The Department of Political Science Honors Program

From Individual to Collective Memory:

South Korea's Gwangju Uprising

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As shown above, this thesis is not an individual endeavor but a culmination of many people's efforts. I cannot claim this as my own.

II. Abstract

Using the Gwangju Uprising as a case study, this thesis investigates how individually held memories coalesce into collectively held memories. In doing so, I formulate a taxonomy of the various forces that cause some narratives to become privileged over others.

Memory studies scholarship largely neglects to differentiate between the terms "dominant narrative" and "collective memory." It also lacks a holistic analysis of the distinct, competing forces that cause narratives to ascend to become dominant narratives and collective memories, as scholars typically consider only one of these forces at a time. However, I explore this process in detail, tracing the progression from memories, to narratives, to dominant narrative, and, ultimately, to collective memory. In doing so, I define dominant narrative as a representation of an event set forth by a certain group that is more popular than existing counternarratives. Collective memory, on the other hand, is a narrative that has surpassed the dominant narrative in that it has obtained societal consensus—in other words, faces very little contestation—and is institutionalized through various modes of remembrance. I frame the development of these concepts by introducing my posited "channels"—legal, cultural, civil, and political—and analyzing their interactions. I illustrate the existence of a competition between the channels in determining which narratives becomes dominant. Through a historical analysis study of South Korea's Gwangju Uprising and its aftermath, I seek to understand this process, comparing primary and secondary sources, including testimonies, legislation, and newspaper articles.

III. Introduction

Don't sing of May as a blade of grass that withers in wind.

May didn't come lyrically like wind, nor did it lie lyrically like a blade of grass.

May came with a beast's blood-stained claws.

May came with the teeth of crazy dogs hungry for blood.

May came with the soldier's bayonet cutting the pregnant mother's womb.

May came gorging on the children's eyes that popped out like bullets.

May came with American tanks that trampled down the breath of freedom.

- Kim Nam-Ju, 2012

In the spring of 1980, a massacre against civilians erupted in Gwangju, South Korea. In the face of a military coup and the installment of martial law nationwide, university students led pro-democratic protests, infuriated by the regime's empty promises of democratization. On May 18, 1980, Chonnam University students in Gwangju were met with paramilitary troops who violently responded to their peaceful protest. Civilians and troops clashed until the 27th, when the troops decisively took over the city. The massacre's aftermath was shrouded by contesting reports. As the nation was still under the control of martial law, speaking about the paramilitary's brutality, and thus challenging the government's official narrative of what had happened in Gwangju, was perilous and forbidden. But, when the nation left behind its authoritarian past and democratized, contesting narratives finally made their way to the light, and the government eventually acknowledged what it had done to the people of Gwangju.

But how did we get to telling the stories we tell today? How have certain memories come to be enshrined as our collective memory?

In my thesis, I seek to understand the mechanisms underlying this progression, from the transmission of memories through narratives to the contest that results in a dominant narrative, and later its promotion to collective memory. As a disclaimer, the purpose of this thesis is not to decide, definitively, what happened in Gwangju; rather, it is to investigate how various stories surrounding the event interacted and grew into what we, as a collective, understand today.

In Part IV, I will clarify and differentiate key concepts, such as "memory," "narrative," "dominant narrative," and "collective memory." Despite their importance in memory studies and memory politics, I will point out that there have been differences in how such terms are employed, leading to confusion about how collective memories are formed. To that point, my thesis seeks to fill in the gap of understanding the interactions of mechanisms that drive collective memory.

In Part V, I will reintroduce my research question but in the context of presenting my main argument, which posits various "channels," or methods of transmission that carry narratives forward in the contest for dominant status. I will describe four channels—legal, cultural, civil, and political—and the interactions between each that contribute to the weakening and strengthening of narratives. Each channel consists of various institutions and practices that provide the narrative with power. Based on this type of framework, I will set forth various hypotheses regarding the conditions that allow for a dominant narrative to form and even become the collective memory. In the same section, I will expand upon my chosen methodology of a historical analysis as well as the sources I sought before transitioning into Part VI, which delves into a background of the Gwangju Uprising.

From there, in Part VII, I identify the two key narratives of the Gwangju Uprising, which I have called the "People's Narrative" and the "Government's Narrative." In Part VIII, I embark

on a closer examination of how certain channels carried these narratives and interacted with one another in each decade, from the 1980s to the 2020s. For each decade, I identify which narrative of the two has grown to become the dominant narrative, and in the later decades, the collective memory. In Part IX, I revisit my hypotheses and determine if my findings align with my predictions through a more precise application of the framework to the interaction of the channels. I will also expand upon my finding of a particular power dynamic between the legal channel and the cultural channel, in which one can "counteract" the other under certain contexts. And finally, in Part X, I conclude with a discussion of how future research may expand upon my thesis.

IV. Literature Review

A. Defining Key Concepts: "Narrative," "Dominant Narrative," and "Collective Memory"

Memory is defined as the process of "encoding, storing, and retrieving information."[1] Because every stage of the memory-making process is an individual process, the content of such memories is, in turn, unique. Likewise, there also exists a diversity of methods through which an individual's memory can be transmitted. Memory studies scholars largely agree that the umbrella term for the vehicle that carries such memories forward is "narrative," or "a process of storytelling to reach a state of understanding."[2] In other words, narratives seek to make sense of the past, present, and future. Memories are selective, since they encode, store, and retrieve only some of what occurred. Narratives are similarly selective, as they are reconstructions, rather than accurate recreations, of the past. According to Heux (2022), such "representations of the past or narratives might alternate according to what they might be used for,"[3] thus further suggesting that narratives are malleable interpretations of memories, rather than perfect representations.

Narratives themselves can take various forms in taking hold and preserving memory. Sicher (2000) identifies various mediums of art—film, drama, museums, etc.—as ways for narratives to travel. Likewise, Marianne Hirsch proposes that narratives of memories can be shared over time and across generations, a phenomenon which she coined "postmemory," through family stories, practices, and behaviors. Hirsch's position resonates with other scholars who agree that

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[1] Gregorio Zlotnik and Aaron Vansintian, "Memory: An Extended Definition," *Frontiers in psychology 10* (2019): 2523, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02523.
[2] Qi Wang, Qingfang Song, and Jin Boon Kim Koh, "Culture, Memory, and Narrative Self-Making," *Imagination, Cognition and Personality 27*, no. 2 (2017): 199, https://doi/org/10.1177/0276236617733827.
[3] Lucréce Heux, Clare Rathbone, Sarah Ge. , Rebecca Clifford, and Céline Souchay, "Collective Memory and Autobiographical Memory: Perspectives from the Humanities and Cognitive Sciences," *WIREs Cognitive Science 14*, no. 3 (2022): 8, https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.1635.

narratives are shaped by "culturally situated beliefs, goals, and practices"[4] which, as a prerequisite, shape the memories that are encoded. Wang, Son, and Koh (2017) label this as "joint reminiscing" in which parent shares memories with the child through culturally bound interactions, behaviors, and beliefs. This transmission of narrative can even appear as passing on an heirloom or "testimonial objects," according to Hirsch and Spitzer (2006). Hirsch recounts how a group of women in the Terezin concentration camp secretly came together and created a book of recipes they recalled from a time before the Holocaust. After the Holocaust, one of the survivors sought help in passing down this cookbook to her daughter. The narrative of survival and food that the mother wished to convey is survived by this cultural artifact.

Courtrooms and trials are also seen as spaces in which narratives are exchanged in the form of arguments and testimonies,[5] placing the memories in a formal institution for their ratification and preservation. Booth also identifies legislative movements—such as the passing of laws, granting amnesty, and/or truth commissions—as another manifestation of narratives. Similarly, politicians and their parties may also act as vehicles of transmittance in the narratives they share with their constituents,[6] appealing to people's political beliefs through expressions of morals and stances. Institutions, such as schools/education, civil organizations, and media coverage, can also enshrine certain narratives. A school's curriculum provides an essential framing of events, thereby making it a form of narrative. Islam (2018) points out the influence of media as the

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[4] Wang, Song, and Koh, "Culture, Memory, and Narrative Self-Making," 201.
[5] James W. Booth, "The Unforgotten: Memories of Justice," *The American Political Science Review 95*, no. 4 (2001): 777-791, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3117713.
[6] Elise Jing and Yong-Yeol Ahn, "Characterizing Partisan Political Narrative Frameworks about COVID-19 on Twitter," *EPJ Data Science 10*, no. 1 (2021): 53, https://doi.org/10.1140/epjds/s13688-021-00308-4.

stories that are spread through such platforms have the potential to incorporate and normalize a certain narrative.

Across all the methods described above through which narratives take form, scholars admit two key points: (1) multiple narratives may arise from one memory surrounding the same event, and (2) each of these narratives may contend with one another due to the inherent selectivity of memory. Sicher (2000) cites how narratives told by soldiers can be and often are contested or uprooted by other narratives, such as those transmitted by victims of violence. Mumby (1987) also identifies how narratives may contest within political settings as they can "function ideologically to produce, maintain, and reproduce those power structures,"[7] emphasizing their malleability. Jing and Ahn (2021) point out the different narratives politicians may employ depending on partisan lines as the rhetoric they espouse are "interpretations of the reality that fit with people's political beliefs" which "may be at conflict with each other."[8] Kearney (1998) also views the existence of an unreliable narrator as a core nature of narratives.

Such contestation of narratives is productive, however, as it can lead to more truthful narratives triumphing over less truthful ones as well as create a common factual universe for societal discourse. This is especially important given that contesting narratives arise after an event and further confuse our understanding of what is fictitious and what is closer to the truth.[9] Due to the inherent selectivity of memory-making, narratives, in turn, cannot fully encapsulate a

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[7] Dennis K. Mumby, "The Political Function of Narrative in Organizations," *Communication Monographs 54*, no. 2 (1987): 113, https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758709390221.
[8] Jing and Ahn, "Characterizing Partisan Political Narrative Frameworks," 2.
[9] Suhi Choi, "Silencing Survivors' Narratives: Why Are We 'Again' Forgetting the No Gun Ri Story?" *Rhetoric and Public Affairs 11*, no. 3 (2008): 267-288, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41940374.

whole memory and deem it as truth. This does potentially take away from their legitimacy as this shortcoming is simply unavoidable.

