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The Mobilization of Memory and Tradition: Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement and Beijing's 1989 Tiananmen Movement

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Abstract

The 2014 Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong has been the most important pro-democracy protest on Chinese soil since the rise and fall of the Tiananmen Movement of 1989. Moreover, the 1989 Beijing Massacre has politicized a generation of pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong that has shaped Hong Kong's vibrant civil society. However, while this "Tiananmen generation" has been crucial for the preparation and initial stage of the Umbrella Movement, the actual occupation was dominated by a new generation that is almost exclusively concerned with local Hong Kong politics. In light of this background, this paper compares the two democracy movements. The external environment and the goals of the two movements are markedly different. However, our comparison demonstrates striking similarities between the two

movements, e.g. their internal structure and framing. Moreover, what we see as the "mobilization of memory" reflects both the continued importance of civil society structures that have been shaped by the "Tiananmen veterans" as well as the on-going renegotiation of the SAR's relationship with the Mainland. Finally, these findings entail that the Chinese party-state will need to utilize different means to pacify the Umbrella Movement than what was done to placate democracy activists after the 1989 crackdown.

Keywords: *Hong Kong, Umbrella Movement, Tiananmen Movement, social protest, collective memory, civil society, democratization*

1. Introduction

Up to 2 million inhabitants[1] joined the pro-democracy movement in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) occupying three districts of the city for two and a half months. It shocked the local Hong Kong government led by Chief Executive (CE) C.Y. Leung 梁振英, irritated the central government and China's Communist Party (CCP) in Beijing, and surprised a world that has become accustomed to the notion that the people of Hong Kong only care about pecuniary matters – not politics.[2] These street protests became widely known as the Umbrella Movement (UM) after protestors used umbrellas to protect themselves from pepper spray and teargas grenades fired by policemen into crowds in Admiralty (金鐘) on 28th September 2014. Although the former British colony has seen many political protests especially after 2003, this was the largest democratic protest against the ruling authorities since 28th May 1989 when about 25 per cent of Hong Kong's population hit the streets in support of the pro-democracy movement at Beijing's Tiananmen Square (天安門廣場) (de Silva, 2009).

Today, more than 25 years after the crackdown in Beijing, the memory of the broad social movement for democracy and equality is more alive in Hong Kong than in Mainland China where the party-state has done its utmost to erase the events from the collective memory. Whoever controls the construction of the social and collective memory of a nation inevitably has the upper hand in terms of public discourse and power. Since June Fourth the Communist Party has been engaged in an extraordinary erasing of the 1989 Tiananmen Movement from the collective Chinese memory through state media, school text books, historiography, and in social media (Lagerkvist, 2016: 180). The late leader Deng Xiaoping 鄧小平 strongly emphasised the need to instil patriotic education in China's youth, to prevent a similar movement from ever emerging again. The new leadership headed by Jiang Zemin 江澤民 in the 1990s woke the slumbering Japanese ghosts in order to bury their own. The people's resentment needed an outlet; the government deftly directed it outward, towards the rest of the world. The aim of the Communist Party's new nationalist programme was to sharpen the Chinese sense of humiliation at having been bullied and colonised by the West and Japan in the nineteenth century. Anti-imperialist nationalism under Chairman Mao 毛澤東 was exchanged for a new Chinese nationalism (Lagerkvist, 2016: 227). Moreover, the Chinese authorities made sure any suppressed energy was promptly channelled into the nascent market economy with its siren song of individual success and economic growth. People became thoroughly convinced of the value of focusing their efforts and energy on economic gain rather than politics or matters of human rights and freedoms (Lagerkvist, 2016:181).

In Hong Kong, however, ever since 1989 an annual commemoration is held in Victoria Park for the victims of the massacre. In some years, hundreds of thousands of people have been mobilized to light candles to remember the killed students and ordinary citizens of Beijing. Clearly,

the commemoration of the massacre contributed to the politicization of a generation of pro-democratic activists in Hong Kong who have founded civil society organizations such as the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China (香港市民支援愛國民主運動聯合會), and pan-democratic parties, most prominently Hong Kong's Democratic Party (民主黨). To maintain what in the field of memory studies is called "memory work" (Fischer, 2015), these activists have established a museum of the 1989 Tiananmen Movement (TM) in Hong Kong. Apart from its commemorative activities, these groups of activists have committed themselves to the promotion of democracy locally in Hong Kong. Since many of these activists are Chinese patriots, the democratization of Hong Kong's local polity for them is part of a wider hope for a democratized China.

1.1. Receding Influence of the "Tiananmen Generation" among Hong Kong's Democracy Activists

One of the most recent and prominent examples of local activities was the foundation of the Occupy Central with Love and Peace (讓愛與和平佔領中環 / 和平佔中 , OCLP) movement formally established in May 2013 in reaction to a reform process of the Chief Executive elections in Hong Kong: while the city's most important political representative had been selected by a so-called "Election Committee" comprising only 1,200 members previously, the Hong Kong SAR government started a reform process in 2013 to introduce elections by universal suffrage in 2017 (J. Chan, 2014: 573). The activists of OCLP aimed at constructively engaging with this reform process, raising the people's awareness of democratic principles in order to ensure that a true democratization by international (meaning: Western) standards would be achieved and – if necessary – organize public protests to press for the pro-democratic movement's demands (Kan, 2013). It is significant that

many of the leading figures of OCLP became politically engaged in the wake of the Beijing Massacre; but of crucial importance is also that the movement profited from various resources of established pro-democratic organizations and their civil society networks such as faith-based groupings and teachers' unions etc.[3] Hence, it is fair to say that civil society networks established in Hong Kong in the immediate aftermath of the Tiananmen crackdown significantly contributed to Hong Kong's occupation in 2014.

