Inheritance and Dissemination of Cultural Collective Memory: An Analysis of a Traditional Festival

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Abstract
The traditional festivals in urban societies constitute public memory and are essential for constructing a sense of locality. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the collective memory of traditional urban festivals to promote the sense of locality. In this research, the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market was selected as a case study. By examining the historical literature, and conducting field research and interviews, the collective memory of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market was classified and sorted from the perspective of the categories of collective memory. A collective memory graph of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market was constructed using Gephi complex network analysis software. By examining the rich memory content and hierarchical structure of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market, we can better understand and foster the function of traditional urban festivals as collective memory and achieve the sustainability of collective memory.

Keywords
traditional festival, collective memory, graph, Winter Jasmine Flower Market, Guangzhou

Introduction
Rapid urban development in China, including urban construction or transformations of the old cities, has caused considerable changes to traditional living spaces and lifestyles. A large number of traditional streets, old places, old buildings, and historical blocks have disappeared. Therefore, many people have begun to discuss local history, traditional culture, and collective memory. Urban traditional festivals are social and cultural phenomena that represent the living culture of a local community, they can attract extensive participation and create deep memories, evoke cultural memories, and form new collective memories. Locality and its uniqueness are very important; however, as implied in Doreen Massey’s concept of the “progressive sense of place” (Massey, 1994), locality is not static but a process of continuous evolution. One of the most important challenges facing people today is how to ensure the sustainable development of the environment and society. In the context of festivals, sustainability and sustainable development have other meanings in terms of preserving the memory of traditional festivals. However, the new sustainable development model can be applied to the practice of traditional festivals. The traditional festival “the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market” has been transformed from a trading place dominated by flower sales to a local cultural symbol. Its uniqueness and continuity have led it to become the symbol of “locality” in Guangzhou.

Literature Review

Theoretic Basis
The concept of collective memory was developed by Hugo Von Hofmannsthal in 1902, who stated that “The power of our mysterious ancestors accumulated in us” created “the stacking of accumulated collective memory” (Olick & Robbins, 1998). He argued that collective memory is not only a controlling force but also an accumulating force; however, he did not study the term collective memory in more detail. Halbwachs pointed out in his book Social Framework of Memory published in 1925 that memory is not a purely physiological concept (Halbwachs, 1992). Although it is based on the brain as the material carrier, memory is largely

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restricted by social factors. Halbwachs defines collective memory as “the process and result of sharing past events among members of a particular group, and guarantees the continuity of collective memory when social communication and group consciousness need to extract it.” Therefore, Halbwachs introduced the concept of collective memory into the field of social psychology and extended the study of memory from psychology to sociology and cultural studies. Marcuse summarized the various terms derived from collective memory as including public memory, social memory, cultural memory, historical memory, national memory, official memory, print memory, and local memory, and so on (Marcuse, 1992). Scholars, including sociologists, philosophers, and historians, tend to analyze collective memory broadly as belonging to a country, nation, or culture, but it is worth noting that some scholars combine collective memory with tourism and festival activities (Hanif & Ullah, 2018).

**Collective Memory and Tourism**

Landscapes, ceremonies, and performances are important components of tourism resources. Research on collective memory demonstrates a trend toward including tourism geography. MacCannell uses the idea of the memory symbol system to explain the symbols (symbols), sights (symbolized meanings), and tourists (understanding readers) of tourist attractions (MacCannell, 1999). He believes that the process of tourism can arouse memories of past events and form collective memories. For example, World Wars I and II are disasters and collective memories shared by humanity. Winter believes that tourism affected the selection, interpretation, and reconstruction of collective memory during World War I because tourists can construct and influence the interpretation of landscapes by the group (C. Winter, 2009). Seaton studied Waterloo’s approach to restoring and reconstructing battlefield landscapes and collective memory to attract tourists (Seaton, 1999). Dydia (2003) and Lloyd (1998) focused on the types of tourists that visit war memorials and demonstrated that pilgrims are the main audiences for the construction of post-war memories. The sources of collective memories are not limited to history and are included in fictional literature. For example, Digance studied fictional collective memory in southern California based on various tourist attractions constructed by the famous novel Ramona (Digance, 2003). In addition, Sabine (2012) studied the visitor groups of Disneyland and indicated that childhood collective memory is the motivation behind this type of tourism, and theme parks arouse these memories. Tourism activities also have the characteristics of globalization, and tourism plays an important role in the construction of collective memory, which means that a wider range of tourists can participate and play an important role in the construction of collective memory.

