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**A FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION: THE EVOLUTION OF  
KOREAN CIVIL SOCIETY 1972-1987**

by

**Sukhee Lee**

**A Dissertation  
Submitted to the  
Faculty of The Graduate College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Political Science**

**Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
August 2002**

# **A FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION: THE EVOLUTION OF KOREAN CIVIL SOCIETY 1972-1987**

**Sukhee Lee, Ph.D.**

**Western Michigan University, 2002**

**This dissertation seeks to explain the evolutionary process of Korean civil society throughout the 1970s and 1980s as a foundation for democratization. I argue that the changing character of civil society in the mid-1980s was a necessary condition for democratic transition in 1987. Thus, this study focuses on how an ineffective civil society became sufficiently effective to be a deciding factor in Korea's democratic transition, and seeks to define what factors led to the change. In the process of development of civil society, several factors, such as political culture, economic development, political opportunity structure, and the external environment, affected the character of civil society.**

**Most factors had an initial obstructive effect on the character of democratic civil society, and thus it remained divided, isolated, and ineffective during the 1970s and early 1980s. This ineffective character began to shift to an active, united, assertive, and effective character from the mid-1980s by the favorable and simultaneous influence of those factors. Moreover, the middle class who had been passive in supporting democratic civil society and its struggles with the authoritarian regime began to support and participate actively in the democratic movement after the**

general election in 1985. Due to these changes, democratic civil society began to attain counter-hegemony against the regime and forced it to make concessions in 1987.

This study demonstrates several findings. First, the changing character of democratic civil society was a foundation for the democratic transition. Second, the crucial condition for changing the character of civil society was that those internal and external elements should affect the character, both favorably and simultaneously. Third, along with the influence of domestic and international elements, the active support of the middle class was essential to the success of civil society in the mid-1980s.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Statement of the Research Problem

In the spring of 1987, Seoul and other major cities in South Korea were filled with demonstrators who called out “Democratization!” Business people, workers, religious organizations, and ordinary citizens joined students-led demonstrations on the streets to demand an end of the authoritarian regime and a fair direct election for president. After weeks of escalating tension and confrontations between firebomb wielding protesters and riot police armed with tear gas, the Chun Doo-Hwan regime yielded to the people’s demands for democratization. Roh Tae-Woo, a presidential nominee of the ruling Democratic Justice Party, announced democratic programs, including a direct presidential election and the release of political prisoners, on 29 June 1987, and thus it became a turning point of Korean democratization. Thus, as many scholars mentioned, the democratic transition of South Korea was a result of efforts of thousands of individuals and civil society organizations that fought and suffered over many years.<sup>1</sup>

Although there are many studies that focus on the role of civil society in the Korean democratic transition, most studies have stressed only the role of civil society and

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<sup>1</sup> Bret L. Billet, “The History and Role of Student Activism in the Republic of Korea: the politics of contestation and conflict resolution in fledgling democracy,” *Asian Profile* (Hong Kong) 20, no. 1 (1992): 23-34; Lee Kang-Ro, “Democratization and the Social Movements in South Korea: The Dynamics of the Bureaucratic Mobilization Regime.” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1990); Lee, S. H. “Transitional Politics of Korea, 1987-1992: Activation of Civil Society,” *Pacific Affairs* 66, no. 3 (fall 1993): 351-67; Joe Foweraker, *Making Democracy in Spain: Grassroots Struggle in the South, 1955-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), vii-viii.

its interactions with the authoritarian regime in the last stage of the democratic transition process. However, pro-democracy civil society in South Korea had not been strong enough to force the authoritarian regime to move toward the democratic transition process, and had not had the capability to challenge the authoritarian regime until the mid-1980s. In fact, most groups and organizations of civil society in the 1960s and 1970s did not have autonomy from state, and were divided in terms of ideologies, strategies, and organizations. Therefore, it is significant to find out how this divided, isolated, and inconsequential civil society of the 1970s and early 1980s changed to an autonomous and strong social force that could pressure the regime to accept people's demands for democratization in 1987. However, in spite of the importance of the long-term evolutionary process of civil society, previous studies have not emphasized the long-term evolutionary process of civil society and the relationship between the character of civil society and democratic transition. Because of those limitations, it has been difficult to understand the whole process of the democratic transition.

Thus, this study argues that the change of civil society through the 1970s and 1980s and its impact on the institutional political arena significantly influenced the Korean democratic transition. Many important social and political factors, such as socioeconomic development, the political elites' role, and a split within the ruling coalition, influenced the democratic transition. However, more importantly, the changing character of civil society throughout the 1970s and 1980s was a decisive element of the Korean democratic transition. That is, the civil society that attained autonomy and counter-hegemony through the political struggle in the 1970s and 1980s led the regime to

**consider negotiations with the opposition party for a constitutional revision in the mid-1980s, and finally forced the regime to accept democratic transition in 1987.**

**This study also attempts to find the main reason of failure and success of the democratic movement from the changing character of civil society throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Namely, democratic civil society of the 1970s had many limitations in struggling with the authoritarian regime because of internal and external difficulties. Thus, the democratic movement could not be influential and failed to attain counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime.<sup>2</sup> However, civil society in the mid-1980s rapidly grew and expanded by the influence of several internal and external elements and became a strong political and social force that could challenge the authoritarian regime. This well-organized and strategically and ideologically united civil society came to have the capacity to challenge the regime directly and influenced the negotiation process for the democratic transition of 1987. Therefore, the main research questions of this study are: how did divided, isolated, and inconsequential civil society of the 1970s change to an united, assertive, and influential civil society in the mid-1980s? What were the major elements that influenced the changing character of Korean civil society? How did those elements affect changing the character of democratic civil society throughout the 1970s and 1980s? And, how was the democratic transition process in the mid-1980s influenced by the civil society organizations that were empowered and politically active?**

**In order to answer these questions, this study will examine several internal and external factors, such as political culture, economic development, political opportunity structure, and external environments, which could possibly affect the character of civil**

society through the 1970s and 1980s. Those internal and external factors not only respectively affected changing the character of civil society, but also reciprocally influenced each other. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the dynamic relationship among these factors and their influences on the character of civil society. In addition, because these internal and external factors were closely related to policies and reactions of the regime toward civil society, interactions between civil society and the regime should be carefully examined to understand the process of changing the character of civil society.

Therefore, the main purposes of this study are: 1) examining internal and external factors that influenced changing a character of Korean civil society throughout the 1970s and 1980s, 2) analyzing how and when those internal and external factors favorably or unfavorably influenced the changing a character of civil society, 3) understanding how civil society organizations attained autonomy and counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime through the 1970s and 1980s, and 4) examining the impact of the civil society, which attained counter-hegemony and autonomy, on the democratic transition process of 1987.

Since this study covers a long-term evolution process of Korean civil society, the civil society approach is not enough to explain the whole process of the growing and changing civil society. Because the civil society approach excessively emphasizes the role of civil society in the democratic transition rather than its evolutionary process, it is difficult to examine the long-term evolutionary process of Korean civil society and the

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<sup>2</sup> Yun Sung-Yi, "Sahoiundongui kwanjumesu bon Hankook Kwonuijuicheje Byundong" (The Change of Korean Authoritarianism in the Perspective of the Social Change: focused on the political opportunity structure), *Korean Political Science Review* 32, no. 4 (1998): 120-22.

change of its character that had many intervention variables.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, synthesizing pre-existing democratic theories and approaches is very useful to elucidate what the civil society approach has difficulties in explaining the long-term evolutionary process of Korean civil society and its influence on democratic transition.

Through examining research questions, this study will reach several conclusions. First, the divided, isolated, and inconsequential democratic civil society of the 1970s and early 1980s not only changed to active, united, and assertive civil society, but also it was supported from the middle class in the mid-1980s. This changed democratic civil society played a decisive role in the democratic transition of 1987. Second, the waning of the traditional Confucian political culture strongly influenced the change of civil society and the democratic struggle in the mid-1980s. In addition, the change of the political culture affected not only the attitude of the middle class toward the authoritarian regime but also the basic relationship between civil society and the state. Therefore, development of political culture was a necessary condition for changing character of civil society.

Third, in the Korean case, economic development had directly influenced the changing character of civil society as well as indirectly influenced the change by affecting other internal and external elements, such as political culture and the political opportunity structure. However, economic development itself is insufficient to explain the changing character of civil society and attaining counter-hegemony against the regime. For instance, successful economic development had been favor to the authoritarian regime rather than civil society until the mid-1980s. Therefore, economic

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<sup>3</sup> More importantly, civil society approach often dismissed the character of civil society. That is, certain types of civil society may distort democratic order, and civil society groups and organizations may contain many uncivil and undemocratic elements. He Baogang, *The Democratic Implications of Civil Society in China* (London: Macmillan, 1997).

development cannot be a sufficient condition, but it is certainly a necessary condition for changing character of civil society.