For more than a year, OCLP was active and visible in Hong Kong organizing many events including three so-called "deliberation days" when the city's population was invited to discuss the democratic reforms and the political future (Occupy Central with Love and Peace, 2014b). The result of the third deliberation day were three reform proposals that OCLP brought to an unofficial referendum turning out almost 800,000 votes in Hong Kong on 20th-29th June 2014 (Ip, 2014). Despite this impressive turnout, the Hong Kong SAR government refused to implement the decision of the referendum which led OCLP to call for a peaceful occupation of Hong Kong's business district on 1 October, 2014 (J. Chan, 2014). Clearly, these preparations of OCLP were crucial for the emergence of the Umbrella Movement.

Yet the occupation itself showed marked differences from OCLP's preparations: starting already in late-September and not occupying the business district of Central but the neighbourhoods of Admiralty, Causeway Bay (銅鑼灣) and Mong Kok (旺角), these protests resulted out of class boycotts of secondary and tertiary students. In other words, the protests were not led by the "Tiananmen-generation" of pro-democratic activists – but by young people, many of them students (Yuen and Cheng, 2015).

For most parts of the occupation, the young students and the "Tiananmen-generation" led by OCLP cooperated closely. However,

during the course of the demonstrations and even more in its aftermath, a marked generational difference became visible: in contrast to their predecessors, the young generation is less patriotic and less attracted to a party-state directed "Chinese-ness" (Hong Kong Transition Project, 2014a). These young people are primarily concerned with evolving political trends in the SAR since the handover of the former colony to the People's Republic of China in 1997 and an underlying fear that the CCP leaders would inevitably intervene in the affairs of Hong Kong notwithstanding adherence to the formula of late leader Deng Xiaoping, i.e. "one country, two systems" (一國兩制). Such intervention has not been (openly) implemented, promises to accept political liberties in Hong Kong has not been broken. And yet a creeping sense of "Mainlandization" of society, politics, the media landscape, and the economy has propelled resistance among large segments of the young population in Hong Kong.[4] Hence, while the older generation seems to mostly hope for a pan-Chinese democratization with Hong Kong taking the lead, the UM did address the local political development of Hong Kong from a different angle, emphasizing the need of the Hong Kong SAR's autonomy from Mainland interference. Consequently, when student protests erupted in 2014 – ostensibly about democratic reform – social, cultural and identity-related issues and its interweaving with the PRC were also prominent in the discourse of the UM (Rühlig, 2015b).

In essence, while the legacy of pro-democracy movement which established itself in Hong Kong in the direct aftermath of the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989 did contribute to the UM, the 2014 occupation signalled also the emergence of a new generation of protesters which distinguished itself from Hong Kong's "Tiananmen veterans" and followed its own agenda. This reflects not just a different strategy to achieve political change but mirrors the much more ambivalent relations of Hong Kong's youth with the Mainland compared to previous

generation. In short, it is an expression of rising localism (Chen and Szeto, 2015; Cheung, 2014/2015).

1.2. The Problem of Intuition: The Tiananmen Movement and the Umbrella Movement in Media Observations

Regardless of this shift towards a more local focus, in the international news media comparisons of the TM and the UM were quickly made. Yet no authors of these news articles self-reflexively asked in-depth questions about the readiness to make comparisons between the two movements, regardless of if the arguments were to claim differences or highlight similarities. This was further fuelled by the fact that many demonstrators themselves referred to the TM, some drawing on the unarguable importance of the Tiananmen crackdown for the Hong Kong demonstrators' identity, protest culture, discourse and framing: while essential for most of the older generation, Hong Kong's young protesters remain divided with regards to their relations with both the Mainland in general and the pro-democratic protest tradition of the TM in particular. In essence, the TM and its support in Hong Kong remained a crucial though contested reference point of the 2014 UM and constitutes an ideal example of what Eyerman and Jamison (1998) have termed the "mobilization of tradition" – what we in this specific context conceptualize as a "mobilization of memory".

This article's purpose is twofold. First, we aim to shed light on the contested importance of the TM memory during the 2014 occupation in light of the generational divide. Second, given the widespread comparisons, albeit superficial, we attempt to fill a void in the research literature by contributing a grounded comparison between the two movements by asking what was different and what was similar regarding the background, build-up, goals, frames, protest culture, end of the movements, and the final outcomes. Strikingly, our comparison

demonstrates that similarities between the two movements concern their internal structure and framing. However, the external environment and the goals of the two movements are markedly different.

This finding leads us to three conclusions. First, while the internal structures of the pro-democratic movement in Hong Kong as well as its discursive form and framing are (still) shaped by the "Tiananmen veterans" who have massively contributed to the build-up of the city's civil society, the goals are now being reshaped by the younger "Umbrella generation".