**Collective Memory and Events**

Zerubavel argued that collective memory is not simply about the individual memory shaped by social instance memory, but about the social memory behavior itself, with particular emphasis on public commemorative activities, such as religious festivals (e.g., Easter or Passover) and specific holidays (such as Thanksgiving Day; Zerubavel, 1997). Marie Kruger explored the role of collective memory in festivals and public ceremonies to maintain cultural identity (Kruger, 2014). Pennebaker et al. explored the creation, maintenance, and distortion of the collective memory of social events from a psychosocial perspective (Pennebaker et al., 1997).

**Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market**

Guangzhou, a famous historical and cultural city, located in the south of China, is widely called the “City of Flowers” and the “City of Five Rams.” Its reputation as the “City of Flowers” best reflects the characteristics of the city, and this term was derived from the flower market held in the city, which has a long history. Guangzhou has a subtropical monsoon climate with abundant sunshine, rainfall, evergreen seasons, optimal geographical location, and a good natural environment, which provide excellent growth conditions for all types of flowers.

The Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market, commonly referred to as a “hang fa gai,” can be traced back to the Southern Han Dynasty in the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms. It is said that Liu Yi, King of the Southern Han Dynasty, had a pet girl named Suxin, who was formerly the flower-bearing girl of Zhuangtou Village on the South Bank of the Pearl River. After she was a maid in an imperial palace, she maintained the habit of hoeing using a lotus handle, and sowing, fertilizing, and planting flowers. Subsequently, each flower or blooming season was the happiest time for Suxin. Royal nobles began to follow the King’s example of planting flowers and plants, and then this habit spread from the court to ordinary people. Over time, the custom of cultivating flowers as auspicious symbols of happiness took root during the South of the Five Ridges area. The finalization of the development of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market was in the 1920s and combined the traditional flower market and spring festival activities. After the foundation of the People’s Republic of China, the New Year’s Eve Flower Market in Guangzhou became a municipal project sponsored by the government. From the 28th day of the lunar month to the eve of the New Year, Guangzhou citizens go out and walk around Flower Street as a way to wish themselves good luck for the coming year. Among the festival activities that take place in modern Guangzhou, the Winter Jasmine Flower Market is the most typical, and it is considered a unique cultural tradition. Although the spring flower festival market has spread to other cities, including...
some bigger cities in the north, the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market has a unique cultural value, which is why it was selected for this study.

The Relationship Between Traditional Events and Collective Memory

The inheritance of collective memory mainly refers to the preservation and continuation of collective memory in the time dimension, so that the existing members of the group maintain strong emotions, and promote the new generation members of the group obtaining information and collective memory. As there are many human groups, there are many types of collective memory, and collective memory is accompanied by traditional festivals, which are objective and can be reproduced. Figure 1 demonstrates this relationship between collective memory and traditional events. Traditional festivals, as the elements and carriers of collective memory, often need to be continuously performed to continue, while traditional festival activities such as bodily practices and memorial ceremonies often become an important means of memory inheritance.

Bodily Practices: Body Reproduction of Collective Memory

Collective memory carriers can be material (such as monuments, buildings, and other material culture), which can be guaranteed by the official system; they can also be non-material (collective memory related to daily life), which must be supported by informal practices of various social activities. By holding large-scale activities regularly, the ceremonies and events are based on the text of vague memory or words passed down from generation to generation. After transforming the traditional festival activities into observable behavior norms, they can play the function of collective memory (Gan, 2016).

The experience of Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market is closely related to the collective memory, and life practice of local flower planting and daily consumption, and Flower Street is a unique New Year’s memory for every Guangzhou citizen, as a habit of the older generation and a memory of the younger generation. The focus of the festival on Flower Street is “strolling,” so that participants can touch the flowers, smell their fragrance, and metaphorically, squeeze out bad luck. Through the bodily practices of “strolling around Flower Street,” cultural subjects comment on the narrative of the flowers, to relax the body and mind, pray for the New Year, and commemorate the seasons, especially the New Year. By strolling around the Winter Jasmine Flower Market in Guangzhou, collective memory is reproduced through bodily practices and cultural significance is spread (see Figure 2).