Fourth, by the expansion of the political opportunity structure, democratic civil society was able to revitalize and establish strategically and ideologically united nationwide organizations for influential struggles with the authoritarian regime. Moreover, there was a significant change in the character of civil society due to the expansion of the political opportunity structure. That is, after the political opportunity structure was expanded, democratic civil society became more active, united, and assertive and thus could challenge the hegemony of the authoritarian regime. Therefore, the expansion of the political opportunity structure was another important necessary condition for changing a character of civil society in South Korea. Fifth, although external elements were not as important as other internal elements, they could reinforce the changing character of civil society. In this respect, external elements were also important and necessary condition for changing the character of civil society.

Finally, despite the fact that each of several factors affected the change of civil society in South Korea, they could not be a sufficient condition for changing the character of civil society. In the mid-1980s, simultaneous and favorable influence of those internal and external factors made the democratic movement more influential, and thus democratic civil society played a decisive role in the democratic transition of 1987. Therefore, it is very important that those four internal and external elements affected civil society at the same time and in the same space in understanding the changing character of civil society. That is, each of four elements is a necessary condition for changing the

character of civil society, but it can be a sufficient condition for changing a character of civil society when they combine at same time and in the same space.

## **2. Themes of Post-War Governance of South Korea**

### **1) The Military in Politics**

For nearly three decades without interruption, the military authoritarian regime had ruled the country with iron-clad control over its political institutions as well as civil society in general.<sup>4</sup> Under the pretense of protecting the nation from communist forces in the North and securing national prosperity, military leaders prohibited all types of organizations as well as individual citizens from engaging in any activities that challenged their repressive rule.<sup>5</sup> As the most important group of the ruling coalition, the influence of the military directly and indirectly reached every sector of the society. For example, after the inauguration of the Yushin regime in 1972, the role of the military became even more significant as a part of the ruling coalition.<sup>6</sup>

Since the Yushin authoritarian rule, the military of South Korea had consisted of the regular career group and the political group. President Park intentionally divided the military and carefully controlled the balance of those two groups. Thus, the internal division within the military was not serious enough to break down the authoritarian rule. This internal conflict within the military began to appear more clearly after Park's death in 1979, and it developed into an internal power struggle in the transitional process. Through an internal coup in December 1979, the new military force, a politically oriented

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<sup>4</sup> Yang Byung-Ki, "Hankookui Goonbujungchie kwanhan Yongu" (The Study on the Military Politics of South Korea), *Korean Political Science Review* 27, no. 2 (1993): 178-79.

<sup>5</sup> Choi Jang-Jip, *Hankook Minjuui Jogunkwa Junmang* (Conditions and Prospects of Korean Democracy), (Seoul: Nanam, 1996); Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, (New York: Norton, 1997).



military group, came to control not only the military but also the institutional political arena. Since the new military force took power in 1980, it occupied strategically important positions in the military, and controlled not only the military but also the institutional political arena.<sup>7</sup> Through these processes, the military had maintained its political position as one of the most important state institutions, and it continued as such until the democratic transition of 1987.

## 2) The Weakness of Democratic Institutions

Traditionally, democratic institutions of South Korea had been weak and used by authoritarian regimes. Especially, after the military coup in 1961, the domination of the government over other institutions, such as the court, the National Assembly, and political party, became stronger. Thus, the National Assembly, political parties, and the courts had been forced to serve as institutional instruments that merely approved and supported the policies formulated in the executive branch, controlled by the authoritarian regime, until the democratic transition in 1987.<sup>8</sup> Because of the tight control of the authoritarian regime over the institutional political arena during the 1970s and early 1980s, those institutions could not attain any autonomy from the regime.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Robert E. Bedeski, *The Transformation of South Korea: Reform and Reconstruction in the Sixth Republic under Roh Tae Woo, 1987-1992* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 23.

<sup>7</sup> According to Nordlinger, the military of South Korea belongs to the “type of rulers” among Nordlinger’s category of the military political system. He defined the “type of rulers” as a military regime that pursues political, economic, and social change through the regime dominance by the direct military rule. Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 22-7.

<sup>8</sup> Shin Doh C, *Mass Politics and Culture in Democratizing Korea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), xxii.

<sup>9</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *80nyundae Hankookui Minjuhwaieanggwajung* (The Process of Korean Democratization in 1980s), (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1997), 62.

Particularly, opposition parties did not play active roles in the democratic movement during the 1970s and early 1980s, and thus some autonomous social groups and organizations of civil society played roles of the opposition party. In this respect, the weakness of the opposition parties caused civil society to grow rapidly and lead the democratic movement. Although there were several opportunities for the opposition party to attain autonomy from the authoritarian regime and become actively involved in the democratic movement, the opposition party did not take advantage of those opportunities. The dominant role of the regime over political parties began to change after the general election of 1985. After the emergence of the strong opposition party as an outcome of the general election, the opposition party was able to struggle actively against the authoritarianism inside and outside of the institutional political arena through establishing a grand coalition with civil society.

During the authoritarian ruling, one distinctive characteristic of the institutional political arena was that there had not been a close relationship between political parties and civil society until the general election campaign began in early 1985 because of differences of ideologies and strategies. After the strong opposition party emerged as an important actor through the election of 1985, the attitude of civil society toward the opposition party began to change, and they were willing to establish a coalition with the opposition party. Through the grand coalition with civil society, the opposition party could force the authoritarian regime more aggressively to make concessions for democratization.

### 3) Economic Development

The economy of South Korea has been rapidly and successfully developing for the last three decades. Since authoritarian governments had concentrated all efforts on economic development, their efforts for economic development were successful. The authoritarian regime elaborated the idea of modernization into a form of ideology that may be called "developmentalism."<sup>10</sup> Developmentalism here is not meant as a specific model of economic development as in the context of Latin America, but a set of ideas and beliefs in a broader sense.<sup>11</sup> Through economic development, authoritarian regimes had justified their authoritarian rule. In order to achieve rapid and successful economic development, every economic policy had been set and implemented by the government, and the regime had to suppress labor movements and other social movements that criticized the suppression of workers and the regime's economic policy. Thus, the people's satisfaction and support toward the economic performance of the regime caused democratic civil society to be isolated from ordinary people.

In this viewpoint, successful economic development functioned as an element that reinforced the political foundation of the authoritarian regime. However, the government-led economic policy inevitably brought economic inefficiency and resulted in a structurally unbalanced economy.<sup>12</sup> Because of the regime's emphasis on the export-oriented economic policy, economy had come to be dependent on large conglomerates,

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<sup>10</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Korean Crisis and the End of "Late" Development* (London: New Left Review, 1998); Im Hyug-Baeg, "The Rise of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in South Korea," *World Politics* 39, no. 2 (January 1987): 231-57; Muller N. Edward, *American Sociological Review* 53, no. 1 (February 1988): 50-68.

<sup>11</sup> Developmentalism has been characterized by the researchers on Latin America as a model of economic growth achieved through import-substituting industrialization focused on heavy industry, high reliance on foreign capital, and state direction of economy.

<sup>12</sup> Lim Hyun-Chul, "Chamyoboda Anjunge Chijung" (Concerns more for a Comfortable Life than for Participation), *Wolgan Chosun* (April 1985): 90.

and collusion between politics and business (*Jungkyunguchak*) took place. Due to the unbalanced economy, conflict between the state and the bourgeoisie, and external influences, the economy came to face a crisis in 1978. Furthermore, this economic crisis made the society unstable and caused the ruling coalition to split in dealing with the economic and political crisis. Eventually, this political instability caused the collapse of the Yushin regime.

In the 1980s, the structural problem of the economy was not solved, but became even more serious. The regime was getting less autonomous from conglomerates. Moreover, from the early 1980s, the relationship between the state and the bourgeoisie was getting worse because the regime did not respond well toward the capitalists' demands. Since then, not only capitalists but also ordinary people did begin to express their dissatisfaction toward the authoritarian regime and criticize economic policies. This conflictive relationship between the state and the bourgeoisie advantageously affected the democratic transition. In this regard, economic development had affected the authoritarian regime, both positively and negatively. The successful economic development favorably affected the authoritarian rule through drawing more support from the public. On the other hand, rapid and successful economic development caused the authoritarian regime to lose its legitimacy and to split the ruling coalition. Furthermore, it facilitated creation of the middle class who were critical of the regime, and encouragingly affected the growth of pro-democracy of civil society.

#### **4) Active but Inconsequential Civil Society**

Since its independence, Korean civil society had been isolated, divided, and inconsequential because of a repressive policy and institutional and financial control of the authoritarian regime until the mid-1980s. Thus, civil society could not have autonomy from the state and had to be satisfied with its survival. After the early 1970s, several politically conscious groups of civil society transformed to pro-democracy groups and actively struggled for democratization with the authoritarian regime as a reaction to the regime's suppression.<sup>13</sup> During the Yushin regime, the democratic movement of civil society had focused on the restoration of the democratic constitution. However, democratic civil society faced fundamental limitations in its democratic struggle because of harsh suppression and internal divisions. Thus, civil society could not have the capacity to overthrow an authoritarian regime. More importantly, pro-democracy civil society failed to obtain popular support because of its radical ideologies and the political propaganda of the authoritarian regime.

