

CHINA: FROM REVOLUTION TO REFORM

Francis L.F. Lee and Joseph M. Chan

Memories of Tiananmen

Politics and Processes
of Collective Remembering
in Hong Kong, 1989-2019

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 Lee, F. L. F., & Chan, J. M. (2018). Memory mobilization, generational differences, and communication effects on collective memory about Tiananmen in Hong Kong. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 28(4), 397-415. Doi: 10.1080/01292986.2018.1425465

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Acknowledgments

This is the third book the two authors publish as a team. The first one was *Media, Social Mobilization and Mass Protests in Post-Colonial Hong Kong*, which focuses on the July 1, 2003 protest as a critical event that spurred social mobilization and altered the trajectories of the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong in subsequent years. In the process of studying the annual July 1 protests, we also conducted our first on-site survey of the June 4 Victoria Park vigil in 2004. After finishing that book manuscript on the July 1 protests in early 2009, it seemed natural to us to turn our attention to the June 4 commemoration, the other series of ritualistic protests in Hong Kong, and study it systematically.

That was a little over a decade ago. When we began our study of the June 4 commemoration, our overarching question, put rhetorically, was: Why couldn't Hong Kong people forget about June 4? Indeed, in 2009, Hong Kong remembered the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown, and Hong Kong citizens were hailed as "China's conscience." But within a few years, collective remembering of Tiananmen was questioned and critiqued not only by the state, but also by a new generation of young people who felt alienated from China. Our own research was distracted by the Umbrella Movement in 2014, and we published our second co-authored book *Media and Protest Logics in the Digital Era: The Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong* in 2018. When we returned to the topic of collective remembering of Tiananmen, the memory landscape had changed tremendously.

We conducted some follow-up research, updated our analysis of inter-generational memory transfer, and examined what we came to call the processes of memory repair and memory balkanization. Around mid-2019, we finished the first draft of the present book. However, social and political changes in the city have only accelerated since then. Hong Kong witnessed the biggest protest movement in its history in the second half of 2019. By the time we had to finalize this manuscript in late 2020, the June 4 vigil of the year had been banned and the National Security Law was established. It is everyone's guess what may have happened by the time the book comes out.

Nevertheless, looking at it in another way, all the changes and transformations in the past decade only affirmed the significance of the Tiananmen commemoration. For three decades, the commemoration had been one of the most important "difference markers" signifying the distinctiveness of Hong Kong from mainland China under "one country, two systems." Hong Kong was a place where citizens could openly call for the end of one-party



rule; it was a place where people insisted on remembering what the state wanted people to forget. This, of course, was not due to the state's leniency; it was a result of a set of complex processes driven by the agency of actors in various institutional contexts, as this book will explain. The story told by this book, therefore, is at one level a story about how collective remembering of Tiananmen persisted in Hong Kong. And at a more general level it is a story about how Hong Kong people exercised – and by doing so attempted to defend – their freedom to resist state power.

At a more personal level, in 1989, the first author was in his second year in secondary school. He has only some bits and pieces of memories about those days, such as classmates talking about going to the protest march together (but ultimately did not because of the typhoon), seeing off his grandmother to Macau before returning home to watch live broadcast of the protests in Tiananmen Square, watching TV news about the tanks' movement in Beijing in the immediate days after June 4, etc. Fragments of media images mixed and meshed with the trivialities of everyday life. He cannot even remember exactly when and how he knew about the crackdown. After 1989, he went to the June 4 vigil only once throughout the entire 1990s. He became a more frequent participant of the vigil only after becoming a researcher studying social movements. This personal trajectory nonetheless highlights the point that the relationship between a historical event and an individual's life trajectory often does not develop in a simple and linear manner, and many individuals have their unique ways of entering or relating to the mnemonic community of the Tiananmen Incident.

The second author was an assistant professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong then. He engulfed himself in following the Tiananmen tragedy as it unfolded in various news media. Deeply touched, he joined the massive protests that shook Hong Kong to its core. The images of Beijing students hunger-striking, the bloody crackdown, and the huge local rallies still linger in his mind to this day. He found it hard to turn away from this critical event as its repercussions were strongly felt in the daily politics of the city in the ensuing decades. While he at times regretted having missed the opportunity to conduct an on-site study in Beijing in 1989, he was intrigued by the apparent resilience of the June 4 collective memory in withstanding the erosion of time many years later. If he could have his will, he would rather that this tragedy had not happened even though there would then be nothing left for us to study. Yet it did happen and the resulting collective memory is facing a severe threat as it draws to a natural temporary closure with the firewall between China and Hong Kong melting. Back in 1989, he

had no idea that the event would one day make a perfect case for the study of social remembering, as it seems today.

Throughout the past 10 years, our research has received support from many people. We want first and foremost to thank all the interviewees in this project, including ordinary citizens who participated in the vigils, student activists, key members of the Alliance, journalists, secondary school teachers, and so on. We would like to thank various graduate students who helped us at different stages of the project. We also want to thank the numerous reviewers of our work on the topic over the years, who have provided us with precious feedback and suggestions. We thank the media companies and the individual journalists who allowed us to use their materials and photos for this book. We own Dr. Robert Chung, formerly of Hong Kong University's Public Opinion Programme, special thanks for his collaboration in conducting on-site surveys at the candlelight vigils. Finally, we thank the editors at Amsterdam University Press for their professional help on getting this book published in the best shape possible.

Francis L. F. Lee

Joseph M. Chan



List of Abbreviations

Anti-ELAB	Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill
ATV	Asia Television Ltd.
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CUHK	Chinese University of Hong Kong
DAB	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong
EPA	Economics and Public Affairs
HKFS	Hong Kong Federation of Students
HKPTU	Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union
LegCo	Legislative Council
NSL	National security law
OCLP	Occupy Central for Love and Peace
PLA	People's Liberation Army
RTHK	Radio Television Hong Kong
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SARS	Severe acute respiratory syndrome
The Alliance	Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China



1 Introduction

Abstract

Chapter 1 articulates the core research questions underlying the book's analysis and highlights the theoretical and social significance of the case of collective remembering of the Tiananmen crackdown by Hong Kong society. It discusses the conceptualization of and perspective on collective memory adopted by the book. The processual approach and the six memory processes to be examined are explicated. The chapter also provides information about the methods utilized.

Keywords: collective memory, counter-memory, memory processes

How people remember the past is a crucial factor shaping their identity, perceptions of present reality, and ideas about a desired future. In the political arena, actors with varying interests thus have the incentives to construct and promote certain versions of the past and undermine others. Representations and narratives of the past are therefore often subject to contestation. Such contestation has a substantial impact on public opinion, policymaking, and the long-term political development of society.

These arguments are now well-established in the study of collective or social memory. An important strand of analysis in the literature has focused on how counter-memories – a concept often attributed to Foucault (1977) – can be developed to challenge a society's dominant collective memory (e.g., Gutman, 2017; Verberg & Davis, 2011; Walkowitz & Knauer, 2011; Whitlinger, 2015). In such analyses, a representation of the past is dominant in two senses simultaneously: it is the most widely circulated, accepted, or even canonized version of the past in the public arena, and it serves the interests of the dominant social group or the state. Beyond the dominant collective memory, there can be “an unarticulated system of communicative and cultural references to the past and common experiences” shared by members of subordinated groups (Molden, 2016: 136). These references and experiences are the materials for the production of counter-memories. In multicultural

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societies, counter-memories “offer socially excluded groups a sense of ownership [...] [and also] transform dominant narratives and help produce a more nuanced and just understanding of the past” (Weedon & Jordan, 2012: 150). In the context of Gramscian hegemonic struggles, counter-memories are crucial weapons for challenging ideological domination (Misztal, 2003).