Second, if the central government in Beijing aims to pacify the UM with similar means as it did back in the late 1980s with the pro-democratic spirit of the TM, it is likely to fail. Repressive means were deployed in the much more restrictive external environment of Beijing and Mainland China in 1989 compared to the current situation in Hong Kong where basic civil liberties are protected by a largely independent judiciary. These civil liberties, most prominently the freedoms of expression and the press, make it unlikely that the CCP succeeds in shaping the collective memory in Hong Kong to a similar extent as in post-1989 Mainland China. Furthermore, the central government's economic means are limited as well since most economic stimuli go along with a closer economic integration of the SAR with the Mainland. This, however, is clearly rejected by most of the young Umbrella protesters.

Third, the ongoing generational change of Hong Kong's protest movement unfolds an exciting and highly relevant societal re-negotiation of the SAR's relationship with the Mainland. Hence, these debates do not only reflect contention around the role of the TM, but point to a wider discursive struggle on the role of Mainland China not only in Hong Kong but in Greater China more generally, most prominently in Taiwan.

Hence, our comparison may shed light on actually existing legacies and connections between social protest movements in Greater China and their political opportunity structures – though they are separated by time, space, and context. Looming in the background are also the overarching issues and debates on "Western" liberal democracy and universal values in China, debates that have been stifled severely under the increasingly repressive rule of general secretary Xi Jinping. In connection to this background are also the ongoing and future structural and ideational changes in Greater China concerning the rise of individualism and self-expressive values of youth and manifestation of local identities in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Guangdong but also minority areas inside the People's Republic (Yan, 2009; Welzer, 2013). In other words, we believe that whether protest movements in Greater China aim to mobilize by means of reference to the tradition of the Tiananmen student demonstrations is an important aspect of the contested interplay between Chinese traditions, universal values and emerging localism and identity struggles which aims to distinguish itself from the PRC and its political development – present and past.

In order to elaborate on these arguments further, we proceed in three steps. First, we summarize the mostly intuitive comparison of the TM and UM and outline our own more thorough approach. Second, we compare the two movements along three categories – goals, structures and frames. Third and finally, by way of conclusion we do not only summarize our comparison but aim to shed light on why the UM is so often linked to the Tiananmen protests and point to some consequences in terms of the mobilization of memory for future political developments, social movements in Hong Kong and Greater China.

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2. From Sweeping Intuition to Grounded Comparison

Given the fact that the Tiananmen legacy remained a contentious focal point of the UM, the press often drew on comparison of the two movements. Some journalistic accounts of the UM argue that it shared many commonalities with the Tiananmen protest of 1989, most notably that both movements were started by students who demanded democracy and initiated class boycotts (BBC, 2014; Goldstone, 2014; Kowlowska, 2014; Lui, 2000). However, other observers emphasize that there were also differences between the two movements (Economy, 2014; Hui, 2014). Importantly, some argue that while the TM demanded something new, the UM aimed at protecting existing freedoms (Hui, 2014). Furthermore, some articles question whether the demonstrations of Tiananmen aimed at democracy in a "Western" sense but take this claim with regards to the UM for granted.

This article aims to compare the two protest movements along theories on social movement mobilization, i.e. what factors impact on political opportunity structures. In the cases of Hong Kong and Mainland China, changes in state-civil society relations, and particularly under what conditions activism and mobilization for political reform become possible (see e.g. Cohen and Arato, 1992; Burnell and Calvert, 2004) are important. In relation to perspectives of power structures and collective action we lean on Sidney Tarrow's understanding of political opportunity structures as "*consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure*" (Tarrow, 1998: 5). Drawing on theories of political opportunity structures (McAdam *et al.*, 1996), we focus on how civil society (Cohen and Arato, 1992) intermeshes and produces social organization and mobilization – especially the mobilization of memory – aimed at restructuring social and political

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systems. Through highlighting these two important case studies, situated within the protest traditions and cultural context of Greater China, and movements critical of, and challenging the CCP regime of the PRC, we hold the two cases to shed new light on the discussion of political opportunity structures in different socio-political contexts in Greater China, where political opportunity structures and potent collective memories may lie dormant, yet full of contained energy in longstanding authoritarian and post-colonial and pre-democratic contexts.

However, we do not limit our comparison to the political opportunity structures and collective memories but look at the goals of the TM and UM and their underlying discursive frames as well: we include discursive frames into our comparison because they are "*schemata of interpretation*" which "*locate, perceive, identify, and label*" (Goffman, 1974: 21) events in people's life and in the whole world and hence provide a context and framework for understanding the world and given political decisions. Thus, discursive frames structure experiences and direct actions.

Such frameworks of interpretation and reasoning are not given but may be used strategically: tying in with cultural structures and norms as well as symbols and rites to define and reason a given political situation, actors can shape not only the peoples' perception but motivate them to support certain political decisions (Benford and Snow, 2000: 613-614).

At the same time, however, framing theory does not only highlight the importance of discourses and their strategic usage but also the conditions of successful framing depending on many factors including the centrality of the frame, its narrative fidelity, empirical credibility and consistency as well as the credibility of the frame articulators (Benford and Snow, 2000; Rochford, Benford and Snow, 1986). The frame's success largely depends on its congruence with actual decisions, conditions and developments. Thus discursive frames matter but they

have to be based on "real-word" conditions, developments and decisions.

Hence, while frames are closely interrelated with the structural conditions, they bear force in themselves. Drawing on tradition, rites, cultural representations and artefacts they offer interpretations and understandings of the protests as well as its environment including the political and economic system. This implies that the constant comparison with the TM whether it takes the uniqueness of the UM into account or not bears enormous political impact (Wasserstrom, 2014). Finally, such interpretive frames are not only re-produced by means of discourse but are inscribed into the protest culture. Therefore, we summarize how the UM's protest culture tied in with the Tiananmen Movement below.