Right after President Park's death, civil society had a great opportunity to vitalize and could actively engage in the transitional politics. However, democratic civil society failed to take advantage of the opportunity and thus another authoritarian regime was established in 1980. The new regime suppressed civil society more harshly than in the previous regimes. In spite of the harsh suppression, unlike civil society of the 1970s, democratic civil society in the 1980s continued to develop its ideologies and strategies and tried to establish coalitions among themselves and with the opposition party. Eventually, democratic civil society came to be revitalized by the expansion of the

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<sup>13</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *80nyundaek Hankookui Minjuhwaiehanggwajung* (The Process of Korean Democratization in 1980s), 75.

political opportunity structure in late 1983 and began to actively struggle to attain counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, with the changing a perception of the authoritarian regime and the participation of the middle class in the democratic movement, democratic civil society began to penetrate deeply to the society in the mid-1980s. These changes contributed to moving public discourse from the authoritarian regime to civil society.<sup>15</sup> Democratic civil society established a grand coalition with the public sector and the opposition party for influential democratic struggles and grew as a strong political and social force that the regime could not control over. This changed civil society strongly pressured the authoritarian regime to move toward democratic transition in the mid-1980s, and the regime had to accept democratic demands in 1987. Therefore, the political struggle of civil society in spring of 1987 was a culmination of tensions that had been building up between the authoritarian regime and civil society, which had grown larger and stronger, with heightened interest in broader political participation.<sup>16</sup>

##### 5) Traditional Political Culture

As a traditional political culture, Confucianism has been a powerful organizing principle in South Korea. It provided political, social, ethical and even aesthetic norms for over five hundred years. It also provided a hierarchical concept of the cosmos and society, while fusing upward social mobility based on merit and an authoritarian social

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<sup>14</sup> Yun Sung-Yi, "Sahoiundongui Kwanjumesu bon Hankook Kwonuijuicheje Byundong" (The Change of Korean Authoritarianism in the Perspective of the Social Movement): 117-19.

<sup>15</sup> Tun-Jen Cheng and Lawrence B. Krause, "Democracy and Development: with special attention to Korea," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 10, no. 2 (1991): 58.

<sup>16</sup> Hagen Koo, "Strong State and Contentious Society," in *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*, ed. Hagen Koo (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 247.

order.<sup>17</sup> Its stress on education has undoubtedly benefited Korean social and economic development, but it is also true that the principles of traditional Confucianism have not been conducive to democracy. That is, because of the hierarchical and authoritarian character of the Confucianism, it had been difficult for people to express dissatisfaction toward the state and to challenge the authority of the state.<sup>18</sup> This traditional political culture made establishment of authoritarian rule easier and the democratic movement of social sectors more difficult.<sup>19</sup>

However, this traditional political culture began to change through the process of modernization albeit there were still Confucian characteristics not only in the society but also in people's thoughts and behaviors. Through the modernization and influence of Western culture, more people came to believe in the superiority of Western values and methods. The Western way was embraced completely as a cure for all of South Korea's ill, an effective technical formula for economic growth and national security, and a new basis for building a good society, that is, an American-style mass-consumer society and a popularly based democracy. Liberal democracy and market capitalism became new state ideologies, a presidential regime was instituted, and societal actors became increasingly versatile in using the modern political rhetoric of liberty and equality.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the traditional Confucian political culture became for Korean people something to be criticized, delegitimized, and dismantled.

Several factors influenced the development of the political culture. Among them, the influence of Western liberal culture, socioeconomic development, and the spread of

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<sup>17</sup> Robert E. Bedeski, *The Transformation of South Korea: Reform and Reconstruction in the Sixth Republic under Roh Tae Woo, 1987-1992*, 96.

<sup>18</sup> Han Sung-Joo, "The Korean Experiment," *Journal of Democracy* (spring 1991): 93.

Christianity significantly influenced the change of the political culture.<sup>21</sup> This changed political culture through three decades strongly affected not only the relationship between civil society and the state but also the relationship between the state and people. In addition, the change of the political culture directly and indirectly influenced not only the character of civil society but also the Korean democratic transition.

#### 6) External Environments

Since the independence of South Korea, the external environment had been favorable to authoritarian regimes. After the end of the Korean War, every government used the issue of national security to legitimize itself. The crude anticommunist ideology or mentality that emerged from the war reduced Korea's capacity to develop new democratic values and ideals. The inevitable outcome was that, for decades, the authoritarian values of law and order remained unchallenged as the ruling ideology underpinning the dictatorship. During the 1970s and 1980s, authoritarian regimes justified their suppression on democratic civil society and opposition leaders with the national security issue. In this respect, the ideological polarization and military hostility between North and South Korea may have helped to delay democratization. In addition, the U.S. support negatively affected democratic transition. The U.S. government had supported every authoritarian regime since the independence in 1945 for its strategic national interests. The U.S. even permitted and supported the use of the military to suppress the democratic movement. This favorite attitude of the U.S. toward

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<sup>19</sup> Larry Diamond and Kim Byung-Kook, eds., *Consolidating Democracy in South Korea* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 9

<sup>20</sup> Larry Diamond and Kim Byung-Kook, eds., *Consolidating Democracy in South Korea*, 62-3.



authoritarian regimes began to change from the mid-1980s, and the U.S. directly and indirectly supported civil society and democratization.

Besides the confrontation between South and North Korea and a change of the U.S. policy, the Asian Games in 1986 and the Olympic Games in 1988 functioned as positive elements in the democratic transition of 1987.<sup>22</sup> As a host country, the government could not openly suppress the democratic movement and had to show improvement of human rights conditions to the world. In addition, the successful democratic transition in the Philippines greatly influenced not only the character of civil society but also the democratic movement. For example, the successful democratic transition in the Philippines provided confidence that the Korean civil society could successfully achieve democratization. Therefore, external factors certainly contributed to not only the regime's strategy for dealing with political crisis but also changing a character of civil society.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### **1) Literature Review of Democratic Transition**

There are many diverse theories and approaches to explain the democratic transition of the authoritarian regime. According to Dankwart Rustow, those theories of democratization can be divided into two major groups: functionalist theories and genetic

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<sup>21</sup> Robert E. Bedeski, *The Transformation of South Korea: Reform and Reconstruction in the Sixth Republic under Roh Tae Woo, 1987-1992*, 98-101.

<sup>22</sup> Shin Doh C., *Mass Politics and Culture in Democratizing Korea*, 3; Chu Yun-Ham, Fu Hu, and Moon Chung-In, "South Korea and Taiwan: The International Context," in *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*, eds. Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

theories.<sup>23</sup> Functionalist theories assume that outcomes of transition result from functional preconditions. On the other hand, genetic theories emphasize open-ended causal relationships, and consider the transition not as an inevitable process but as one dependent on how and when it originates and on the outlooks, strategies, and behavior of different actors. Thus, genetic theories pay less attention to structurally determined preconditions and prerequisites for democracy, and more to the strategies available to the actors involved in the democratic transition and to the specific political arrangements by which democracy emerges as a solution to contending political actors.

Modernization theory, one of socioeconomic functionalist theories, argues that higher levels of literacy, education, and urbanization are usually associated with high levels of economic development, and in turn provides civil understandings and supports necessary to democratic institutions and practices.<sup>24</sup> According to functionalist theorists like Scott C. Flanagan, the major cause of democratic transition is a functional dissynchronization between an authoritarian political system and the requirements of the society. That is, if an authoritarian regime doesn't fulfill the requirements or needs of the society, aroused by socioeconomic changes, the authoritarian regime comes to face its

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<sup>23</sup> Dankwart Rustow, "Transition to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics* 2, no 3 (1970): 337-63.

<sup>24</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), chapter 2 and 14; Philips Cutright, "National Political Development: Measurement and Analysis," *American Sociological Review* 28 (April 1963): 253-64; Deane E. Neubauer, "Some Conditions of Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 61 (December 1967): 1002-9; Larry Diamond, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Juan Linz, "Building and Sustaining Democratic Government in Developing Countries: Some Tentative Findings," *World Affairs* 150, no. 1 (1987): 5-19; Larry Diamond, "Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered," *American behavioral Scientist* 35, 4/5 (1992): 450-99; Larry Diamond, "Introduction: Civil Society and Struggle for Democracy," in *The Democratic Revolution: Struggles for Freedom and Pluralism in the Developing World*, ed. Larry Diamond (London: Freedom House, 1992); Larry Diamond, "The Globalization of Democracy: Trends, Types, Causes, and Prospects," in *Global Transformation and the Third World*, eds. Robert O. Slater, Barry M. Shutz, and Steven R. Dorr (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993); Larry Diamond, Introduction: Political Culture and Democracy," in *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries*. ed. Larry Diamond (Boulder:

crisis, followed by an emergence of democratic institutions which fulfill the new requirements.<sup>25</sup> However, these functionalist theories are criticized because they do not distinguish a correlation and causation of independent and dependent variables. For example, Dankwart Rustow contends that economic prosperity may be the functional requisite for the maintenance of democracy, but it does not bring the democracy into existence.<sup>26</sup> Robert Dahl also points out that evidence simply does not sustain the hypothesis that a high level of socioeconomic development is either a necessary or a sufficient condition for competitive politics nor the converse hypothesis in which competitive politics is either a necessary or a sufficient condition for a high level of socioeconomic development.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, cultural functionalism assumes that there is a direct congruence between dominant social values and the mode of political domination.<sup>28</sup> For example, East Asian authoritarianism is explained by hierarchical Confucian political culture and Latin American authoritarianism is explained by Libero-Latin authoritarian, patrimonial, Catholic, stratified political culture. Almond and Verba identified a so-called “civic culture” as the one most conducive to democracy. The civic culture is characterized by a high degree of mutual trust among its members, willingness to compromise and to tolerate conflicting interests and beliefs. On the other hand, O’Donnell’s theory of the

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Lynne Rienner, 1993); Samuel Huntington, *The Third World Wave: Democratization in the late Twentieth Century*.