There are theoretical reasons to argue that the publicly dominant ideas and narratives are often those of the power holders. In one sense, this is just a version of the Marxist dictum that the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas in every epoch. But in reality, there can be cases in which the socially dominant collective memory is not the one favoring the power holders. In the latter case, the core questions become: How did the socially dominant collective memory come to be established in the first place? How does it constrain the actions of the power holders? How can it withstand the power holders’ attempt to suppress or rewrite the memory? What factors influence the sustainability of the collective memory in the long run? Under what conditions will the socially dominant collective memory start to fade?

This book examines such a case: Hong Kong society’s continual commemoration of the 1989 Tiananmen student movement in China. Our analysis covers the 30-year period between 1989 and 2019, when this book manuscript was finalized. In 2020, the June 4 commemoration was banned for the first time in Hong Kong. The decision was made in the name of a ban on public gatherings due to the COVID-19 outbreak, but it was also clearly driven by substantial changes in the political dynamics in Hong Kong after the onset of the huge protest movement in the second half of 2019. While we will discuss the developments after 2019 in the Epilogue, the main content of this book focuses on commemoration during the three decades in which the June 4 commemoration was a major annual event in the city.

Chapter 2 will contain a brief narration of the original events in Beijing in 1989 and Hong Kong people’s participation in it. Here, suffice to say that the Tiananmen Incident¹ is one of the most significant political events in

1 Over time, various labels have been used in public discourse in Hong Kong to refer to the events in 1989, including the “89 democracy movement,” “June 4 Incident,” “June 4 massacre,” and the “Tiananmen Incident.” “June 4 Incident” is arguably the most commonly used label, though some activists may criticize the term for its failure to foreground the cruelty of the CCP’s actions. We primarily use the terms June 4 Incident, Tiananmen Incident, or sometimes simply Tiananmen in this book. The terms are interchangeable and are employed to avoid verbosity. The word “incident” is used partly because it is indeed the more commonly used phrase in English in Hong Kong’s public discourse, and partly because it can cover a broader range of happenings over the months in 1989. Yet we also do not refrain from using other terms such as “crackdown” when appropriate.

contemporary Chinese history. It is also a transformative event (Lee & Sing, 2019; Sewell, 1996) for Hong Kong, i.e., the event changed political actors' perceptions of reality and strategic calculations, leading to new interactional dynamics and setting political developments onto new paths. Before 1989, Britain adopted a convergence policy toward China. Although it had the incentive to institutionalize democracy in order to salvage its own legitimacy (Scott, 1989) and plan for a "glorious retreat" (Lee, Chan, Pan & So, 2002), Britain was willing to collaborate with China and make concessions regarding the pace of political reform. The Tiananmen crackdown, however, created a huge confidence crisis locally and uproars against the Chinese government internationally. Britain adjusted its policy and pushed for quicker democratization in Hong Kong (Baum, 1999). The local business sector, for a period of time, also stood on the opposite side of Beijing. Even after the emotional impact of the event started to subside, a certain part of the business sector remained less opposed to democratization than before (So, 1999).

Besides elite interactions and strategies, the Tiananmen Incident ignited local public support for democratization. As Sing (2000) summarized, public support for democratization among Hong Kong people in the 1980s was limited by a sense of political powerlessness and a lack of knowledge about and commitment to a democratic system. Yet Tiananmen led many Hong Kong people to see democratization as a means to protect the city's future, a sentiment captured by the phrase *man-zyu kong-gung*², which means resisting the Communists through democracy (Law, 2017). The protest activities in Hong Kong during the movement also gave the local protest leaders, such as Martin Lee and Szeto Wah, a significant degree of public visibility, credibility, and legitimacy. The Tiananmen Incident allowed these local protest leaders, who were mostly middle-class service professionals, to gain the support and recognition from the grassroots (So, 1999). The protest leaders would later become the leaders of the major pro-democracy political parties, which dominated the direct elections of the legislature in 1991 and 1995 (Ma, 2017).

Moreover, the Tiananmen Incident led to the rise of "democracy" as a condensation symbol that groups on opposite sides of the political divide appealed to and appropriated. As So (1999) put it, the Tiananmen Incident

2 Throughout the book, transliteration follows Cantonese pronunciation when Chinese phrases used primarily in public discourses in Hong Kong are concerned. As far as Chinese phrases belonging to mainland political discourses are concerned, Mandarin pronunciation is followed.

imposed a democratic discourse onto Hong Kong society. The clearest indication of the symbolic dominance of “democracy” is the fact that even pro-establishment political parties appropriated the label in their names.³

Across the border, the Chinese government “was very angry at and resentful of the support the people of Hong Kong had given the student protesters” (Tsang, 1997: 172). Although China recognized the need to rebuild Hong Kong people’s confidence about the future, it was unwilling to collaborate with Britain on quickening the pace of democratization of the city. Instead, the Chinese government engaged in new efforts to coopt social and business leaders in Hong Kong, expelled the pro-democracy movement leaders from bodies such as the Basic Law Drafting Committee, and rhetorically warned Hong Kong society not to engage in subversive activities (Lee & Chu, 1998). Wary of Hong Kong becoming an anti-communist base, the Chinese leaders introduced Article 23 into the Basic Law, requesting the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government to enact laws protecting national security. For more than two decades after the handover, Article 23 had been one of the most sensitive and controversial issues in Hong Kong politics.

Nevertheless, this book is not about how the Tiananmen Incident shaped Hong Kong politics or Hong Kong-China relationship through its power of contingency. Rather, this book addresses the power of collective memory (Schudson, 1997) of the Tiananmen Incident. During the 1989 student movement, the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China (the Alliance) was formed. The Alliance engaged in a range of actions immediately after the Tiananmen crackdown, including the “Yellow Bird Action” – the coordinated effort to help Chinese dissidents to flee the country (Lo, 2013). The Alliance later became the main organizers of the Tiananmen commemoration activities. It organized the first June 4 candlelight vigil in 1990, in which 150,000 citizens participated according to the Alliance, or 80,000 according to the police.

The June 4 candlelight vigil became an annual event. Table 1.1 shows the numbers of participants of the vigils over the years. Several points are worth noting. From 1990 to 1995, the number of participants went down substantially. Part of the decline might be attributable to the subsiding of the emotional impact of the event. In addition, many Hong Kong citizens had a strong sense of frustration and powerlessness after 1989 (Wong, 2000).

3 Two examples are the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, which is the largest pro-government political party in the Hong Kong legislature in the 2010s, and the Liberal Democratic Federation, a more pro-business and pro-Beijing party founded in 1990.



