claimed that their action was meant to "implement transitional justice" in Taiwan, for they found it unacceptable to commemorate Chiang Kai-shek, an evil slaughterer who massacred innocent Taiwanese people, in the public space.

On the other hand, another statue was decapitated. This time it was not the statue of Chiang Kai-shek, but that of Hatta Yoichi (八田與一), a Japanese civil engineer who designed the Chianan Canal (*Jianan dazun* 嘉南大圳) and Wusanto Reservoir (*Wushantou Shuik*u 烏山頭水庫) during the colonial period. To acknowledge his contributions to Taiwan, the local people erected a statue to express their gratitude. The statue is also the site where the film *Kano*, in which Hatta was portrayed as a benign colonial official, staged its promotion

24. KUHN, 1962. It should be noted that incommensurability and incompatibility do not necessarily entail each other. For instance, in the scientific community, there have been many different paradigms that are incommensurable with each other (such as quantum physics and Newtonian physics), but they can co-exist in the same community without excluding each other. In the case of collective memory we deal with here, the two paradigms are not only incommensurable, but also incompatible with each other. The existence of one entails the denial or exclusion of the other.

conference in 2014.[25] However, in 2017, Lee Cheng-lung (李承龍), a pro-unification activist, cut off the head of the statue to express his disagreement. He contended that it was wrong to commemorate a Japanese colonizer in Taiwan nowadays, while acknowledging that he did this in part as retribution for the decapitation of Chiang Kai-shek's statue. To people like Lee, this is also a kind of "transitional justice" that has never been implemented in Taiwan since it was decolonized after World War II.

The historical background motivating these actions must be addressed. During the authoritarian period, especially after Chiang Kai-shek's death in 1975, the KMT regime erected numerous statues and several memorial halls across the country to commemorate him, while numerous streets and public buildings, including the newly constructed international airport, were named after him.[26] During the process of democratization, these political symbols were regarded by many as nothing more than personal worship of a dictator; therefore, the removal of such symbols has been considered an important task of transitional justice. On the other hand, political symbols based on the Green paradigm, such as the memorial of the 228 Incident and the White Terror, or memories concerning the Japanese colonial period, are mushrooming. Such a contrast—one diminishing while the other proliferating—brought about a strong sense of resentment in pan-Blue supporters who identify with the ROC.

The decapitation of the two statues has been performed on the basis of the Green and the Blue paradigms, respectively. Although these two paradigms are incommensurable and incompatible with each other, they do have one thing in common—namely, violence. In the scenarios we have seen, two kinds of violence have been involved: physical violence and symbolic violence. They also involve violence now and violence in the past. Indeed, the relations between violence and memory have been an essential issue in the politics of collective memory, which is far more complicated than most people assume. Let us simply focus on one form of violence here—namely, war, an extreme form of collective violence.[27] This brings us to the second major issue that needs further scrutiny: the China factors and the legacies of wars.

25. This film, which can be viewed as constituting part of the memory booms mentioned earlier in this paper, delineates how the Kano baseball team from colonial Taiwan overcome various odds to represent the island and eventually won the second place in the Japanese High School Baseball Championship at the renowned Koshien Stadium in 1931. Despite of its claim of basing on the true story, it has been criticized for distorting history to eulogize Japanese colonizers in various ways.

26. The Chiang Kai-shek International Airport, opened in 1979, was renamed Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport in 2006 when President Chen Shui-bian was in rule.

27. The fundamental relations between violence and memory are too complicated and too profound to be discussed here. One may refer to Ricœur for a more comprehensive analysis. See

The China Factors and the Legacies of Wars

The "China factors" refer to two elements, one is exterior to Taiwan while the other is interior. With the rise of China on the global stage, it has become quite fashionable nowadays to talk about the "China factors" or "China impacts." In almost all of these cases, the China factor refers to the People's Republic of China (PRC). However, when it comes to Taiwan's collective memories in general and national identity in particular, there is another China factor inside Taiwan that should not be overlooked, that is, the ROC. The China factors are crucial in our understanding of Taiwan's collective memories for two reasons. First, collective memories in Taiwan have been shaped by both factors within and outside Taiwan. Second, the ROC factor has been an intrinsic, but often forgotten, part of Taiwan's collective memory that can be neither written off nor eliminated. Let me expound these two aspects in the following.

