

# Collective Identity, Symbolic Mobilization, and Student Protest in Nanjing, China, 1988–1989

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In winter 1988 and spring 1989 college students in Nanjing, China, took to the streets in protest. In each case, activists mobilized in a calculated response to conjunctural and structural opportunities. In 1988 a racial incident involving visiting Africans created a moment of mass anger that Chinese protest organizers attempted to channel toward political ends. The 1989 demonstrations were part of the nationwide democracy movement sparked by the death of former Communist Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang. But mobilization was not only a reaction to exogenous opportunities; it was also created by the Chinese students themselves. They worked hard to frame issues and interpret events to craft a collective identity that would inspire and sustain the movement.

Interest in collective identity is growing among social movement theorists. The literature on “new social movements” focuses on how participants construct their social identities.<sup>1</sup> Activists are seen as dynamic creators of a collective ethos that enables social movement activity; they are not assumed to be unambiguous rational egoists in the manner of Mancur Olson’s work on collective action. Similarly, frame theorists analyze how movement participants interpret and represent social conditions so as to gain adherents and weaken opponents.<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, the language and symbolism of collective self-definition are critically important to a social movement. Consideration of collective identity now extends beyond studies of new social movements and frame theory. In a recent volume, a group of prominent social movement theorists turn their attention to “the definition of the actor, the social context within which meanings are developed and transformed, and the cultural content of social movements.”<sup>3</sup> The key questions for these theorists are how participants define themselves and what difference their definitions make for the movement.

These questions are pursued here in an examination of mobilization in Nanjing, China. Collective identity and its interrelationship with collective action are discussed first, leading to the conclusion that the specific dynamics of the relationship are context-dependent. The context of student protest in China is then analyzed, followed by an explication of how mobilization has proceeded within the Chinese context, with attention drawn to symbolic mobilization. In summary form, the argument holds that, because of the unfavorable context, mobilization in China has been discontinuous, conjunctural, and public, all of which place a premium on symbolic communication and action. The particular aspects of symbolic mobilization are explored in a case study of student protest in Nanjing, China during 1988–1989.

## **Collective Identity and Social Movements**

A collective identity is an interpretation of who “we” are as a social movement. It is a common cognitive framework that unites individuals in their understanding of social,

political, and economic conditions and action orientations.<sup>4</sup> Specific definitions of collective identity are contingent yet durable, changing with social transformations but reconstituted from a limited range of experiences and memories.<sup>5</sup> As such, collective identity is socially constructed; it is the creation of "active processors of meaning" as they grapple with complex and ambiguous realities.<sup>6</sup> Social movement participants, in some cases, painstakingly cultivate their collective identity, carefully reflecting on the meanings of their words and deeds. Self-definition thus can be a primary goal of a movement. In other cases, where circumstances do not allow for thorough explication of the nuances of collective identity, more diffuse imagery must suffice. Whatever the case, the sense of who "we" are is central to movement mobilization and activity.

Frame theory is helpful in describing how collective identity pervades the life of a social movement. A "frame" is a "schemata of interpretation" that enables individuals to see and understand their surroundings.<sup>7</sup> For a social movement a frame brings people together by accomplishing three core tasks; diagnosis of social ills, prognosis of movement possibilities, and motivation for social action.<sup>8</sup> It may be more or less successful in convincing an individual to join a group depending upon how well it resonates with preexisting beliefs and prevailing circumstances. A collective identity does these same things; it is a definition of "we" that orients movement participants in relation to social problems, possible solutions, and action. If it is to blend individuals into a larger whole, a collective identity must also harmonize with "the stories, myths, and folk tales that are part and parcel of one's cultural heritage and that thus function to inform events and experiences in the immediate present."<sup>9</sup>

In specifying how collective identity interrelates with collective action, it may be best to conceive of it as both a dependent and independent variable.<sup>10</sup> How participants define themselves and envision their surroundings shapes their understanding of mobilization opportunities, potential allies, and strategic resources.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the definition of "we" determines, to a degree, the course of a social movement. Socially constructed identities, however, do not exist independent of shifting realities and exogenous events. As political, social, and economic conditions change, collective identity is transformed.<sup>12</sup> The inauguration of a democratically elected government in South Korea, for example, has changed the way students there think of themselves in relation to the state.<sup>13</sup> Consequences, both immediate and longer-term, of movement activity inform collective identity.

Identity is thus context-dependent. Precisely how the dynamic interaction of social movement activity and collective identity works itself out depends upon particular historical and conjunctural factors. In searching for a common conceptual language applicable to a variety of social movements, while resisting overly abstract and ahistorical grand theory, social movement theorists analytically divide the context of collective action into "macro" and "micro" aspects.<sup>14</sup> The macro context encompasses such factors as political structures, cultural norms, and the recent history of the movement or "cycle of protest." The micro context is defined by personal, often informal, networks through which individuals encounter each other face-to-face and define themselves as social actors. A collective identity arises from both facets of the social movement context: participants are embedded in a particular social milieu, and they understand this environment through interpersonal exchanges. An explication of the macro and micro contexts of the student movement in Nanjing will thus help to illuminate the interaction of collective identity and collective action in this case.

### The Context of Student Protest in China

The protests that swept across China in spring 1989 were recurrent episodes of a social movement.<sup>15</sup> On a number of occasions, especially in the post-Mao era, intellectuals and students have mobilized to call for democratization of China's Leninist political institutions.<sup>16</sup> The democracy movement has been harshly suppressed over the years and has not been able to develop in the manner of social movements in less coercive contexts. Nonetheless, the Chinese case fits Alberto Melucci's definition of "social movement": collective action characterized by internal solidarity, conflict over valued resources, and transgressions of the social system's limits of compatibility.<sup>17</sup> At the macro level, the two most salient features of the social movement context in China are political and cultural.

**Political Opportunity Structure** The concept of political opportunity structure describes the formal and informal political forces surrounding a social movement.<sup>18</sup> It includes a wide variety of factors, from the nature of the state to the presence of support groups. Its particular composition is historically specific, varying from country to country and over time within a country. Some key elements, drawn from a study of mobilization in authoritarian political systems, are the repressive capacity of the state, availability of access points in the political system, elite coherence, the presence of allies, and the timing of the cycle of protest.<sup>19</sup> These factors may provide openings for mobilization.