Table 1.1 Number of participants in the June 4 candlelight vigils, 1990-2019

	Figures from the Alliance	Figures from the Police		Figures from the Alliance	Figures from the Police
1990	150,000	80,000	2005	45,000	22,000
1991	100,000	60,000	2006	44,000	19,000
1992	80,000	28,000	2007	55,000	27,000
1993	40,000	12,000	2008	48,000	18,000
1994	40,000	12,000	2009	150,000	62,800
1995	35,000	16,000	2010	150,000	113,000
1996	45,000	16,000	2011	150,000	77,000
1997	55,000	(no figure)	2012	180,000	85,000
1998	40,000	16,000	2013	150,000	54,000
1999	70,000	(no figure)	2014	180,000	99,500
2000	45,000	(no figure)	2015	135,000	46,600
2001	48,000	(no figure)	2016	125,000	21,800
2002	45,000	(no figure)	2017	110,000	18,000
2003	50,000	(no figure)	2018	115,000	17,000
2004	82,000	48,000	2019	180,000	37,000

Note: Figures were originally derived from Lo (2013) and a Wikipedia entry about the candlelight vigil. They were then double-checked with the figures reported in the news in various years.

Many middle-class citizens migrated to other countries. Others focused their attention on the local scene and strived for democratization in Hong Kong. Pro-democracy politicians and activists also turned their attention and resources to political party formation and electioneering.

However, the dwindling of the size of the vigil stopped in 1995. Between 1996 and 2008, around 50,000 citizens joined the vigil each year. The exceptions were the vigils in 1999 and 2004, which attracted more participants than in the other years. This is consistent with the common observation that rounded-number anniversaries are more capable of drawing attention and participation (Forrest, 1993). Numbers of participants jumped to 150,000 in 2009, the 20th anniversary of the Incident. Yet the number of participants stayed high between 2010 and 2013, no matter whether the Alliance's or the police's figures are used. These figures suggest that Hong Kong people's urge to remember Tiananmen had not been weakened by time. Rather, there were signs that the urge to remember had become stronger between 2003 and 2014.

Nevertheless, not including the 30th anniversary, which carried the significance of a "rounded number anniversary" and was on the eve of the outburst of the Anti-Extradition Bill Movement later in the month (Lee, Yuen, Tang & Cheng, 2019), the size of the vigil went down rather substantially

between 2014 and 2018. Observers of Hong Kong politics may immediately point toward the rise of “localism” in the 2010s (Kaeding, 2017; So, 2017; Veg, 2017) as an important factor associated with this decline of the Tiananmen commemoration participation. Localism can be understood as a set of ideas and claims about the local distinctiveness of Hong Kong as opposed to mainland China, with Hong Kong independence being its most radical manifestation (Lee, 2018a; Lo, 2018). Some localist groups and politicians contended that democratic reforms in Hong Kong were doomed to fail “so long as the moderate democrats dominating the political scene in Hong Kong refused to sever their emotional ties with China” (Law, 2017: 802). Tiananmen commemoration is arguably the most conspicuous public manifestation of such emotional ties. Some localist groups thus called for abandoning the commemoration. Collective remembering of Tiananmen was seemingly undermined not so much by the state’s efforts to suppress the memory as by new forces in contentious politics that questioned its relevance.

Certainly, Hong Kong society remembered Tiananmen not only through the candlelight vigils. Memories about the events in 1989 were sustained and contested through regular retellings of the events in 1989 via various media, journalists’ employment of June 4 as a news icon (Bennett & Lawrence, 1995; Lee, Li & Lee, 2011), controversies aroused by the state’s or other political actors’ attempts to challenge the dominant representation of the events, the passing on of knowledge and stories to the younger generation in classrooms and families, the circulation of related images and videos in cyberspace, and so on. Nonetheless, Table 1.1 has helped us to sketch a basic storyline of the stabilization, strengthening, and weakening of collective remembering of Tiananmen in Hong Kong between 1990 and 2019.

This book is an attempt to understand the processes that led to the above-mentioned stabilization, strengthening and weakening of collective remembering over time. Analyzing the politics of Tiananmen memory is a way to examine the resilience of the civil society in Hong Kong in the face of state pressure, as well as the limits of such resilience. It also informs our understanding of related issues such as the transformation of contentious politics and the evolution of national and local identities in the city.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had insisted on its verdict of the 1989 student movement as a riot. Media references to the events had been censored within the mainland (Lim, 2015; Roberts, 2018). Non-remembering of Tiananmen in China is the result of state-induced amnesia among the younger generation and a culture of public secrecy among those who “know what not to know” (Hillenbrand, 2020). Hong Kong used to be the only place under CCP’s control where Tiananmen could be publicly commemorated. In



one sense, Hong Kong society has been preserving the memory of Tiananmen *for China*. Although this preservation work is not welcomed by the CCP regime, there were signs that some mainland citizens appreciated Hong Kong people's persistence on remembering June 4. There were mainland tourists observing or even participating in the vigil every year (Huang, 2015; Lo, 2013). What this book addresses is therefore also an interesting case of a collective memory being conserved primarily by an offshore civil society (Hung & Ip, 2012).

For the study of the politics of collective memory, three characteristics of this case can be highlighted. First, as noted at the beginning, Tiananmen memory in Hong Kong is not a typical case of counter-memories challenging a dominant collective memory. More precisely speaking, when put within the context of China at large, Tiananmen commemoration in the SAR of Hong Kong might indeed be treated as a counter-memory. But when we focus on the dynamics of collective remembering within Hong Kong, it would be more accurate to see Tiananmen commemoration as a socially dominant collective memory challenging state power. This character means that the case is likely to illustrate not so much the malleability as the persistence of the past, not so much how collective memory serves the interests of the powerful as how it defends the subordinate. The key question is what explains the persistence and defensive function of collective memory.

Second, the development and transformation of collective memory of Tiananmen in Hong Kong has not been a linear process. As Table 1.1 suggests, an initial decline was followed by a period of stabilization, which was then followed by a period of strengthening, and yet further by another period of decline. If this book was written in the early 2000s, we might have focused entirely on the factors explaining the growth and persistence of collective remembering of Tiananmen. But writing at the end of the 2010s, we are compelled not only to explain the decline of collective memory since 2014, but also to re-evaluate the period immediately before 2014 as one in which the seeds for the decline of collective memory might have already been sown. The case thus allows us to develop a more nuanced account of the factors and processes shaping the persistence and/or change of collective memory.

Third, Tiananmen commemoration in Hong Kong is not only a case of a people remembering a tragedy; it is also about making contentious claims against the Chinese and Hong Kong governments. The five founding principles of the Alliance are "rehabilitating June 4," "ascertaining the responsibility of the massacre," "releasing all dissidents," "ending one-party rule," and "developing a democratic China." Some of these are strong claims putting the legitimacy of the CCP regime under question. This study is

therefore also one about a particular social movement. The analysis will shed light on how collective memory and social movement dynamics intersect.