Memorial Ceremony: Public Demonstration of Collective Memory

Ritual is the most basic and common form of organization and carrier of collective memory (Lewicka, 2008). In illiterate societies, time is divided into two different types: daily time and festival time. Daily time mainly leaves people’s daily communication memory, while festival celebrations
and ceremonies are more embodied in social interactions and highly condensed collective memory (T. Winter, 2004). As Plato put it, “Festivals re-illuminate our dark existence in everyday life, and God himself re-brightens the order that is naturally dull due to neglect and forgetfulness.” Emile Durkheim also pointed out that festival ceremonies have “strong vitality and inspiration.” It is precisely because of the existence of ceremonies that every participant is attracted to ceremonies and affected by the experience gained by participating in them. This produces recognition and respect for festival ceremonies and cultures, which adds to the individual’s sense of existence and the significance of their existence, and at the same time, creates a specific and profound sense of collective identity.

There is a saying in Guangzhou: “one must stroll around Flower Street on Chinese New Year’s Eve.” The annual Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market creates a specific atmosphere in the city and a solemn sense of ceremony, and people willingly participate happily. Group members acquire and maintain collective memory through rituals, customs, and habits such as this flower market. As long as rituals, customs, and habits are maintained, collective memory will be inherited from generation to generation, and the framework of local culture will be evident within the traditional framework.

**The Combination of Collective Memory Elements**

Memory is an ordinary individual physiological function and a reaction to things that happened in the past that are being recalled and represented constantly. The assertion that the collective memory of a group helps to underpin its sense of identity was originally proposed by Halbwachs in 1925 (Halbwachs, 1992), and memory studies in the field of human geography are deeply influenced by Halbwachs’ collective memory theory and Nora’s more recent work (Nora, 1989).

Memory art in Ancient Greece and Rome combined spatial form, place, and memory organically. If this is applied to festivals, festival activities can be seen as an auxiliary means to preserve and help people recall. Identifying the rules of memory in festival activities will help festival designers to discover the factors and meanings of urban festival activities and more intrinsic non-material forms, and link urban historical festival activities with daily life in design practice more effectively, so that they can survive in the people-centered environments. From the perspective of the collective memory material library, the group’s “current experience” is a fresher and more detailed “new member” of collective memory and a collective memory under construction. The group’s “current experience” that can become part of the collective memory database is the experience of those group members participating in an event or sharing information about it, including the events they are experiencing together (Zhang, 2016).

According to psychological theory, memory can be divided into subconscious memory and cognitive memory. The former consists of actions involving habits and norms, for example, gymnastics, cycling, or swimming. The latter depends on people’s cognitive system, which has two manifestations: images and symbolism. Images consist of coding information formally according to the visual features of objects, while symbolism consists of coding information semantically according to its meaning, which is expressed with symbols (Boyer, 1997). Lawson gives a simple example of cognitive memory: “When walking on the road, we may meet a cat crossing the road. How do we describe the event in our minds and store it in memory?” (Lawson et al., 2008). He argued that most people usually remember cats as an image: “Some visual features are recorded, while others are encoded in the form of familiar geometric and visual elements.” Alternatively, we can use references or rules to understand meaning and help memory, such as the use of literal symbols. Given this background, we used sociological interviews and relevant design cases to divide the collective memory elements of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market into three categories: integrative elements, scene elements, and symbolic elements.

**Integrative Elements**

The embodied elements focus on the importance of bodily actions and participation in the process of memory, including bodily practice and rituals. Among them, bodily practices are mostly spontaneous and related to behavior and habits, while rituals are compulsory and involve social norms. Connerton demonstrates these two non-textual and non-cognitive modes of social memory transmitted through the rehearsal of bodily practices and memorial ceremonies (Connerton, 1989). Using this classification, this paper elaborates on the integrative elements of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market.

**Bodily practices.** As a basic way to inherit the collective memory of festival activities, bodily practices are an important part of collective memory developed in the process of tourists’ repeated participation and experience of festival activities. Furthermore, through the rendering of ceremonies and the construction of society, these cognitive memories are shared by groups.