In China, the political opportunity structure in 1988–1989 did not support social movements that threatened, even in modest ways, the power of the ruling Communist Party. Meaningful access points in the political system were scarce because electoral and oppositional politics were not practiced. Routine state repression disrupted the cycle of protest, diffusing the momentum of nascent movements. A breakdown in elite coherence did occur in 1989, affording an opportunity for protest, but activists had some difficulty in exploiting this opening because of organizational weaknesses.<sup>20</sup> Chinese students also discovered strategic allies within the state bureaucracy in 1989 that bolstered movement activity.<sup>21</sup> But elite fragmentation proved to be transitory, and government coercion ultimately quieted sympathizers. Organizations that might have provided support were controlled, coopted, or intimidated by the state. On balance, the political infrastructure was not conducive to movement activity that challenged the status quo.

Political opportunity structures, however, vary from place to place in China. The events of spring 1989 suggest that Beijing was a better locale for student protest than Nanjing. Beijing students quickly gained the support of their faculty and gradually developed a mass base in the municipal population. Working class mobilization in Nanjing paled in comparison to worker participation in Beijing's Tiananmen Square demonstrations.<sup>22</sup> These differences may have been due to propinquity to the political center in Beijing. Student organizers and social supporters in the capital could apprehend elite fragmentation more readily and were in direct contact with sympathizers within the state bureaucracy. Beijing has also been the location of the most important episodes of China's democracy movement. People there are more familiar with the possibilities of protest, and an elementary, albeit underdeveloped, "social movement sector" exists.<sup>23</sup> In 1989 past protesters were available to inspire and counsel Beijing students.<sup>24</sup>

Nanjing students, by contrast, looked to their Beijing peers in spring 1989 to get a sense

of the political potential for protest.<sup>25</sup> They were unsure of the depth of elite divisions and did not receive clear signals from the bureaucracy that protest might be possible. Local authorities in Nanjing also followed events in Beijing, where their political superiors were engaged in a factional contest of uncertain outcome. Nanjing politicians were loath to either repress or support the local student movement because, for a time, they did not know which the center would ultimately sanction. The ambivalence of local leaders was not apparent to the Nanjing students in the early phases of the 1989 demonstrations; instead, they prudently assumed that the political opportunity structure was restrictive. As they grew more aware and confident of elite fragmentation, Nanjing activists organized larger and more challenging mass protests, seizing the opportunity to develop the movement. But, as discussed below, even in its heyday the Nanjing movement did not attract the popular and working class support evident in Beijing.<sup>26</sup>

In the final analysis, the political opportunity structure worked against the Chinese students in both Beijing and Nanjing. Elite fragmentation, while important, did not persist long enough to allow for the development of effective and ongoing movement organization. The repressive elements of the political system overwhelmed the permissive aspects. Moreover, the political consequences of a decade of structural economic change proved insufficient to sustain a politically heretical social movement. Economic reform reduced somewhat the state's capacity to control the population, freeing individuals to travel, communicate, and amass economic resources, all of which facilitated enormous gatherings of demonstrators and supporters. These social opportunities were limited, however, by the state's continuing control over major national media (television, newspapers, radio) and administrative power over organizations (universities, research institutes, private companies) that supported the movement.<sup>27</sup> The violence in Beijing was only one of several instruments used by the state to destroy the opportunity for social movement activity.

The political macro context thus partially explains the rise and fall of China's 1989 democracy movement. Mobilization was made possible by structural opportunities—elite fragmentation and the presence of allies—but once conservative forces under Deng Xiaoping prevailed, the movement was swiftly and violently repressed. Mobilization, however, was not determined solely by macropolitical factors but was also influenced by other contextual forces.

**Cultures of Remonstrance and Repression** Chinese students understand themselves, and are understood within Chinese culture, as inheritors of an ambiguous tradition of politically engaged intellectuals.<sup>28</sup> The culture of intellectual activism stretches back into imperial times, when scholar-officials assumed the responsibility of remonstrance, principled criticism of the ruler, but remained by and large servants of the state. They were duty bound to impartial moral judgment yet were not wholly autonomous, either institutionally or philosophically, from state power. Only as the state lost its legitimacy, in the face of internal dissolution and foreign assault, did intellectuals decisively assert the critical aspect of their conflicted political identity, as seen especially during the May Fourth Movement of the 1910s and 1920s. When the Communist Party reconstituted the Chinese state, intellectuals assumed a variety of culturally sanctioned roles: ideological apologist, professional elite, and critical intellectual.<sup>29</sup> Students in the 1980s were heirs to this complex tradition.

The cultural context of student protest in the 1980s was further confused by the legacy of past crackdowns. A "culture of repression," rooted in a pervasive sense that movement activity is too costly and dangerous, worked against mobilization.<sup>30</sup> Criticism of the regime by intellectuals had been crushed in the past, convincing many students of the peril of movement activity. Democracy demonstrations in 1986–1987 resulted in the downfall of reformist party secretary Hu Yaobang and the subsequent "antibourgeois liberalization" campaign, outcomes that demonstrated the futility of even modest public protest.<sup>31</sup>

Chinese students thus received mixed cultural signals in 1988–1989. On the one hand, the tradition of remonstrance and the experience of the May Fourth Movement provided a sense of historical agency that enabled critical defiance of the state. On the other hand, the tradition of loyal service to the state and the likelihood of repression militated against a distinct and powerful collective identity. These cultural contradictions of the Chinese intelligentsia account for some aspects of the 1989 democracy movement: the moralizing tone of the public discourse, the compromising reformism of the students' agenda, and the weakness of movement organization.<sup>32</sup> However, the effect of cultural norms—and political opportunity—on movement activity is mediated by formal and informal personal interactions. Chinese students negotiated among themselves about how to interpret cultural and political information to suit the current movement. The macro contexts of politics and culture were filtered through the micro context of face-to-face encounters.

**The Micro Context: Interpersonal Networks and Limited Privacy** Social movement mobilization is a melding of myriad personal commitments, the transformation of a scattering of individuals into a unified collective. This process is vitally influenced by the "micromobilization context," a small group setting in which rudimentary organization takes shape and identity issues are confronted.<sup>33</sup> Small groups may be formal organizations, such as labor unions or churches, or they may be informal associations, such as friendship networks. Whatever the case, they center on interpersonal exchanges, the avenues for negotiation of collective identity and movement strategy. Melucci, in his discussion of movement "latency," further suggests that micromobilization requires private space, away from the public stage, in which activists can grapple with the "daily production of alternative frameworks of meaning."<sup>34</sup> Privacy allows individuals to reconfirm or redefine the meaning of the movement and their personal commitment to it.

In China, the micro context of interpersonal, private networks was encumbered by the macro context of structural political constraints. Formal groups, such as unions and student associations, were dominated by the state, affording little in the way of autonomous and secure forums for social movement activity. Although extant organizations, especially academic departments, were important loci of student mobilization in 1989, they could not sustain the movement because of government control.<sup>35</sup> Students and workers created independent associations to further the movement, but this endeavor in and of itself was seen by state officials as a threat, a political challenge that demanded stiff resistance. None of the formal organizations established by the democracy movement in 1989 survived the crackdown.