The specificities of the Tiananmen commemoration in Hong Kong can also be illustrated by comparing it to remembrance of state violence in other Asian countries. In other major cases of historic state violence in the region, such as Taiwan's 228 Incident, Korea's Kwangju Uprising, and Indonesia's 1965 Killings, the regime typically propagated official versions of the events which portrayed the resistance as unruly rebellion and omitted the severe state violence. Memories about the state violence were typically suppressed, even though they survived through the presence of physical sites that reminded people about the events, sharing of stories at the interpersonal level, and efforts by activists living abroad (Eickhoff et al., 2017; Lewis, 2002; Stolojan, 2017). Open discussions of the historical events were made possible only as a result of a regime change, i.e., democratization of Korea and Taiwan in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the end of the Suharto regime in Indonesia in 1998 (Kuddus, 2017; Leong, 2019; Rowen & Rowen, 2017). In comparison, what happened within mainland China regarding the (non)remembrance of Tiananmen is highly similar to what happened in these other East Asian cases before political transition. But the Tiananmen commemoration in Hong Kong stands out as a case in which memories about state violence were heavily publicized and socially dominant even though the regime perpetrating the violence remained firmly in power.

On the surface, Hong Kong people's commemoration of Tiananmen features a discrepancy between local level commemoration and national level (non)commemoration. Yet it also differs from other cases of national vs. subnational level collective memory. Hook (2017) has examined how subnational level collective memory of Okinawans about the Second World War differed from the national level collective memory in Japan. How people in Kwangju remembered the Kwangju Uprising could differ from how other Koreans remembered the events (Lewis, 2002). However, in Okinawa and Kwangju, the contrast between the subnational and national level collective memories was rooted first and foremost in the actual experiences of the locals – Okinawans during and after the war and people in Kwangju during the uprising. The collective memories are subnational not only because they are held mainly by the people in the localities, but also because the contents of the subnational level collective memories are indeed mainly about what happened at the subnational level. In contrast, although collective remembering of Tiananmen in Hong Kong was also partly driven by Hong Kong people's "local experiences" in 1989 (i.e., how people participated in activities in Hong Kong supporting the Beijing student movement), the

main object of commemoration remained the crackdown in Beijing. The local public had been building a memory about and for the nation.

While the above put forward the central research questions and clarified the background, significance, and specificities of the case, the remaining parts of this chapter will explicate certain theoretical and conceptual bases of the study. We will first discuss how we define collective memory and delimit the scope of our analysis. This is followed by an explication of our emphasis on the *processes* of collective memory. We will then discuss issues in analyzing the collective-memory-social-movement nexus. The final section provides an outline of the subsequent chapters and briefly introduces the methodologies and data employed.

Defining Collective Memory

In the vast literature of “memory studies,” besides collective memory, notions such as public memory (e.g., Dickinson, Blair & Ott, 2010), social memory (e.g., Climo & Cattell, 2002), and cultural memory (e.g., Assmann, 2012) are also employed by researchers. There are nuanced differences among them. For instance, the term social or cultural memory does not emphasize the presence of a “collective” as the agent. But the various notions also overlap and are sometimes used interchangeably (Schudson, 2014). This book primarily uses the term collective memory because the emphasis is on how Tiananmen commemoration in Hong Kong is a collective act that many citizens engage in.

Many scholars have questioned the validity and usefulness of the concept of collective memory as relevant studies proliferated in the 1980s and 1990s. Some argued that the term is too closely tied to the problematic notion of a group mind or a collective consciousness dissociated with individuals’ thoughts (Fentress & Wickham, 1992). Others argued that the term is used in too many different ways to refer to too many different things, including myths, tradition, rituals, history, etc. It is better for scholars to just use the more specific terms (Berliner, 2005; Gedi & Elam, 1996). Proponents of the concept, in response, argued that a unifying label is needed to point to the multifarious ways through which societies selectively remember and forget. The concept of collective memory does cover a lot of ground, but it is only because societies and people do remember the past through a wide range of mnemonic practices and objects. Hence collective memory can be considered a sensitizing concept alerting us to the means through which societies remember. Empirically, collective memory is not a singular thing.



There are sets of mnemonic objects, institutions, practices, and processes intertwined with each other to carry out the task of remembering (Olick & Robbins, 1998).

While Olick and Robbins's (1998) approach is useful to demarcate the boundary of a field of research, few studies can actually examine a full array of mnemonic objects and practices. Numerous more specific definitions were therefore developed by various scholars, partly based on their disciplinary and theoretical allegiance, and partly on the need of the study at hand. Most directly pertinent to this book, communication researchers tend to treat mediated representations or narratives of the past as the main empirical referent of collective memory (Orenstein, 2002; Zelizer, 1992). Edy (2006: 3), for instance, defined collective memory as:

the stories that everyone knows about the past, even if not everyone believes the story. Such memories become a kind of common cultural currency – the shared language that one must be able to speak if one wishes to communicate with others about a shared past, even if one's goal is to challenge that shared memory.

This way to define collective memory locates it in the public arena. Collective memory does not necessarily correspond to what individuals in the society remember. In fact, the above passage explicitly highlights the possibility that the publicly available stories may not reflect what individuals remember or regard as true.

In contrast, some researchers defined collective memory in terms of what people actually think. Schwartz (2014: 212) treated the concept as a variant of public opinion and defined it as “the distribution through society of what individuals know, believe and felt about past events.” This definition facilitates the use of surveys to examine collective memory. But survey researchers are not the only ones who locate collective memory inside people's heads. Studying collective remembering of the former USSR in Russia, Wertsch (2002) focused on the role of narratives in history textbooks. Yet he saw the narratives only as the tools used by agents to do memory work. Collective memory is still understood as distributed across individuals.

The contrast between the individualist and collectivist approach was the subject of Olick's (1999a) classic discussion of the “two cultures” of collective memory studies. He argued that certain scholars emphasize memory as essentially an individualistic phenomenon because, if memory is understood literally, only individuals do the remembering. Those scholars thus see collective memory as the aggregated individual memories of the



members of a group. They may acknowledge that individuals remember within a social context and that memories are shaped by shared cultural frameworks, publicly available symbols, and collective representations. But those frameworks, symbols, and representations are seen not as “memories”; they are tools, resources, or influences shaping how people remember.

Olick (1999a) noted that the individualist approach has several advantages, e.g., it facilitates the incorporation of psychological processes into the study of social memory, and it avoids the problematic notion of a group mind. However, he preferred to use “collected memory” to refer to the individualists’ object of analysis. In contrast, “genuinely collective memory” refers to “public discourses about the past as wholes or to narratives and images of the past that speak in the name of collectivities” (p. 345). He argued that collective memory cannot be reduced to individuals’ thoughts because the collective representations and rituals indeed contain a group’s “memory” about its past. The construction and negotiation of such collective representations and symbols have their own institutional, structural, and technological bases. That is, there are social, political, and institutional processes shaping these collective memories through employing the technologies of memory available in a society. Depending on the characteristics of the case, individuals in a society or group may have rather little influence on the collective memory processes.

Over time, many scholars agreed that one should try to incorporate both individualist and collective perspectives instead of choosing between the two. There are different ways to articulate the relationship between collective representations and individual memories. Schuman, Corning and Schwartz (2012) stated that collective memory cannot be reduced to, but is realized through, individual understanding and memory. Hirst and Manier (2008) argued that collective memory should be located in the interaction between what is out there in the world and what is in people’s heads. Studies have to examine the design of mnemonic or social resources, practices, and tools relevant to collective memory, as well as the effectiveness of these practices and tools in shaping people’s memories. Public representations of the past and individuals’ understanding of the past thus form two sides of the same collective memory coin.