**Ceremony.** With the help of normative body behavior, procedural language, and images, ceremonies simulate and display historical events and situations in repetitive exercises to help participants experience the cohesion of the social community through memory. At the same time, because rituals are usually associated with major events, the potential and short-term spatial-visual memory of a place can easily be transformed into positive flash memory (Yang, 1994).
Scenario Elements

Scenario elements focus on how the characteristics and contents of objective objects (“field” and “scene”) form the general atmosphere and create emotions. According to related research in psychology (Rossi, 1982), scenario elements are divided into three components: the field element, scene element, and perception element.

Field elements. Field elements are more concerned with space and its combination characteristics and include the block field (emphasizing centripetality), linear field (emphasizing directionality), regional field (emphasizing sequence), and texture, and so on.

Scene elements. As the saying goes, “Touch the scenery to create feelings,” which demonstrates that the scenery factor is also an element of affection that involves related feelings and experiences. The landscape elements include various natural and artificial landscapes and human beings, and animals. In addition to the inherent characteristics of the landscape elements, such as shape, color, and quality, which directly affect people, indirect or variable factors such as external climate and light intensity can also make the scenery produce a specific atmosphere and strong feelings.

Perception elements. People’s perception of a scene is a process. Borden (2002) once pointed out that synaesthesia, which occurs in everyday life experience, also exists in memory. Although visual impression plays a leading role in the process of memory, auditory, tactile, and olfactory elements are all involved in acquiring, preserving, and reproducing information (Kostof, 1991). Their integration can deepen our memory of places, and through frequent and diversified experiences, people can connect specific feelings related to certain places from vivid life scenes.

Symbolic Elements

Symbolic elements focus on the subject’s understanding of objective objects according to their background knowledge and experience, including place names, cultural elements, and landmarks. As coding symbols, symbolic elements demonstrate how the content and meaning of life in material space and social space are interpreted, with strong cultural and narrative features.

Place names. Place names are the product of long-term collective inheritance. They not only distinguish the material space from the environment but also express certain meanings and symbolic meanings, reflecting the origin and development of urban and social lifestyles.

Cultural elements. As a type of material or carrier, specific regional cultural elements contain rich folk culture and life content and also highlight regional cultural characteristics.

Landmarks. Landmarks constitute important landscape elements for people to perceive and experience festival activities and spatial nodes for group gathering activities. As memory symbols, landmarks are often related to the patterns and rules of activities of specific groups and have the characteristics of groups and times (Zhu, 2006).

Analysis of Collective Memory Graph

As it is well known social network analysis has become very popular in recent times. Social network analysis method is a quantitative analysis method developed by sociologists according to mathematical methods and graph theory. In recent years, it has been widely used in the fields of occupational mobility, the impact of urbanization on individual happiness, the world political and economic system, international trade and other fields, and played an important role. Gephi, an open-source and free cross platform complex network analysis software based on JVM, is used for interactive visualization and detection of various networks and complex systems, dynamic and hierarchical diagrams, and can be widely used for exploratory data analysis, link analysis, social network analysis, and biological network analysis. Memory graph analysis overcomes the problems of conceptualization of description variables, fuzziness of result attributes, and patternization of result types in traditional methods. However, there are few related researches of collective memory social network analysis at present.

Specific Steps

The first step is to construct a model of the collective memory of festivals. Online comments are an independent record of tourists’ experience, and they are useful as they can reflect the collective memory of festivals. Using this text to extract the elements of the collective memory of festivals is, therefore, an important step in constructing a model for the collective memory of festivals (Xu & Cheng, 2017). Considering the diversity of festival collective memory structures, the lack of a mature dimension structure (Chandralal et al., 2015), the fragmentation of online commentary text, and the complexity of Chinese characters semantics, this research used ROST Content Mining software to mine content, translate text content, select high-frequency words as the analysis unit of festival collective memory, conceptualize high-frequency words, and exclude less than three articles. The high-frequency words in the text formed the characteristic words, and the bottom-up induction method was used to extract the elements of the collective memory of festivals, integrate the category of memory (Zhong, 2015), establish the logical relationship, and construct the model of the collective memory graph of the festivals.