Less formal mobilization networks were also forged in the face of state power. Student discussion groups, such as the "Olympic Institute" and "Democracy Salon" at Beijing

University predated the massive demonstrations of spring 1989 and served as sites for consciousness-raising and identity construction. Members of these groups, however, were very much aware of the political character of nominally private activity in China, and they were careful to frame their actions and words so as not to provoke official repression.<sup>36</sup> Movement identity was intricately bound up with strategy, the movement's meaning intertwined with the sense of what was politically possible. Moreover, participants had to assume that unreliable allies and government spies were present in their private space, opening their personal reflections to police scrutiny. Micromobilization of Chinese students proceeded through interpersonal exchanges, in which individuals committed themselves to the movement, but this process was either quasi-public or wholly public.

The micro context of state-dominated formal organizations and limited privacy complicated mobilization of the 1989 Chinese democracy movement. The tasks of interpreting political opportunities, understanding cultural codes, defining a collective identity, and plotting movement strategy had to be accomplished quickly and effectively because the micromobilizational context did not afford the organizational base or the private space necessary for deliberate contemplation. Given these constraints, movement activists were remarkably successful in creating and managing the movement. Although they were ultimately smashed, they articulated a collective identity that allowed them to take advantage of political opportunities, to draw upon supportive cultural resources, and to inspire millions of individuals to participate directly in the movement.

### **Constructing Collective Identity in the Chinese Context: Symbolic Mobilization**

The context of social movement activity in China conditions mobilization and in this manner influences the construction of collective identity. Limited political opportunities, ambiguous cultural codes, and compromised interpersonal networks are realities activists confront as they work to articulate a message that resonates with current sentiments but does not provoke state repression. A movement is not necessarily a slave to context; the effects and memories of its collective action can change the milieu and become part of the context of future activity. Moreover, an evocative collective identity may be able to realize the potential for mobilization beyond what the immediate context seems to permit. In China, however, the social movement context circumscribes the possibilities for mobilization and thus creates particular problems for the articulators of collective identity.

**Discontinuous Mobilization** State power and social movement weakness hinder sustained organization and action by advocates of democracy. Mobilization thus occurs in fits and starts, when the infrequent opportunity arises. This discontinuity poses strategic difficulties for movement activists, who must reinvent goals, personal networks, and repertoires of resistance with each new instance of mobilization. Past activists may be available to advise or participate in the current movement, but they are scattered individuals, not well-formed organizations. Experienced organizers, moreover, are under even greater pressure from state authorities because they face the most stringent punishment for repeat offenses. Movement leadership, therefore, changes with each moment of mobilization, and each successive generation is likely to repeat at least some of the mistakes of its predecessors.

**Conjunctural Mobilization** Movement activists find few structural opportunities; therefore, they must seize circumstantial chances as they arise. The 1989 episode of China's democracy movement was nested in an extraordinary conjunction of historically significant dates: the fortieth anniversary of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the seventieth anniversary of the May Fourth Movement, and the two-hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution. Reinterpreting China's present political situation in light of these past events was very much on the minds of Chinese intellectuals and students. When Hu Yaobang died, providing a catalyst for public action, students seized the moment to call for political reform and liberalization. Both the specific event of Hu's death and the general historical conjunction inspired the 1989 democracy movement.

Conjunctural mobilization creates its own strategic problems, however. Time is not on the side of movement organizers; they must act quickly, most likely without thorough planning, to take advantage of temporary conditions. The government was fully aware of the coincidence of anniversaries and was putting forth official interpretations. Hu Yaobang's death was the evanescent moment that enabled students to take the interpretive initiative; they understood the inherent opportunity and exploited it. Although they were fairly successful in this case, the specific circumstances of a particular moment may work against developing a message and attracting adequate support.

**Public Mobilization** Mobilization everywhere has an obvious public face, but in China nurturing visibility in periods of latent mobilization is very difficult because of the extensive reach of the state. Public demonstrations must therefore fulfill a variety of functions at the same time. The core framing tasks of diagnosing social problems, proposing solutions, and motivating movement participation must be accomplished simultaneously and in the glare of intense publicity. Pressure to achieve all of these goals at once confounds the fulfillment of any one of them. China's 1989 demonstrations were hampered by such complex problems, inspiring critiques of the movement's disorganization, incoherence, and immaturity.

The discontinuous, conjunctural, and public qualities of China's democracy movement conditioned how collective identity was articulated. The explication of who "we" are and what the movement represents was rushed and incomplete because of the transience of the mobilizational moment. The definition of collective identity hinged upon shorthand expressions, the creation and manipulation of evocative, ambiguous symbols.<sup>37</sup>

**Symbolic Mobilization** Symbols are "signs that have meaning for the observer beyond the literal interpretation."<sup>38</sup> When skilfully constructed, symbols can express concise messages that reach many potential participants. During the 1989 democracy demonstrations, Chinese students were acutely aware of the symbolism of the movement. By taking their protest to Tiananmen Square, they were proclaiming the seriousness of their struggle and identifying themselves with the May 4th tradition. The May 12–19 hunger strike by some activists in Beijing, which revived the flagging movement, represented the movement's moral purity, selflessness, and sincerity.<sup>39</sup> In poems and songs the students created an imagery of official corruption, moral decline, and necessary reform. Symbolism was their primary resource; it was the medium for constructing collective identity.

Symbolic mobilization saved the Chinese students from immediate repression because the

symbols they employed were polysemous, open to several alternative interpretations.<sup>40</sup> Singing the "Internationale" was, for the Chinese student protesters of 1989, a sign of the movement's righteousness.<sup>41</sup> It implied that corruption had robbed the government of its moral authority and that the demonstrators were truer to socialist principles. It further suggested that the movement was reformist in character, seeking to improve the existing political system, not to change it fundamentally. The appropriation of the Communist anthem defined the movement's identity and made it difficult for the state to strike back. How could the "Internationale" be criticized as subversive?

The government thus faced a dilemma when confronted with the movement's symbolizing. When it acted forcefully to repress the movement, it helped define the movement, as was the case in Beijing during the Xinhua Incident of April 19-20, when police beat up students staging a peaceful sit-in outside the residence compound of the country's highest leaders.<sup>42</sup> This action crystallized the movement's nonviolent identity and cast the state in the role of forceful repressor of defenseless students. Conversely, when the state acted with moderation, it provided openings for symbolic action, as was the case during the massive April 27th Beijing parade, when students marched through lines of soldiers and defied official warnings not to move on Tiananmen Square.<sup>43</sup> With this act the students defined themselves as fearless defenders of morality and won the hearts of millions of Beijing residents. To place the state in this bind, however, activists had to create symbols that inspired a critical mass of people. As is illustrated below, the construction of symbols may fail because meanings proffered by the movement do not ring true to potential participants or sympathizers.