Our examination of Hong Kong society’s collective memory about the Tiananmen Incident will also look into both representations of the past in the public arena and how individuals understood the Incident and its associated issues. We examine both sides of the collective memory coin not only for the sake of comprehensiveness itself. How individuals think and act is particularly important in the present case. As discussed above,

the size of the annual June 4 vigil constituted one of the most important symbols regarding the strength of collective memory about Tiananmen in Hong Kong. That is, a core aspect of the public representation of collective remembering was constituted by and grounded in the actions of individuals. More broadly speaking, individual citizens' views on the Tiananmen Incident were regularly publicly expressed and/or represented through protest activities, media forums, and opinion polls. A collective representation of the Tiananmen Incident could hardly have been dominant and sustainable in the public arena if too many people did not regard it as legitimate.

Moreover, individual actions and expressions not only serve to confirm the validity of collective representations; they also embellish the collective representations. As van Dijck (2007) argued, while personal memories take up cultural frameworks, the sustaining of collective cultural memories requires accounts from individuals to provide them with authority, richness, and authenticity. Individual accounts may be included in mediated representations such as news reports and commentary articles. They may be shared among friends and acquaintances in relatively private settings. Social psychologists have noted the role of ordinary conversations in the shaping of social memory (Hirst & Echterhoff, 2012). As parts of this book will illustrate, the sharing of personalized memories about the Tiananmen Incident can indeed play a crucial role in certain collective memory processes. Therefore, the analysis will miss a great deal if individual attitudes and beliefs are not addressed.

Nevertheless, public representation of the past retains a degree of theoretical primacy in our analysis. That is, theoretically speaking, we are closer to Olick (1999a) than to Hirst and Manier (2008) in privileging the "collectivist side" of the collective memory coin. The original collective representations of a past event may be grounded in individual memories. But once the collective representations are formed, their impact on the memories and thoughts of individuals is usually stronger than the impact of individual memories on the collective representations. While the collective representations can be changed over time, contestation and negotiation of collective memory typically occur in the public arena, especially in the cluster of institutional spaces that constitute "the media." Social, political, and professional groups and organizations are the primary players in the contestation and negotiation.

Even within mainland China, the Beijing government could not completely erase ordinary citizens' personal memories about Tiananmen (Hillenbrand, 2020); what it did is to undermine public representations of the events in 1989. The most important aim of censorship is arguably not so much to stop people from holding certain views as to prevent the expressions of

views that can become the bases of new collective actions (King, Pan & Roberts, 2013). In the politics of memory, collective representations of the past constitute the primary object of struggle.

Processes of Collective Memory

The extent to which collective memory is stable and enduring constitutes another key issue in the literature. Many scholars in the 1990s contrasted the presentist perspective with a persistence perspective (Olick, 1999b). Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) *Invention of Tradition* was often cited as the representative work in the presentist camp. The presentists see the past as subject to the manipulation by powerful elites to serve their present interests. They treat traditions as having very weak grounds in historical reality, and they emphasize the substantial over-time shifts in how people remember historical events or figures (Schwartz, 1982, 2000). In contrast, some scholars emphasized that collective memories can be resistant to change. For Schudson (1997), there are limits of what available pasts people can draw upon, there are norms regarding how certain stories need to be told, and there are people who would defend an existing version of collective memory. In journalism studies, some scholars have argued that the past constitutes resources that journalists can draw upon to constrain and resist the influence of political elites (Bennett & Lawrence, 1995; Berkowitz, 2011).

Certainly, a simplistic contrast can hide a number of nuanced yet important points. First, to claim that collective memory is likely to be shaped by present circumstances does not entail that the retelling of the past necessarily serves the interests of the present power holders. Numerous studies have continued to show how "the present" shapes collective memories, but "the present" can refer to factors other than elite manipulation. Schwartz, Zerubavel, and Barnett (1986), for instance, examined the recovery of the siege of Masada in Jewish history by Palestinian Jews in the 1920s. They argued that the rediscovery had to be understood in terms of how the historical event matched the conditions facing the Palestinian Jews in the 1920s. At stake was the congruence between the past event and the present condition. Cunningham, Nugent and Slodden (2010) analyzed the changing narrative structure surrounding the Greensboro massacre in the U.S. They argued that the changes are the result of a cluster of factors not reducible to the interests of the powerful. The factors include the emergence of new information, the changing institutional contexts of the retelling, and the changing mix of speakers doing the retelling.



Second, we can differentiate between two meanings of persistence. One refers to the content of the collective memory; the other refers to the strength of the collective memory. The former is concerned with whether the representations and narratives about a historical event remain largely unchanged over time, whereas the latter is concerned with whether people of a society continue to attach special significance to the historical event so that remembering is seen as central to a group's collective identity or even a moral duty. In fact, in this study, when we talk about the persistence, strengthening, and weakening of collective memory about Tiananmen in Hong Kong, we refer primarily to the issue of strength, i.e., the extent to which Hong Kong people continue to see remembering Tiananmen as a moral imperative.

Third, given the distinction between constancy in content and persistence in strength, one can see that adjusting a narrative or collective representation according to the present context does not entail the lack of persistence. In fact, it is difficult to imagine the total absence of adjustments or changes in collective representations of a past event over time. This is similar to individuals telling their personal stories: people naturally tell the same personal stories somewhat differently when facing different audiences in different contexts (Hirst & Echterhoff, 2012). It does not entail a significant shift in the core content or the main thrust of the stories. It does not mean people are “manipulating” the stories, or that the stories have become less important to the storytellers. Analogously, in the case of collective representations or historical narratives, changes may occur over time because of the need to incorporate new information, the need for the retelling to be pegged to ongoing events, or the need to adjust for a changing audience. Such adjustments of the collective representations can actually be needed for the perpetuation of collective remembering.

What our analysis will do is examine the changing content of collective memory about Tiananmen in Hong Kong and how it relates to the strength of the collective memory. More specifically, we will adopt the dynamics of memory approach to examine the processes that shape the path along which collective memory moves. The approach sees collective memory as under constant negotiation and contestation through the interactions among social and political actors (Misztal, 2003). The past and the present constantly influence each other (Olick & Levy, 1997). While recognizing the possibility of transformations of collective memory, such transformations are not always driven by strategic concerns. There can be cultural and inertial reasons for both stability and change (Olick & Robbins, 1998; Wertsch, 2012). Collective memory is therefore an active process of sense-making through time. In this approach, “[the] role of agency and the temporal dimension



of memory as well as the historicity of social identities are stressed and analyzed" (Misztal, 2003: 69).

Dynamics is a broad and general term, though. To study it in a more conceptually meaningful manner, it would be useful to adopt the insights from McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) on the role of mechanisms and processes in constituting the dynamics of contentious politics. They defined mechanisms as "a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations," while processes are "regular sequences of such mechanisms that produce similar (generally more complex and contingent) transformations of those elements" (McAdam et al., 2001: 24). Self-fulfilling prophecy and bandwagon effects are classic examples of mechanisms in sociology. They point to recurring phenomena that unfold over time with identifiable patterns and lead to specific outcomes. Yet their onset can be contingent or even accidental. How mechanisms combine together to form complex processes can also be contingent. The mechanism and process approach, therefore, is a way for social scientists to deal with both contingency and generalizability simultaneously (Hedstrom & Swedberg, 1998).