Outside Taiwan, the PRC has been making territorial claims on Taiwan based on its own historical memory. According to the official narrative of Chinese nationalism advocated by the PRC, China lost Taiwan after they were defeated in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895, but reclaimed it after their victory during the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1945. However, as the PRC claims, Taiwan was "unlawfully occupied" by the KMT regime, which lost the Chinese Civil War in 1949, and it has remained separated from the motherland due to the "imperialist" intervention of the U.S. Nowadays, the PRC has been able to carry out its "One China Principle" worldwide to a great extent, forcing most countries in the world to officially recognize (or at least "acknowledge") the PRC's claim on Taiwan while denying the sovereignty of the ROC at the same time. This way of thinking is also the reason why the PRC always considers it legitimate to use force to reunify Taiwan, for it is understood as a continuation of the civil war. If Taiwan wants to defend its autonomy against such a territorial claim from the PRC, how can it develop a counter-narrative or counter-memory to help interpret its own status in a different way?

One of the key issues concerning the legacies of war is: How may previous wars, such as World War II, or the Second Sino-Japanese War, be commemorated? As I have demonstrated above, the Blue paradigm based on the War of Resistance against Japan, and the Green paradigm based on the Greater East Asian War, are quite incompatible. But apart from the Sino-Japanese War, another far more complex conflict is the war fought between the KMT and the CCP during 1945-1949: Should the Chinese Civil War be counted as part of Taiwan's collective memory? To the majority of politicians and supporters

RICŒUR, 2004, p. 56-92. Regarding how war shapes collective memory, especially in the context of East Asia, see WANG Horng-luen, 2014a.

of the DPP, the most practical and convenient answer would be "no." This perspective has been clearly stated by many DPP political leaders on different occasions. For instance, the former vice president Lu Hsiu-lien (呂秀蓮)[28] once stated:

> The "independence vs. unification" dispute or any form of confrontation is a historical product of the struggle between the Kuomintang and the Communists. Let us look forward and forget about it. From the moment President Chen Shui-bian assumed the presidency and the DPP became Taiwan's ruling party, this dispute became meaningless.[29]

On another occasion, she stated:

> First, let's talk about Taiwan's relations with China. There is absolutely nothing to be feared about a DPP leadership in this regard. In fact, I believe the DPP is capable of making progress in relations with China where the KMT could not. The KMT has a long history of conflict with the Communist Party dating back to the Chinese Civil War, and the present state of hostility and military tension between China and Taiwan is largely an outgrowth of that history. It has nothing to do with the DPP. When the KMT is removed from power, China and Taiwan should be able to make a new beginning. Since Taiwan's president is now democratically elected by her people, and the government long ago gave up its claim to sovereignty over China, the enmity between the two sides need not continue.[30]

Although Lu claimed that "when the KMT is removed from power, China and Taiwan should be able to make a new beginning," such a claim is nothing more than wishful thinking. First, the KMT was not removed from power forever. As it turned out, the KMT returned to power from 2008 to 2016 by winning the presidential election twice. And second, even if the DPP government wants to give up the claim to sovereignty over China, the ROC Constitution, based on which the DPP obtained its legitimacy of power, does not. Besides, even if the KMT regime ended the "Period of Mobilization for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion" in 1991, in effect, it did not put

28. The romanization of 呂 should be "Lü" instead of "Lu," so that it will not be confused with other last names such as 陸, which is pronounced differently. However, I use Lu to follow her own transliteration of the English name.

29. Lu Hsiu-lien, 2006, p. 73.

30. *Ibid*., p. 41.

an end to the Chinese Civil War. It only signified that one warring party, the KMT/ROC, gave up the fight by ceasing to view the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as a rebellious group, but it did not mean that their rival, the PRC governed by the CCP, gave up the fight. This is why the PRC never promises to renounce using force against Taiwan, as it is understood as an unfinished civil war.