3. A Thorough Comparison between the Two Movements

Although structural factors and discursive frames are empirically interwoven, we analyse the goals, structures, and frames in the following paragraph separately for analytical reasons.

3.1. Goals of the Two Movements

Discussing the motivations and goals of social movements, a significant theoretical literature has emphasized rational utility calculations referring to both incentives resulting out of greed as well as grievances. From such a cost-benefit calculus perspective, the TM and UM share significant similarities. Both the population of China in the late 1980s as well as the inhabitants of Hong Kong in recent years faced severe economic challenges. In China the experimentation with market reform led to social problems that affected all Chinese citizens daily, such as rising inflation and corruption, and a growing discontent with state-

directed occupational choice and political control in the workplace. Tensions culminated in 1989, as further signs of economic crisis emerged, especially soaring food prices (Lagerkvist, 2016: 66). Hong Kong, in turn, is among the ten most expensive cities in the world with over-proportionally rising costs (*The Economist*, 2015). Especially housing is very expensive; depending on the location and size, Hong Kong's properties rank among the fifteen most expensive ones in the world, being the most expensive in the whole of Asia (*Numbeo*, 2016). This left both populations in Beijing in the late-1980s and in Hong Kong in 2014 with a rising social insecurity which was in the case of Hong Kong further increased by a privatization of social welfare (E.W.Y. Lee, 2012). Furthermore, it has been argued that both students in Beijing as well as in Hong Kong aimed to protect their privileges, which is debatable. Hong Kong's students face increasing performance pressure from highly qualified Mainland students coming to the SAR: the last decade has brought a ninefold rise in the enrolment of Mainland Chinese undergraduate students in Hong Kong (Xu, 2015: 16).

However, apart from these materialist incentives for social protest, the TM and the UM do not share a lot with regard to their goals and motivations: The TM aimed at reforming China's political system to improve economic, social and ethical conditions in Mainland China plagued by official corruption which we may summarize as a demand for comprehensive national reforms to produce political equity and economic equality for the Chinese people (Lagerkvist, 2016). The UM, in contrast, was a largely localist protest aiming at more self-determination and autonomy from China. In some sense, it was not a national Chinese but at least partly an anti-Mainland Chinese movement. As has been argued elsewhere in more detail (Rühlig, 2015b), the UM's call for democratization was embedded into a broader demand for more Hong Kong autonomy and self-determination comprising at least three

more fields: economic and welfare policies, identity politics and the overall institutional setting:

In the field of economic and welfare policies, large parts of the UM argued that the SAR's integration with Mainland China caused economic and social challenges. For example, the relaxation of money flow controls from Mainland China was associated with speculation on Hong Kong's property market.[5] Furthermore, both migration from the Mainland as well as Chinese tourism and smuggling are seen as the cause of an increase of basic living costs by parts of the UM because they believe that Mainland Chinese citizens have more trust in the product quality in Hong Kong thus increasing the demand for basic everyday needs such as milk and milk powder in the SAR.[6] Consequently, significant parts of the young "Umbrella protesters" favoured more economic autonomy from the PRC.

With regard to the young protesters' identity, many perceive themselves as distinct from the Mainland: many term themselves "Hong Kong-Chinese" or simply "Hong Kong person" (Hong Kong Transition Project, 2014b: 58). Although ideational issues were not at stake during the UM, a significant personal overlap with the 2012 protest campaign against the "national and moral education plan" is eye-catching: Many young "Umbrella protesters" had hit the streets two years before demonstrating against a new curriculum that demanded Hong Kong schools to praise the CCP, its ideology and grade school students for showing emotions when the Mainland Chinese flag is raised (Bradsher, 2012).

Finally, the UM's call for democratization is mostly concerned with the nomination procedure of candidates running for the post as Hong Kong's Chief Executive: strikingly, by demanding civic nomination (i.e. that a certain number of Hong Kong voters' signature would be enough for nomination) the UM wanted to ensure that the central government's

influence on the CE nomination process would be limited. They feared that a Beijing-controlled nomination committee as the only institution able to nominate candidates would equal a politically motivated screening process and ensure that only pro-CCP candidates would be able to run for elections (see e.g. Occupy Central with Love and Peace, 2014a). While in the eyes of some UM protesters this violates the spirit of the "one country, two systems" formula, a small minority even favours outright independence from the Mainland.[7]

All in all, even if we do not argue that the UM aimed at full independence, the protestors' goals have to be interpreted in a "secessionist spirit or mindset" which is very different from the TM being largely motivated by frustration over illnesses of the existing system, e.g. corruption. This "secessionist" spirit shares more commonalities with the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan, especially identity-wise, and the May Fourth Movement in 1919 (Hioe, 2015; Hui, 2014; Wasserstrom, 2014) than with the TM that was mostly concerned with national reform.

Hence, the widespread assumption that TM and UM are rather similar because both aim at democracy (*The Economist*, 2014; Kowlowska, 2014) takes both movements at face value without analysing the underlying agendas more closely. Furthermore, even if one reduces both movements to their claim for democracy, Lui (2000) and Goldstone (2014) have argued that the protesters at Tiananmen Square did not have "Western" democracy in mind or had only a very vague understanding of the term. The UM, in contrast, made it very clear that they demanded an electoral reform of the Chief Executive elections along international/"Western" standards that ensure an only very limited ability of the Mainland Chinese government to intervene in the nomination process. All in all, while the UM and the TM demonstrations may indeed share some motivations and goals, we should not overlook

marked differences: The fact that both movements drew on the same "headline" or "discursive frame", namely democracy, does not make their goals identical.