Another essential concept within the literature of memory studies is collective memory. Scholars share similar definitions of collective memory and posit how various conditions shape its creation. For instance, sociologist Maurice Halbwachs defines collective memory as the product of society's intervention in an individual's historical beliefs to align it with the society's beliefs.[10] Rahman (2010) similarly defines this term as "the combined memory of a population that has experienced a common past."[11] Heux (2022) configures collective memory as a composition of "the narratives available in a given space."[12] He goes on to touch upon the malleability of memory as the condition that allows for collective memory to be formed, given that such creation is a "historically contingent process (which means that it is grounded in a specific time and place, with significance both to the individual and beyond the individual)."[13] This harks back to Wertsch (2008) who coalesces in his understanding how "aspects of narrative play a role in organizing collective memory."[14] Mirroring narratives as representations, Wertsch defines collective memory as "a representation of the past shared by members of a group such as a generation or nation-state."[15]

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[10] Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, "Collective Memory—What is it?" *History and Memory 8*, no. 1 (1996): 30, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25618696.
[11] Smita A. Rahman, "The Presence of the Past: Negotiating the Politics of Collective Memory," *Contemporary Political Theory 9*, no. 1 (2010): 60-1, https://doi.org/10.1057/cpt.2008.44.
[12] Heux et al., "Collective Memory and Autobiographical Memory," 3.
[13] Ibid, 10
[14] James V. Wertsch, "The Narrative Organization of Collective Memory," Ethos 36. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20586564.
[15] Wertsch, "The Narrative Organization of Collective Memory," 120.

Although there is a multiplicity of definitions, they all touch upon essential characteristics of collective memory. In agreement with the existing literature, my thesis will employ the same definition, in which collective memory is a societal historical consensus that is maintained and institutionalized by various methods of remembrance.

B. Gap

While the literature is clear about the terms "narrative" and "collective memory," the term "dominant narrative" is vague. Heux (2022) attempts to formulate a distinction between dominant narrative and collective memory as he starts to define collective memory as "dominant narratives of the past that circulate at the collective level [which] can have a profound influence on an individual's description of their own past"; however, the murkiness returns as he later refers to this as "dominant collective memories."[16] His statement, as a whole, implies an interchangeability of narratives and collective memory, which is not compatible with the existing scholarly understanding of collective memory as it is—quite literally—the collective's memory, not an individual's memory.

Rather, if we take Heux's understanding of how dominant narratives may exist at the collective level, it implies that a narrative has not been enshrined as collective memory. And without a clear distinction between dominant narrative and collective memory, the scholarship overall lacks a clear tracing of the process memories undergo when becoming collective memory. This issue is exacerbated by the isolated analyses of the various forms narratives take in preserving memory. Without an understanding of how such forms interact with each other, it leaves us with a fragmented idea in how they formulate a collective memory. Thus, in the

[16] Heux et al., "Collective Memory and Autobiographical Memory," 4.

absence of a distinct understanding of this process—from memories to narratives to dominant narrative to collective memory—the boundaries between the terms, especially the latter two, begin to blur.

V. Research Question

A. Argument and Framework: Identifying "Channels"

In order to fill the gaps addressed above, my thesis sets forth three arguments. The first argument posits a distinction between dominant narrative and collective memory through a clarification of the definition of dominant narrative. Considering that "the vulnerability of memory… renders possible the formation of collective memory,"[17] it is reasonable to say that once a narrative is made dominant, it provides a framework through which memories are reinterpreted and collectivized. Accordingly, I define dominant narrative as a representation of an event set forth by a certain group that is more popular than existing counternarratives. Collective memory, on the other hand, is a narrative that has surpassed the dominant narrative in that it has obtained societal consensus—in other words, faces very little contestation—and is institutionalized through various modes of remembrance.

This conception is further illustrated in my second argument. I argue for a clearer development of collective memory in the framework below (see Figure 1) which demonstrates how contesting narratives arise from individual memories. These narratives are transmitted through various "channels" (legal, civil, cultural, and political) which compete to establish a certain narrative as dominant. This dominant narrative may then become enshrined as the collective memory through a process of institutionalization that spans across channels. The dotted arrow underneath the "Collective Memory" box, however, indicates that if enough contestation arises—in that a counternarrative increases in saliency and institutionalization—the

[17] Heux, "Collective Memory and Autobiographical Memory," 5.

agreed-upon collective memory can be undermined and potentially be "demoted" to the status of dominant narrative.

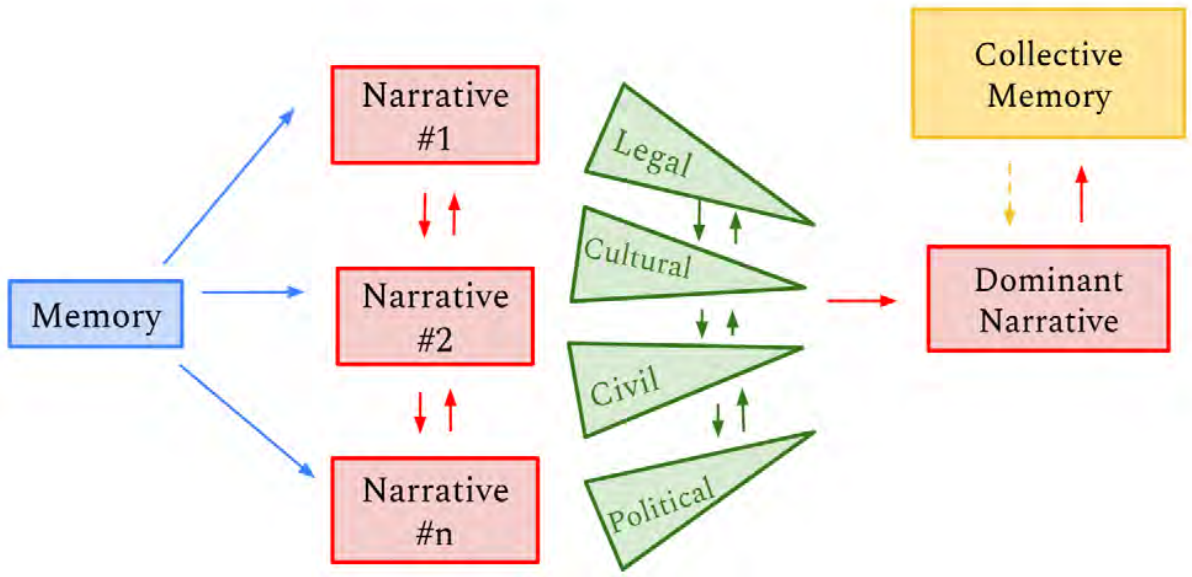

Figure 1: Diagram of framework that captures the development of memory to dominant narrative to collective memory.

I define channels as the methods of transmission that carry narratives forward in the contest for dominant status. Drawing upon the literature that discusses individual methods of transmission, I have collected these methods into the four channels described above. Each channel consists of various institutions and practices that act as vehicles for the narrative.

Booth's analysis of how justice and legal institutions shape narratives provided the basis for the legal channel which constitutes trials, courtrooms, legislative movements, and truth commissions. Trials and courtrooms are institutions in which certain laws and rules "regulate the production, accessibility, and dissemination of information about the past."[18] The narratives that

[18] Joachim J. Savelsberg and Ryan D. King, "Law and Collective Memory," Annual Review of Law and Social Science 3 (2007): 189. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.lawsocsci.3.

are told in these settings are given priority as the dramatic element that is characteristic of trials allows for the raising and legitimizing of a narrative as a dominant narrative, whereas those that are excluded or unsuccessful at trial are delegitimized.

On the other hand, the cultural channel consists of "beliefs and values as well as everyday routines and practices," whether it be within the family or outside, that shape and select which narratives are passed on or conveyed.[19] This resonates with Hirsch's notion of postmemory in which narratives are passed on through generations. Sicher and Hirsch contribute to the construction of the cultural channel, as they identify different modes of commemoration that may compose a narrative, such as cultural artifacts, artistic representations, memorial practices (i.e., museums, ceremonies), and oral storytelling.

The civil channel encapsulates the same institutions as mentioned in the literature: schools/curriculum, civil organizations, media coverage, and academic discourses. In accordance with Islam's (2018) analysis of how these social institutions normalize narratives, I posit that the civil channel is composed of mechanisms that spur social discourse according to the narratives generated. When certain narratives are upheld by these institutions, they are assigned power and hold a bid for dominance as these social institutions incorporate/normalize these narratives, for the present and future community.

As for the political channel, I based it on the notion of narratives being reinforced by a pre-existing us/them divide surrounding national identity[20], ideology, ethnicity, and/or political alignment. Savelsberg and King (2007) posit how certain narratives may resonate more with one group in comparison with another according to the group they belong, resulting in the

[19] Wang, Son, and Koh, "Culture, Memory, and Narrative Self-Making," 201.
[20] Booth, "The Unforgotten: Memories of Justice."

discrepancies between narratives. Jing and Ahn (2021) explore how "narratives used by politicians and political parties convey their morals" and that these "interpretations of… reality… fit with people's political beliefs."[21] In carrying narratives that resonate with one's political beliefs/party alignment, for example, there is a "membership categorization process… where 'us' is often projected as the heroes and 'them' as the villains in each party's narratives."[22] Political parties often are built on divisive us/them mythologies,[23] so the narratives certain parties choose over others are usually due to its resonance, thereby resulting in the transmission of said narratives. Based on previously constructed ideas of political elements, I have determined the political channel to be composed of political parties, presidential rhetoric, and policy changes.

Lastly, I argued that each channel carries a certain amount of power, thus providing this same authority to the narratives they transmit in competition for dominance. The definition of dominant narrative inherently indicates the existence of a certain power dynamic as a narrative becomes dominant due to the power held by those who agree upon it, at the expense of others being marginalized or weakened. The power dynamics between the channels also contributes to the weakening of narratives and strengthening of others. Following the literature, I define power as being "exercised when ambiguous… information is interpreted in a way that favors the interests of a particular organizational group."[24] These channels not only maintain the power of certain narratives but also grant narratives the function of reinforcing the structures that uphold

[21] Jing and Ahn, "Characterizing Partisan Political Narrative Frameworks," 2.
[22] Jing and Ahn, "Characterizing Partisan Political Narrative Frameworks," 4.
[23] Wertsch, "The Narrative Organization of Collective Memory."
[24] Mumby, "The Political Function of Narrative," 116.

this power themselves.[25] Thus, within and between channels, power can be exercised just by the sort of narratives they carry and the magnitude to which they resonate.