What is more, if the answer to the previous question is "no," a problem immediately ensues: how should people deal with the collective memory of "mainlanders," who account for 13-15% of the population of Taiwan nowadays? Most of the "mainlanders" retreated to Taiwan around 1949 along with the KMT regime, while the Chinese Civil War has been a vivid and essential part of their collective memory. Do their lived experiences not count as part of Taiwan's collective memory?[31]

A recent example of Hsu Chia-ching (徐佳青), a DPP politician, can provide one such illustration. In a TV talk show broadcast nationwide in 2018, Hsu commented that the 8-23 Battle, which took place in Kinmen in 1958, epitomized the civil war of China as the conflict between the CCP and the KMT; thus, it has nothing to do with the DPP, nor with Taiwan.[32] Such a comment incurred controversies and criticisms, but it also reflects the view held by the majority of the Green camp, who regard the Chinese civil war as irrelevant to Taiwan.

For the DPP and pro-independence groups, the collective memory of the Taiwanese has been repressed by the KMT regime for decades, and it is high time for them to restore or recollect those lost memories. In so doing, they do not seem to be aware, or even do not seem to care, that their mnemonic engineering of collective memory, so to speak, may run the risk of repeating the same errors that their rival KMT has committed. These actions resulted in strong resentment against the DPP (or Taiwan Independence discourse) among the mainlanders, for their life experience does not count in DPP/Green narratives of collective memory.

31. With the passing of time, the first generation of the mainlanders are gradually dying out, and it can be argued that the anti-Japanese war and the Chinese Civil war will eventually no longer be the "lived experiences" that characterize the mainlanders. However, as Halbwachs has accurately pointed out, such "lived experiences," although no longer experienced by their offspring, can be transmitted from generations to generations through formal and informal channels, thus constituting what is called "collective memory" or "historical memory" that, in turn, has been at stake in the debates over the collective memory in Taiwan to be discussed here. Furthermore, these debates are ultimately related to the origin of the collective community to be analyzed in the following section.

32. *China Times*, 24 August 2018.

On the other hand, if our answer to the previous question is yes, then, should cross-strait relations be understood in terms of civil war? Has the civil war ended? How can Taiwan deal with the legacies of the Chinese Civil War? Collective memory implies where we came from and who we are. To answer the questions raised above, one is tempted to ask first: What is Taiwan now?

The official and the most popular answer today would be: Taiwan is already a sovereign, independent country whose national title is the Republic of China. This seems to be a compromise that most people can accept, and it is a political reality that people take for granted in everyday life. However, making such a claim requires a great deal of forgetting, including forgetting the Chinese Civil War.

To make the situation more acute, let us consider a simple question often raised by scholars in the field of nations and nationalism: When was the nation (formed)?[33] Specifically, when did Taiwan become an independent country/nation? If "nation" is too political and too hard to define, we can pose the question differently: when was the founding moment of the collective community called Taiwan? The following are a few milestones worth considering: 1895 (when Taiwan was ceded to Japan), 1911 (when the ROC was founded, without Taiwan being part of its territory at the time), 1945 (when Taiwan was handed over to the ROC government), 1947 (when the 228 Incident took place), 1949 (when the KMT regime retreated to Taiwan), and 1971 (when the ROC was expelled from the United Nations). Each of these years reflects a historical event that has critically influenced the status of Taiwan or the ROC, but none of them has been widely accepted as the founding year of an independent Taiwan.[34]

Some may contend that Taiwan has become an independent country through the so-called "silent revolution" of democratization and indigenization. However, if that is the case, can we say that the nation was born in 1992, when

33. Ichijo & Uzelac (eds.), 2005.

34. To raise the question as to "When was the founding moment of the collective community called Taiwan?" also begs another tricky question regarding the role of the Aborigines in the formation of collective community of Taiwan. In our context of discussion here, what is meant by "collective community" refers to the political community, presumably a nation—be it recognized by other counterparts or not—which is a modern notion completely alien to the indigenous Austronesian-speaking peoples who have been dwelling on the island of Taiwan for thousands of years. In contrast, both the Blue and the Green paradigms of collective memory are constructed by the Han people originally from mainland China, who have been present on the island and become the dominant ethnic group for merely some 400 years. Since the relations between the Han and the Aborigines have been rather complicated during different historical periods, how the Aborigines, who constitute less than 3% of the population nowadays, view the two paradigms of collective memory, and how they see Taiwan as a collective community, are rather intriguing, yet important, issues worth investigating. However, due to the limited scope of this paper, such issues should be dealt within a separate study and will not be discussed here.