As McAdam et al. (2001) acknowledged, processes and mechanisms form a continuum. Sometimes, whether to call a certain sequence a process or a mechanism can be arbitrary. McAdam et al. (2001) prioritized the term mechanism because they wanted to emphasize the point that the same mechanisms recurred across different cases of political contention. The present book is not a comparative study of multiple cases, however. Instead, examining the dynamics of collective remembering of Tiananmen over a period of nearly three decades, it should be advisable not to focus on the micro-level mechanisms. It should be more appropriate and effective to organize the analysis through pinpointing the more general processes that constitute the three-decade dynamics. We therefore minimize the use of the term mechanism in this book and focus more on the notion of process.

More specifically, in line with the idea that collective memory about the Tiananmen Incident in Hong Kong has gone through periods of sustenance, strengthening and then decline, six processes constitute the conceptual focuses of our analysis. While each of the processes will be discussed more elaborately in subsequent chapters, we can briefly introduce them here. The first process is memory formation, simply referring to the process through which a collective memory of an event came into being and acquired the status of something that people *should* remember. Not all important historical events become the object of commemoration (e.g., Armstrong & Cragge, 2006; Cunningham et al., 2010; Pennebaker & Banasik, 1997; Whitlinger,



2015). For instance, the 1967 urban riots, another transformative event in Hong Kong history, have not been the object for society-wide collective remembering.⁴ Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, the size of the June 4 vigil actually declined in the early 1990s. Why Tiananmen commemoration did not simply die down and how Tiananmen came to be seen as what Hong Kong people should not forget are questions to be answered.

Once the collective memory is formed, its maintenance requires the work done through other processes. This study focuses on three of them. The first is memory mobilization, defined as the organized efforts to bring the collective memory about the past to the fore for the purposes of social mobilization. Memory mobilization is significant in the present case because the commemoration of Tiananmen is an annual event held at a designated time point in the year. Citizens are unlikely to have the events in 1989 at the top of their heads every day. But they need to be able to recall the memory at the right time. The notion of memory mobilization directs our attention to how memories about Tiananmen are foregrounded throughout the society in the period preceding the annual June 4 commemoration.

Besides mobilization, generation is another key concern in studies of the perpetuation of collective memories over the long haul. Because of differences in life experiences, people of different age cohorts tend to see different historical events as significant (Schuman & Scott, 1989; Corning & Schuman, 2015). The sustainability of a collective memory thus depends on whether and how the new generation would take it up. This process is often dubbed intergenerational memory transmission (e.g., Azarian-Ceccato, 2010; Ros, 2012; Svob & Brown, 2012). In the present case, the participation of a large proportion of young people in the June 4 vigils in the 2000s and early 2010s can be seen as signifying the success of memory transmission. However, the minds of young people are not empty vessels to be filled. The younger generation may consciously or unconsciously adjust the narratives of the past. They may even proactively re-evaluate the relevance of the elder generation's memory. This phenomenon might become particularly salient under certain social and political conditions. To maintain consistency with the extant literature, we keep using the term intergenerational memory transmission to describe the process, though we need to keep in mind the

4 However, in the most recent years, debates surrounding historical representations of the 1967 urban riots arose in association with the publication of media materials related to the event. Such debates are arguably fueled by perceived attempts on the part of the pro-government forces to "re-evaluate" the deeds of the pro-Communist groups during the 1967 riots.

agency of the younger generation. Intergenerational memory transmission is in practice a process of intergenerational memory negotiation.

The third process pertinent to the sustainability of collective memory is memory institutionalization, by which we mean the extent to which collective memory of an event became inscribed into enduring institutional forms, either through the establishment of mnemonic institutions (e.g., museums or monuments) devoted to the event or through the embedding of collective memory into existing social institutions (e.g., becoming the subjects addressed in textbooks). The relationship between the sustenance of collective memory and memory institutionalization can be complicated. It is a well-known argument in collective memory studies that the proliferation of museums and monuments in modern societies is the consequence of modernity's tendency to forget (Connerton, 2009; Nora, 1989). But it cannot be denied that certain forms of institutionalization could provide collective memory of an event a "permanent base," thereby facilitating the continuation of collective remembering in the long run (Eickhoff et al., 2017; Pelak, 2015).

To say that memory mobilization, intergenerational memory transmission, and memory institutionalization are instrumental to the sustainability of collective memory is also to say that the failure, limits, or weakening of these processes would help explain the weakening of collective remembering. In addition, we highlight two interrelated processes that are pertinent to the challenges faced by collective remembering of Tiananmen in Hong Kong after 2014. The first is memory repair. The need for repair arises when the hitherto dominant collective memory appears to lose its appeal. This can be the result of changes in the social and political environment or the emergence of new social groups with a different set of goals and interests. In this situation, proponents of the original collective memory may need to rearticulate their discourses and representations to keep the collective memory relevant to the current situation and acceptable to new groups. This is similar to how social movements sometimes need to adjust movement frames and narratives to broaden the movement's appeal and align with other social groups (Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986).

Lastly, contemporary studies of collective memory cannot completely ignore the substantial transformation of the media and communication environment brought about by digitalization (e.g., Neiger, Meyers & Zandberg, 2011). Some scholars have argued that digital media have led to a "connective turn" such that digital and social media networks become the bases for the articulation and perpetuation of collective memory (Hoskins, 2011; van Dijck, 2011). However, digital media have also led to the problem of fragmentation and cyberbalkanization (Sunstein, 2009, 2017): people holding



different views form into exclusionary groups and stop communicating with each other. This may lead to the formation of “memory silos,” i.e., “distinct groups of people within a social system come to share a collective memory unique to them and are unaware that this memory is not typical beyond the boundaries of their group” (Edy, 2014: 73-74). Along this line of thinking, this study identifies memory balkanization as a process. It refers to how a fragmented communicative space may facilitate the formation of distinctive and competing mnemonic and counter-mnemonic communities. The fragmentation of communicative space may then weaken the capability of a version of the past to achieve dominant status in the public sphere.

The above paragraphs only briefly introduce the six processes. Each of them will be further explicated in the corresponding chapters. Here, let us end with some remarks on how we identified these processes and on their generalizability. We did not have these processes in mind when we started the research. They came to our attention as particularly significant through our observations and analysis. Hence the identification of these processes was partly inductive. But at the same time, as the previous paragraphs should illustrate, the processes were not arbitrarily labeled and identified. All of them are related to concepts and phenomena that have been examined either in collective memory studies or in other related literatures such as social movement studies and media and communication research.

Therefore, overall speaking, there are both generalizable and particularistic elements in the analytical account offered by this book. The generalizable elements reside in the fact that each of the processes occurs across many cases. We believe that our analysis of the various processes can generate insights that are potentially applicable to how those processes operate in other cases. However, we do not claim that all cases of the dynamic evolution of collective memories can be analyzed in terms of these (and only these) six processes. How these processes relate to or concatenate (McAdam et al., 2001) with each other may also vary across cases. The evolution of collective remembering of Tiananmen in Hong Kong is after all a unique story resulting from the specific ways these processes operated and related to each other.