By illustrating a clear step-by-step process of the transformation of individual memories to collective memory, the dynamics between contesting narratives as well as the channels that carry them out can be further understood in terms of their contribution to the overall progression. Furthermore, in clarifying this process, the terms themselves are also made explicitly distinct, aiding scholars in further understanding the development of collective memory.

B. Hypotheses

From my arguments above, I set forth three hypotheses of what I had expected to find upon the completion of analyzing my sources.

First, I hypothesized that there exists a power dynamic between the channels across narratives in which the magnitude of power varies between them, thereby fueling the transmission of certain narratives over others. Rahman (2013) touches on the influence of this imbalance of power on narratives by identifying how "relationships of power often determine whose accounts are included and whose are excluded in the construction of a collective memory."[26] This relativity of power depends on the context in which the narratives are situated. In Wertsch's 2008 study, he collected testimonies from Russian people across age groups and had them recount the events of WWII. He found that their narratives varied depending on their age, their generation, the temporal distance from the event, and their current environment, as these factors skewed which details were told and which were omitted. Context amplifies certain

[25] Mumby, "The Political Function of Narrative," 113.
[26] Rahman, "The Presence of the Past: Negotiating the Politics of Collective Memory," 61.

channels over others, granting them more power to make selective narratives more salient than others. Similarly, the type of government under which the narratives appeared can grant more power to certain channels, such as the legal and/or political channel. For instance, under an authoritarian government as in the case of the Gwangju Uprising, the narratives the government upholds can be more easily preserved by the strength of legal and political channels in comparison to the strength these same channels can provide to those opposed to the government.

Second, I hypothesized that for a narrative to become a dominant narrative, it must be supported by at least three channels. However, if the counternarrative was transmitted by the cultural channel, I hypothesize that there would be a chance for the counternarrative to be regarded as the dominant one, regardless of how many other channels already support it. Similar to my first hypothesis, what three channels support and empower a certain narrative depends on the context in which the narrative is situated.

Third, I hypothesized that for a dominant narrative to act as a framework for the reinterpretation of memories and become a collective memory, it requires institutional support in which there is little contestation across all four channels—legal, cultural, civil, and political. The agreement of the four channels would act as an indicator or measurement of what the collective has generally accepted. Along the same vein, what was once established as collective memory can be demoted to dominant narrative if there arises enough contestation and challenging accounts, losing saliency across all four channels.

C. Methodology

To test the solidity of my framework and hypotheses, I employed a historical analysis study of South Korea's Gwangju Uprising of 1980. While this event does have a personal resonance, I

also found that in my initial study of the Uprising, it was an event that was shrouded by silence, denial, and competing narratives, so I believed it to be an optimal case study to trace the process my thesis posited. I also chose to employ a historical analysis study rather than a mixed-methods or quantitative study as I found it to be more appropriate in tracing the progress illustrated in the sections above by applying my conceptions directly to real-life, contested events.

This entailed searching for and studying primary and secondary sources that aligned with my formulations of channels. Such sources included, but are not limited to, testimonies, interviews, social media coverage, and legislation that came as a result of the events. I also parsed through literary works, such as *Human Acts*, films, memorial sites, and non-profit/civil organizations that were constructed in the aftermath of the event. These primary sources allowed me to (1) identify what the narratives were, (2) how they developed/were transmitted through which channels, and (3) which narratives were left out and which went on to become the dominant narrative or the collective memory, if at all.

I utilized the Korean Studies databases made available on the UCLA Library website as well as Charles E. Young Research Library to find the primary sources I described above. The Korean Studies databases consist of archived newspaper articles, which I referenced in understanding how the events were portrayed across decades. For even more media portrayals, I turned to the *New York Times* Times Machine. In addition to these archives, I referred to existing archives provided by the South Korean presidential database as well as the May 18 Memorial Foundation. In the books I obtained, I also turned to their references page for further information on what other sources may be useful; oftentimes, these books would refer to another work which shaped the direction of my source-finding.

Regarding the language barrier, for online resources that are primarily in Korean—such as the news articles and presidential speeches—I utilized Anthropic's Claude Sonnet 3.5 or 3.7 to translate the sources into English. Although I realize Claude Sonnet 3.5 or 3.7 could have potentially made translation errors in terms of capturing specific connotations unique to the Korean language, I still believe this model to be a strong candidate in providing mostly thorough translations of materials.

I also conducted three interviews of Korean individuals who were close to the Uprising, spatially and/or temporally. I conducted all three interviews through Zoom, utilizing its Pro feature to record our conversation and then obtain transcripts. I prepared and asked the same set of questions; however, depending on the direction of the conversation, I improvised follow-up questions, mostly for clarification reasons. For the list of questions, see Figure 4 under the Appendix. I attempted to keep my questions open-ended and broad so as to not give the participants any indication of my own thoughts and beliefs surrounding the event. In creating them, I sought to understand how the participants remember and conceptualize the event in order to parse out major themes and any recurring narratives across interviews. I had hoped to gain an idea of how they perceived the aftermath of the event as well.

When parsing through these materials, I organized them by decades and which narratives they belonged to (as explained in more detail in Part VII). Oftentimes, due to difficulty in obtaining a certain source—such as government orders issued during the Uprising—I utilized media coverage that shed light on what said orders or rhetoric entailed. Although I had categorized media coverage as part of the civil channel, in these unique cases, I grouped them under—for instance—the legal channel. Even so, I believe the integrity of the channels stand, as the narrative/message the source conveys is the relevant feature.

VI. Background: The Gwangju Uprising

This section contains a basic account of the events of the Gwangju Uprising, also known as the May 18th Democratic Movement. In this background, I was careful, to the best of my ability, to not impose my own opinion about these events.

From its inception in 1948 to the 1960s, South Korea was ruled by two successive authoritarian leaders, Rhee Syngman and Park Chung-Hee. During his time as president, Park Chung-Hee instituted the Yushin Constitution, which centralized and strengthened the president's power, legitimating his dictatorial rule. On October 26, 1979, Park was assassinated, allowing general Chun Doo-Hwan to execute a military coup and rise to power as the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency under Park's successor, Choi Kyu-Hah. Pro-democratic protests against the institution swept the nation, mostly led by university students and opposition political leaders. Shortly after Chun's seizure of power, he declared martial law throughout most of the country before extending it nationwide on May 17, 1980. At the same time, student leaders and opposition politicians, including future president Kim Dae-Jung, were arrested. Kim Dae-Jung was charged with organizing the protests with the intent to overthrow the government.

In response to the protests, paramilitary forces were sent to Gwangju, South Jeolla province. On May 18, 1980, Chonnam University students organized pro-democratic demonstrations against the closing of their university when they were violently met by the government troops. In response to the brutality of the army, civilians joined the demonstrations. The troops beat, shot, and bayoneted civilians indiscriminately. The protestors, in turn, seized whatever weapons they could find and clashed with the troops for the next few days. The violence escalated on May 20 as troops opened fire on groups of protestors. Civilians responded by burning down two broadcasting stations. Lines of vehicles—including buses and taxis—made

their way to the Provincial Office Square in protest, forming a barricade and attempting to retrieve those that were wounded while under the assault of the soldiers.

On May 22, the military retreated to the outskirts of the city and created a blockade shutting down the city, preventing people from coming in or out. On May 27, the paramilitary troops returned and violently suppressed the movement in just a matter of hours. While official records note the number of casualties as approximately 200, Gwangju witnesses argue it reaches the 2000s. During and in the immediate aftermath of the event, Chun's government claimed that the Uprising was a riot instigated by North Korean infiltrators and sympathizers. However, as time passed and the nation developed into a more mature democracy, the Uprising has been increasingly recognized as a "pivotal moment in the South Korean struggle for democracy."[27]

[27] "Gwangju Uprising," Encyclopedia Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/event/Gwangju-Uprising.

VII. Analysis, Part I: Identification of Key Narratives

While parsing through my obtained sources, two recurring narratives stood out to me. I have sorted them under the labels, "People's Narrative" and "Government's Narrative."

First, the People's Narrative describes the Gwangju Uprising as a turning point in the struggle for democracy as the Gwangju citizens persisted in their protest for democracy, asserting themselves and their values in the face of military brutality and Chun's oppression. The table below displays the channels in which this narrative was present and during which decades, beginning with the 1980s (see Figure 2). To indicate this, I listed the applicable sources that fell within their corresponding channels and decade. The red boxes indicate that I did not find any sources that transmitted the given narrative for certain channels and decades. However, this is not to indicate that there is a complete absence of materials that fit into those categories.

Year	Legal Channel	Cultural Channel	Civil Channel	Political Channel
1980		*Kwangju Diary*		The Shorrock Files: Kim Dae Jung Speaks (interview)
1990	Special Act on the May 18 Democratization Movement	- National Memorial Day Designation - May Mothers' House - *May 18th Kwangju Democratic Uprising* - May 18th National Cemetery	Creation of May 18th Memorial Foundation	President Kim Young-Sam inauguration speech
2000	Act on the Honor Restoration of and Compensation to Persons Related to Democratization Movements	*We Saw: The May 18th Democratic Uprising* - *Memories of May 1980*	- *Gwangju Press Eyewitness Accounts* - *South Korean Democracy: Legacy of the Gwangju Uprising*	Kim Dae-Jung's 20th Anniversary Commemoration Speech
2010	Special Act on Investigating the Truth of the May 18th Democratization Movement	-*A Taxi Driver* - *Human Acts* - UNESCO Memory of the World - *The Ten Days of Field Hospital*	- Inclusion of May 18th in high school textbooks - Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City	- Defense Minster's Apology for Rapes During Gwangju Crackdown - Defense Minister's Apology on Behalf of Military
2020	UN: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth	- Interviews #1-3	Selection of Hankyoreh articles	Moon Jae-In's 40th Anniversary Commemoration Speech

Figure 2: Table of People's Narrative categorizing where and when this narrative was found, in terms of decade and channel.