<sup>25</sup> Scott C. Flanagan, “Models and Methods of Analysis,” in *Crisis, Choice and Change: Historical Studies of Political Development*, eds. Gabriel Almond, Scott C Flanagan, and Robert J. Munt (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1973), 46-57.

<sup>26</sup> Dankwart Rustow, “Transition to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” 337-63.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

<sup>28</sup> Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1963); Harry Eckstein, “A Theory of Stable Democracy,” in *Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

bureaucratic authoritarianism demonstrates that some types of authoritarian regimes are more likely to emerge with a certain level of economic development. Especially, this theory criticizes Almond's political cultural theory, as a so-called "civic culture" might be the outcome rather than the preconditions of democracy. Moreover, Albert O. Hirschman points out that consensus on basic values and political procedures can often be shown as a the product of democracy rather than its cause or precondition.<sup>29</sup> That is, it seems uncertain that the change of political culture brings about either institutional change or democracy.

Therefore, functional theories have difficulties in explaining the specific process of the democratic transition in Third World countries because the functional theories that have been developed based on Western experiences tend to ignore unique political and social conditions of Third World countries. According to these functional theories, certain socioeconomic preconditions can automatically bring democracy. However, in reality, democratization has not occurred in many Third World countries in spite of socioeconomic development. In this regard, these functional democratic theories have a serious limitation in explaining why those Third World countries, which attained socioeconomic development, did not achieve democratic transition. The main reason of this is the functional theories mainly ignore the political and social uniqueness of the Third World countries and other important factors, such as political struggle of civil society and political leaders' role in explaining the democratic transition process.

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<sup>29</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, *A Bias for Hope: Essays on Development and Latin America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 30.

On the other hand, genetic theorists argue that the genesis of democracy should be studied separately from the functional requisites for its maintenance.<sup>30</sup> The genetic theories emphasize causation more than correlation. For example, genetic theories focus more on the political actors' choice and decision than structural preconditions or determination. According to Laurence Whitehead, the path of democratic transition is decided ultimately by relevant political actors although structural variables, such as economic performance, class structure and international systems, do constrain and affect the course of democratic transition in the Third World countries.<sup>31</sup> According to these theories, there are diverse paths to democratic transition – and non-transition – depending on the strategies and choices of the relevant actors.

In genetic theories, there are various models of democratization, such as the “Transition from Above” model,<sup>32</sup> the “Projection of Hegemonic Bourgeoisie” model,<sup>33</sup> the “Opening through Election” model,<sup>34</sup> the “Invisible Transition” model,<sup>35</sup> and the “Standoff” model.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the “contingent choice” model emphasizes the political actors' strategic choice more than structural preconditions or determination in the process

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<sup>30</sup> Dankwart Rustow, “Transition to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” 346.

<sup>31</sup> Laurence Whitehead, “International Aspect of Democratization,” in *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, eds. O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 38

<sup>32</sup> Donald Share and Scott Mainwaring, “Transitions through Transition: Democratization in Brazil and Spain,” in *Political Liberalization in Brazil: Dynamics, Dilemmas, and Future Prospects*, ed. Wayne A. Selcher (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 175; Philippe Schmitter, “Liberation by Golpe: Prospective Thoughts on the Demise of Authoritarian Rule in Portugal,” *Armed Forces and Society* 2, no. 1 (1975); Nicos Poulantzas, *The Crisis of the Dictatorship: Portugal, Greece, Spain* (London: New Left Books, 1976).

<sup>33</sup> Peter Evans, *Dependent Development: The Alliance of Multinational, State and Local Capital in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 267.

<sup>34</sup> Im Hyug-Baeg, “Politics of Transition: Democratic Transition from Authoritarian Rule in South Korea,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1989).

<sup>35</sup> Manuel Antonio Garretón, “Political Processes in an Authoritarian Regime: The Dynamics of Institutionalization and Opposition in Chile, 1973-1980,” in *Military Rule in Chile: Dictatorship and Opposition* J. eds. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

<sup>36</sup> Dankwart Rustow, “Transition to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” 337-63.

of democratic transition has noticed. According to this model, democratization is characterized by a high degree of uncertainty. Consequently, the dynamics of democratization necessarily revolve around strategic interactions between actors with uncertain power resources. Contingency implies that political outcomes in the process of democratization depends less on objective conditions than subjective rules surrounding strategic choices made by the elite.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the right decisions by elites, both from authoritarian regimes and the opposition force, are crucial to the outcomes of democratization.<sup>38</sup> In addition, Frances Hagopian argues that democratic institutions arising out of “pacted” transitions tend to have greater chances of survival. Elitists in nature, such pacts usually restrict the scope of direct mass participation during the transition stage and so lessen the fears of authoritarian elites and their incentives to reverse the transition process. These political pacts usually affect the rule-making aspect of democracy rather than a broader socioeconomic democratization.<sup>39</sup>

Besides the functionalist and genetic theories of democratization, many scholars who study democratization have recently focused on a role of civil society in the democratic transition process. According to this civil society paradigm, the political struggle of civil society with an authoritarian regime is a main source of democratization, and thus the role of civil society is very important, not only in the process of democratic transition, but also in democratic consolidation.<sup>40</sup> Thus, civil society has been considered

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<sup>37</sup> Terry Lynn Karl, “Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America.” *Comparative Politics* 23 (1990): 6.

<sup>38</sup> Baohui Zhang, “Corporatism, Totalitarianism, and Transitions to Democracy,” *Comparative Political Studies* (April 1994): 110.

<sup>39</sup> Frances Hagopian, “Democracy by Undemocratic Means?: Elites, Political Pacts, and Regime Transition in Brazil,” *Comparative Politics* 23, no 2 (July 1990): 147-70.

<sup>40</sup> Leonardo Avritter, “Introduction: The Meaning and Employment of Civil Society in Latin America,” *Constellation* 4 (1997): 88-93; David L. Blaney and Mustapha K. Pasha, “Civil Society and Democracy in the Third World: Ambiguities and Historical Possibilities,” *Studies Comparative*

as a very important variable in the analysis of the actual processes of democratization and future possibilities in the Third World countries.<sup>41</sup> For example, in Southern Europe and Latin America, civil society was resurrected as soon as the first step toward political liberalization had been made, and the subsequent massive democratic struggle of civil society broke down authoritarian rule.<sup>42</sup> In Eastern Europe, independent and well organized civil society, after liberalization, played a decisive role as a necessary condition for democratic transition.<sup>43</sup> In Africa, political struggles of civil society have played a decisive role in the struggle for democratization, and it is highly unlikely that a viable democracy can survive without a civil society.<sup>44</sup> Also, in Asia, the growth of civil society has played a crucial role in the democratic transition because the impetus of the political progress primarily came from the conflict and compromise between the increasingly organized civil society and the ruling party.<sup>45</sup>

Although existing literatures of civil society and democratization focus on the role of civil society in the democratic transition process, not many literatures focus on how

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*International Development* 28 (1993): 3-23; Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, "Secondary Associations and Democratic Governance," *Politics and Society* 20 (1995): 393-472; Larry Diamond, "Introduction: Civil Society and the Struggle for Democracy," in *The Democratic Revolution: Struggles for Freedom and Democracy in Developing World*, ed. Larry Diamond (New York: Freedom House, 1992).

<sup>41</sup> Larry Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation," in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 227-40.

<sup>42</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 48-56.

<sup>43</sup> Michael H. Bernhard, "Civil Society and Democratic Transition in East Central Europe," *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no 2 (1993): 326.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Fatton, Democracy and Civil Society in Africa, *Mediterranean Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1991): 83-95; Dwayne Woods, "Civil Society and in Europe and Africa: Limiting State Power through a Public Sphere," *African Studies Review* 35 no. 2 (1992): 77-100.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas B. Gold, "Resurgence of Civil Society in China," *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 1 (1990); David Strand, "Protest in Beijing: Civil Society and Pacific Sphere in Beijing," *Problems of Communism* 39, no. 3 (1990); Ahn Chung-Si, "Economic Development and Democratization in Korea: An Examination on Economic Change and Empowerment of Civil Society," *Korea and World Affairs* 15 (1991); Gordon White and Jude A. Howell, *In search of Civil Society: Market Reform and Social Change in Contemporary China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); David M. Jones, "Democratization, Civil Society, and Illiberal Middle Class Culture in Pacific Asia," *Comparative Politics* 30, no. 2 (1998).