In the second step, the TF algorithm was used to calculate the weight of the collective memory elements. The frequency of a particular word in a particular text reflects its importance,
and in this paper, the frequency of a memorized feature word among the total feature words of a visitor’s comment reflects the importance of the factor. The frequency index of the TF algorithm can reduce the influence of different text lengths on the importance of model elements. The specific operation process calculated the weight of the elements by using the feature words of the collective memory of festivals, to verify the comprehensiveness of the elements of the collective memory of festivals and the correctness of the model of the graph of the collective memory of festivals.

In the third step, the structure partition results of collective memory were obtained by using a complex network-based graph analysis. The graph analysis method based on a complex network is used to reveal the structure of a complex system, which is widely used in the field of knowledge management, such as the development of discipline knowledge (Lian et al., 2013; Yu et al., 2012), the Construction of Knowledge graph of “National Image” (H. Z. Wang, 2013). With the expansion of the research field, the graph of public opinion obtained from the micro-blog network was constructed (Jia et al., 2015; Zou et al., 2014). This method has been used in the field of tourism to analyze the structure of tourism demand (Baggio & Sainaghi, 2016). Given the complex structure of large data, using the network analysis software Gephi, based on the collective memory model of events and the weight of the collective memory elements of events, the edge data were used to construct the edge of each tourist and their collective memory of events. First, a modular index was used to cluster and summarize the memory elements, so that the modular value (the quality of clustering and modularization) can be maximized, even though the nodes in the same module were more closely connected and have a greater density (Formula 1; Blondel et al., 2008). Then, the structure division based on the collective memory of festivals was completed through the grade index of degree and combined with the actual situation.

\[
Q = \frac{1}{2m} \sum_{i,j} \left[ A_{ij} - \frac{k_i k_j}{2m} \right] \delta(c_i, c_j) \quad (1)
\]

where \( A_{ij} \) represents the weight of the edge between \( i \) and \( j \); \( k_i = \sum_j A_{ij} \) is the sum of weights representing all edges of joint nodule \( i \), \( c_i \) is a group of memory elements representing the allocation of node \( i \), and for \( \delta(c_i, c_j) \) when \( c_i = c_j \), \( \delta = 1 \), and when \( c_i \neq c_j \) \( \delta = 0 \), and \( m = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i A_{ii} \).

### Application of the Method

**Data sources.** According to website ranking indices, such as the stationmaster’s home (http://top.chin-az.com/), Alexa website (http://www.al-exa.cn/), and Baidu index, this paper used the Ctrip website (http://www.ctrip.com/), Mafengwo website (www.mafengcn/), Owl website (https://www.tripadvisor.cn/), and a popular commentary network (https://www.dianping.com/) as the data sources. We searched for “the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market” and “West Lake Flower Market” as keywords and obtained 810 comments from March 1, 2010, to July 29, 2018. We used the “Octopus Collector 5.1 Edition” through the Sina Blog (http://blog.sina.com.cn/), NetEase Blog (http://blog.163.com/), Baidu Post Bar (http://tieba.baidu.com/), Tianya Forum (http://tianya.cn/), and other online websites. We also searched for “Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market,” “Hang Hua Gai,” and “Flower Street,” and identified 131 related blogs and online travel notes about the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market from 2006 to 2018. The period of the relevant online reviews and travel notes was 12 years, which eliminated the influence of time factors on online reviews and comments as far as possible, and enhanced the reliability of our research results. Subsequently, after eliminating duplicates, theme-independent comments, and advertising-related comments, and merging comments from the same tourist, we identified 861 comments about the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market, totaling 193,167 words.

**Extraction and model construction of collective memory elements of festival events.** The translation of the sample content mainly included the standardization of names, such as the unified revision of “Flower Street” and “Flower market” to “Hang Hua Gai,” and “West Lake Flower Market” and “West Lake Road Flower Market” to “Yuexiu West Lake Flower Market.” Then, the network text was copied into a text document (.txt). The relevant names and nouns of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market, such as “stroll around the Flower Street,” “strange luck,” and “Flower market archway,” were preliminarily included in the custom dictionary. ROST Content Mining software was used to analyze word segmentation, word frequency, and high-frequency words. By screening and conceptualizing the high-frequency words, 50 feature words were finally extracted to capture the elements of the collective memory of festivals in the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market and summarize the categories of the collective memory of festivals.