Remarks on Collective Memory and Social Movement

It is not difficult to see the possible connection and overlapping between collective memory and social movements. In fact, two of the six processes identified in the previous section – memory mobilization and memory



repair – are directly borrowed from or closely related to social movement studies. This is not the place to provide a comprehensive review or theoretical articulation of the two interdisciplinary fields. What we attempt is to offer some additional remarks about the collective-memory-social-movement nexus so as to further highlight certain characteristics of our analysis.

Following Tilly (2004), we define a social movement as an ongoing campaign that makes collective and contentious claims on target authorities and involves an array of claim-making performances and public representations of the worthiness of the cause and the unity, numbers, and commitments of the participants and supporters. With this definition, the first point of connection between social movement and collective memory resides in the fact that both are grounded in a collective identity. That is, social movement formation and participation are premised on the definition of the collective for which the movement speaks, and people's participation in collective actions is conditioned by the extent to which they identify with the collective (Klandermans, 1997; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). Collective memories, then, can be the crucial resources used by social movements to articulate a conception of collective identity for the purpose of mobilization (Issa, 2007).

Second, collective memory can be utilized in movement framing. Social movements make claims on issues. Yet no social and political issues exist in a historical vacuum. An issue may appear differently and certain courses of actions may seem to be more or less justifiable depending on how the history of the issue is narrated and/or how historical events are utilized as templates, analogies, or metaphors to understand the current issue (Edy, 1999; Kitzinger, 2000; Schudson, 1992). Besides, some issues are by their nature tied to specific past events. For instance, Verberg and Davis (2011) discussed how family groups of the victims of a mine disaster in Canada engaged in narrative work and “transformative commemoration” – defined as commemorative work aiming at social change – in their search for justice.

To the extent that a collective memory is closely tied to a social movement, the evolution of the movement can be expected to influence the dynamics of collective memory. If a narrative of the past is central to the collective identity underlying a social movement, the narrative may be challenged when the collective identity shifts. Tiananmen commemoration, in particular, has long been supported by a “Hong Kong Chinese” identity (Lee & Chan, 2005), i.e., the willingness of Hong Kong people to consider themselves as both Hong Kongers and Chinese. Therefore, when young people in Hong Kong started to reject their Chinese identity, they also started to question the relevance of the Tiananmen commemoration to them and to Hong Kong.



Similarly, the pertinence of a collective memory to a social movement may also undergo negotiation and change when the core issue is redefined. Notably, the five principles of the Alliance include claims of different temporal orientations. There are past-oriented claims linking only to the Tiananmen Incident in 1989 (i.e., rehabilitating June 4 and ascertaining the responsibility of the massacre), and there are future-oriented claims pointing to issues much broader than the 1989 student movement itself (i.e., ending one-party rule and establishing a democratic China). The bundling of the five claims is not the result of logical necessity. Besides, the claims of “ending one-party rule” and “establishing a democratic China” are pertinent to the democracy movement in Hong Kong only to the extent that people treat democratization in China and democratization in Hong Kong as indissociable. On the whole, although the transformation of a social movement is not in itself a collective memory process, it can be an external process having a substantial influence on collective remembering.

Given the significance of collective memory to social movements, activists and movement groups should have the incentives to strategically articulate and foreground memories for the purpose of mobilization (Farthing & Kohl, 2013; Gutman, 2017). Nevertheless, just as collective memory can be resistant to the manipulation by the state, social movement actors cannot manipulate and appropriate collective memory as they wish. For instance, on the feminist movement in East Germany, Guenther (2012) found that memories about a relatively egalitarian past during the socialist era were not developed and evoked by feminist activists in their search for gender equality despite the fact that many new German policies regarding gender equality in the 2010s had their predecessors in the German Democratic Republic era. This is due to the hostile political climate in which East Germany’s past was generally viewed negatively, the difficulty of invoking the memory of relative gender equality without invoking other more negatively valenced memories about the socialist state, and the lack of a powerful and obvious commemorative vehicle for crystallizing and sustaining the collective memory.

Similarly, Avenell (2012) noted that there is a “nuclear blind spot” in the environmental movement in contemporary Japan despite Japan being hitherto the only country in the world that has suffered from the atomic bomb. Part of the reason for such a blind spot is the Japanese’s tendency to distinguish between nuclear power and the military use of nuclear technology. Here, one might wonder if the environmental activists’ reluctance to evoke memories of the atomic bombs is due to the inappropriateness of evoking memories of a trauma that people would rather forget. In any



case, social movement actors have to face the same variety of instrumental, cultural, and inertial constraints (Olick & Robbins, 1998) that everyone has to face in their employment of collective memory. Interpreting the opportunities and constraints different actors had to face is an aspect of the analysis to come.

Chapter Outline and Methodological Notes

To recapitulate, this book aims at explicating the formation and transformation of Hong Kong society's collective memory about the 1989 Beijing student movement and the Tiananmen crackdown. We are particularly interested in how a socially dominant collective memory can persist in spite of pressures from the state. We see collective memory as referring primarily to public representations of the past, but collective memory is unlikely to be sustainable without the endorsement by individual citizens. Our empirical analysis thus involves the examination of both media discourses and individual opinions and beliefs.

We adopt a process approach to make sense of a three-decade evolution involving periods of formation, stabilization, strengthening, and weakening of collective remembering. We identify memory formation, memory mobilization, intergenerational memory transmission, memory institutionalization, memory repair, and memory balkanization as the six processes central to the present case. Meanwhile, since Tiananmen commemoration is closely tied to the democracy movement in Hong Kong, the dynamics of the democracy movement in the 2010s, most notably an identity shift and the discursive dissociation between Hong Kong and China, have had a substantial impact on collective remembering.

Given the aim, scope and approach of the study, there are two possible ways to organize the analysis and discussions. One is to offer a historical narrative describing the dynamics from the early 1990s to the late 2010s. Roughly speaking, one might differentiate Hong Kong politics in the 30 years between 1989 and 2019 into five periods:

- 1 Between 1989 and the handover in 1997;
- 2 Between the handover and 2003, which marked the beginning of more proactive intervention into Hong Kong affairs by the Chinese state after the July 1, 2003 protest against national security legislation;
- 3 Between 2003 and 2008, a period when Hong Kong people's national identification and trust in the Chinese Central Government continued to grow, reaching a peak in the year of the Beijing Olympics;



- 4 Between 2008 and 2014, marked by a quick decline in national identification among young people and the initial growth of localism, ending with the Umbrella Movement;
- 5 Between 2014 and 2019, a period when localism intensified and presented a direct challenge to Tiananmen commemoration.

There were important correspondences between the five periods and the formation, stabilization, strengthening, and then weakening of collective remembering of Tiananmen in Hong Kong. However, recounting the evolution of collective remembering of Tiananmen in Hong Kong chronologically could make it difficult to adequately and systematically explicate and illustrate the memory processes identified in this study. As social scientists instead of historians, we choose to organize the book according to the memory processes. Nevertheless, the various memory processes were more or less prominent in different periods within the 30-year time span. Memory formation, for instance, referred mainly to what happened in the early 1990s (period 1 above), whereas the further valorization of Tiananmen memory would occur mainly in the latter half of the 1990s and the 2000s (that is, periods 2 and 3). Memory mobilization is distinctive in the sense that it is presumed to be a recurrent process emerging every year. Hence it occurred throughout the three decades. Memory institutionalization and intergenerational memory transmission were becoming more prominent beginning in the 2000s and continued into the 2010s (that is, periods 3 and 4). Memory repair and memory balkanization were prominent issues in the 2010s (periods 4 and 5). Therefore, although the chapters are organized by the memory processes, there is a rough timeline underlying the flow from one chapter to the next.