**civil society emerges and attains counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime, and how weak organizations and groups of civil society under authoritarian rule develop into a strong and united civil society. Thus, it has been difficult to understand the whole process of democratization by the political struggle of civil society and long-term interactions between civil society and the state. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the nature and the evolution process of civil society, especially the changing character of civil society and its influence on democratic transition.**

**Many social, political, economic, and cultural factors, such as economic development, political culture, and political opportunity structure, can influence changing a character of civil society. In particular, the political opportunity structure is a very important necessary condition for changing character of civil society. Generally, the political opportunity structure is defined as dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure.<sup>46</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter assert that normal science methodology is not appropriate to study rapidly changing situations like liberalization and democratization.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the concept of the political opportunity structure can help to explain how civil society attains counter-hegemony and forces the authoritarian regime to concede for democratic transition.**

**The political opportunity structure can also be altered by several factors, such as repression of the state, elite fragmentation, existence of supportive forces outside of the social movement organizations, and the power configuration in the institutional political arena. First, when the level of state repression increases, activities of civil society will be**

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<sup>46</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 85.



constrained, and vice versa. Second, elite fragmentation certainly opens space for the opposition force. Third, the existence of supportive force outside of civil society organizations is also an important factor that can change the character of civil society. Fourth, the emergence of strong opposition parties and their alliances with civil society place meaningful pressure on the authoritarian regime and facilitated democratic transition. The relationship between civil society and the political opportunity structure is reciprocal. That is, the strengthened civil society can transform the political opportunity structure in their favor.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the nature of civil society and its character change, strategies of civil society for influential struggle with an authoritarian regime are also important. Particularly, in explaining and analyzing strategies of civil society, a “war of position” and a “war of maneuver,” introduced by Antonio Gramsci, are very useful concepts to analyze interactions between civil society and an authoritarian regime. According to Antonio Gramsci, the “war of maneuver” is a direct challenge against the state, such as violent demonstrations, electoral revolutions, workers’ revolutions and so on. Through strong collective efforts, civil society can challenge and overthrow the ruling bloc. However, Gramsci argues that the “war of movement” or “war of maneuver” cannot be effective against hegemonic states, such as those in Western Europe because civil society, under bourgeois hegemony, is much more fully developed and takes manifold forms. A “war of movement” might conceivably enable a revolutionary vanguard to seize control of the state, but because of the resistance of civil society, such an exploit would, in the

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<sup>47</sup> O’Donnell and Schmitter, “Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies,” 4.

<sup>48</sup> Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 146.

long run, be doomed to failure.<sup>49</sup> A premature attack on the state by a “war of movement” would only reveal the weakness of the opposition, and lead to a re-imposition of bourgeois dominance as the institutions of civil society reasserted control.

By articulating the concept of a “war of position,” on the other hand, Gramsci tries to put forward a fundamentally new theory of revolution. This is a more fundamental strategy than a “war of movement.” The purpose of this strategy is to make people (workers and peasants) gradually have political consciousness, and make them realize that they are exploited by the ruling bloc. This strategy includes education, use of mass media, role of political entrepreneurs, spreading propaganda, and so on. Such a revolution would be an extended campaign for hegemonic influence among the population at large. As a strategy for political change, the “war of position” resolves an imbalance between the powers and needs of the proletariat, as well as eliminating the radical conjunction of violent means and ethical ends that has plagued classical Marxism.<sup>50</sup>

Particularly, in considering the capacity of civil society in struggling with an authoritarian regime, its nature is very significant. Some scholars, like Benjamin R. Barber, assert that it is difficult to expect an active role of civil society in the democratization without a strong democratic civil society.<sup>51</sup> That is, most civil society organizations and groups in the Third World countries were not well organized and were divided by their goals, ideologies, and strategies. Because of the weakness and split of

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<sup>49</sup> Robert W. Cox, “Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method,” in *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*, ed. Stephen Gill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 53.

<sup>50</sup> Walter M. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 236-37.

<sup>51</sup> Benjamin R. Barber, *A Place for Us: how to make society civil and democracy strong* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 38-68.

civil society, its democratic movements have been inconsequential, and they have been easily suppressed by authoritarian regimes. However, this passive, isolated, and divided civil society slowly develops to a united political and social force in terms of organizations, ideologies, and strategies, and challenges authoritarian regime to attain counter-hegemony. This change of character is a very important element in attaining counter-hegemony and forcing the authoritarian regime to move toward the democratization process. In spite of the importance of examining the character of civil society, however, previous studies of democratization and civil society have not focused on the evolution process and changing a character of civil society. As a consequence, it has been difficult to understand the long-term evolution process of civil society and its influence on the democratic transition process.

## 2) Literature Review of Korean Democratization

The successful democratic transition of South Korea still remains largely unexplored using most theories and methods of comparative inquiry. Unlike its counterparts in Southern Europe and Latin America, South Korea has received little attention in the large body of theoretical and empirical literature that is concerned with the world's current wave of democratization.<sup>52</sup> Those studies that have been done have taken the perspective of a mixed set of approaches, such as elite-oriented theory, modernization theory, and civil society approach. Some previous studies that were conducted based on elite-oriented theories emphasized the social and political elites'

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<sup>52</sup> Richard Gunther, Nikiforos Diamandouros & Hans-Jurgen Puhle, eds., *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation: Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 1-32; Juan J Linz and Alfred Stephan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns

roles and decisions in the process of democratic transition. Those studies tried to explain the Korean democratic transition as an outcome of the elites' disposition, calculation, and interactions between ruling elites and the opposition challengers. Thus, the most important factor facilitating the democratic transition of South Korea was the ruling elites' decision to accept democratic demands and opposition party members' entrepreneurship. For example, Kim Dae-Jung and Kim Young-Sam, who had been major opposition leaders since the 1970s, used both the regular political arena and the streets to force the Chun Doo-Hwan regime to move toward the democratic transition process in 1987.<sup>53</sup> If organized political parties had not been working in both arenas, the massive demonstrations could have resulted in a temporary regime breakdown, with no transition to a democracy.

Thus, some scholars, like Edward Friedman, emphasize that democratic transition requires bargaining and rule setting by political leaders who are working within the institutional political arena.<sup>54</sup> The negotiations can be prompted by street demonstrations, but the rule-setting process requires politicians and a bargaining game. That is, the political leaders' roles taken in the institutional political arena was a decisive factor in the democratic transition of South Korea.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, scholars, like Ahn C. S., point out that the Korean democratization is a perfect example of Huntington's term "transplacement," Donald Share's "transition through transaction,"

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Hopkins University Press, 1996); Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyn Huber Stephens & John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>53</sup> Shin Doh C. *Mass Politics and Culture in Democratizing Korea*, 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> Edward Friedman, *The Politics of Democratization: Generalizing East Asian Experience* (CO. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

<sup>55</sup> Some scholars like Im Hyug-Baeg argue that the democratic transition was a result of the split of the ruling coalition into hard-liners and soft-liners. Im Hyug-Baeg, "Democratic Transition in Korea: A Strategic-Choice Analysis," a paper presented at the Conference of the Korean Political Science Association, Seoul, Korea, 1991.

Karl and Schmitter's "transition by pact," and Przeworski's "democracy with guarantee." In these terms, the government made a concession and opposition groups accepted it as a compromise to avoid mutual catastrophe.<sup>56</sup> However, because the elite-oriented theories mainly focus on the political leaders' role in the process of the democratic transition, they have ignored what influenced the elites' decisions and behaviors in the democratic transition process. Moreover, many studies, conducted on the basis of elite-oriented theories, have stressed the political actors' decisions and interactions with the opposition forces at the moment of the democratic transition. For example, Moon Chung-In and Kim Yong-Chul focused on how and why the political leaders on the both ruling and opposition side reached an agreement for the democratic transition, and what the role of political leaders in the democratic transition process of South Korea was.<sup>57</sup>

Like this, many scholars provide insufficient focus outside of the institutional political arena, such as the political struggle of pro-democracy civil society. That is, they dismiss the point (or at least pay it no heed) that the democratic transition involves long complicated and uncertain interactions between the authoritarian regime and pro-democracy civil society. Particularly, in the case of South Korea, the long-term democratic struggle by civil society was a significant factor that changed ruling and opposition elites' attitudes and behaviors. Because of the emphasis on one sector of the

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<sup>56</sup> Ahn, C. S. "Democratization and Political Reform in Korea: Development, Culture, Leadership, and Institutional Change." in *Korea in the Global Wave of Democratization*, eds. Shin, D. C., Zoh, M. H., & Chey, M (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1994), 161-78; Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*; Donald Share, "Transition to Democracy and Transition through Transaction," *Comparative Political Studies* 19 (1987); Karl and Schmitter, "Modes of Transition in Latin America, Southern, Eastern Europe," *International Social Science Journal* 138, (1991); Adam Przeworski, "Games of Transition," in *Issues in Democratic Consolidation*, eds. Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell, and J. Samuel Valenzuela (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).

<sup>57</sup> Moon Chung-In & Kim Yong-Chul, "A Circle of Paradox: Development, Politics and Democracy in South Korea," in *Democracy and Development: Theory and Practice*, ed. Leftwich Adrian (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press), 1996.

society and covering a short period of the democratization process, most elite-oriented studies can explain only a part of the long democratic transition process.