The Government's Narrative, on the other hand, describes the Gwangju Uprising as a series of riots instigated by North Korean communists and sympathizers attempting to overthrow the government. Below is a similar table (see Figure 3) that categorizes the relevant sources that carried this narrative in their respective channels and decade.

Year	Legal Channel	Cultural Channel	Civil Channel	Political Channel
1980	- Martial Law Act - Select NYT and Chosun Ilbo articles about Kim Dae Jung Trial		Select NYT & Chosun Ilbo articles	- Chun Doo-hwan's Breakfast Prayer Remarks - Chun Doo-hwan's Instructions to Dept. Chairs and Members of the National Security Emergency Measures Committee
1990				
2000				
2010			TV Shows tarnish Gwangju History	
2020			Asia Times article: Gwangju massacre deniers	- Chun Doo-Hwan's widow's apology - Yoon Yuk-Seol's Martial Law Declaration

Figure 3: Table of Government's Narrative categorizing where and when this narrative was found, in terms of decade and channel.

In the sources I studied, I did not find any recurring narratives that depicted the Gwangju Uprising in a way that is different from the themes present in the two narratives above. Although the identified narratives seem broad, the finer details various sources described—and even contested at times—can be categorized within the two narratives.

VIII. Analysis, Part II: Formation of Collective Memory: Interaction of Narratives and Channels through the Decades

In this section, I embark on a closer analysis of the two narratives and their presence in certain channels within each decade. This will provide more detail and a stronger foundation for the third part of my analysis in which I consolidate how the competition of the two narratives through the interaction of my posited channels contributed to the development of a collective memory of the Gwangju Uprising.

A. 1980s

In the wake of the Uprising, during the 1980s, the two narratives found various footholds, especially while still under Chun Doo-Hwan's administration. The nation remained under martial law until 1987, with plain-clothed policemen often infiltrating civil society. Indiscriminate arresting, interrogating, and torture was rampant, and the government controlled most aspects of society—such as press, speech, assembly, etc. Such control was legitimated by the Martial Law Act enacted on May 17, 1980. Although not explicit, the Martial Law Act uplifted the Government's Narrative through the legal channel by reinforcing its mission in maintaining civil obedience. The surge in civil "disobedience" contributed to the Government's Narrative. Additionally, the arrest of Kim Dae-Jung under charges of sedition, paying university students to demonstrate against the government, and organizing the Gwangju "rebellion"[28] served to further contribute to the legal channel's uplifting of the Government's Narrative. In another article from December 1, 1980, the *New York Times* revealed how many military officials staunchly believed the Uprising was incited by North Korean agents, given that Kim Dae-Jung was arrested and

[28] Special to the New York Times, "Seoul Regime Announces Charges Facing Kim Dae Jung in Rebellion," *New York Times*, July 4, 1980, A4.

labeled a North Korean sympathizer. The potency of the martial law declaration and Kim Dae-Jung's arrest, driven by an animosity for North Korea, contributed to the Government's Narrative.

The Government's Narrative was also fueled by various *Chosun Ilbo* and *New York Times* articles categorized under the civil channel (see civil channel of 1980s in Figure 3). A *New York Times* article from June 5, 1980, characterized the people of South Jeolla as "stubborn and aggressive"[29] while also employing other terms, such as "rioters" and "mobs" to describe the Gwangju participants. Several Chosun Ilbo articles published during the Uprising also employed specific terminology, calling the event a "disturbance" or "situation," deescalating the brevity of the event. These linguistic strategies reinforced the aspect of the Government's Narrative that characterized participants as violent rioters.

Presidential rhetoric also empowered the Government's Narrative. Speeches made by Chun Doo-Hwan (see political channel of 1980s in Figure 3) used labels of varying severity in reference to the Gwangju Uprising. Chun explicitly called the events "senseless riots" and admonished the "impure element"[30] behind them, a veiled reference to North Korean threats. In another speech, he railed on those who "sympathize with [the] North Korean puppet regime" that "aim to overthrow the state."[31] He also called for the disposal of "social irregularities" who

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[29] Shim Jae Hoon, "Protestors Control South Korean City; At Least 32 Killed," *New York Times*, May 22, 1980, A1.
[30] Chun Doo Hwan, "Breakfast Prayer Meeting Remarks" (speech, August 6, 1980), Office of the President of the Republic of Korea, https://www.pa.go.kr/research/contents/speech/index.jsp#this_id3.
[31] Chun Doo Hwan, "Instructions to Department Chairs and Members of the National Security Emergency Measures Committee" (speech, June 5, 1980), Office of the President of the Republic of Korea, https://www.pa.go.kr/research/contents/speech/index.jsp#this_id3.

participate in "illegal demonstrations and disturbances" through "social purification."[32] The range of vocabulary he used in describing the Uprising is legitimated by his position as a high-ranking government official. In using intense words, such as "eradication," "purification," and "irregularities," Chun drives home the illustration of the pertinent threat of North Korean sympathizers and spies who wrought havoc in Gwangju.

On the other hand, the People's Narrative found fewer footholds, its presence in only two channels. First, despite the difficulty in expressing counternarratives under martial law, author and Gwangju eyewitness Lee Jae-Eui found a way to publish a retelling of the events in his book *Kwangju Diary: Beyond Death, Beyond the Darkness of the Age* (see cultural channel of 1980s in Figure 2). His book, originally published in 1985, could only be published at the risk of the publisher's house and cover author, Hwang Sog-Yong. Because political meetings and opposing publications were banned, it was dangerous to publish this book; the fact that the book was still published indicates the desperation of the Gwangju citizens to share their story. As predicted, the publisher and cover author were arrested, and the copies were destroyed. The book circulated underground instead, spreading word about the military regime's violence.

The second channel through which the People's Narrative was carried forth was the political channel (see political channel of 1980s in Figure 2). In an interview with political opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung, he summarized the Uprising concisely: "The Kwangju people kept order; paratroopers broke order."[33] He continued to criticize the military's violent response to the Gwangju people and even admonished the U.S. administration for having supported Chun.

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[32] Chun, ibid.
[33] Kim Dae Jung, interviewed by Tim Shorrock, "Kim Dae Jung Speech (1985)," Tim Shorrock (blog), November 11, 2009, https://timshorrock.com/2009/11/11/kim-dae-jung-speaks-1985/.

Similar to Lee Jae-Eui's feelings of "horror" and "anger,"[34] Kim Dae-Jung expressed anger towards those complicit, especially to the Carter administration.

The interaction of the narratives displayed the struggle for power I posited earlier. The Martial Law Act within the Government Narrative's legal channel was significant in controlling various aspects of society, which, in turn, granted its power over the other channels with censorship and force. It is notable that there were no cultural artifacts supporting the Government's Narrative whereas such was present for the People's Narrative. However, due to the government's centralization of power and mechanisms through which martial law was enforced, it was able to imbue its narrative across the channels. Although the People's Narrative was present in the cultural channel, it was overpowered by the legal, civil, and political channels of the Government's Narrative, given the fact that the People's Narrative had to travel through underground, secretive methods. As the Government's Narrative was present in three channels, with prominent control over the legal and civil channels which actively allowed for the marginalization of the People's Narrative, I strongly believe the Government's Narrative was the dominant narrative during the 1980s, as it became widely accepted through the exertion of power by a certain group.

Although I found the Government Narrative to be the dominant narrative, I found that the Government Narrative was not quite the collective memory. It achieved dominant status through its consolidation of power through the legal channel and civil channel, as demonstrated by the legal channel's control over the wide dispersal of its story; however, it did not receive any commemoration or significant cultural remembrance efforts. Its absence in the cultural channel is

[34] Lee Jae-Eui, *Kwangju Diary: Beyond Death, Beyond the Darkness of the Age* (United States: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 1999), 11.

notable as it indicates the absence of another facet of institutionalization (i.e., culturally significant practices) that may further enshrine the narrative. The cultural channel is also closest to those on the ground, so the absence can imply a lack of agreement amongst the people, especially since the cultural channel empowers the People's Narrative instead. Thus, I find that the Government's Narrative to not be promoted to collective memory.

B. 1990s

In the 1990s, the Government's Narrative seemed to have lost saliency, as it was not found present across all four channels. To understand this, further context is needed. Given that martial law ended in 1987 after the June Democratic Movement, stripping the Government's Narrative of its power within several channels (especially the legal channel), the People's Narrative grew in saliency instead.

Within the legal channel (see legal channel in 1990s in Figure 2), the People's Narrative came in the form of the Special Act on the May 18 Democratization Movement of 1995 which officially recognized the violence of the military troops as "crimes against humanity."[35] In doing so, the Act set forth various articles that pushed for the creation of memorials in honor of the Gwangju victims and staunchly prohibited those who generated or spread false information regarding the events. The articles in this Act, while not explicit in terms of the series of events that happened in Gwangju, admits to the violence committed by the government, establishing official, legalized methods through which the People's Narrative may be promoted.

[35] "Special Act on the May 18 Democratization Movement," Korea Legislation Research Institute, https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=56035&type=part&key=9.

In response to the articles calling for memorialization, such approaches can be found in the cultural channel. For instance, in 1996, mothers of victims created the May Mothers' House to hold meetings where families could come and honor the memories of their lost loved ones together. In coming together as a group and commemorating the memory of those they have lost and they who suffer, the group kept the People's Narrative alive, preserving the memory through community sharing. In 1997, May 18 was designated as a national memorial day commemorated annually in which people were encouraged to recognize the Uprising and its influence on the development of democracy in South Korea. In the same year, a national cemetery called the National May 18 Democratic Cemetery was specially created in honor of those who were buried in mass at the Mangwol-dong Cemetery, becoming an annual commemoration site. In 1998, the 5.18 History Compilation Committee of Gwangju City published a book titled *May 18th Kwangju Democratic Uprising*, in which the committee published fifty pages of photos taken by various Korean journalists during the Uprising. The images showed soldiers entering Gwangju, hitting student and civilians. Photos of burnt buildings, a line of buses, citizens organizing weapons, dead bodies in carts and coffins, as well as women making rice balls for the people, were all preserved in this book, demonstrating the Committee's success in publishing a book without the intervention of censorship as well as how the people of Gwangju fought back against the brutality of the military. This book falls under the cultural channel as these photos were published in a book commemorating the Uprising, with the intention to provide an alternate, competing account that demonstrates the Uprising as a pivotal moment of democracy, not a riot.