Symbolic mobilization in the Chinese context posed other problems for the democracy movement. Student leaders could not easily choose the time and circumstances of mobilization; they had to construct symbols out of conditions not necessarily of their own making. The discontinuous, conjunctural, and public quality of mobilization in China thus limited the interpretive possibilities of the movement. As discussed below, the death of Hu Yaobang both enabled and constrained mobilization. Students were able to exploit periods of legitimate public mourning to create a critical collective identity, but they were constrained by the funerary symbolism of the moment. Once proper rites had been enacted, the time for public spectacle was past.

To overcome these sorts of limitations, activists had to set the symbolic agenda, control their actions, and anticipate governmental responses so as to make specific political statements about the meaning of the movement. This might be referred to as "strategic symbolizing," the creation of symbolic acts that sustain the movement. In Beijing, the students and their supporters were fairly successful along these lines, as seen in events such as the April 27th march and the May hunger strike. These actions became summarizing symbols with meanings that were "clustered, condensed, relatively undifferentiated" but that were understood as "summing up, expressing, representing for the participants in an emotionally powerful way, what the system means to them."<sup>44</sup> In this manner, collective identity was forged through the construction and manipulation of symbols.

Strategic symbolizing requires organization, through which participants consider how to act and how their actions might be understood. Symbolic construction of collective identity is, therefore, partially determined by contextual factors that hinder or permit movement organization. It is more than organization, however. Strategic symbolizing draws upon



established cultural practices, the store of familiar signs and words through which the movement expresses itself. To be effective, a symbol must speak to popular sentiments through representations that are sensible and moving. To a degree, this sort of popular resonance can be calculated. Images of rapacious bureaucrats taking advantage of their official positions for private gain were sure to be welcomed by many Chinese in 1989. Symbolic mobilization thus can be "strategic" in the sense that activists have some control over how they represent their world. But meaning is fluid, and interpretation of an event, a speech, or a wall poster is not determined solely by its author. Strategic symbolizing is beyond the absolute control of activists because they can never be certain that their intended meaning gets through or that unintended actions will not take on unforeseen meanings.

Symbolic mobilization in China is thus a complex process. Activists must strive to organize themselves to articulate a clear and concise message. They must continually reflect upon how their self-definition is both constituted by and expressed in their actions. They must work against alternative renditions of their collective identity, arising from either official media or popular perceptions, and take advantage of unintended symbolic victories. In Beijing, students were able to manage such difficulties in several successful actions, including, but not limited to, the aforementioned Xinhua incident, the April 27th march, and the hunger strike. In Nanjing, symbolic mobilization and strategic symbolizing took longer to accomplish than in Beijing. This difference was due, in part, to the mobilization context in Beijing, where proximity to the center of state power allowed students there to see and seize opportunities as they arose. The disparity is also due to the specific circumstances of mobilization in Nanjing.

### **Symbolic Mobilization in Nanjing, China, 1988-1989**

Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu province, has seen its share of democracy movement demonstrations. In 1976 public protests against the "Gang of Four" in Nanjing precipitated the famous Qing Ming incident in Beijing.<sup>45</sup> In 1984 and 1986 students took to the streets to express their dissatisfaction with the local and national administration. The 1986 protest brought apathy in its train with the downfall of liberal party general secretary Hu Yaobang and a strengthening of conservatives. In Nanjing, quiescence was shattered in December 1988 when students attempted to turn a racial brawl into a political movement. Although this effort failed, it presaged the massive public demonstrations of spring 1989, when Nanjing was swept up in the nationwide mobilization.

A pattern of mobilization appears in the December 1988 and spring 1989 Nanjing demonstrations. First, specific events afforded opportunities for collective action. Second, student responses involved a complex combination of public efforts to construct a symbolic collective identity, to organize a more permanent movement, and to demand official action. Third, the state employed its powers to squelch the movement. The student protests of 1988-1989 in Nanjing thus illustrate both the promises and problems of symbolic mobilization.

**The Anti-African Demonstrations of December 1988** In December 1988, a confrontation between African and Chinese students at a local university sparked several days of public demonstrations in Nanjing. Proximate causes are found in the Communist Party's Third Plenum

of the Thirteenth Central Committee in October. This meeting signaled a tightening of university regulations, including stricter registration procedures for guests visiting foreign students.<sup>46</sup> At Hehai University in Nanjing local authorities implemented these guidelines with an eye toward the school's seventy African students. As one Hehai administrator remarked, they wanted to "stop African students exchanging obscenities with Chinese women."<sup>47</sup>

The African students were outraged by the new restrictions, which led to a series of confrontations that escalated mistrust and tension on both sides. The confrontations culminated on December 24, when several African students, escorting two Chinese women to a party, were stopped at Hehai's front gate and ordered to register their guests. A brawl ensued and lasted for the balance of the night with intermittent fistfights between Africans and Chinese.<sup>48</sup> The next day, Chinese students and workers surrounded the Africans' dormitory, chanting "down with black devils," "black devil" being roughly equivalent in connotation to "nigger." The crowd entered the first floor and destroyed personal property belonging to African students. The Africans, believing their safety was at risk, left for the railway station to entrain to Beijing. They contacted other African students in Nanjing who, in solidarity, joined them at the railroad station. Local authorities, trying to avoid the escalation of the incident into a national issue, would not allow them to board trains. As a result, about 150 Africans sat-in at the train station waiting for a chance to leave.

After the sun set, roughly three thousand Chinese students from many Nanjing colleges took to the streets chanting "down with black devils" and other slogans.<sup>49</sup> Rumors had swept the city that a Chinese person had been killed in the melee the night before, and the crowd called for "justice." The general feeling was that the Africans responsible for the "crime" should be held accountable under Chinese law in the same manner as a Chinese citizen and not be granted special treatment. In streetside discussions, Chinese students did not condemn all foreigners but disparaged blacks in particular.

Chinese student leaders attempted to make the episode into a movement critical of China's legal system. They failed, however, because their political message was overshadowed by the racist overtones of the incident.<sup>50</sup> The symbolic confusion of the protests was evident in an afternoon march to the provincial government office on December 26. Assuming that Africans were guilty of a crime, Chinese students sharpened their call that they be dealt with according to the full force of Chinese law. The banner at the head of a column of roughly 1,000-2,000 Chinese students read: "Protect Human Rights." When confronted with the contradiction of their position, that the condemnation of a particular class of people was inconsistent with the protection of human rights in general, Chinese students argued that they were making a political point.<sup>51</sup> The possibility of special treatment for the African "criminals" was a manifestation of the larger problem of personalized justice and official corruption. They were trying to embarrass the government by revealing a lacuna in China's legal system.