There are also studies that examine the Korean democratic transition based on the modernization thesis that emphasizes a correlation between socioeconomic development and democratization.<sup>58</sup> Those studies basically argue that the successful socioeconomic development was the main causal variable in the Korean democratic transition of 1987. Haggard and Kaufman call this mode of democratic transition “the authoritarian withdrawal in good times.”<sup>59</sup> Socioeconomic development, such as a certain level of per-capita income, education and urbanization, resulted in the formation of a relatively strong middle class, who came to have democratic values and attitudes, caused the regime to accept democratization. For example, Hahm Chai-Bong is such an author.<sup>60</sup> According to him, Korean democratization was a result of a “crisis of success” rather than a “crisis of failure.”

Pak Se-Jin also characterizes the democratization of South Korea as an outcome of a “crisis of success.” According to him, the kind of Korean democratization can neither be characterized as the “East Asian” model nor as liberal democracy in the “Anglo-American” style.<sup>61</sup> The “crisis of success” brought a crisis of legitimacy, and the authoritarian regime adopted liberalization policies to overcome the legitimacy problem. The result of liberalization was that both the opposition party and civil society organizations took up the struggle for democratization against the authoritarian regime.

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<sup>58</sup> Martin Seymour Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (1959), 69-105.

<sup>59</sup> Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *Political Economy of Democratic Transition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>60</sup> Hahm Chai-Bong, “Democratic Reform in Korea Promise of Democracy,” *Korea Focus* 5, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1997): 38-49.

However, Pak's study does not explain a causal relationship between the successful economic development and civil society's attainment of counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime. Therefore, it has a limitation in explaining the whole development process of civil society as one variable to explain Korean democratic transition.

Han Sung-Joo emphasizes the role of the middle class in the process of the democratic transition as an outcome of socioeconomic development. According to him, there were several socioeconomic factors that influenced the democratic transition of South Korea, including 1) democratic socialization among a highly literate populace; 2) the growth of the middle class whose members are becoming increasingly confident with economic achievement and political rights; 3) the high cost of repression resulting from a rapidly growing democratic movement; 4) the national desire to be accepted and recognized by the outside world as a modern democratic nation; 5) a status that is becoming increasingly important in continued economic expansion; and 6) the particular externality of South Korea as a nation closely allied with the United States for its acute security needs.<sup>62</sup>

However, most studies that applied the modernization thesis do not explain why the democratic transition of South Korea took place when it did. Another weakness is that many studies tend to overstress the role of the middle class who had not been significant until the transitional moment of the mid-1980s. For example, David Steinberg argues that urbanization, one of the consequences of economic development, was an

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<sup>61</sup> Pak Se-jin, "Two Forces of Democratization in Korea," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 28, no. 1 (1998): 45-73.

<sup>62</sup> Han Sung-Joo, "South Korea: politics in transition," in *Democracy in Developing Countries*, eds. Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, 3, (London: Adamantine Press, 1988), 267-303.

important cause of the Korean democratic transition.<sup>63</sup> As urbanization increased, the relative freedom of the population to express its voting preferences was far less restricted, and the authoritarian regime lost control over social groups. As another consequence of urbanization, Steinberg points out the growth of the middle class. The status of the middle class in South Korea essentially conveys three messages: 1) hope in a society in which the lives of children will be better than those of the parents; 2) a conservatism that has been evident in voting patterns, which indicates that this group wants to protect these gains; and 3) a sense of participation in the political process. Thus, Steinberg concludes that urbanization and pluralism, based on successful economic development, were very significant conditions of the democratic transition of South Korea.

Despite the fact that many studies have emphasized the growth of the middle class and its role in the democratic transition, those studies failed to clearly explain how the middle class suddenly turned its back on the authoritarian regime and participated in the democratic movement in the mid-1980s. The democratic struggle of civil society, including the middle class, in the mid-1980s was not a direct consequence of economic development. Even though the socioeconomic development influenced the changing character of civil society and provided social and economic resources to civil society, it did not directly cause civil society to struggle more actively and aggressively with the authoritarian regime. For example, the middle class, after the mid-1980s, began to be politically and morally motivated rather than economically, and actively participated in

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<sup>63</sup> David I. Steinberg, "The Republic of Korea: Pluralizing Politics," in *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experience with Democracy*, eds. Diamond, Larry Linz Juan J. Lipset Seymour Martin (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995); David I. Steinberg, "Continuing Democratic Reform: The Unfinished Symphony," 203-4.



the democratic movement.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, the main proposition of the modernization thesis about the relationship between economic development and the growth of civil society partially fit in the Korean case. Finally, although many studies try to explain the democratic transition with the modernization thesis, most studies have been devoted to descriptions of the institutional and procedural aspects of the democratic transition.<sup>65</sup>

On the other hand, studies of the Korean democratization that have used the civil society approach emphasized the role of several civil society groups or organizations in the last stage of the democratic transition process. According to the civil society approach, the pressure of civil society was a major cause of the regimes' ultimate compliance with the people's demands for democratization.<sup>66</sup> Thus, those studies argue that an empowered and politically active civil society threatened the authoritarian regime, and forced it to follow the process of democratic transition in 1987.<sup>67</sup> Scholars, such as Sung Kyung-Ryung, point out that the acceptance of democratization by the authoritarian regime was a result of the tremendous popular resistance organized by civil society organizations, such as student activists, labor activists, religious communities, and the middle class.<sup>68</sup> However, it is difficult to find literature that deals with those significant groups and organizations of civil society from the beginning of their movements. In other words, most studies have focused on any one or a few groups and organizations,

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<sup>64</sup> Mar In-Sub, "Capitalist Development and Democratization in South Korea: The Socioeconomic Structure and Political Process," (Ph.D. diss., North Western University, 1991).

<sup>65</sup> Shin Doh C. *Mass Politics and Culture in Democratizing Korea*, xxiii.

<sup>66</sup> Alfred Stepan, *Democratizing Brazil: Problems of Transition and Consolidation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), xi.

<sup>67</sup> Larry Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation," 228; Gordon White, "Democratization and Development II: Two Countries' Cases," *Democratization* 2, (1995).

<sup>68</sup> Sung Kyung-Ryung, "Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation in South Korea: Great Achievements and Remaining Problems," 87-109.

and examined the democratic struggles of those limited groups and organizations in the democratic transition process.

For example, Bret L. Billet focuses on the role of student activism among various pro-democracy groups and organizations of civil society in the 1980s.<sup>69</sup> According to him, student activism during the “June Rebellion” in 1987 served to bring other elements of civil society, such as the opposition party leaders, and the middle class, into the political contest with the Chun regime. Despite the fact that students had been the most active group of civil society, there were other important groups of civil society, such as religious communities, the Jaeya forces and labor organizations that greatly contributed to Korean democratic transition. In this regard, the Billet’s study tends to ignore the evolution process of the student movement and other important democratic groups and organizations. Therefore, without examining the long-term evolutionary process of the student group and the relationship with other democratic groups and organizations, it is difficult to understand the whole process of the democratic transition.

Lee S. H. also examines the contributions of civil society in the democratic transition period.<sup>70</sup> However, like Billet, he also focuses on certain groups, namely militant industrial workers, reform-minded white-collar workers, and intellectuals. According to Lee, these three groups were the main actors of civil society that forced the authoritarian regime to move toward the democratic transition. However, unlike other studies, he stresses that counter-activities and responses of the regime toward the democratic struggle of civil society are other important factors in the democratic transition. Namely, he points out that the liberalization policy and weakening of the

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<sup>69</sup> Bret L. Billet, “The History and Role of Student Activism in the Republic of Korea: the politics of contestation and conflict resolution in fledgling democracy,” 23-34.

state's capacity to deal with the political crisis influenced a character of civil society. However, his study dismisses not only the evolution process of civil society but also the change of its character through the 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore, Lee seems to overstress workers' role in the democratic transition process. Compared with other groups, such as students, religious communities, and the Jaeya force, the working class in the 1970s and early 1980s was passive and poorly organized.<sup>71</sup> Because of the internal and external restrictions, workers' influence on the democratic transition was weaker than that of other major groups. In this respect, previous studies of Korean democratization are limited in applying the civil society approach.

In this regard, Lee Kang-Ro's study on democratization and the social movement of South Korea takes a new direction based on the civil society approach.<sup>72</sup> He demonstrates the crucial role of democratic civil society in pushing an authoritarian regime toward democratic transition. Moreover, he examines the interactions between key democratic groups of civil society and the authoritarian regime. In order to illustrate the interactions, he examines the goals, ideologies, organizational forms, and coalition activities of democratic groups and organizations of civil society. However, he did not present a systematic analysis of structural changes that were responsible for the resurrection of civil society under the authoritarian regime. As a consequence, Lee could not explain why the authoritarian regime implemented the decompression policy in late 1983, which provided space for revitalization and active struggles. In addition, like other previous studies that applied the civil society approach, Lee dismisses the evolution

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<sup>70</sup> Lee S. H., "Transitional Politics of Korea, 1987-1992: Activation of Civil Society," 351-67.

<sup>71</sup> Kim Byung-Kook and Lim Hyun-Chin, "Labor Against Itself: Structural Dilemmas of State Monism," 111-37

process of democratic civil society through the 1970s and 1980s, focusing only on the transitional period. In spite of these weaknesses, however, his study is very valuable in examining the roles and activities of civil society in the Korean democratic transition.