the national parliaments were entirely re-elected, or in 1996, when Taiwan first elected its president through a popular vote, or in 2000, when the 55-year rule of the KMT was put to an end by the DPP? Again, none of these events has been commemorated as the birth of the nation. As it turns out, up until today, the ROC continues to celebrate its national day on October 10, the date of the Wuchang Uprising that gave birth to Republican China in 1911, during which time Taiwan was not part of the ROC.

Furthermore, unlike communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the KMT has never been overthrown during the process of democratization. Although the transition from authoritarianism to democracy has been proudly branded by some as a "silent revolution," such a characterization is quite misleading. As a matter of fact, there has been no revolution at all. In other words, the authoritarian regime (namely, the KMT) has never been overthrown; rather, it continued to rule during the transition. Although the opposition party, the DPP, put an end to the KMT's 55-year rule on the island in 2000, it has overthrown neither the KMT nor the ROC. Instead, the DPP simply replaced the KMT and became the ruling party through democratic elections legitimized by the ROC constitution. In other words, no matter which party rules, the ruler's legitimacy has always come from the ROC Constitution, which still assumes that Taiwan is an integral part of the Chinese territory.

The point that I am endeavoring to make, of course, is not to suggest that Taiwan should declare its independence to break free from the legacies of the ROC—this is a political issue beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, what has been pointed out is the sheer fact that there has been no consensus regarding a generally accepted common ground to form a coherent and cohesive collective memory, and this is the most fundamental problem inflicting Taiwan's collective memory today. This brings us to the third major issue under debate: transitional justice.

Problems with Transitional Justice

As pointed out above, the TJC has been surrounded by controversies since its very beginning. In theory, the TJC ought to be an independent organization that works impartially regardless of party politics, but in practice, both the DPP and the KMT have used it as a political tool for their own partisan interests. Worse yet, the credibility of the TJC has been fatally damaged since Vice Chairman Chang Tian-chin (張天欽) was forced to resign due to his improper statement in an internal meeting, in which he explicitly instructed his staff to use the power of the commission to smear a KMT candidate during the 2018 election. In fact, this incident is merely the tip of the iceberg. The problems are much more profound than merely using transitional justice as a political tool.

There are structural factors behind it, and I would even go so far as to say that the model of transitional justice may not be suitable for contemporary Taiwan and, since it is ill-fitting, transitional justice will do disservice to the goals it promises to achieve. I will now expound on the reasons.

First, transitional justice presumes a political transition, usually from dictatorship or authoritarianism to democracy. However, in Taiwan, there are at least two transitions to be accomplished, but they cannot be said fully completed. As mentioned above, two driving forces have been propelling the political transition: democratization and indigenization. For the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, one may say that it has been, to a great extent, accomplished. For the transition from a China-centered to a Taiwan-centered polity, however, it is far from completed. In other words, the transition from a "divided nation model" to an "independence model" has never been achieved.[35] The incompletion of the second transition is crucial because it affects the functioning of democracy to a great extent. Specifically, the incompletion of indigenization hinders the process of democratization because it erodes the foundation of democracy, which assumes a clearly defined political community as the prerequisite. Since the political transitions have never been fully accomplished, to pursue transitional justice is premature, if not inappropriate, for contemporary Taiwan.

Secondly, transitional justice often sets out to achieve a few goals. Among them, the strongest and the most mentioned argument is that transitional justice is essential to the consolidation of democracy that has been newly established. In addition, transitional justice has also been regarded as an unavoidable, albeit painful, step to achieve reconciliation between victims and perpetrators—although this has not always been the case. However, paradoxical as it may seem, these two goals can hardly be achieved by pursuing transitional justice in contemporary Taiwan. Worse yet, the implementation of transitional justice may even be a disservice to these two goals. I will elaborate on this by addressing the latter first, then the former.