The anti-African demonstrations did not grow into a broader social movement. The great majority of students were most likely moved to demonstrate because Africans symbolized the Chinese students' own feeling of impotence. The image, even if groundless, of black men flaunting conventions and laws that repressed Chinese students enraged the protesters. Africans thus became a highly visible target for Chinese frustrations. These passions, once unleashed, imbued the protests with a crude racist tone and created a certain ambivalence. Chinese students understand racism to be wrong. They rejected any implication of racism in the protest and were disappointed when they saw the international media reporting the

incident as racist.<sup>52</sup> Upon reflection, most students could not support a movement defined as racist; they did not want to identify themselves in those terms. The symbols that momentarily mobilized thousands of people could not define a persuasive collective identity.

**Nanjing's Democracy Protests, April 15–May 4, 1989** Hu Yaobang's death provided a legitimate reason for public action, mourning a fallen party leader.<sup>53</sup> Almost as soon as they heard the news, Nanjing students began to interpret the meaning of Hu's death, making him into something that defined themselves collectively. Eulogies to him in wall posters at Nanjing University became a vehicle for core framing tasks: criticizing China's problems, proposing solutions, and motivating participation in protests.<sup>54</sup> Critiques of tyrannical abuses of power, factionalism, corruption, and economic mismanagement were common themes in the early wall posters. Calls for further economic reform, political decentralization, and multiparty democracy were articulated. Hu was compared to past martyrs, Liu Shaoqi and others, who died at the hands of "power-mongers." In contrast, other leaders were represented as villains; Deng Xiaoping and Zhao Ziyang were castigated as corrupt and aloof.<sup>55</sup>

Hu Yaobang's life was thus made into a struggle against all that was bad in China, his death an opportunity to extoll a vision of what China could be and to resist the forces of political tyranny, economic ruin, and social malaise. It was hardly relevant that Hu may not have been a shining hero in real life; the students were defining themselves politically as much as they were honoring Hu. Moreover, the wall posters were problematic for local leaders because student-created images of Hu challenged established political authority and economic policy. But Communist Party officials could not easily assail the very reverential student praise for a former general secretary, whom the official obituary regarded as a "loyal fighter for Communism."<sup>56</sup> State authorities could only wait and hope to regain the interpretive initiative as the students' enthusiasm flagged.

The students took advantage of the state's dilemma to push their symbol making beyond wall posters. An on-campus commemoration at Nanjing University on April 17 was followed two days later by a larger march through the city's streets that drew students from several other local colleges. Their slogans revealed the political character of their protest. Rarely referring directly to Hu, they chanted: "down with official corruption," "down with dictatorship," "long live freedom," "long live democracy."<sup>57</sup> These efforts did not spawn a citywide protest organization in Nanjing, however. Several relatively small demonstrations occurred between April 19 and May 4 but paled in comparison to Beijing's throngs. It was evident that the Nanjing students simply were not as well organized as their Beijing peers. When the Beijing students began to establish their independent unions, the Nanjing students did not immediately follow suit. The two cities communicated, but not enough to systematize the Nanjing protests.<sup>58</sup>

Nanjing's weak organization was evident on May 4, an officially recognized day of tribute to the activists of 1919. Nanjing students marched to the provincial government headquarters, where 200–300 students staged a sit-in, calling for a "dialogue" with the governor. They issued ten demands: resignation of bureaucrats who neglected their duty; resignation of leaders over seventy-five years of age; limitations on Communist Party expenditures; a public investigation into official corruption; public disclosure of leaders' homes, incomes, and family members' situations; freedom of the press; a report of the "real facts" of the April 22 and April 27

demonstrations in Beijing; protection for demonstrators and organizers; a truthful account of the Nanjing University student who was forced into a nervous breakdown by school officials; and abolition of local regulations against demonstrations.<sup>59</sup>

The governor refused to meet with the protesters that day, and the dwindling group of students retired to their dormitories with little to show for their efforts. The demonstration had been anticipated by local authorities, who for several days before had pressured students not to participate in unsanctioned events. Local work units notified their employees to avoid the demonstrations, thwarting a student-worker alliance. On the day itself, police were out in force, recording the protests with video cameras. Few students were willing to risk arrest, and the Nanjing movement waned.

The weakness of the Nanjing movement at this time was due to both structural and symbolic factors. State power clearly worked against local activists, who could not overcome the general sense of danger associated with protest activity. Nanjing students were also less certain than their Beijing peers of elite fragmentation and the presence of allies within the state apparatus. They heard stories of political intrigue in the capital, but these stories were second- or third-hand accounts, not persuasive enough to counteract their ambivalence. Beijing students, by contrast, were closer to the political center and quicker to see political opportunities as they unfolded. Symbolically, the Nanjing movement was limited by the very circumstances that motivated it. The specific event of Hu Yaobang's death had moved students to act. The impetus for action dissipated, however, once proper funeral rituals were observed. Unable to create other symbols that might have sustained mobilization, as the Beijing students did, the Nanjing movement gradually lost its momentum, swinging the advantage back to the state.

**“Support Beijing,” May 15–June 6, 1989** The key event that revived the local movement was the Beijing hunger strike that began on May 13, a purer political symbol of defiance. The ritualistic grieving for Hu Yaobang had provided an opening for legitimate public demonstrations, but it had also limited the students' vision of protest. The hunger strike afforded a new rallying cry: “Support Beijing.” The personal element of aiding suffering peers in Beijing made political commitments more focused and militant in Nanjing.

The local movement organization began to take shape in the wake of the Beijing hunger strike. Nanjing faculty members were critical in this regard. Over the weekend of May 13–14, a teacher in the Nanjing University law department publicly announced his resignation from the party.<sup>60</sup> Shortly thereafter a petition was posted, signed by one hundred Nanjing University faculty members, supporting the Beijing students. This action emboldened Nanjing students to found a protest organization, modeled on the Beijing student unions. On May 16 an announcement was posted declaring the establishment of the Autonomous Union of Nanjing Universities. This union was to be an open and democratic body, representing the identity of the movement itself. A second poster listed the names of the provisional leadership, until proper elections could be held, and major offices. In an ironic imitation of official government structures, a standing committee of five students oversaw the work of propaganda, liaison, and logistics departments. The basic organizational building blocks, as in Beijing, were individual academic departments. This department-based structure was very effective; it brought organization down to the interpersonal level where classmates could motivate and reassure one another.