In addition, Kim Sun-Hyuk recently criticizes previous studies that apply the elite-oriented paradigm in the Korean democratization case, and demonstrates the appropriateness of the civil society paradigm over other theories in explaining the democratization of South Korea.<sup>73</sup> Although Kim effectively explains the role of civil society in the process of Korean democratic transition, he does not explain which factors caused a weak, isolated, and divided civil society in the 1970s and early 1980s to change to a strong and united civil society in the mid-80s. That is, Kim's study does not explain how Korean civil society evolved and eventually attained counter-hegemony against the regime. Thus, most previous studies that applied the civil society paradigm in explaining the Korean democratic transition process are incomplete.

In another approach, Chu, Yun-Ham, Hu Fu, and Moon Chung-In emphasize the impact of external factors in the Korean democratic transition.<sup>74</sup> Although these authors recognize the importance of domestic factors, such as economic development and the transformation of civil society, they point out that external influences were more important. According to them, two significant external factors influenced the democratic transition of South Korea in 1987. One was a decrease in the threat from North Korea, and the other was the U.S. pressure. Their study emphasizes that the Korean democratic

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<sup>72</sup> Lee Kang-Ro, "Democratization and the Social Movements in South Korea: The Dynamics of the Bureaucratic Mobilization Regime," (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1990).

<sup>73</sup> Kim Sun-Hyuk, *The Politics of Democratization: The Role of Civil Society* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).

<sup>74</sup> Yun-Ham Chu, Fu Hu, and Chung-In Moon. "South Korea and Taiwan: The International Context," in *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*, eds. Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

transition was not an isolated incident driven only by domestic dynamics. That is, without the external influences, such as the U.S. influence, democratic transition would not be possible. However, their emphasis on external factors is overstressed. Rather, it is more appropriate to say that those external factors reinforced the domestic factors.

On the other hand, Mar In-Sub applies the relative class power model for explaining Korean democratic transition.<sup>75</sup> He stresses the centrality of the alliance of the working class with the middle class and other groups for the democratic breakthrough in June 1987. Mar demonstrates the tension between capitalists and the state, the relative deprivation of the middle class, and the exploitation and oppression of the working class, all of which appeared in the course of capitalist development led by the bureaucratic-authoritarian state. Consequently, various social classes that were dissatisfied with the regime began to struggle for democratization. However, those in opposition to the regime did not automatically establish solidarity for the democratic struggles.<sup>76</sup> For example, the opposition party did not link to the working class to establish a coalition against the regime until early 1987 because of internal conflicts in ideologies and strategies. In addition, he overstated the roles of the middle class and working class in the democratic transition process because he focuses on the last stage of the whole process of democratization. Therefore, his emphasis on the coalition between the middle

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<sup>75</sup> Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Everlyne Stephens and John Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Mar In-Sub, "Capitalist Development and Democratization in South Korea: The Socioeconomic Structure and Political Process," (Ph.D. diss., North Western University, 1991).

<sup>76</sup> Sung Kyung-Ryung, "Hankook Jungchiminjuhwaui Sahoijuk Giwon: Sahoiungdongjuk Jupgeun" (The Social Root of the Political Democratization: social movement approach), in *The New paradigm of Korean Politics and Society*, Kyungnam University Far East Institute (Seoul: Nanam, 1993), 85-132; Park Hyun-Chae, Kim Keum-Soo, Jang-Eul-Byung, Jung Yun-Hyung, and Lee Hae-Chan, "6wol tjaenggwa minjuhwaui jinro (The June Struggle and the Road to Democratization), in *Junhwan* (The Change), (Seoul: Sageul, 1987), 101-167; Choi Jang-Jip, Cho Young-Rae, and Choi Je-Hyun, "Kookminui Himeun Widaehaetda (People's Power was Great), *Wolgan Chosun* 8, (1987): 178-92.

**class and working class for the democratic struggle generalizes the relative class power model too much in the case of Korea.**

**Those various perspectives of studies on Korean democratization have several serious weaknesses. First, previous studies have focused too much on elite-oriented theories and modernization theory in explaining the democratic transition. Consequently, they tend to ignore social factors that influence the elites' role and decisions. Therefore, analyzing democratic struggles outside of the institutional political arena is limited, or incomplete. Second, most studies have focused on only a part of the whole process of the democratic transition. In particular, those studies that applied the civil society approach have mostly ignored the evolution process or changing character of civil society because of focusing on the short period of transition. Third, many scholars who apply the civil society approach tend to focus on particular groups or segments of civil society and their struggles with the authoritarian regime. Because of that, most dismiss the dynamic relationships among various groups and how they established a united front for influential democratic struggles. Thus, existing studies are limited in their ability to understand how civil society became autonomous and had an offensive character in the mid-1980s, a necessary condition for the democratic transition process in 1987.**

#### **4. The Concept of Civil Society and Democratic Civil Society**

**Civil society has been interpreted and conceptualized by many scholars based on various perspectives.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, civil society has been generally understood and**

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<sup>77</sup> For example, John Locke as well as Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, such as two Adams, Smith and Ferguson, contributed to its early popularity as a notion of what linked the state and individual, just as Hegel and Marx gave it a radical turn that allowed it to become both a reflection and a critique of

interpreted by two perspectives, liberal and Marxist-inspired approaches. According to the liberal perspective, civil society refers to that sphere of voluntary associations and informal networks in which individuals and groups engage in activities of public consequence for their liberty and interests.<sup>78</sup> It is distinguished from the public activities of government because it is voluntary and from the private activities of markets because it seeks common ground and public good. In addition, the liberal perspective has considered the state as necessary evil for protecting the rights and freedom of individuals and groups, and it has seen civil society as the good.<sup>79</sup> Although ensuring that people treat each other fairly required a minimal state, liberals worried that the state would revert to the absolutist ways of monarchy in new forms.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, state power should be limited and civil society, which has a right to resist state power, plays a role in limiting state power. Thus, the liberal perspective sees civil society as an independent guarantor of formal democracy or as providing a space for defensive resistance under authoritarian rule. In this regard, civil society provides a foundation for maintaining democracy and for playing a role in protecting individual rights and freedom.<sup>81</sup> The liberal perspective sees autonomy as a necessary condition for civil society to establish and maintain democracy.<sup>82</sup> According to Thomas Paine, the state should not intervene in civil society.

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bourgeois society. In addition, Tocqueville helped to introduce the idea into American political discourse, where it has exercised an important if somewhat paradoxical influence ever since.

<sup>78</sup> Philippe C. Schmitter, "Civil Society in East and West," 240.

<sup>79</sup> Thomas Paine, "Common Sense," in *Thomas Paine: Political Writings*, ed. B. Kucklick (New York: Cambridge UP, 1989), 3.

<sup>80</sup> John Keane, "Despotism and Democracy: The Origins and Development of the Distinction between Civil Society and the State 1750-1850," in *Civil Society and the State*, ed. John Keane (New York: Verso, 1988).

<sup>81</sup> J. Cohen, "Discourse Ethics and Civil Society," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 14 (1988): 325.

<sup>82</sup> Lawrence E. Cahoone, *Civil Society: The Conservative Meaning of Liberal Politics* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 225-26.

Thus, civil society contributes not only to democratic transition but also to democratic consolidation.<sup>83</sup>

Tocqueville's influence on the study of civil society and democracy was to draw attention to the significance of the independent eye of society as a check against the centralization of power in democratic society.<sup>84</sup> Echoes of Tocqueville's writings on civil society's organizational density and its significance for democracy resonate in works on "political development" in the so-called modernization theory tradition. In an influential article by Seymour Martin Lipset, "intermediary organizations and institutions" are identified as "social requisites for democracy."<sup>85</sup> Moreover, Robert Putnam is concerned with the correlation between the effectiveness of public institutions and the success of democratic government, and with the degree to which a society approximates the ideal of a civil community.<sup>86</sup> In short, according to the liberal perspective, the proliferation of autonomous organizations serves to deepen civil society, which, in turn, guards against state despotism and strengthens democratic processes and institutions.

In contrast with theorists in the liberal and Tocquevillean tradition, who take political regimes as their point of departure, Marxist-inspired political scientists situate civil society within a broader social formation. According to Marxist-inspired theorists, civil society and democratization appear not as essentially self-organizing and self-limiting spheres and processes, but rather as discrete phenomena within a contingent

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<sup>83</sup> Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 371; Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 107.

<sup>84</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Vintage, 1954).

<sup>85</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," 69-105.



historical context which is characterized by capitalist production relations, bourgeois state apparatuses, and social class conflict. Marx linked civil society to the emergence of a post-feudal mode of production and to the development of distinct institutional spheres, such as state and economy. Marx saw democratization as the dissolution of civil society, like the realm of economic interests, labor, private property, and class distinctions.<sup>87</sup>

Some neo-Marxists, associated with Antonio Gramsci, afford the state a higher degree of autonomy, and thus a more prominent role in creating the conditions within which civil society may survive or thrive. Alan Wolfe believes that the experience of Western capitalism changed the conception of civil society. It occupies the space between the market and the state, embodying neither the self-interest of the one nor the coercive authority of the other.<sup>88</sup> Unlike Marx who identified civil society as the material relations of individuals, Gramsci focused on ideological and cultural relations.<sup>89</sup> The Gramscian perspective emphasizes the importance of the role of dense civil society in complementing and reinforcing the coercive state under capitalism.<sup>90</sup> Additionally, Gramsci's concept of the relationship between the state and existing institutions is less abstract and more dynamic and interactive.<sup>91</sup> Gramsci argued that "the ensemble of organisms, which is commonly called private," such as political parties,<sup>92</sup> civic

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<sup>86</sup> Robert Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Masking Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University press, 1993), 87.