To determine the structural division of memory elements of festival activities, the extraction of collective memory elements of festival events should emphasize the particularity of festival activities. Based on the analysis of the text using the NVivo 12 software, eight memory elements of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market were extracted, namely, bodily practices, ceremony, site elements, scene elements, perception elements, place names and cultural elements, and landmarks. These were summarized into three categories, namely, embodied elements, scene elements, and symbolic elements (see Table 1).

**Weight calculation of collective memory elements.** Based on the eight elements of the collective memory of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market, the TF algorithm was
used to calculate the weight of each memory element of the visitor’s experience. The weights of the total elements calculated by network text were as follows: perception factor, 0.2133; landscape element, 0.1473; landmark, 0.1460; field element, 0.1456; bodily practices, 0.1426; place name, 0.0838; ceremony, 0.0804; and cultural element, 0.0410.

Analysis of collective memory graph of festival events. In this research, we used edge data to construct each visitor and their memory of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market and obtained a total of 851 nodes and 2,973 edges. Gephi complex network analysis software was used to analyze and run a modular calculation. The maximum modularization value was 0.228, and 8 collective memory groups were obtained. Each group was named by the most central node of the collective memory group, and according to the scale, the order was as follows: perception elements, scene elements, landmarks, site elements, bodily practices, ritual, place names, and cultural elements. The eight-episode collective memory groups originally proposed in this paper are eight independent groups (see Figure 3), which need not be further summarized.

Content hierarchy of collective memory. The collective memory of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market was organized into eight different groups. Although there are different levels among the groups, it is possible to establish some connections as the tourists act as a bridge. The size of the group node and node font is positively correlated with the group grade. According to the different grades, a hierarchical changing graph was developed, and this describes the three levels of the content structure of collective memory in the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market. The first level was named social fact, which mainly includes perception elements, and the second level was named collective representation, which mainly includes landscape elements, landmarks, and site elements. The third level was collective meaning, which mainly includes geographical names, rituals, and cultural elements. Social facts experienced by groups are always obliterated, leaving some tangible or intangible collective representations within groups. Each collective representation contains more or less collective meaning, and some representations will disappear over time, but the collective meaning it carries will be retained through other representations. Therefore, in the content system of collective memory, the collective meaning is the most invisible but the most stable and long-term level. The collective representation system that carries it widely exists in the dribs and drabs of group life, and its scope is extremely wide. Any point may arouse the group members’ perception and the pursuit of collective meaning.

Table 1. Analysis of Collective Memory Content of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market.

| Category              | Element          | Character words (frequency)                                                                 |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Integrative elements  | Bodily practices | hang fa gai (343), buy flowers (101), enjoy flowers (74), flower language (44), floral   |
|                       |                  | fragrance (20), Spring Festival shopping (11)                                               |
|                       | Ceremony         | Must visit every year (76), annual (68), transshipment (55), transport (40), pray (20),  |
|                       |                  | feelings (15)                                                                              |
| Scenario elements     | Place name       | Flower Street (304), Flower Market Arch (83), Flower Market Shelf (25)                     |
|                       | Landscape element| Flowers (250), oranges (121), crafts (183), windmills (112), peach blossoms (83),        |
|                       |                  | ornaments (62), customs of Xiguan (7)                                                      |
|                       | Perception factor| Joy (271), tradition (176), festival atmosphere (168), sea of people (130), characteristics |
|                       |                  | (116), crowding (90), strong flavor (72), festival (51), beautiful (50), custom (45),      |
|                       |                  | long history (41), sea of flowers (41)                                                      |
| Symbolic elements     | Field element    | West lake road (90), Beijing Road (77), Tianhe Sports Center (67), Education road (48),   |
|                       |                  | Liwan Road (38), Binjiang Road (28)                                                        |
|                       | Cultural element | Spring Festival couplets (50), Chinese Zodiac (36), lantern (29), Cantonese Culture (15), |
|                       |                  | Lingnan Culture (11)                                                                        |
| Landmark              |                  | Yuexiu West Lake Flower Market (219), Tianhe flower market (120), Haizhu flower market (88), Liwan flower market (60), Central flower market (32) |

Figure 3. Collective memory graph of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market.
The eight collective memory elements in the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market were organized according to their weights in the order of perception elements, landscape elements, landmarks, field elements, bodily practices, place names, ceremonies, and cultural elements, which was different to the size of the memory groups. This is because the collective memory of festivals is pluralistic. Although they are one of the most important memory elements, the other secondary collective memories are different. Memory elements cannot be neglected, so the evaluation of the importance of collective memory should consider them comprehensively.