Along with the new organization, Nanjing students also developed a strategy of protest. They reoriented their objectives and formulated tactics to secure their goals. Four demands were issued on May 16: a dialogue between the "highest leaders" of the provincial government and representatives of the autonomous student union before May 20, accurately reported in the local media; recognition of the student union's legality and protection of its rights of assembly and publication; a guarantee of the security of student protesters; and a publicly supervised investigation of official corruption. The May 4 demands had expressed student frustration with abuses of power and corruption: the new objectives would create the institutional means to act on the earlier concerns.

The Nanjing students increased the pressure on local authorities to accede to their demands. They struck their classes and filled the streets with larger and larger demonstrations between May 16 and 19. At their height, roughly 100,000 people jammed major downtown thoroughfares.<sup>61</sup> The movement took on many of the features of the Tiananmen Square occupation that was simultaneously occurring in Beijing. Marching under school and departmental flags, students called for democracy and freedom; they reiterated demands for dialogue, truthful reporting, recognition of the student union, and investigations into official corruption. Teachers joined their students, as did, for the first time, some workers. Journalists, in solidarity with their Beijing colleagues, protested against press restrictions.

The situation changed dramatically on May 19, when martial law was declared in parts of Beijing, raising the costs of protest everywhere. The emerging Nanjing student organization did not, however, disintegrate when faced with serious possibilities of repression. On the same night that martial law was announced in Beijing, police agents visited Nanjing organizers and said that they would follow suit in approximately twenty-four hours. Some protest leaders welcomed this threat, seeing in it a sign of government weakness and the possibility of greater symbolic gains. An all night sit-in, held on May 20–21, called local officials' bluff. When the night passed without martial law, Nanjing activists turned their wrath on key Beijing leaders Li Peng, Yang Shangkun, and Deng Xiaoping, calling for the troika to resign. Far from backing down, the Nanjing students, empowered by the week's victories, dared local officials to crack down.

Nanjing protesters were now able to control their demonstrations to produce specific symbolic effects. On May 21, several thousand students went to Nanjing military region headquarters and kowtowed in the street, beseeching the military not to use force. They sang the national anthem, representing themselves as good citizens with no alternative but virtuous remonstrance. In the early morning hours of May 22, under renewed threats of martial law, thousands converged on a central square in well-ordered columns, chanting defiant slogans in haunting unison. They were marching as to war, a powerful show of their resolve. Later that same day, the tactics shifted to rallying the citizens of Nanjing. Bicycle brigades of students spread the protest message through the city's southern districts, working class neighborhoods as yet untouched by the movement. Although the people did not respond as they did in Beijing, this effort helped to counter a sense of social isolation among the students. They were not merely acting by themselves for themselves but were defining themselves as stewards of China's common good.

These actions were different from the makeshift demonstrations of April 19 and May 4. They involved more calculated and precise strategic symbolizing that stiffened resistance to official censure. The Nanjing movement, however, was not wholly self-propelling; it was

still tied symbolically and operationally to Beijing. The central role of Beijing helped Nanjing students in that the provincial government dared not take decisive action as long as the situation in the capital was unresolved. The extrinsic dynamic, however, also hampered Nanjing students. As the Beijing demonstrations began to lose their focus, so too the Nanjing movement began to fade. Strategy beyond existing victories was cloudy as Nanjing organizers waited for a clearer sense of the situation in Beijing.

What was needed was an event that would keep up spirits in Nanjing until Beijing sorted itself out. Activists devised just such an action: the long march for democracy. On June 1, about 800 students from a dozen different Nanjing schools set off on foot for Beijing.<sup>62</sup> Crowds numbering in the thousands bid them farewell. Their plan was to carry the message of democracy to the hinterland and, upon their arrival in the capital, show their support for the movement there and deliver a petition calling for an emergency session of the National People's Congress to renounce martial law. For the next three days the long marchers commanded the attention of Nanjing students, but their undertaking was cut short by the Beijing massacre.

The carnage in Beijing did not immediately put a stop to the Nanjing protests. Rather, it induced several more episodes of strategic symbolizing. As the tragic news was heard on June 4, students and teachers organized demonstrations of public mourning. On June 5 grief turned to contention as students laid siege to the city. The northwest entrance to a main traffic circle was blockaded by two empty buses. Students sat-in at important intersections throughout the downtown area, but especially on the route to the Changjiang (Yangzi) River Bridge, snarling transportation. Believing military occupation was imminent, they hoped to obstruct the most obvious approaches to the city. Students solicited, and received, money from citizens. Linked by telephone and fax machine to news sources in Hong Kong and elsewhere, students covered the city with international press reports of the massacre, thus breaking the state's information monopoly.

The most daring postmassacre action occurred on June 6, when hundreds of students blocked the Changjiang River Bridge. This structure is Nanjing's most prominent national symbol, representing China's self-reliance in the aftermath of the Sino-Soviet split. It is also a key rail and road corridor. Students brought all traffic on the bridge to a standstill for the daylight hours. The next day, a contingent of about 400 students slowed traffic on the bridge for several hours. It was the finale of the Nanjing movement.

By this time it was clear that repression in Nanjing would not take the bloody form of the Beijing massacre. Local authorities pursued a series of late night arrests to break the movement. In the following weeks over 3,500 people were arrested throughout Jiangsu province for offenses related to the spring demonstrations.<sup>63</sup> Faced with certain incarceration, protest leaders went underground, and demoralized students left town to avoid trouble.

## **Conclusions**

The 1988–1989 student demonstrations in Nanjing illustrate the complexities of forming a collective identity in the Chinese context, where structural constraints magnify the importance of symbolic mobilization.

**Dubious Circumstances and Dissonant Symbols** The anti-African protests failed to

articulate a collective identity that could inspire and sustain the movement envisioned by activists. The attempt to transform a moment of mass anger into a political movement critical of China's legal system was confounded by the students' aversion to a racist self-identity. Participants were speaking and acting in a racist manner, but they did not want to define themselves as racist. The circumstances did not lend themselves to a comfortable sense of who "we" are as a social movement. In this instance, the conjunctural nature of mobilization worked against the symbolic expression of collective identity. Democracy advocates had to try to make something of the situation, since mobilization opportunities are few and far between, but their call for human rights was overwhelmed by racist rhetoric. A different strategy, one that relied less on racial stereotyping and more on legal and political issues, would have required more time and better organization, which were simply unavailable. The proverbial silk purse could not be made from this particular sow's ear.