3.2. Structures of the Two Movements

In this section we differentiate for analytical reasons between internal and external structural conditions with the former referring to characteristics of the protest movements themselves.

3.2.1. Internal structures

Apart from both movements being associated with their democracy advocacy, the close linkage of the UM and TM is the result of similarities of both movements' composition: Both demonstrations were initiated by students before being broadened to other societal sectors including intellectuals as well as workers. However, both movements are mostly associated with the young academics.

Apart from that the literature on social movement has pointed to the importance of formal (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Smith and Fetner, 2007: 30) and informal organizations as well as alliances with existing civil society (Della Porta, 2005; Diani, 1995, 2003; Escobar, 2004; Rucht, 2004) as structures for resource mobilization.

Empirically, there exist a lot of similarities in terms of the Umbrella and Tiananmen Movements' organizational setting. Both movements were not only initiated by students but drew on the support of student organizations and successfully reached out to (labour and teacher) unions for support (Lui, 2000). However, the overall freer context in Hong Kong provided the UM with much more comprehensive possibilities of alliances.[8]

Another similarity is that both protests though widely perceived as being spontaneous drew on significant preparations and predecessors (OCLP in Hong Kong and the "democracy salons" organized by Beijing University students in 1987 and 1988 (Lagerkvist, 2016: 102; BBC, 2014; Lui, 2000). However, the Internet and social media have eased the spontaneous mobilization dynamics in Hong Kong compared to the 1989 Beijing protests (Goldstone, 2014). As a result of these mixtures of spontaneity and prior preparations, both movements brought up well-known leaders that on the one hand were able to provide leadership that is crucial for any social movement such as to frame and articulate the respective demands, activate networks and mobilize supporters (Aminzade, Goldstone and Perry, 2001; Morris, 2004). On the other hand, these leaders never succeed to completely control the movements.

Finally, both movements were shaped by participants with a rather high education which is referred to as crucial in parts of the social movement literature as well (Florini, 2003; Sikkink, 2002; Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995) and were influenced by international developments and standards to some degree. While in the Hong Kong case many argue that the young people's education (at school and in universities) of international standards is crucial for their world views, the TM was clearly less inspired by "cosmopolitan" discourses.[9] Also that transnational ties (organizational, tactical etc.) being regarded as conducive to social movements in the conceptual literature (Meyer and Tarrow, 1998) have been much stronger in the UM due to lower transaction costs in times of Internet communication.

All in all, this thorough comparison of the internal structures of the two movements uncovers significant similarities.

3.2.2. External structures

Theoretical approaches to social movements have demonstrated the importance of the political context for a successful mobilization among social movements. Tilly, for example, has argued that social movements make use of "windows of opportunity" to access the polity. Such windows of opportunity emerge in times of major changes such as massive migration, fundamental economic reforms or crisis or reconfigurations of political institutions (McAdam, 1982; Piven and Cloward, 1977; Tarrow, 1998; Tilly, Tilly and Tilly, 1975). However, the conceptual literature distinguishes between positive opportunities and negative threats as different kinds of "windows of opportunity" for social movements (Francisco, 1995; Rasler, 1996; Staggenborg, 1986; Van Dyke, 2003). This distinction holds true in the cases of the TM and the UM empirically: while the Beijing massacre ended a phase of relative liberalization in China, the UM emerged in a context of increasing political control by the Beijing government. The Hong Kong demonstrators utilized the electoral reform of the Chief Executive selection to voice their concerns embedding the planned introduction of elections by universal suffrage and their call for true democracy (including the nomination process) into the broader campaign against increasing Mainland Chinese control over the SAR. Hence, the "windows of opportunity", though in both cases existent, were rather different.

Another factor often mentioned by the social movement literature is the regime type in general and the openness of the regime in particular: Eisinger (1973) has found that the likelihood of protest is lower in closed as well as open regimes because closed regimes often react with repression while open regimes provide other forms of participation to the citizens.

Empirically, Hong Kong's polity though in a process of "de-liberalization" and closure remains much more open compared to the Chinese one at the end of the 1980s. Hong Kong rated as "partly free" by freedom house (2015) is characterised by multiparty competition, a relatively free press, an independent judiciary and pressure groups playing a vital and very influential role (Xi, 2014). The Tiananmen Movement, in turn, did emerge in a time when political freedoms in China, i.e. the 1980s, had improved significantly. It was the death of former CCP Secretary General Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦, who was a liberal reformer within the party, that ignited the Tiananmen Movement at a moment when further political reform hung in the balance as conservative and liberal factions within the CCP struggled about future policies.