Analysis of the Dissemination Paths of Collective Memory of Traditional Festivals

Early collective memory emphasizes inheritance but neglects dissemination (Mills, 2006). During the periodic ceremonies, group members constantly review those collective memories that belong to themselves. In the ceremony, the information of collective memory is shared by the group members through group communication or interpersonal communication, and through personal participation, the group members understand the information and learn that other members also get the same information, which generates a common feeling and forms or strengthens the collective memory (Jung & Ryu, 2015). As far as the current research literature is concerned, the study of memory mainly focuses on the study of memory carriers and memory functions, but studies on memory dissemination are rare. As the intersection of sociology, history, communication, and other disciplines, memory communication deserves more research and attention. The dissemination of collective memory mainly means that collective memory is shared more deeply by group members in the spatial dimension. Communication is the core issue of the construction of collective memory, but communication is not carried out in a vacuum (Hua & Zhou, 2015). First, it is necessary to establish one or a series of communication content based on collective memory. Generally speaking, the dissemination of content originates from the collective memory material, which can be based on the content system of collective memory, including social facts, collective representations, and collective meaning (see Figure 4).

Social Facts: The Origin of Collective Memory Communication in Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market

Durkheim stated that “all modes of behavior, whether fixed or unstable, can be given personal restraint from the outside, or that is to say, they exist everywhere in the society and have their inherent existence before, regardless of their performance on the individual, they are called social facts” (Sarmento, 2009). For the construction of collective memory, social facts can be divided into two categories: past and current (Gurler & Ozer, 2013). Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market is a valuable intangible cultural heritage that has been accumulated and enriched by Guangzhou residents as a long-term social practice with a very broad mass base. In Guangzhou, people have a long tradition of appreciating and growing flowers. The Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market is based on the flower culture of Guangzhou, which has lasted for thousands of years. However, the spread of folk customs of strolling around Flower Street on Chinese New Year’s Eve in Guangdong gradually spread from the central source to the surrounding areas. Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Foshan, Dongguan, Zhuhai, and other major cities and towns in the Pearl River Delta all have a Winter Jasmine Flower Market as part of the Spring Festival, and they are very popular events.

Social Representation: The Subject of Collective Memory Communication in Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market

In daily life, people grasp social facts through various representations of social facts, including representation and language description. Collective representation is the presentation and description of various social facts shared within a group (Foote & Azaryahu, 2007). For the specific dissemination of collective memory, the most common form is the dissemination of collective representation. However,
collective memory with collective representation as its core is now very fragile, and the logical chain of collective memory can be naturally broken from collective representation. Subsequently, social facts and collective representation do not necessarily lead to a specific collective meaning.

National cultural symbols are an ideographic system of national culture, made up of perceptual symbols of national emotion and spirit, and a common memory that can awaken the nation as a community (Tyner et al., 2015). The Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market evolved from Flower Fairs as popular culture in Lingnan and included folk symbols with flowers as its core; annual symbols composed of flower market halls, lighting, shelves, flower heads, and windmills; as well as commercial streets with basic ceremonies and collective memories (S. Y. Wang, 2008). Not all the past is memory, and not all memories have retained value, and collective memory must be valuable through selection and preservation. Memory itself is a reiterated interpretation (Chen & Tao, 2017). Whether as a sign of a signifier or a symbol of signification, the interpretation or translation of symbols will be involved in the collective memory symbol system of Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market. After being selected and explained by the group, Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market was repeatedly reviewed through the “Flower Street” ceremony, creating a habit from this collective memory, preventing it from being forgotten by the society, and constantly injecting vitality with the development of the times (Liao & Dai, 2018).

Collective Significance: The Soul of Collective Memory Communication in Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market

Collective meaning is the value concept, goal, and purpose of the group and its members. Social facts and collective representation contain collective meaning; therefore, the collective meaning is a transparent container of social facts and collective representation, and only through the filling of social facts and collective representation can its appearance be revealed. The same social facts may have different collective representations, and the same representations may also contain different meanings.