It was not impossible to use a conjunctural opportunity to enact symbolically a powerful collective identity. The death of Hu Yaobang was propitious, though not perfect, for movement self-definition. However, the anti-African demonstrations reveal the contingency of symbolic mobilization. Whether a symbol can serve as an identifier for a social movement depends upon its resonance among participants, but resonance can not always be successfully engineered. The occasion itself may limit interpretive possibilities and thwart efforts to construct appealing symbols. The outwardly racist elements of the anti-African protests undermined the human rights imagery and ultimately unsettled the nascent movement's collective identity. The success of symbolic mobilization in promoting an efficacious collective identity is thus contingent upon the particular events and happenings that surround it, some of which may be beyond the interpretive reach of the movement.

**From Symbolic Mobilization to Strategic Symbolizing** When circumstances are more favorable for symbolic mobilization, the construction of a collective identity that will sustain the movement is still not guaranteed. In the Chinese context, activists had to work to create a common cognitive framework that would keep participants together in the face of likely repression. They moved from symbolic mobilization, the general inspiration of resonant images, to strategic symbolizing, the calculated creation of representations and spectacles that constitute collective identity. In Nanjing, the transition was hampered initially by a lack of organization, a forum for reflecting upon the meanings of movement activity. Without a strategy for symbolic action, the Nanjing movement lost its momentum shortly after Hu Yaobang's death and could not take full advantage of the conjunctural opportunity of May 4th.

The second phase of the 1989 Nanjing democracy demonstrations was animated by a powerful symbol, the Beijing hunger strike. It was channeled by competent organization and produced a surer collective identity. What is most remarkable about this episode is the continuation of protest even after the declaration of martial law in Beijing. The political opportunity structure was working against the movement, the chances of repression were greater, but Nanjing students, like their Beijing peers, persisted. At this time strategic symbolizing became ever more important for the movement. To resist the temptation of defection, participants needed regular reminders of the movement's meaning and their place in it. Moreover, the shared experience of previous collective action had forged an *esprit de corps*, a togetherness, that kept the movement going when the context was changing for the

worse. Collective identity, in this case, was both the driving force and the greatest accomplishment of the Nanjing demonstrations.

**The Limits of Collective Identity** In the end, however, state repression trumped collective identity. The movement could not withstand the onslaught of violence in Beijing and the mass arrests throughout Jiangsu province. Students publicly denied their commitments in order to avoid punishment, and the experiences they had shared receded into memory. Without active recognition and renewal, their collective identity lost its immediate social and political significance. Participants may have continued to identify with the movement in their hearts, but they did so less in their words and deeds.

The Nanjing demonstrations did not, in and of themselves, change significantly the social movement context in China. The political opportunity structure afterward was generally unresponsive of social movement activity, although continuing economic reform may improve the prospects for future mobilization. The micro context was still problematic, and private space still dear. Nor did the 1989 demonstrations definitively resolve the cultural contradictions of the Chinese intelligentsia. In sum, the collective identity that signified an unprecedented challenge to China's government was not strong enough to transform the context that repressed it.

The 1989 movement did, however, have an important effect. Melucci argues that symbolic challenges are consequential because they "render power visible," the first step in changing the contours of authority throughout society.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Nanjing activists intuitively understood this point when they stiffened their resolve when confronted with the threat of martial law. They sensed that overt government repression would validate their demand for political reform, even if they were defeated in the process. Although its organizational base was destroyed, the movement left in its wake a prophecy of political possibilities, a latent collective identity of a "civil society" in which opposition is viable.<sup>65</sup>

To return to the questions posed at the outset of this article, how do participants define themselves, and what difference does their self-definition make for the movement? In China, the "how" of definition is very much a matter of symbolic action and communication; the unfriendly context leaves little room for other means of identity construction. As the Nanjing demonstrations illustrate, symbolic enactment of collective identity may enable or constrain movement activity, depending upon the fit between observable circumstances and symbolic interpretations. The resonance of practice and representation, though beyond the absolute control of activists, can be effected more or less adeptly. When it is done well and strategic symbolizing produces evocative images that bolster collective identity, it makes a crucial difference for China's democracy movement.

## NOTES

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1. Jean Cohen, "Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements," *Social Research*, 52 (Winter 1985), 663-716.

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3. Carol M. Mueller, "Building Social Movement Theory," in Aldon Morris and Carol M. Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 4.

4. Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), pp. 34–35.

5. Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (New York: Penguin, 1991), ch. 2.

6. William A. Gamson, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," in Morris and Mueller, eds., pp. 65–71.

7. Irving Goffman, *Frame Analysis* (New York: Harper, 1974), p. 21.

8. Snow and Benford, 199–200.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

10. "On the one hand, the social construction of meaning precedes collective action and determines its direction; on the other, collective action in its turn determines the process of meaning construction." Bert Kländermans, "The Social Construction of Protest and Multiorganizational Fields," in Morris and Mueller, eds., p. 82.

11. Melucci, pp. 30–36.

12. William Connolly *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 201.

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14. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, "Social Movements," in Neil Smelser, ed., *Handbook of Sociology* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1988), pp. 695–737.

15. For a discussion of continuities among various episodes of China's democracy movement, see Andrew Nathan, "Chinese Democracy in 1989," in Andrew Nathan, *China's Crisis: Dilemmas of Reform and Prospects for Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), ch. 10.

16. For general overviews of China's democracy movement and political trends in the post-Mao era, see Andrew Nathan, *Chinese Democracy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *The Era of Zhao Ziyang* (Hong Kong: A. B. Books, 1989); Carol Lee Hamrin, *China and the Challenge of the Future: Changing Political Patterns* (Boulder: Westview, 1990); Scott Simmie and Bob Nixon, *Tiananmen Square* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989); Jonathan Unger, *The Pro-Democracy Protests in China: Reports from the Provinces* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1991).

17. Melucci, p. 27–29.

18. Sydney Tarrow, "National Politics and Collective Action: Recent Theory and Research in Western Europe and the United States," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 14 (1988), 429–430.

19. Charles D. Brockett, "The Structure of Political Opportunities and Peasant Mobilization in Central America," *Comparative Politics*, 23 (April 1991), 254.

20. The key elite schism in 1989 was between Zhao Ziyang and his allies and the more conservative political forces centering on Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng. See Huan Guocang, "The Roots of the Political Crisis," *World Policy Journal* (Fall 1989); Lowell Dittmer, "The Tiananmen Massacre," *Problems of Communism* (September–October, 1989); and John Fincher, "Zhao's Fall, China's Loss," *Foreign Policy*, 76 (Fall 1989).

21. David Zweig, "The Hunger Strike: From Protest to Uprising," in Suzanne Ogden, Kathleen Hartford, Lawrence Sullivan, and David Zweig, eds., *China's Search for Democracy: The Student and Mass Movement of 1989* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), pp. 189–190.

22. Working class activists in Beijing were not closely allied with student organizers, but workers did play an important part in the Tiananmen demonstrations. See Andrew G. Walder and Gong Xiaxia, "Workers in the Tiananmen Protests: The Politics of the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 29 (January 1993), 1–30.