Turning from the regime type to China's overall position within the international community, the two movements emerged in a rather different context: in the last two and a half decades, China as a whole has moved more to the centre of the global economy and Hong Kong remains an important financial hub in Asia though losing ground to Shanghai. The consequences of these transnational economic conditions have been interpreted very differently. While some argue that it would be more costly for Xi Jinping 習近平 to react with violent force to the UM compared to Deng Xiaoping in 1989 because of China's interdependence with the world economy (BBC, 2014), others have countered that the experiences of the TM have taught the Chinese the opposite: the fact that sanctions remained in place only rather shortly could equip Xi with the best argument not to hesitate to use force (Kowlowska, 2014). Furthermore, the Beijing massacre was followed by a massive economic boom which has made the PRC much more powerful today compared to 1989 (Lagerkvist, 2014a, 2014b). Hence, one could argue that China has even less to worry today compared to the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Whatever the reasons, the Beijing government did not replicate a horrible massacre similar to that in Beijing in Hong Kong twenty-five years later.

Apart from these differences, a few though limited similarities of the external structures faced by the TM and the UM can be identified as well: Most prominently, the state capacities – both repressive means available to the state authorities as well as a strong and efficient bureaucracy – were available in both 1989 and 2014. However, the experience of 1989 may have very well shaped the perceptions and calculus of both the UM and the central government in Beijing: Both wanted to prevent a violent crackdown from happening again. From a conceptual point of view, this is important since repression turns social movements into militant ones significantly reducing the likelihood of civil disobedience and peaceful protest (Zwerman and Steinhoff, 2005). A strong state bureaucracy in turn leads statistically to high degrees of mobilization (Amenta, Caren, Fetner and Young, 2002).

Another partial similarity is the (perceived) factions and splits within the regime that are often regarded as being decisive for the success or failure of social movements (Gamson and Meyer, 1996). In both 1989 and 2014, rumours on power struggles within the CCP were present but they were much more intense in the late-1980s and – in contrast to 2014 – concerned the dealing with the protest movement itself (Lagerkvist, 2014a). Another difference is the fact that the UM had allies in Hong Kong's legislature that possessed a blocking minority enabling them to veto the electoral reform bill introduced by the government around six months after the end of the UM (Forsythe and Wong, 2015; Holden, 2014). Hence, while the UM had some formally influential allies in Hong Kong's Legislative Council (立法會) but lacked the slightest support among CCP leaders, the TM gained some limited sympathy within the central government but did not possess any

formal political influences. Therefore, both movements had limited though very different allies within the ruling elite – a factor that has been regarded as crucial in the comparative and conceptual social movement literature (Lipsky, 1968; Orloff and Skocpol, 1984).

Finally, only limited similarities between the TM and the UM can be observed with regard to allies among bystanders (Rucht, 2004): While the general public remained divided in Hong Kong, the TM received immense support from the local Beijing population (Calhoun, 1997; Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2014). Furthermore, Hong Kong's powerful economic elite remained rather sceptical towards the UM fearing similar "chaos" as in Beijing in 1989. At the same time, their prior interest was not to see another massacre happening since this would have seriously shaken the foundation of Hong Kong's economy (Kowlowska, 2014). Thus, the external structures that the TM and the UM faced were rather different though some very limited similarities existed as well.

3.3. Discursive Frames of the Protests

In contrast to the preceding section that largely drew on structural settings, this section engages with perceptions, discourses, frames and identity. Indeed, discursive references to the TM can be found on all sides: Protesters, the regime as well as the press refer to the demonstrations in 1989: one reason of the protesters' discursive engagement with the TM can be found in the roots of the pro-democratic movement of Hong Kong (see above). Throughout the years, Hong Kong remained the only city on Chinese soil commemorating the massacre with an annual vigil on June 4th (Cheng, 2009). Although the UM was dominated by the young generation and not the "Tiananmen veterans" and significant parts of the young protesters seemed to distance themselves from the older generation, the TM and its

commemoration remained a crucial references point. While some young protesters saw themselves in the tradition of the TM, many others sought to distinguish and distance themselves from any Mainland Chinese traditions, including the pro-democratic protests of 1989. Significantly though, all young people's experiences of protest in Hong Kong are shaped by the annual Tiananmen commemoration contributing to their politicization since it remains a vital part of Hong Kong's collective memory (Lee and Chan, 2013). Furthermore, the fear of violent crackdown is vital in the city and might have contributed to the rise of anti-Chinese sentiments and localist aims in the city's youth.

Apart from many differences between the TM and the UM, many people in Hong Kong were reminded of 1989 and hit the streets to support and protect the students (Caitlin, 2014). Hence, the Tiananmen legacy mobilized people to support the young "Umbrella generation". This is also reflected in the widespread fear among supporters of the UM, the overall citizenry regardless of political orientation, the media as well as former Tiananmen activists that the central government could violently suppress the demonstrations in Hong Kong (BBC, 2014; Beast, 2014; Delury, 2014; Focus, 2014; Holden, 2014; Keane, 2014; Kowlowska, 2014; Lam, 2014; Ma, 2014; McDonald, 2014; O'Connell, 2014; Yang, Teng and Hu, 2014). One example is an open letter by Hong Kong citizens to Chinese president Xi Jinping asking the leader not to replicate a violent crackdown (Wasserstrom and Ho, 2014). Many media reports termed the UM the most important pro-democratic demonstration on Chinese soil ever since 1989 (BBC, 2014; Delury, 2014; eunsollee, 2015; Kowlowska, 2014; Mullin, 2014; Phillips, 2014) and did not avoid making the comparison even if it argued that the TM and UM are rather different (Economy, 2014; Hui, 2014). Whether talking about the goals of the movement, referring to the UM's protest culture, trivial things like the waste separation or references without real comparison, references to

the TM could be found all over the media coverage (Delury, 2014; He, 2014; Powell, 2014). Even pictures from Hong Kong were related to the famous "Tank Man" from Tiananmen Square (Lim, 2014). Clearly, this widespread vital memory of the Tiananmen crackdown and its mobilization in the Hong Kong SAR was crucial for all these references, comparisons and fears.