Although the concept of ritual used by Asman in the theoretical system of cultural memory is a general term of ritual (X. B. Wang, 2007), it refers to a narrow sense of ritual as a public celebration (festival or ceremony). Asman emphasizes that to realize the collective memory function of ceremonies, there must be two indispensable links and activities: one is the presence and personal participation of all the members of the collective, and the other is the repetition and re-inclusion of the collective history. Celebrations and ceremonies ensure the spread of cultural significance by institutionalizing the expanded context (Assmann & Livingstone, 2006). As a type of intangible cultural landscape, Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market displays flowers, flower market halls, scaffolds, advertisements, designs, and various matching facilities and services, which directly or indirectly stimulate or subtly influence visitors’ visual and olfactory senses and produce long-term cultural effects. The tones of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market are all bright red and purple, and because of the cold weather at the end of the year, the warm colors represent liveliness and the festivities, and also the seasonal change and year-old activities. The main flower species on display, such as kumquat, peach blossom, and silver willow, have rich cultural implications. Guangzhou citizens attach unique specific meanings to each flower; the “four seasons orange” flowers imply good luck; cinnabar orange implies prosperity; peach blossom implies that time is running, love God drives; the silver willow is linked to silver, building, and prosperous financial resources; and “five generations together” flowers imply longevity and harmony. All of the flowers are bought to generate good luck in the New Year, and through this the unique Lingnan folk culture of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market has been formed and developed, and strolling around the flower market has become an enduring custom of Guangzhou citizens.

Conclusion

Zerubavel believes that collective memory requires collective recognition (Zerubavel, 2003). In other words, collective memory is not simply about the individual memory that is shaped by the recognition of social examples, but about the behavior of social memory itself, with a particular emphasis on public commemorative activities, such as specific holidays and traditional festivals. However, with the development of society, the changes of the times, and facing the impact of various foreign cultures, many commemorative ceremonies, and customs in traditional festivals are becoming weaker. Younger generations know very little about many of the traditional festivals and cultural customs in China but are proud to celebrate Western festivals. The weakening of traditional memory rituals reduces social cohesion, which has a negative impact on the protection and inheritance of memory. When traditional daily life and folk culture gradually become intangible cultural heritage, more pictures and words are left than real life itself that can be felt, touched, and appreciated, and this part of collective memory will eventually be diluted or even lost.

In the new era, preventing the loss of the cultural memory of traditional festivals, and to improve the collective memory function of traditional festivals deserves in-depth consideration. As a monitor of society, the media’s inherent function can be effectively used for the inheritance of collective memory. If traditional festivals are carriers of collective memory inheritance and dissemination, then the media is the catalyst. The transformation from individual memory to collective memory, and from communicative memory to collective memory, is mostly achieved through media. The media can enable future generations to witness forgotten history; to
carry, materialize, and digitalize the memory; and to make the past events a vivid cultural memory.

However, the media of the collective memory of each social festival is different. In ancient societies, ceremonies supplemented by words were the main part of festivals; in feudal societies, words supplemented by ceremonies were the main part; while, in modern societies, words, traditional festivals, and ceremonies are supported by mass media. Therefore, while focusing on the important role of traditional festivals in the inheritance and dissemination of collective memory, we cannot ignore the influence of the media, especially the new media. Providing more historical knowledge to the public through sustainable practice, explaining the importance of protecting intangible historical witnesses, and realizing the sustainable collective memory of traditional festivals is not only a prerequisite for preserving tradition and identity but also an integral part of our responsibility to future generations.

At present, there are few researches on collective memory from the perspective of social network structure. This paper hopes to make some useful attempts in this area. In this paper, Gephi complex network analysis software is used to construct the collective memory graph of the Guangzhou Winter Jasmine Flower Market, and exploring the spreading path of collective memory of traditional festivals. Of course, the depth and breadth of this study is far from enough, not mature and systematic, but preliminary results. The structure of collective memory is needed to been sufficiently analyze in terms of transitivity, nodal roles, and centrality in the future. Therefore, this article has provided a new perspective to the study of collective memory, and further study should follow.

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