To begin with, the concept of reconciliation in the model of transitional justice is quite misleading in the context of Taiwan. As pointed out, the central issue is not the reconciliation between the victims and the perpetrators, but the

35. As a matter of fact, the divided nation model is not even quite applicable to Taiwan. In other cases of a divided nation such as Korea and former Germany, they do not suffer from international isolation and non-recognition as much as Taiwan does. Even the PRC, which claims that Taiwan is part of China, does not accept the divided nation model either, for it has been able to make most countries in the world accept its "One China Principle," which, by insisting that the PRC is the only legitimate government of China, precludes any recognition of Taiwan's nationhood or sovereignty.

incommensurability and incompatibility of different paradigms to understand the past, the present, and the future of the political community.

Transitional justice necessarily entails the reconstruction of collective memory. In order to establish the truth on which justice can be sought, a transitional truth regime, conceptualized as a regime that aims to reconstruct historical accounts of the past in the transitional period, is needed.[36] However, in a society of intricate historical backgrounds such as Taiwan, which is further complicated by its rather entangled national question, to establish one single truth regime sanctioned by the state may run the risk of undertaking another political enterprise that will be deemed unjust by others. One can only think of it in terms of Michel Foucault's power/knowledge apparatus,[37] or Pierre Bourdieu's conceptualization of symbolic violence and symbolic power of the state,[38] to understand how a truth regime will inevitably involve power struggles in another field. Here I am not advocating relativism about historical truth, but my aim is to highlight the point that any kind of truth will inevitably involve the establishment of an orthodoxy constructed by the power of authority (mostly the state), while the exercise of such a power may well be perceived as a kind of (unjust) symbolic violence by others. This situation is what we have been observing in Taiwan in the past two decades or so. Some may contend that this conflict is a battle between progressive liberals and regressive conservatives which will eventually be won by the former. However, the issue is much more complicated.

One of the results of promoting transitional justice by replacing old political symbolism with a new one is that it increases the hatred and resentment among people who support, or are influenced by, a different memory paradigm. The physical and symbolic violence involved in the decapitated statues discussed above best testifies the escalation of emotional tensions in Taiwanese society nowadays. But there is also physical and symbolic violence involving not statues, but living human bodies. The incident of Cheng Li-chun (鄭麗君), Minister of Culture, being slapped in the face exemplifies such violence. On 22nd January 2019, Minister Cheng was slapped in the face at a New Year banquet by an actress, whose parents were from the mainland, because she was upset at Cheng's efforts to transform the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall into something else, which was undertaken as part of the larger project to implement transitional justice. After the incident, the actress insisted that the slap was "well deserved," and Hau Lung-pin (郝龍斌), a Vice Chairman of the KMT, whose father is a famous general having retreated to Taiwan with the KMT

36. Teitel, 2000, p. 70-72.

37. Foucault, 1980.

38. Bourdieu, 1990.

troops in 1949, also took sides with the actress by characterizing such an action as a result of "officials forcing people to rebel" (*guanbi minfan* 官逼民反).

In the context of Taiwan's history, the phrase "officials forcing people to rebel" has been used by the Blue camp to characterize the traumatic 228 Incident, and now the same phrase is employed again to resist transitional justice pursued by the Green camp. Indeed, those pan-Blue supporters who identify with the ROC, many of them mainlanders, do not necessarily have a very high regard of Chiang Kai-shek; some may even feel hatred to a great extent; nonetheless, Chiang's rule, along with the memories of the KMT and/or the ROC, be they good or bad, are the loci of rich symbolic meanings that connect Taiwan with mainland China. The denunciation of Chiang implies the denial of such memories and connections, which, to the Blue supporters, ultimately entails the removal of China from Taiwan's collective memory. Such an implication has not only hurt Blue supporters' feelings but also incurred strong emotional reactions, and this is why the slap (on Minister Cheng's face) that vented such emotions has been characterized by the Blue camp as the "people's rebellion forced by the officials." In contrast to the White Terror, which refers to the KMT's purge of red communism, along with all other threats to the KMT's rule, during the authoritarian era, transitional justice implemented by the DPP has been characterized by its opponents as "Green Terror," meaning that only those in accordance with the Green paradigm (of history and collective memory) may survive while all others must be removed.