The central government, however, also contributed to these comparisons by using exactly the same vocabulary as in 1989 speaking of "riots" endangering the "social stability" and being induced by "hostile foreign forces". Furthermore, the Mainland leaders made use of the word "chaos" which has to be interpreted as a clear warning from Beijing to Hong Kong (BBC, 2014; J. Chan, 2014: 579; Kowlowska, 2014; Pessin, 2014). With these terms, the Mainland government made clear that it perceived Hong Kong as a "counterrevolutionary" basis like in 1989 when 1.5 million out of the 6 million inhabitants hit the streets in support of Tiananmen protests (Cheng, 2009; Scoggins, 2014). Finally, pro-democratic forces within Hong Kong reported that Beijing used similar tactics compared to 1989 to deter citizens from taking part in protest activities commemorating the UM one year after it got started (Ng, 2015).

Given China's similar rhetoric, it is no wonder that the perception of many UM protesters was influenced by how the central government in Beijing had dealt with the TM 25 years before. Especially disillusionment with the CCP reduced many protesters' readiness to seek a dialogue since they knew that the largely loyal opposition of the TM was termed "counter-revolutionary" before being supressed by force (He, 2014).

All these discursive frames may very well have contributed to the formation the UM's protest culture displaying some crucial similarities to the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square: both demonstrations were

not only supported by artists, but culture (music in Hong Kong and poetry in Beijing) developed into one of the main protest tactics itself (Lui, 2000; Rühlig, 2015a). Furthermore, both the Beijing and Hong Kong protests gathered around a statue – the Goddess of Democracy in 1989 and the Umbrella Man in 2014 (Goldstone, 2014).

All these examples of discursive frames and cultural artefacts point to the significant influence of the TM commemoration for the protest tradition in the Hong Kong SAR. Until 2014 including the preparation of the occupation by OCLP, the "Tiananmen veterans" had shaped the city's pro-democracy movement. Only the UM brought up a new generation that carefully sought to distinguish itself from the "Tiananmen tradition" being interrelated with the Mainland political development and the older generation of protesters who saw themselves as more "Chinese" than the more localist youth. While signs of this generational divide were visible during the UM, they become even more obvious after the end of the occupation. Especially the question whether Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement should aim at political change ultimately affecting not only Hong Kong but the whole country or not became crucial (Bong, 2015; Ho, 2015; Risch, 2015; Steger, 2015). At the core of this debate was also the role and importance of the TM as well as its commemoration in Hong Kong: While for some, commemorating June 4th is a vital part of their struggle for democracy in China and Hong Kong others have started an alternative June 4th ceremony which is more a demonstration against China and not particularly devoted to the Tiananmen massacre (Ho, 2015; Law, 2015; Risch, 2015). At the same time, the June 4th vigil at Victoria Park 2015 in commemoration of the massacre in Beijing changed as well – though not fundamentally enough in the eyes of many "Umbrella activists": in 2015, the organizers invited people to join the commemoration with a logo of a candle in the form of an umbrella. Furthermore, the Goddess of

Democracy statue had an umbrella; music from the UM was played alongside songs from the TM; and almost all speeches linked the Tiananmen protests to the UM (Ho, 2015; Law, 2015; Liu, 2014; Pomfret and Baldwin, 2015; Steger, 2015). Furthermore, Reuters reported that the conveners of the ceremony termed the UM a "mini-June 4" (Reuters, 2015).

All in all, the UM was largely perceived in light of and compared to the TM that took place 25 years before in Beijing. The TM and its commemoration in Hong Kong remained a crucial reference point of both the "Tiananmen veterans" and the "Umbrella generation" though the latter were divided on the question whether they wanted to break up with the tradition of the "Tiananmen spirit" in Hong Kong or not. This became even more visible after the end of the occupation when the pro-democracy movement turned to the June 4th commemoration again.

4. Concluding Remarks: "Mobilization of Memory" and Its Future

All the above comparisons of the TM and UM carry three implications. First, similarities can be identified with regard to the internal structures of the two movements and the framing of the UM in terms of the TM. This reflects the importance of Hong Kong's "Tiananmen veterans" for the SAR's pro-democracy movement in general and the impact of OCLP for the preparations of the UM in particular. Thus, a clear similarity is the "mobilization of memory" and lingering legacies of state versus people. This points to the most striking finding of our comparison: the discursive interrelatedness of the UM with the 1989 Beijing protests which has shaped the Hong Kong protesters' identity but also the reaction of the Beijing government which on the one hand aimed to avoid a second massacre and on the other hand referred to the same language used in 1989 to construct a rhetorical threat to the UM.

At the same time, however, the similarities between the TM and the UM are mostly limited to internal structures and framing: striking differences remain most obviously with regard to the demonstrators' demands, motivations and goals as well as the external structures of the movements.