Specifically, Chapter 2 focuses on collective memory formation. It will first offer a narrative of the happenings in both Beijing and Hong Kong during the 1989 student movement in order to shed light on the production of an emotional imprint on Hong Kong people's mind. It will then analyze the characteristics of media representations of not only the Tiananmen crackdown but also the commemoration activities in Hong Kong. It will highlight the role of discursive valorization and scandalization of counter-commemoration discourses in the emergence, consolidation, and strengthening of collective memory of Tiananmen from the 1990s to the early 2010s.

Chapter 3 focuses on memory mobilization. It analyzes the annual mobilization cycle, led by the Alliance and supported by the news media, surrounding the annual candlelight vigil on June 4. It illustrates how movement strategies and media discourses generate an atmosphere of remembering in the society. The chapter also draws upon population survey data to

illustrate to what extent the Tiananmen Incident was indeed regarded as an important historical event by Hong Kong citizens, and how media and communication activities during memory mobilization led people to recall the Incident.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss intergenerational memory transmission and institutionalization respectively. Chapter 4 focuses on the former. It analyzes how young people in the 2000s and early 2010s took up knowledge and developed understandings of the events in 1989 through a web of institutions including family, school, and the media. Nevertheless, the limitation of intergenerational transmission in the period will also be illustrated through comparing different generations' attitudes and affects toward June 4, as well as through evidence of generational differences from in-depth interviews. Chapter 5 then discusses the struggle for institutionalization. Given the role of the schools in intergenerational memory transmission, part of the empirical analysis of institutionalization focuses on the controversies surrounding the place of June 4 in secondary school curriculum. Besides, the chapter examines efforts by the Alliance and other activist groups to establish enduring "sites of memory" for Tiananmen. The struggles surrounding the placement of June 4-related monuments in university campuses and the project of a permanent June 4th Museum will be examined.

While Chapters 2 to 5 focus on the formation and sustenance of collective memory of Tiananmen, Chapter 6 discusses how Tiananmen commemoration was challenged from within the broadly defined pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong as a result of the rise of localism in the early to mid-2010s. The analysis will reconstruct how the challenge of localism entered the mainstream media, and how the Umbrella Movement constituted a critical event strengthening the challenge of localism. It will also discuss how memory entrepreneurs responded to the challenge by reframing the significance of the Tiananmen commemoration.

Given the centrality of the debates about localism to Hong Kong politics in the late 2010s, Chapter 7 discusses the impact of young people's identity shift on collective remembering of Tiananmen. It re-examines intergenerational memory transmission, but in an altered social and political context. It illustrates the extent and characteristics of generational differences on the issue of Tiananmen. Besides, drawing upon Mannheim's (1972) distinction among generation of location, generation in actuality, and generation unit, the chapter examines why and how some young people came to abandon the Tiananmen commemoration, yet others were still recruited into the mnemonic community surrounding Tiananmen.

Chapter 8 discusses the implications of digital media for collective memory. The chapter examines both the positive and negative impact of digital and social media. On the one hand, the analysis will note how digital media provided the channels for memory mobilization and the archives for memory transmission. On the other hand, the analysis will examine the problem of memory balkanization. It will explicate how political forces have shaped the development of digital and social media in Hong Kong and examine how competing representations of the Tiananmen Incident and commemoration activities are articulated and reinforced within distinctive memory silos.

Chapter 9 concludes the book by further highlighting some of the core findings in the study. It discusses what the analysis has taught us about the collective memory processes and the development of society and politics in Hong Kong. Finally, the Epilogue discusses the events and developments between 2019 and 2020, which are found to have critical impact on the trajectory of the June 4 collective memory.

We employed multiple methods over the years to generate the data needed for the account offered in this book. Given the conceptual emphasis on public representations, qualitative analysis of media texts constitutes one of the most important methods. However, it is impossible for the authors to go over nearly 30 years of all media materials related to the Tiananmen Incident. The media materials actually analyzed are therefore tied to the need of specific chapters. For instance, when analyzing the first wave of discursive valorization of the Tiananmen commemoration in Hong Kong in Chapter 2, we focus on a textual analysis of a series of documentary programs produced by the public broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and newspaper coverage of and commentaries on the June 4 vigils between 1995 and 1997. The analysis of memory mobilization in Chapter 3, for another example, was based on an analysis of newspaper coverage related to Tiananmen commemoration from March to June each year between 2000 and 2013. The analysis of memory repair was based mainly on analysis of newspaper coverage before, during, and after the Umbrella Movement in 2014.

Newspaper coverage and commentaries constituted the primary media texts we examined, partly because of the fact that many other media materials, such as TV news, are not readily available (there is no established TV news archives in the city), and partly because newspapers do provide rich and voluminous materials for examination. Yet, as already noted above, there will be supplementary analyses of other media materials, such as television documentaries, in specific parts of the book. Of course, the analysis of the



impact of digital and social media in Chapter 8 will involve the examination of digital media content.

Beyond the analysis of media materials, data about how people think about the Tiananmen Incident and commemoration is needed for the analysis of the impact of memory mobilization in Chapter 3, intergenerational memory transmission and its limits in Chapter 4, and the impact of identity shift in Chapter 6. Such data comes from three sources. The first are two representative telephone surveys conducted in January to June 2014, and January 2018 respectively. The second are seven on-site surveys of the candlelight vigil participants conducted in 2004, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2018 respectively. The third are two rounds of in-depth interviews with candlelight vigil participants conducted in 2010 and 2014, respectively, as well as another round of in-depth interviews of young student leaders and activists in 2018. Some of the methodological details of these methods will be provided in the footnotes of the following chapters or referenced to existing publications when the specific data sources are introduced for the first time.

Finally, over the years we have conducted more than 15 occasional interviews with core members of the Alliance, other social movement activists, secondary school teachers, and veteran journalists. These interviews are aimed at deriving more background information and getting access to certain insider perspectives regarding the development and operation of the Alliance, specific controversies surrounding Tiananmen commemoration, special endeavors and issues such as the attempt to establish a June 4th Museum in Hong Kong, how June 4 was discussed (or not discussed) in secondary schools, and the producers' perspectives on certain key media texts or images.

The wide range of materials and data should allow us to reconstruct a rich and well-substantiated account of the dynamics of collective remembering of Tiananmen in Hong Kong. We are aware of the fact that, by conducting research and writing on the topic, we are also engaging in the construction and negotiation of the collective memory concerned. We do not claim to be completely neutral on the matter. We believe in the significance of the event to Chinese and Hong Kong history. We also believe in the value of commemorating the event. However, as in all research, our ideas, beliefs, and perspectives are "disciplined" by facts and methods, and the aim of the book remains an academic one: it is to enhance our theoretical understanding of collective memory dynamics as well as our understanding of the past, present, and future of Hong Kong society and politics.



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