Found under the civil channel (see civil channel of the 1990s in Figure 2), the May 18th Memorial Foundation was officially created and recognized in 1994. The Memorial Foundation is a civil society organization that works to organize civil efforts into action to memorialize the

Uprising through advocacy, recognizing democratic efforts, educational resources and projects, and a growing archive of records. It has also hosted the Gwangju Democracy Forum since 1999 which is held annually on May 18, recognizing "democracy and human rights advocates, activists, and researchers."[36] This preserves social bonds through which people from across groups can contribute, learn, and remember the Uprising. In creating an archive, the foundation also ensures that records are kept safe in order to educate others. The organization adds meaning to the narrative in transmitting it through institutions outside the legal and political spheres.

Lastly, categorized under the political channel (see political channel of the 1990s in Figure 2), President Kim Young-Sam's inauguration speech contributes to the empowerment of the People's Narrative. He spoke of a "'new Korea'" with "a freer and more mature democracy" achieved "by the people and of the people of this land,"[37] referencing the past government's failure to put into practice a genuine democratic government. The latter phrase also references his lack of military ties, in comparison to his predecessors, which he likely intended to express a difference in approach. His speech indicates that his term would mark a new democratic era. Although he does not specifically reference the Gwangju Uprising, his remarks imply that the presidential terms before him failed to uphold the people's wishes for democratization. In calling his dedication to achieving democracy the emergence of a "new Korea," he—albeit indirectly—respects the values of the Gwangju people, recognizing the Gwangju Uprising as a cornerstone of democracy.

[36] Gwangju International Center, "May 18 Foundation Bringing the Truth of May 18 to Light," *Gwangju News*, May 2023, https://issuu.com/gwangju_news/docs/gn_may2023/s/23261214.
[37] Ibid.

In the 1990s, the channels between the narratives did not interact, simply because the Government's Narrative had not been transmitted by any of the channels. The change in governance can explain the power shift towards the people as martial law was no longer in place. Additionally, the presence of the People's Narrative within the legal channel for the first time empowered the narrative, especially since it influenced the cultural and civil channels in its call for efforts of memorialization and truth-seeking. What is also significant is the acknowledgment of the Government's Narrative in these sources as false, given that the Special Act on the May 18th Democratization Movement sought to stop the spread of the Government's Narrative.

Based on the increased presence of the People's Narrative across channels and the active dismantling of the Government's Narrative—its effects quite clearly demonstrated by its absence in the channels—I determine that the Government's Narrative lost its dominant status, and the People's Narrative took its place, becoming the more accepted representation of the Uprising. And indeed, due to the legislative support the People's Narrative received, and how that support influenced other channels, I determine the People's Narrative also became the collective memory of the Uprising beginning in this decade. The narrative achieved incorporation across all channels, which indicates a certain level of agreement, while also being continuously maintained by new methods of remembrances—from Special Acts to the establishment of a national remembrance day and to the creation of civil organizations. It is also notable that part of the collective memory includes the Government's Narrative, now cast as a fiction that overshadowed the People's Narrative through coercion.

C. 2000s

Similarly, in the 2000s, the Government's Narrative remained virtually unmaintained by any of the channels. During the early 2000s, Kim Dae-Jung—who had been arrested during the Uprising—was president, thus likely influencing the availability of the Government's Narrative.

The People's Narrative, on the other hand, remained present across all four channels as it maintained its status as collective memory of the Gwangju Uprising. Under the legal channel (see legal channel of the 2000s in Figure 2), the Act on the Honor Restoration of and Compensation to Persons Related to Democratization Movements was an effort made by the government to not only recognize the efforts of the Gwangju people—as well as others who participated in other democratic protests—but provide reparations for those who were wrongly arrested or deeply affected health-wise/socially by being involved in a democratic protest. Although the Act does not specify the Gwangju Uprising, it ultimately classified it as a democratization movement. The Act also enforces the promotion of "memorial projects aimed at maintaining the spirit of democratization movements,"[38] once again demonstrating the influence of the legal channel on the cultural channel in initiating and legalizing the efforts made towards memorialization.

Aligned with the legal channel, the cultural channel (see cultural channel of the 2000s in Figure 2), exhibits the publication of two books which demonstrates the various forms commemoration can take. *Memories of May 1980* includes several poems by authors Kim Jun-Tae, Kim Nam-Ju, and Kim Yong-Taek. Kim Jun-Tae wrote a desolate, grieving poem about the victims—those dead or missing—including a pregnant woman who was killed. In his poem,

[38] "Act on the Honor Restoration Of and Compensation to Persons Related to Democratization Movements," Korea Legislation Research Institute, https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=34955&type=part&key=8.

"Massacre," Kim Nam-Ju focused on the appalled reactions to the military's violence, describing the military as "deliberate" and "organized"[39] to emphasize that the actions of the soldiers were no accident. Kim Yong-Taek, on the other hand, dedicated his poem to the martyrs, calling for the people to unite for the sake of those who sacrificed their lives. The poems, in all, are an artistic form of commemoration as they all focused on the death and destruction of the massacre, their mourning a remembrance of those who were killed. At the same time, they also called for the readers to unite and see through the Gwangju people's mission to the end, entwining the value of democracy to the Narrative even more. The second book, *We Saw: May 18th Democratic Uprising in Gwangju*, is a collection of photos taken during and after the events. Created by the May 18 Foundation, this was a cultural effort to memorialize and make permanent the images that came from the Uprising. A majority of the photos are taken from the perspective of the people, the violence they faced, and the struggles they endured afterwards in trying to get their story out. Together, these books illustrate the Uprising in more artistic formats, memorializing the events as part of South Korea's cultural/artistic practices.

Meanwhile, the Uprising found its way into academic literature and other publications, constituting the civil channel (see civil channel of 2000s in Figure 2). *The Gwangju Uprising: Eyewitness Press Accounts of Korea's Tienanmen* is a collection of photos and journalists' recounting of the event as they were in Gwangju, on the ground, reporting what was happening. Although this book is a collection of testimonies—and likely can be constituted as part of the cultural channel—I grouped it within the civil channel as it was published by another civil organization, the Kwangju Citizens' Solidarity, as a way of preserving the included artifacts for

[39] Chung Sangyong and Rhyu Simin, *Memories of May 1980* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2003), 75-6.

future education purposes. The testimonies and resources—including information that was being disseminated through the radio, leaflets, or similar means during May 18th—were likely also published by the journalists in their respective papers (with the exception of Korean journalists who likely faced censorship). In including the resources the journalists collected from Korea, such as headlines from the Korea Times and other government-supporting media, the journalists followed them with disagreements and doubt, criticizing the diluting of the descriptions instead, thereby reinforcing and legitimizing the People's Narrative. The publishing of *South Korean Democracy: Legacy of the Gwangju Uprising* provides an academic account of the Uprising, analyzing the sociopolitical elements—before, during, and after—as well as its international impact on democracy. It framed the movement as an imperative turning point in South Korea while also including various Korean/international scholars who lend credibility to the intellectualizing of the People's Narrative, utilizing the movement as a guidepost in analyzing other democratic movements such as the Tienanmen Square Massacre. The analysis of how people governed themselves within Gwangju after the military initially retreated supports the narrative of how it was a movement of the people. As an academic piece, it serves to contribute to the larger education and institutionalization of the People's Narrative, given that it was published by a scholarly institution like Routledge.

Within the political channel, presidential rhetoric also played a decisive role in further maintaining the collective memory that is comprised by the People's Narrative. On May 18, 2000, President Kim Dae-Jung gave the 20th Anniversary Commemoration speech, tying the Uprising to themes relevant to the People's Narrative, such as democracy and human rights. He added to the admonishment of the Government's Narrative, reflecting on how the citizens were

once deemed "rioters."[40] He recognized various "spirits" of the Uprising, such as human rights, non-violence, civic spirit, and peace,[41] further legitimating and adding to the growing agreement over the collective memory. He committed to enacting specific legislation recognizing the Uprising and declared several memorial projects as well, demonstrating how the political channel may exert enough power to influence the legal and cultural channels.

Thus far, in the 2000s, the People's Narrative maintained their "status" as collective memory. Without any contestation from the Government's Narrative (to my knowledge), the People's Narrative remained enshrined and embodied as the collective memory. The continual passing of legislation, support from political figures, growing variance of artistic representations of remembrance, and academic discourse serve to further legitimize and institutionalize the present collective memory. It is still crucial to note that the Government's Narrative does not remain wholly unrecognized but is included to demonstrate the government's wrongdoings as described by the People's Narrative.

D. 2010s

Interestingly, the Government's Narrative returns during this decade under the civil channel (see civil channel of 2010s in Figure 3). An article by Korea Joongang Daily detailed how a broadcast station, TV Chosun, aired a talk show that interviewed a purported North Korean defector who participated in the Gwangju Uprising, claiming that he was amongst six hundred other North Korean soldiers who "pretended to be Gwangju civilian forces and even attacked the

[40] Kim Dae Jung, "Kim Dae-jung's speech at the 20th Anniversary Commemoration of the May 18 Gwangju Democratic Movement" (speech, May 18, 2000), Office of the President of the Republic of Korea, https://www.pa.go.kr/research/contents/speech/index.jsp#this_id3.
[41] Ibid,

South's government forces together."[42] This interview supports the Government's Narrative that portrayed the Uprising as North Korean riot. In response to this broadcasting, far-right support manifested in about 17,000 comments on a far-right website called Ilbe, labeling the Gwangju protesters as "hongeo, or Korean name of… a fish and regional specialty of the South Jeolla region," due to its red color as it became a "nickname for South Jeolla people when accusing them of being a 'commie,' or 'red.'"[43] This can also be considered a means of transmission through the civil channel, because the broadcast resulted in further social spreading of the Government's Narrative through online discourse. The conservative media even took to employing their own language as a way of keeping alive the narrative that North Korean riots had been incited in Gwangju.