In light of these major differences as well as the generational change among Hong Kong's pro-democratic protest movement, a shift if not a decreasing importance of the TM's legacy on Hong Kong seems to be very likely. For the Chinese central government in Beijing that has aimed to force back the memory of the Tiananmen Massacre, this development in Hong Kong is a double-edged sword:

On the one hand, a protest with a more "local" aim questions the CCP's rule over China to a lower degree than the TM. This is also reflected in the mere locality of the protests in China's periphery instead of Tiananmen Square which forms the heart of the PRC. This significance of the political symbolism of China's capital became most obvious in 1989 when Mikhail Gorbachev paid a state visit to Beijing ending in a humiliation for the CCP leadership (Lagerkvist, 2014a). Furthermore, the localist protest of the "Umbrella generation" is less likely to spill-over to Mainland China compared to demonstrations demanding greater freedom for the whole country in a spirit of Chinese national pride: Why should Mainland Chinese support a movement that is to a significant degree directed against a perceived "Mainlandization"? Indeed, there were no widespread sympathies for the UM in Mainland China (BBC, 2014; Kuo, 2014).

On the other hand, the "secessionist spirit" of the "Umbrella generation" strengthens the centrifugal tendencies within the PRC (visible mainly in Tibet and Xinjiang) and ties in with scepticism towards the Mainland in Greater China, namely in Taiwan. Finally, Hong Kong's development might also very well diffuse to the southern

Chinese province of Guangdong.

The second implication of our findings concerns the central government's options for action. Given the marked differences between the two movements, it is very unlikely that the deployment of similar means taken after 1989 to pacify the young protesters of the Hong Kong SAR would be successful: Given the civil liberties in Hong Kong as well as the SAR's largely independent judiciary, the Beijing government cannot easily adopt repressive means like it did back in 1989. In this context, the CCP has clearly learnt from the Beijing Massacre to be more patient and wait out the protests (Goldstone, 2014). Furthermore, it is much more difficult to suppress the collective memory in Hong Kong because the freedoms of speech, press and assembly as well as the free Internet in the SAR make such a strategy impossible.

Finally, even effective economic means to pacify the protests are hardly imaginable: in contrast to the PRC in the 1980s, Hong Kong is not in need of market-economic reforms since it is a capitalist entity for a long time. Furthermore, economic stimuli by the Mainland government are likely to increase tensions in the SAR because they would go along with a further economic integration of the city with the Mainland. This, however, would decrease Hong Kong's self-determination and autonomy that is desired by the "Umbrella generation". Consequently, the Hong Kong SAR as well as the Mainland Chinese government have to find new solutions to the challenges of the protest movement in the city.

The third and final implication of our findings is that the generational change of the protest movement in Hong Kong reflects an ongoing societal re-negotiation of the SAR's relations with the Mainland. This comes at a time when Mainland China's political and economic gravitational force is increasing in the whole region, which has increased anxiety not only in Hong Kong but in Taiwan and other East and Southeast Asian countries (e.g. Vietnam) as well. It would be

naïve to neglect that other societies and movements monitor how the PRC deals with the UM in Hong Kong. Most obviously, mutual exchanges between Hong Kong's UM and Taiwan's Sunflower movement illustrate such regional linkages.

In sum, how the "mobilization of the Tiananmen memory" in Hong Kong develops carries implications far beyond the internal and underlying generational change of the SAR's protest movement. The Hong Kong youth's turning away from the tradition and memory of the TM coincides with the rise of Hong Kong's more recent "secessionist spirit", a trend that is clearly detrimental to the interest of the central government in Beijing. This, in turn, illustrates how crucial the "mobilization of memory" is: to which traditions social protest movements in the Greater China region in general and Hong Kong in particular refer in the future will not be the only but a significant factor shaping their relations with Mainland China.

Notes

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1. Estimations vary; however, the most common numbers put the participation at a sixth of Hong Kong's population with 1.2 million. This estimation is based on data published by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Ong, 2014).

2. Conventional wisdom regards Hong Kong to be an apolitical city, when it is in fact a "city of protest". Consider about 500,000 people who demonstrated against article 23 of the Basic Law (基本法) in 2003. Consider the ten thousand people who protested against the rail link to the Mainland in January 2010. Tens of thousands are demonstrating every year on 1st July, in some years as many as hundreds of thousands participated. Moreover, there are many small-scale protests in the city such as the protests against the demolition of the piers and many controversial urban development projects. The spectacular outburst that came to be known as the Umbrella Movement should be viewed against this background. Therefore future research should more carefully investigate Hong Kong's protest history and the reasons for why the narrative of monetary-oriented Hong Kongers has gained such traction both regionally and internationally.

3. Author's interview with two leading members of OCLP and the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, Hong Kong, 18th July 2015.

4. This phenomenon is clearly illustrated by the huge box office success of the budget movie *The Ten Years*, which depicts the grim situation in Hong Kong in the year 2025.

5. Author's interviews with protesters of the Umbrella Movement, June/July 2015 in Hong Kong.

6. Author's interviews with protesters of the Umbrella Movement, June/July 2015 in Hong Kong.

7. Author's interviews with protesters of the Umbrella Movement, June/July 2015 in Hong Kong.

8. For example, some observers argue that it was able to basically win the support of the Hong Kong University (HKU) (Economy, 2014), a perception that seems to be too general to be true. But indeed HKU became a stronghold of the UM with Benny Tai 戴耀廷 being the founder of OCLP. Additionally, the UM found support at least of some religious communities, most prominently Christian ones (Chan, 2015).

9. Many students of the Tiananmen movement were familiar with current reforms in the Soviet Union, the history of the Prague Spring, and the American and French revolutions. However, compared to the UM, cosmopolitan perspectives were less important in 1989.

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