Thus, promoting transitional justice under such circumstances simply incurs widespread resentment and deeply rooted mistrust among the Pan-Blue camp, which, in turn, may result in the deteriorating quality of democracy in Taiwan.[39] This leads us to the assessment of the formerly mentioned argument which asserts that, theoretically, transitional justice can help consolidate democracy by fostering a democratic culture based on equality, freedom and justice that will eventually hold people together. However, such a theoretical assertion needs to be tested by practice on empirical grounds. In reality, one may pose the empirical question: Is transitional justice truly beneficial to the consolidation of democracy in Taiwan, in a practical sense?

There are good reasons based on empirical facts that may lead one to cast doubts on this issue. First of all, the primary threat to Taiwan's democracy does not come from the inside, but from the outside. Although some may fear that the conservatives in Taiwan may favor authoritarianism over democracy, it can be pretty safe to say that, after enjoying freedom and democracy for over three decades, it is hard to imagine authoritarianism returning, unless there

39. Related to this is the problem of historical shallowness of transitional justice, as pointed out by historical sociologists. See Olick, 2007; Torpey, 2006. This is a complicated issue that deserves to be discussed in a separate paper.

is another sea change in Taiwan's political scene in the future. If such a sea change did happen, the most probable scenario would be that Taiwan would be (re)unified by the PRC and governed by the CCP. Such a scenario is not purely imaginary, for the pressure of unification, accompanied by threats of military forces, is indeed real and is becoming even more intimidating in recent years. In other words, the major threat to Taiwan's democracy comes from outside (i.e., the PRC), not inside. To consolidate and safeguard Taiwan's democracy, it is more important for Taiwan to reinforce solidarity within the country to defend itself against the threat from the PRC. Transitional justice may not be the best strategy to achieve this goal. On the contrary, it might even eventually defeat this purpose.

As pointed out above, promoting transitional justice, which has led to the escalation of hatred and resentment among people with different memories, can hardly contribute to strengthening solidarity within Taiwan. Although Taiwan has been proud of its peaceful political transition through the "silent revolution" of democratization, democracy in Taiwan has been impaired by the so-called "vicious fights between the Blue and the Green" (*lanlü edou* 藍綠惡鬥) for a long time, and such fights have only worsened in the past few years, regardless of which party is in power. In the meantime, Beijing has been able to find agents on the island to affect the functioning of democracy in Taiwan, including exercising its influence upon the elections and mass media.[40] As a result, the more Taiwan is torn between conflicting memories and splitting identities, the more fragile and vulnerable its democracy will become, especially to outside threats from the PRC. In other words, a Taiwan divided by incommensurable and incompatible paradigms of collective memory (which entails conflicting memories and splitting identities) will eventually erode the foundation of democracy from both within and without.

To sum up, the model of transitional justice is not a good fit for contemporary Taiwan because the community has never completed the political transitions postulated by such a model. In addition, due to its peculiar situations, such as incommensurable/incompatible paradigms of collective memories, along with the threat to democracy from outside, promoting transitional justice in terms of establishing a new truth regime in Taiwan may do disservice to the goals it

40. Beijing's attempts to influence democratic elections in Taiwan can be traced back as early as the 1990s. The most notable example was the first direct presidential election in 1996, when the People's Liberation Army conducted missile tests in the Taiwan Strait to intimidate voters in Taiwan. Since then, the PRC has employed "attacks by words and threats by force" (*wengong wuhe* 文攻武嚇) to influence Taiwan's major elections, but has only led to opposite effects almost every time. However, the PRC has changed its strategy in recent years by refraining from openly commenting on elections in Taiwan, while trying to manipulate public opinions through various agents in mass media and on the internet. Such a strategy has been found much more effective and has received more and more attention in recent years, especially during and after the 2018 election.

sets out to achieve, including internal reconciliation and the consolidation of democracy.[41]

Concluding Remarks & Questions for Future Deliberations

In his response to the grave crisis of the modern world, which has been torn between contradictory forces of modernity that eventually lead to greater equality and heightened differences among various subjects, Alain Touraine raises a succinct yet profound question: Can we live together?[42] The same question can be posed to contemporary Taiwan, too, which has been torn between two different paradigms of collective memory that, in turn, is crucial to the formation of a collective community. Undoubtedly, collective memory is essential to the formation of identity because it provides an epistemological foundation for people to answer existential questions such as: Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we heading to? In contemporary Taiwan, however, there are many "we's" whose collective memories are incommensurable and incompatible with each other. The results are conflicting narratives, splitting identities, and deeply rooted mistrust.