Although the civil channel of the Government's Narrative challenged the collective memory from the past two decades, I find that it did not upend nor demote the collective memory to dominant narrative status. For one, the People's Narrative that had become collective memory remained institutionalized across all the channels. Even though it was met with some contestation, the narrative remained empowered by all four channels, its status as collective memory, as a whole, seeming mostly undeterred by the Government's Narrative emergence. As explained below, the channels continued to uphold the various methods of remembrance. Second, in comparison to the 1980s when the Government's Narrative was the dominant narrative, it was promoted as such due to the unbalanced exertion of power of the legal channel over the remaining ones, across narratives. In other words, the legal channel that empowered the Government's Narrative was able to do so by suppressing the People's Narrative via the pillars of

[42] Kim Hee-jin and Lee Seung-ho, "TV shows tarnish Gwangju history," *Korea JoongAng Daily*, May 20, 2013, https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2971886.
[43] Ibid.

martial law. In the 2010s, no legislation supporting the People's Narrative/collective memory actively suppressed the Government's Narrative, allowing it to remain in the narrative space with the comparatively weaker support of its civil channel.

The collective memory of the Uprising continued to be ingrained in legislative movements, such as the Special Act on Investigating the Truth of the May 18th Democratization Movement (2018). The first article outlined the purpose of the Act as follows: "to ascertain distorted or covered-up truths by investigating human rights abuses, violence, massacre, secret burials, etc. caused by anti-democratic or anti-humane acts committed by state power at the time in relation to the May 18 Democratization Movement in 1980."[44] In assigning a specially-created committee to investigate the "concealment, distortion, or fabrication" by the government and the "fabricated invasion by the North Korean forces," the government acknowledges the Government's Narrative only to deem it as illegitimate, thereby reinforcing the collective memory of the People's Narrative. This aspect of the legal channel empowers the existing collective memory by calling it a demonstration, rather than a riot, while embarking on investigations to understand how the Government's Narrative sought to suppress the collective memory, acknowledging its presence but not granting it any power.

Meanwhile, the cultural channel grew more expansive in representing the collective memory of the Uprising. While many films have been made about the Gwangju Uprising, one that has seen particular success is *A Taxi Driver*, based on a true story about a Seoul taxi driver, Kim Man-Seob, who takes a German journalist, Jurgen Hintzpeter, in and out of Gwangju during

[44] "Special Act on Investigating the Truth of the May 18th Democratization Movement," Korea Legislation Research Institute, https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/viewer.do?hseq=67724&type=sogan&key=3.

the events. The film centers itself firmly in the historical context, even before the actors appear, as the opening scene consists of slides of text that describe the movement, pointing out the repression the people faced from the military. *A Taxi Driver* depicts the unfolding of the events through Kim's eyes, capturing the inability to understand the horror of the events; the fact he is not from Gwangju emphasizes this and thus the suffering of the Gwangju citizens. Not only did it highlight several key events from the Uprising, such as the taxi and bus line, but it focuses mostly on the citizens and how they did not hesitate facing danger to save others, dismantling the idea that they were "rioters." Through Kim's internal conflict on whether to stay or return to Seoul, he mirrors the nation in its own development from being in disbelief—perhaps even apathetic—to fully embracing what had happened with gratitude and grief. The film's success itself also allowed for the collective memory to be more easily transmitted across groups and generations.

Human Acts is also another significant cultural artifact, a short novel written by Nobel Prize winner Han Kang. She recounts the events through seven characters, two of whom are victims and the rest survivors. Each character is placed in varying positions within the Uprising, both in measures of space and time; in other words, the book follows the Uprising from 1980 all the way to 2013. They coalesce together into an overall narrative of the Uprising as a brutal, violent instance of military oppression, resulting in a massacre. However, Kang also enlightens readers on how commemoration manifested in various ways—from performances to the exhibition of certain behaviors due to trauma from the events and its aftermath as certain characters endured imprisonment, torture, and rape. The survivors' narratives all share certain themes such as grief, anger, hopelessness, and guilt—indicators of how their stories were oftentimes weakened by other forces. The book itself combats these forces by breaking that

silence and publishing these narratives, preserving the collective memory in a popular, widely-translated novel.

Other cultural methods of preservation included the Gwangju Uprising being designated as part of the UNESCO Memory of the World. The organization is dedicated to the preservation of records, documents, and cultural artifacts in order to provide universal access, bolster narratives, and spread awareness. Another artifact, *The Ten Days of Field Hospital During the May 18th Democratic Uprising*, is a collection of numerous testimonies from doctors, professors, nurses, and surgeons of Chonnam National University Hospital, all witnesses to the injuries and death of the civilians. Many testimonies express shock and disbelief, while some re-tell an instance where a student who was standing on top of a truck was shot before dying in the hospital. Many of the staff expressed rage at the soldiers, refusing to offer any forgiveness. This collection of testimonies all conveyed the mental and physical toll of treating hundreds of patients for days on end, to the point that the hospital ran out of room. This effort to preserve the testimonies and experiences ensures the permanence of their stories, as well as the collective memory.

The coalescing of the Government's Narrative within the collective memory is further supported by the political channel (see political channel of 2010s in Figure 2). Former Defense Minister Song Young-Moo issued a public apology on February 9, 2018, for the "great suffering inflicted on history by our armed forces in the process of the May 18 Democratization Movement."[45] This apology issued by a high-ranking military official is significant as it is the

[45] Park Byeong-su, "Defense Minister issues first official public apology to city of Gwangju," Hankyoreh, February 10, 2018, https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/831723.html.

first apology issued on behalf of the military for the first time, admitting the false nature of their narrative. In turn, this recognizes the People's Narrative, helping to maintain its status as collective memory. His apology is especially significant given that the May 18 Memorial Foundation and other associations of the victims welcomed the apology, recognizing it as a "step forward from the… past approach of distorting and concealing the truth."[46] The legal and political channels work in tandem during this decade as both take significant strides in recognizing the government's history of censorship and falsification, stripping the Government's Narrative of legitimacy. Similarly, a few months later, another apology was issued by Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-Do "for the unspeakable pain inflicted on innocent female victims… who suffered because of troops and state power during the May 18th Pro-Democracy Movement."[47] This apology is not only significant in recognizing the Uprising as a democratic movement, rather than labeling it as a "situation," but it "comes a week after a government investigation team... confirmed a total of 17 cases of sexual assault by the military against Gwangju women."[48] Another prime minister, Lee Nak-Yon, similarly apologized for these crimes. Once again, the legal channel appeared to have influenced the political channel as the truth commission established by the Special Act found evidence of sexual assault, thus prompting government officials to make an apology. Not only do these apologies reveal the type of violence the Gwangju citizens endured, but they reinforce the collective memory and the proactive steps of Korea's society in preserving it, stripping the Government's Narrative of legitimacy.

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[46] Park, "Defense Minister issues first official public apology to city of Gwangju."
[47] Arirang News, "Defense chief says sorry for military's sexual assaults during Gwangju Democracy Movement," November 6, 2018, video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTH_bnnnT9M&ab_channel=ArirangNews.
[48] Ibid.

Lastly, under the civil channel (see civil channel of 2010s in Figure 2), curriculum reform and civil organizations contributed to the institutionalization of the collective memory of the Uprising. *The Korea Times* reported in 2011 that the government issued for the event to be included in school curriculums as a democratic movement, rather than a "riot" or "incident," against the "dictatorship of former President Chun Doo-Hwan."[49] This method of institutionalization in which the People's Narrative is included in history textbooks ensures the systematic transmission of the collective memory to the generations of students following the event, empowering its historical significance. Another facet of the civil channel is the creation of the Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City by the World Human Rights Cities Forum. These Principles uphold values of "social justice, equity, solidarity, democracy and sustainability,"[50] values that the citizens of the Uprising sought. This directly counters the Government's Narrative in which the Gwangju citizens were portrayed as communist sympathizers/participants. The establishment of such principles related to the Uprising on a global platform designates Gwangju as a memorable site of democracy but also sustains the collective memory on a broader scale.

Thus, due to the collaboration of the legal and political channels as well as the global popularity of the vehicles under the cultural and civil channels, the collective memory from decades past was preserved in the 2010s as well, despite the re-emergence of the Government's Narrative.

E. 2020s

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[49] "Gwangju Uprising Played Up in History Textbooks," *The Korea Times*, December 16, 2011, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/southkorea/20111216/gwangju-uprising-played-up-in-history-textbooks.

[50] https://en.whrcf.org/generaldata/?bmode=view&idx=54278730

This decade has seen a similar occurrence as the 2010s in that the Government's Narrative has reappeared, this time in the political channel (see political channel of 2020s in Figure 3). In 2021, after Chun Doo-Hwan's passing, his wife Lee Soon-Ja issued an apology, as follows: "I would like to offer a deep apology on behalf of our family towards the people who suffered pains and scars during my husband's time in office."[51] Many had criticized Chun for never issuing an apology for the Uprising; in response to Lee's apology, people—including politicians such as Lee Jae-Myung—criticized the lack of details and sincerity in her apology due to the vagueness of her language. Although the apology may hint towards the Uprising, I categorized it under the political channel of the Government's Narrative as the lack of explicit acknowledgment and the employment of blanket terms undermined the apology, giving more credence to the Government's Narrative than the People's Narrative. More recently, however, is President Yoon Suk-Yeol's martial law declaration on December 3, 2024. This incident resurrected the language utilized by Chun's government as Yoon similarly declared martial law as necessary "to defend the free Republic of Korea from the threats of North Korean communist forces and to eradicate the shameless pro-North Korean anti-state forces."[52] His claims of pro-North Korean sentiments and communist threats hark back to Chun's own claims regarding the presence of North Korean spies within Gwangju. The vague apology and resurgence of old presidential rhetoric combined to empower the political channel in transmitting the Government's Narrative.

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[51] Stella Kim and Corky Siemaszko, "Widow of Chun Doo-hwan, South Korea's Last Military Dictator, Issues Apology," *NBC News,* December 11, 2021, . https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/widow-chun-doo-hwan-south-korean-last-military-dictator-issues-apology-rcna6861.

[52] Yoon Suk Yeol, "President Yoon's Speech During Martial Law," *New York Times*, December 3, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/03/world/asia/president-yoon-speech-martial-law.html?smid=url-share.