23. A "social movement sector" is "the configuration of groups willing to engage in disruptive direct action against others to achieve collective goals." Tarrow, p. 432.

24. Ren Wanding, a veteran of the 1978 Democracy Wall actions, participated in the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations. See the translation of his April 21, 1989, speech, "Why Did the Commemoration Activities for Hu Yaobang Turn into a Democracy Movement," at the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, Harvard University.

25. Linking up with activists in the capital was a political strategy used by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution and by democracy activists in the 1970s and 1980s. See, for example, James D. Seymour, ed., *The Fifth Modernization: China's Human Rights Movement, 1978–1979* (Stanfordville: The Human Rights Publishing Group, 1980), introduction, pp. 11–12, 19–21.

26. Workers participated in the largest public demonstrations in Nanjing but never established an autonomous federation. In Beijing, a specific event, the beating of a group of students by police on April 19, and skilled leadership, especially in the person of Han Dongfang, were key factors in the emergence of the Workers Federation. See Walder and Gong, pp. 4-15. Neither a precipitating event nor a charismatic leadership inspired Nanjing workers to broader participation.

27. Elements of the news media supported the students at crucial moments, but the government regained control, especially with the imposition of martial law, and used the media to rationalize its policies. See articles by Michael J. Berlin, Frank Tan, and Judy Polunbaum in Roger Des Forges et al., eds., *Chinese Democracy and the Crisis of 1989* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), chs. 13-15.

28. Tu Wei-ming, "The Enlightenment Mentality and the Chinese Intellectual Dilemma," in Kenneth Lieberthal, ed., *Perspectives on Modern China: Four Anniversaries* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1991); Vera Schwarz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Timothy Cheek, "From Priests to Professionals: Intellectuals and the State under the CCP," in Jeffrey Wasserstrom and Elizabeth Perry, eds., *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).

29. These roles are discussed in Merle Goldman and Timothy Cheek, "Introduction: Uncertain Change," in Merle Goldman et al., eds., *China's Intellectuals and the State: In Search of a New Relationship* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987).

30. Brockelt, pp. 263ff.

31. Li Qiao et al., "Death or Rebirth? Tiananmen: The Soul of China," in Michel Oksenberg et al., eds., *Beijing Spring, 1989: Confrontation and Conflict* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), p. 12.

32. Lucian Pye, "Tiananmen and Chinese Political Culture," *Asian Survey* (1990), 331-347. For a different perspective on culture and protest, see Elizabeth Perry, "Casting a Chinese 'Democracy' Movement: The Roles of Students, Workers, and Entrepreneurs," in Wasserstrom and Perry, eds., pp. 146-164.

33. Mueller, pp. 9-13.

34. Melucci, pp. 70-71.

35. Dorothy Solinger, "Democracy with Chinese Characteristics," *World Policy Journal* (Fall 1989).

36. Shen Tong, a founder of the Olympic Institute, discusses the dangers of student organizing in *Almost a Revolution* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), ch. 6.

37. Joseph Esherick and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, "Acting Out Democracy: Political Theater in Modern China," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 49 (November 1990), 835-865; Alan P. L. Liu, "Symbols and Repression at Tiananmen Square, April-June 1989," *Political Psychology*, 13 (1992); and Wu Hung, "Tiananmen Square: A Political History of Monuments," *Representations*, 35 (Summer 1991), 84-117.

38. David Kowalewski, "The Protest Uses of Symbolic Politics: the Mobilization Functions of Protester Symbolic Resources," *Social Science Quarterly*, 61 (June 1980), 97-98.

39. Zweig, "The Hunger Strike."

40. Kowalewski, pp. 98-100.

41. Tony Saich, "When Worlds Collide: The Beijing People's Movement of 1989," in Tony Saich, ed., *The Chinese People's Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), p. 39.

42. Li Qiao, pp. 21-25; and "Under the National Emblem of the People's Republic of China," in Ogen, Hartford, Sullivan, and Zweig, eds., pp. 83-85.

43. The April 27th march was sparked by a *People's Daily* editorial, written by Deng Xiaoping and published the previous day, that castigated the movement. Li Qiao, pp. 29-38; Timothy Brook, *Quelling the People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 32-34; and Han Minzhu, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 91-96.

44. Sherry Ortner, "On Key Symbols," *American Anthropologist*, 75 (October 1973), 1339, 1342.

45. Barrett L. McCormick, *Political Reform in Post-Mao China: Democracy and Bureaucracy in a Leninist State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 44-59; Roger Garside, *Coming Alive: China after Mao* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), pp. 110-114.

46. *Hong Kong Standard*, Jan. 5, 1989, p. 5. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *China: Daily Report* (hereafter FBIS), Chi-89-003, Jan. 5, 1989, pp. 15-16.

47. *Hong Kong Standard*, Dec. 31, 1988, p. 1; FBIS, Chi-89-001, Jan. 3, 1989, pp. 18-19.

48. The fullest official Chinese account of the incident is a front page report in the local Nanjing paper, *Xinhua*

*Ribao*, Dec. 27, 1988, which was reprinted in *Nanjing Ribao* (FBIS, Jan. 6, 1989, p. 15). African students provided their own interpretation to the author in Nanjing in January 1989.

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50. For a detailed discussion see Michael Sullivan, "The 1988-1989 Nanjing Anti-African Protests: The Constraining Impact of Chinese Nationalism on Political Change in China," *China Quarterly* (forthcoming). Racism in China is analyzed in Frank Dikotter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

51. From author's discussions with Chinese student demonstrators.

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53. For a detailed analysis of the 1989 democracy movement in Nanjing, see Richard Lufrano, "Nanjing Spring: The 1989 Student Movement in a Provincial Capital," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 24 (January 1992).

54. "Yaobang Reform Memorial" (*Yaobang Gaige Ji*); "Mourn Yaobang, Discuss Reform" (*DaoYaobang, Languige*); wall posters at Nanjing University, April 16, 1989.

55. "Song of the Five Sons" (*Wuxige*), wall poster, Nanjing University, April 16, 1989.

56. *Xinhua Ribao*, Apr. 16, 1989, p. 1.

57. Author's eyewitness observation.

58. *Jingxin Dongpo de 56 Tian* (Beijing: State Education Commission, 1989).

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

61. From author's eyewitness observations.

62. *Jingxin Dongpo de 56 Tian*, p. 191.

63. *Asia Watch*, Nov. 15, 1989.

64. Melucci, p. 77.

65. Lawrence R. Sullivan, "The Emergence of Civil Society in China, Spring 1989," in Saich, ed., pp. 126-144.