One may contend that similar situations can be found in many other cases and thus there is nothing unique about Taiwan. Indeed, as many studies have shown, collective memory can be highly contested due to the fact that it can be multidimensional, multivocal, and even fragmented.[43] However, the question we should raise when comparing different cases is whether, or to what extent, the contested memories will undermine or even overthrow the very foundation of the collective community thus involved. We must keep in mind that Taiwan is an extraordinarily complicated case (if not an anomaly) where proceeding with caution is necessary. It is very natural that there will always be people who do not subscribe to mainstream discourse; there will always be different memories from different perspectives that challenge the mainstream. However, what I want

41. Needless to say, transitional justice involves many different aspects, some of which are worth pursuing in contemporary Taiwan, but some of which may not. According to Teitel, transitional justice includes criminal justice, historical justice, reparatory justice, administrative justice, and constitutional justice. Insofar as collective memory is concerned, it is historical justice that forms our major focus here, and as I have made clear, to pursue historical justice through establishing a new truth regime may not be appropriate to Taiwan at the current stage in that the political transition of indigenization has not been fully accomplished. The question as to whether other aspects of transitional justice may or may not be suitable to contemporary Taiwan deserves to be examined separately, as it is beyond the scope of this paper.

42. Touraine, 2000.

43. See, for example, Kertzer, 1998; Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2002; Wagner-Pacifici & Schwartz, 1991.

to point out and emphasize here is that there is actually no "mainstream" in Taiwan. There is no dominant paradigm or hegemonic discourse to talk about in the first place. Floating and unstable, the mainstream has been changing with different political parties. Let us think of the results of the past few presidential elections after 1996, the year when the Taiwanese people elected their supreme leader by direct vote for the first time. It turns out that Taiwanese voters have been swinging between two parties. The DPP came to power in 2000 to end the KMT's 55-year rule, but the KMT was able to make its way back in the 2008 election. Although the DPP defeated the KMT again by a landslide win in 2016, it suffered a humiliating defeat during the midterm election in 2018. However, one should not be misled by the result of the elections by interpreting it as the so-called "pendulum effect" in which voters simply swing between two parties. The problem involves not only different political ideologies or collective memories, but also, at a more fundamental level, the incompleteness of its political transition that, in turn, has been implicated with the indeterminacy of Taiwan's nationhood and unrecognized state sovereignty.

In lieu of a conclusion, let me raise a few questions for future deliberation: Has Taiwan accomplished the necessary political transitions so that we can speak of transitional justice at the current time? Has there been a "silent revolution," or just an unfinished transition? Besides, how can we deal with the legacies of the ROC (including the legacies of the Chinese Civil War)? These questions are further complicated by Taiwan's national and international status—namely, the lack of international recognition regarding its nationhood and sovereignty. As I have pointed out, the urgent and most fundamental problem is not so much about "reconciliation" between the victims and perpetrators, as often assumed in usual cases of transitional justice, but about the incommensurability and incompatibility of the Blue and the Green paradigms of collective memory. Under such circumstances, I would suggest that other alternative models, such as "civil repair" in civil society,[44] rather than the model of transitional justice sanctioned by the state, might be more appropriate to Taiwan at the current stage.

44. Civil repair is a loose term that refers to the reparation of relations between groups that are divided by the existing cleavages either created by different spheres of society or by the exclusion resultant from the binary codes in the civil sphere. For more discussions on the subject, see ALEXANDER, 2006. For how civil repair can be applied in East Asian cases, see ALEXANDER *et al*., 2019.

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