Under the civil channel (see civil channel of 2020s in Figure 3), an article from *Asia Times* sheds light on the proliferation of old theories regarding the Uprising, all tied back to the Government's Narrative. A Korea Military Academy graduate that was interviewed was staunch in his belief that the military would never have committed such violence in Gwangju. Others claimed that ordinary Gwangju citizens could have never taken over the larger vehicles, reasoning that their civilian status meant they would not have the requisite skills. Another conservative individual claimed the existence of a North Korean division amongst the student movement in Gwangju. Overall, the article illustrates an attitude of denial and the idea that North Korean spies incited/participated in "riots" in Gwangju that is characteristic of the Government's Narrative—old beliefs persisting from decades past. As seen in the 2010s, the civil channel has remained a transmitter of the Government's Narrative.

However, despite the growing saliency in terms of appearance in channels, the Government's Narrative has yet to demote the People's Narrative from collective memory to dominant narrative. Although it is the agreed-upon narrative by far-right conservatives in Korea—as seen by the fact it is supported by two channels—the power provided by said channels do not impact nor influence the channels that continue to sustain the collective memory. The channels—both past and present—that maintain the collective memory, on the other hand, surpass the Government's Narrative in terms of magnitudes of power, given that all four channels interact and support one another. Thus, I do not see how the Government's Narrative can be the dominant narrative as (1) it lacks power from the channels it is present in in comparison to the collective memory, and (2) any power it does hold does not overtake another narrative's power in the aggregate.

Following the previous decades, the collective memory remains ever-present in all four channels. Within the legal channel (see legal channel of 2020s in Figure 2), the UN General Assembly's "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence" in South Korea legally recognizes the event as a democratization movement rather than a riot or situation. The report continues to acknowledge the legislative efforts made by the government, from the reinstatement of victims' honor (in which participants are seen as "persons of 'distinguished service,'"[53] contradictory to the previous rioter label) to the various fact-finding progress made by truth commissions. The approval of the UN General Assembly on South Korea's legal efforts in enshrining the People's Narrative recognizes the collective memory on an international level.

The three interviews I conducted fall under the cultural channel (see cultural channel of 2020s in Figure 2) as I held them over the summer of 2024. Across all three interviews, I found recurring themes that reinforced each participant's understanding of the event which aligned with the collective memory. My first participant, Participant A, grew up in Korea and was an active participant of the June 1987 Democratic Movement. Aside from their own activity in social justice, Participant A has a personal connection to the Uprising as they had family there during the event. They remember hearing their father calling family members during the Uprising to make sure they were safe inside their homes. They learned of the Uprising in more detail through images that came out of Gwangju and other underground methods, such as secretive seminars and book clubs. Interestingly, they also mentioned the film *A Taxi Driver*, illustrating how the film transmits the legacy of the Uprising and upholds the People's Narrative as the collective

[53] United Nations, Human Rights Council, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," A/HRC/55/71, July 14, 2023, https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/174/68/pdf/g2317468.pdf.

memory. During our interview, Participant A reflected on the scales of violence the Gwangju citizens endured, reflecting on the anger and sadness they felt as well as the respect they hold for Gwangju for their dedication to social justice. Their interview demonstrated how the collective memory has been embedded deeply within Korean culture as it has elevated Gwangju as a symbol of democracy. Additionally, Participant A's involvement in underground clubs can be attributed back to the strength of the cultural channel in the 1980s, during which counternarratives could only travel through such secretive methods.

The sadness and anger Participant A felt was mirrored in Participant B's interview. Participant B was also raised in Korea, having attended a women's university during the tumultuous period of dictatorship. Participant B recounted how plainclothes policemen would infiltrate universities to detect any activity they found suspicious and arrest the related students. Similar to how Participant A learned about the Uprising through underground means, Participant B also learned of the events through underground films and books. Despite the overwhelming power of the Government's Narrative provided by the legal channel of the 1980s, the cultural channel was still active in spreading the People's Narrative, albeit with more barriers. Participant B also recommended cultural forms of remembrance, such as the novel *Human Acts*, demonstrating the saliency of certain practices that maintain the People's Narrative. Like Participant A, Participant B called Gwangju a "special place where it taught us democracy, citizenship."[54] Both participants' praise of the city demonstrates the influence of the decades of commemoration that has promoted the People's Narrative as the collective memory.

[54] Participant B, interview by Shanon Lee, September 5, 2024.

Participant C, on the other hand, was born in Korea but mostly raised in the United States. They are related to Participant B and learned of the events through their stories "about how professors would get arrested along with their students."[55] Oral storytelling within families is a significant cultural mode of transmission as the collective memory is passed from one generation to another, preserved in another "vessel" for years to come. Since Participant C was not yet born during the Uprising, they recalled it through their experience of visiting museums at Jeju Island and seeing pictures as well as Korean media, such as Korean dramas, which they claimed aids in invoking a "sense of pride" within people. As someone who was born after the Uprising and came to know about it through cultural transmissions, Participant C shed light on how impactful the cultural channel is across decades and generations. The power of familial storytelling, museums, photos, and forms of performance—such as films and TV shows—is especially seen here as that is how Participant C learned of the Uprising and understood it to be a violent event in which the people—students, professors, and citizens alike—advocated for democracy. Getting to know and understand this cultural memory is essential to the formation and understanding of Participant C's identity as they said that they "find a need to culturally go back and seek that culture and history in Korea. […] As I grow older, I feel like the body needs it."[56]

Presidential rhetoric continues to play a powerful role within the political channel (see political channel of 2020s in Figure 2) for both the People's and Government's Narratives. In terms of maintaining the collective memory, former President Moon Jae-In gave a commemoration speech on the 40th anniversary of the Uprising, adding to the growing

[55] Participant C, interview by Shanon Lee, September 15, 2024.
[56] Ibid.

acknowledgement of the violence of the paramilitary and of the attempted distortion by the government. He committed to further efforts to uncover and reveal past distortions; this makes its way to the civil channel as the media is used to convey and spread evidence legitimizing the collective memory. Moon also proposed including the events of the Uprising in the preamble of Korea's constitution to "establish it as a great history… that no one can damage or deny."[57] While this has not happened as of yet, the political channel demonstrates some of its potential power over the legal channel, as presidential rhetoric can incite legislative change that may further cement and protect the People's Narrative as collective memory.

As mentioned before, the political channel makes use of the civil channel to disseminate new findings in regards to the truth-seeking investigations through news media. *Hankyoreh* published the findings from an investigation spearheaded by the truth commission that led to the pursuit of murder charges against several commanders of the involved brigades. This shows a clear follow-through of what President Moon had intended in terms of revealing to the public when new evidence has been uncovered, atoning for the decades of silencing and control over speech and press under authoritarian rule. The uncovering of a memo that potentially indicates the cremation of those who had been deemed missing was also published in a *Hankyoreh* article, demonstrating how civil organizations are crucial in aiding the truth commission—an overlap of the civil and legal channels. The article itself is a testament of Moon and the commission keeping their promise in terms of ensuring transparency for the sake of keeping the collective memory alive. In another article, *Hankyoreh* published brief testimonies of survivors along with input from scholars who all describe the event as a massacre sponsored by the state. The interaction of

[57] Moon Jae-In, "40th Anniversary of the May 18 Democratic Movement Commemoration Ceremony" (speech, May 18, 2020), Office of the President of the Republic of Korea, https://www.pa.go.kr/research/contents/speech/index.jsp#this_id3.

testimonies and academia in the news add strength to the media as a vehicle for the collective memory as it is likely to reach a wider audience. Throughout all the articles, the Uprising is described as a democratization movement, standardizing this label that frames the collective memory, rather than the use of "riots" or watered-down words (such as "situation") that is indicative of the Government's Narrative.

As iterated earlier, the People's Narrative remains intact as collective memory as the channels supporting it coalesce their strength through their interactions and influencing of one another. Despite the reappearance of the Government's Narrative, it is not supported by enough strength within the channels it exists, as it fails to intervene in any of the channels supporting the People's Narrative in any productive way (given that the channels all reinforce fact-finding efforts).

IX. Analysis, Part III: Revisiting the Hypotheses

Now that there has been a concrete establishment of the progression to collective memory—which is distinct from dominant narrative—as well as an analyses of power relationships between the channels, I now return to the hypotheses and evaluate whether my findings align with my predictions.

A. Hypothesis 1

To reiterate, I first hypothesized the existence of a power dynamic between the channels across narratives in which the magnitude of power varies between them, thus fueling the transmission of certain narratives over others. However, this magnitude of power is determined by the context in which the narratives are situated.

From the analysis above in Part XIII, it is evident that different channels have varying magnitudes of power. From a qualitative standpoint, the legal channel exerts a great deal of power over the others, whether the nation was ruled by a dictatorship or a more genuine practice of democracy. Under Chun's rule, the legal channel was empowered by martial law, which affected the capacities of the other channels, such as the civil channel; in other words, the Government's Narrative was able to reign dominant as the legal channel supporting it ensured its presence in the other narratives. However, what is notable here, especially in the 1980s, is that the Government's Narrative was never present in the Cultural channel, while the People's Narrative was always transmitted by the cultural channel throughout all the decades analyzed. This indicates an imbalance in power, a dynamic that fluctuated depending on the context (i.e., the type of government in place). While the cultural channel may have been weaker in power during the 1980s due to the control the legal channel exerted on the others, across narratives, it

seemed to have gained more power as the nation turned more democratic. This change in governance allowed for the cultural channel to exert more power, especially for the People's Narrative, as counternarratives may exist more easily under a democratic government rather than an authoritarian one.

This shifting of power is not isolated to the legal and cultural channels. As I pointed out in the 2020s, the political channel seems to exert some power over the other channels. Moon Jae-In's rhetoric in describing the Uprising focused on future steps towards further remembrance and honoring those who suffered. In this, he influenced the civil channel as news outlets were employed to keep the public apprised of the truth commission's findings and consequences. His call for the enshrining of the Uprising in the Constitution also hints towards a potential collaboration between the political and legal channels; although this has yet to happen, I believe Moon's commitment is significant as it portrays a boldness and potential for the political channel to affect the legal channel.

Based on these findings, I find my first hypothesis was validated.

B. Hypothesis 2

Next, I hypothesized that for a narrative to be promoted to dominant status, it must be supported by at least three channels (with no specific configuration in mind as it would depend on the context at that point in time). In addition to this, I hypothesized that if a counternarrative were supported by the cultural channel, however, it has the potential to become the dominant narrative as the dominant narrative represents the widely accepted representation of the majority, which I believe the cultural channel encapsulates.

In regards to the hypothesized three-channel requirement, I do not think my findings support nor reject my hypothesis. As mentioned before, I determined the Government's Narrative to have been the dominant narrative during the 1980s. While Figure 3 demonstrated the narrative's presence across three channels—legal, civil, and political—one instance of this is not enough to confirm that three channels are necessary to be promoted to dominant narrative. In the following decade, I found the People's Narrative to replace the Government's in the status of dominant narrative, but I also found it to have been progressively promoted to collective memory during the same decade. Thus, the instance of a dominant narrative being supported by three channels is only seen once in this specific case study, which is not enough to confirm nor reject my second hypothesis, as I was not able to determine whether this instance was a coincidence or part of a larger pattern.

Likewise, the second part of this hypothesis regarding the cultural channel can neither be supported nor rejected by my findings. In my analysis of the 1980s, the Government's Narrative did not require the transmitting power of the cultural channel in order to become the dominant narrative. However, similar to the explanation above, one instance is not enough to confidently reject my hypothesis. Another reason I believe there is potential for my hypothesis to stand is that the legal channel of the Government's Narrative weakened the cultural channel of the People's Narrative by means of censorship and the oppressive control of martial law. As a reminder, I define dominant narrative as a popular representation of memories surrounding an event, so it is reasonable to understand the cultural channel as an indicator of what is considered "popular." Thus, a narrative that is carried by the cultural channel seems like it still has a "fighting chance" to become the dominant narrative. The consistent empowerment provided by the cultural channel also aided in the development of the People's Narrative into the dominant

narrative, and later, the collective memory. The limited examples and conflicting outcomes contribute to the lack of determinability in whether to reject or accept the second hypothesis. However, one main takeaway stands: the exertion of state power to generate a wide acceptance of a narrative is a strong determiner of what makes a narrative dominant.

C. Hypothesis 3

Lastly, I hypothesized that for a dominant narrative to be enshrined as collective memory, it requires wide institutional support across all four channels. The second part of this hypothesis sets forth the prediction that the framework is bidirectional: what is a dominant narrative can be demoted and, likewise, what is a collective memory can be demoted to dominant narrative.

For the first part of this hypothesis, my findings aligned with what I had initially predicted. Starting from the 1990s, the People's Narrative was transmitted through all four channels. The consistency of the channels as vehicles for the People's Narrative grants it the saliency of a dominant narrative but also the institutionalization that is required for the creation and maintenance of a collective memory. All four channels are "in agreement" with one another in uplifting the People's Narrative as collective memory, mirroring the group agreement that brings about said uplifting and institutionalization. Although this particular case supports my hypothesis, there are still limitations about my study as a whole that necessitate the inclusion of more case studies in order to more confidently accept my hypothesis.

The latter half of my third hypothesis, however, can neither be supported or rejected for the reason that there is no occurrence of the collective memory being demoted to dominant narrative. While the Government's Narrative is an example of a dominant narrative being demoted to a contesting narrative within the collective space, the collective memory that is the

People's Narrative does not experience a demotion. Theoretically, and based on the promotion/demotion bidirectionality we see with dominant narratives, it stands to reason that, with enough challenging and contestation, what is understood as the collective memory may be undermined and thus demoted. Although the reappearance of the Government's Narrative in the past two decades indicates a rise in contestation, I found that there was not enough power provided by the channels to uplift or institutionalize the narrative in any way; in other words, it did not pose enough of a "threat" to dismantle the People's Narrative as the collective memory. While this may appear as an indication that my hypothesis should be rejected, I argue that the absence of demotion does not indicate that this phenomenon does not occur. Again, in theory, I strongly believe this hypothesis could be supported with the inclusion of additional case studies.

Thus, my final hypothesis is only half-supported, as it is indeterminable from this study whether the latter half should be supported or rejected.

X. Conclusion

A. Future Direction

Building on my proposed arguments (i.e., distinguishing dominant narrative and collective memory, examining in detail the formation of collective memory, and the interactions of power between various transmitters or channels of narratives), I believe future research can incorporate various new methods and take my posited framework in new directions. A comparative historical analysis would be a comprehensive approach in testing my framework's durability and general applicability. This sort of methodology coupled with an even more in-depth tracing—analyzing the development of the collective memory year by year, for instance, instead of by decade—could also aid in providing insight into the hypotheses I posited.

Similar to Wertsch's study, interviewing groups of people across generations could also provide a clearer understanding of how narratives are transmitted across space and time. For instance, a Korean American college student may have a different understanding of the Uprising due to the unique way in which they learned about it, in comparison to their parents who are closer in time to the Uprising. Such spatial and temporal distances are worth investigating as narratives may take different forms or even embody different themes when being transmitted on international levels and across cultures.

Overall, I believe my thesis provides the beginnings of a groundwork that further clarifies how the field should consider collective memory, separate and distinct from the concept of dominant narrative, while delving into a more holistic development of collective memory, rather than only through one lens.

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XII. Appendix

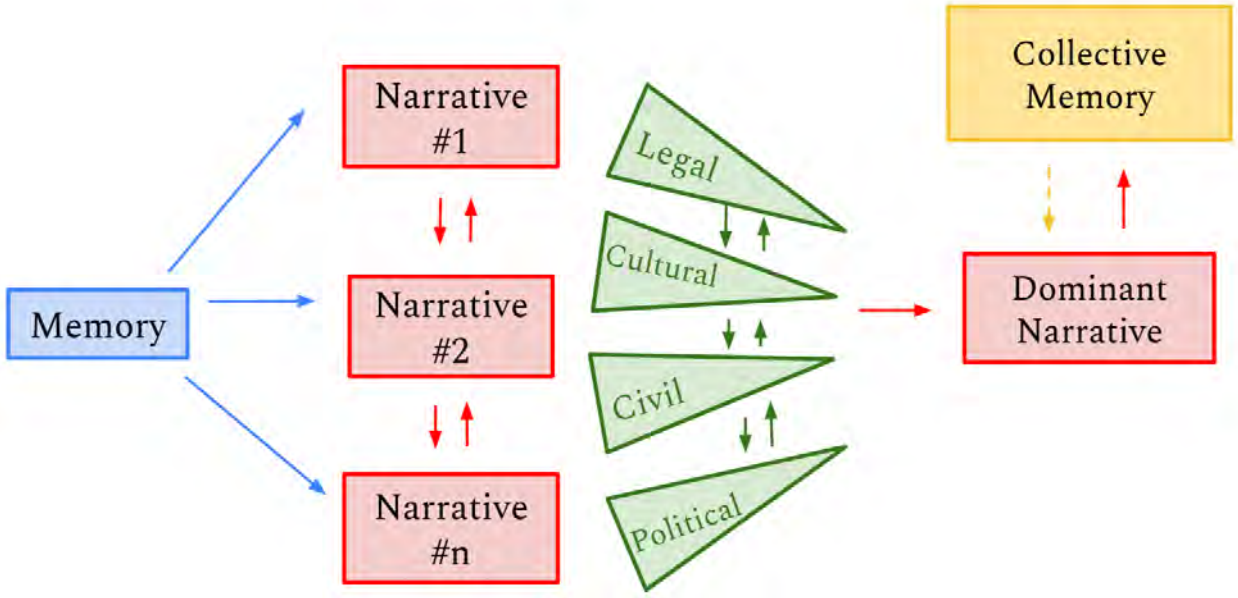

Figure 1: Framework of progression to collective memory.

Year	Legal Channel	Cultural Channel	Civil Channel	Political Channel
1980		*Kwangju Diary*		The Shorrock Files: Kim Dae Jung Speaks (interview)
1990	Special Act on the May 18 Democratization Movement	- National Memorial Day Designation - May Mothers' House - *May 18th Kwangju Democratic Uprising* - May 18th National Cemetery	Creation of May 18th Memorial Foundation	President Kim Young-Sam inauguration speech
2000	Act on the Honor Restoration of and Compensation to Persons Related to Democratization Movements	*We Saw: The May 18th Democratic Uprising* - *Memories of May 1980*	- *Gwangju Press Eyewitness Accounts* - *South Korean Democracy: Legacy of the Gwangju Uprising*	Kim Dae-Jung's 20th Anniversary Commemoration Speech
2010	Special Act on Investigating the Truth of the May 18th Democratization Movement	- *A Taxi Driver* - *Human Acts* - UNESCO Memory of the World - *The Ten Days of Field Hospital*	- Inclusion of May 18th in high school textbooks - Gwangju Guiding Principles for a Human Rights City	- Defense Minster's Apology for Rapes During Gwangju Crackdown - Defense Minister's Apology on Behalf of Military
2020	UN: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth	- Interviews #1-3	Selection of Hankyoreh articles	Moon Jae-In's 40th Anniversary Commemoration Speech

Figure 2: Table of sources under their respective channels/decades for the People's Narrative.

Year	Legal Channel	Cultural Channel	Civil Channel	Political Channel
1980	- Martial Law Act - Select NYT and Chosun Ilbo articles about Kim Dae Jung Trial		Select NYT & Chosun Ilbo articles	- Chun Doo-hwan's Breakfast Prayer Remarks - Chun Doo-hwan's Instructions to Dept. Chairs and Members of the National Security Emergency Measures Committee
1990				
2000				
2010			TV Shows tarnish Gwangju History	
2020			Asia Times article: Gwangju massacre deniers	- Chun Doo-Hwan's widow's apology - Yoon Yuk-Seol's Martial Law Declaration

Figure 3: Table of sources under their respective channels/decades for the Government's Narrative.

Interview Questions:

1. How did you learn about the Gwangju Uprising?
2. What do you remember?
3. When you think of this event, what is the first thing you think of?
4. Do you remember the event in terms of stories, images, feelings, etc.?
5. Do you think you can tell a story of what happened? What would you say?
6. What are your impressions or takeaways of the event? Have they changed at all since you first learned about it or experienced it?
7. In its aftermath, what are your thoughts in regards to the outcomes or what happened afterwards?

Figure 4: List of interview questions I asked all three participants.