<sup>87</sup> Karl Marx, "The German Ideology," in *Writing of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, eds. Trans. Lloyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 13.

<sup>88</sup> Alan Wolfe, *Whose Keeper?: Social science and Moral Obligation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 16.

<sup>89</sup> Norberto Bobbio, "Gramsci and the Concept of Civil Society," in *Civil Society and the State*, ed. Keane (London: Verso Press, 1988), 83.

<sup>90</sup> Perry Anderson, "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci," *New Left Review* 100 (November 1976-January 1977): 5-80.

<sup>91</sup> Marcia Landy, *Film, Politics, and Gramsci* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 24.

<sup>92</sup> Antonio Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," in *Selections from the Prison Notebook*, eds. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 12.

associations, and religious institutions, helps to maintain the power of the bourgeois state by facilitating rule through consensus, or to use his term, “hegemony.” In the Gramscian perspective, the concept of hegemony is very important; it is defined as “the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group.”<sup>93</sup> Recently, some scholars, such as Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens try to link growth of counter-hegemonic pressures in subordinate classes to democratization.<sup>94</sup> Those theorists stress that the role of civil society in democratic transition ultimately depends on its autonomy from dominant class interests.

As shown above, the concept of civil society is interpreted and understood differently by different scholars. Especially, the discourse of civil society has been revived during the recent wave of democratization from authoritarian and totalitarian rule.<sup>95</sup> Particularly, since the early 1970s, the focus of study in democratization has shifted toward the developing of civil society. However, in spite of its widespread use, the concept of civil society, like other political terms, remains ambiguous and confusing. Many scholars have presented such different concepts of civil society that it becomes a formidable task to establish a universal definition.<sup>96</sup> Most literatures generally agree on

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<sup>93</sup> Antonio Gramsci, “The Intellectuals,” 12; Joseph Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 24-6.

<sup>94</sup> Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Evelyne Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 45-51.

<sup>95</sup> John Keane, “Remembering in Dead: Civil Society and the state from Hobbes to Marx and Beyond,” in *Democracy and Civil Society* (New York: Verso, 1988); John Keane, “Despotism and Democracy: The Origins and Development of the Distinction between Civil Society and the State 1750-1850,” in *Civil Society and the State*, ed. John Keane (New York: Verso, 1988); Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992).

<sup>96</sup> For example, Tocqueville emphasized the role of civil society in sustaining democracy, and provided an early formulation for the argument that a pluralist and self-organizing civil society independent of the state is an indispensable condition of democracy. In addition, Antonio Gramsci emphasizes the importance of the role of dense civil society in complementing and reinforcing the coercive state under capitalism. Recently, Jeff Haynes defines civil society as “encompassing the collectivities of non-state

several elements that constitute civil society, despite the ambiguity and diversity of the concept of civil society.

First, individual units of civil society must be able to determine their collective interests independently of the state.<sup>97</sup> Thus, civil society can freely criticize the state and demand collective interests. Civil Society is considerably limited under state corporatism, where the authoritarian state organizes, sponsors, funds, subsidizes, monitors, subordinates, mobilizes, and controls corporatist groups, with a view to co-optation, incorporation, repression, and domination. Thus, the first priority of civil society under an authoritarian regime is to attain autonomy from the state, and such autonomy becomes a foundation of civil society movements against the regime. In addition, civil society should be differentiated from political society, mainly the political party. Although civil society and political society may be intimately interconnected through multi-level channels, there are fundamental differences. For example, civil society doesn't seek political power whereas the ultimate goal of the political party is to take political power.<sup>98</sup> Instead, civil society seeks to engage and to influence the state for collective interests.

Second, civil society has an organized form. It may be planned or spontaneous, short or long duration, formally or informally organized.<sup>99</sup> Civil society exists as forms of associations, groups, movements, organizations, and institutions. Moreover, individuals should voluntarily organize or join organizations of civil society, and express

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organizations, interest groups and associations, such as trade unions, professional associations, further and higher education students, religious bodies, and media-which collectively help maintain a check on the power and totalizing tendency of the state." Stepan defines civil society as an arena where numerous social movements and civic organizations strive to constitute themselves into an ensemble of arrangements to express themselves and advance their interests.

<sup>97</sup> Edward Shils, "The Virture of Civil Society," *Government and Opposition* 26, no. 1 (1991): 3.

<sup>98</sup> Philippe C. Schmitter, "Civil Society East and West," 240.

their needs and interests. In this respect, civil society is the self-organization of society, the constituent parts of which voluntarily engage in public activity.<sup>100</sup> However, under authoritarian regimes, this organizational form of civil society was often threatened by repression. Thus, it is difficult for civil society groups and organizations to maintain an institutional form.

Third, associations, groups, movements, organizations, and institutions of civil society share a certain set of norms and rules, such as pluralism and self-governance.<sup>101</sup> Thus, they accept the notion that different groups and organizations of civil society represent different interests. In the relationship with the state, a civil society that is legally guaranteed legitimates the state.<sup>102</sup> However, if the state itself is lawless and does not respect the self-governance and autonomy of civil society, then civil society doesn't consent to the legitimacy of the existing order. Instead, civil society attempts to revoke and change the norms and rule themselves, either by crafting informed arrangements invisible to the authorities or by replacing the existing state-society relations with new ones. In this regard, civil society is potentially a highly subversive space, a space where new structure and norms may take hold to challenge the existing state order.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, civil society is a place where the state and the opposition force struggle for hegemony of a society.

Based on these elements and for the purpose of this study, civil society is defined as self-organized groups, associations, and institutions in society that have or seek

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<sup>99</sup> Kim Sun-Hyuk, *The Politics of Democratization in Korea: The Role of Civil Society*, 12.

<sup>100</sup> Marcia A. Weigle and Jim Butterfield, "Civil Society in Reforming Communist Regimes: The Logic of Emergence," *Comparative Politics*, (October 1992): 3.

<sup>101</sup> Edward Shils, "The Virtue of Civil Society," 4.

<sup>102</sup> John Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society* (New York: Verso, 1988), 14; Larry Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation," 5.

<sup>103</sup> Robert Fatton, "Democracy and Civil Society in Africa," 86.

relative autonomy from the state, and voluntarily engage in public activity to pursue individual, group or national interests within the context of a legally defined state-society relationship.<sup>104</sup>

However, these various associations, groups, organizations, and institutions of civil society cannot be monolithic and homogeneous with respect to their activities and characteristics. That is, not every group and organization of civil society contributes to a democratic transition because each has different characters and goals, and there may be an unbalanced relationship with the state. Some civil society groups and organizations are controlled or co-opted by the regime, and therefore the capacity to struggle against an authoritarian regime, are not concerned with democratization, and may even support an authoritarian regime. Thus, only certain groups or organizations of civil society are involved in a democratic movement and contribute to democratization.<sup>105</sup>

Benjamin Barber notes that democratic civil society should be more narrowly and explicitly defined than the general concepts of civil society.<sup>106</sup> In studying democratization and civil society, the broad concept of civil society should be divided into democratic civil society that is actively involved in political development or democratic movement and non-democratic civil society which is not concerned with political development or don't participate in democratic movements. In accordance with

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<sup>104</sup> Marcia A. Weigle and Jim Butterfield, "Civil Society in Reforming Communist Regimes: The Logic of Emergence," 3; Larry Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation," in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, 4; Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and Southern Cone* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 3-4; Thomas B. Gold, "The Resurgence of Civil Society in China," *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 1 (1990): 20; Andrew Arato, "Civil Society against the State: Poland, 1980-1981," *Telos* 47 (1981): 23; Gordon White, "Prospects for Civil Society in China: A Case Study of Xiaoshan City," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 29 (1993): 65; Edward Shils, "The Virtue of Civil Society," *Government and Opposition* 26, no. 1 (1991), 4; John Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society* (New York: Verso, 1988), 14.

<sup>105</sup> Kim Sun-Hyuk, *The Politics of Democratization: The Role of Civil Society*, 20.

<sup>106</sup> Benjamin R. Barber, *A Place for Us: How to Make Society Civil and Democracy Strong* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 57.

political and social conditions of each country, democratic groups of civil society that play a crucial role in the democratic transition process can be different. Moreover, the influence of each democratic group or organization of civil society on the institutional political arena might be also different. For example, in the democratic transition of the Philippines, the role of the church was important, and it strongly influenced democratic transition in 1986.<sup>107</sup> On the other hand, students were one of the most powerful civil society groups in the democratic transition process of South Korea. Therefore, the concept of civil society should be narrowed down, and democratic civil society that actually participated in the democratic movement should be focused in studying on the relationship between civil society and democratization.

There are several characteristics of democratic civil society. First, it is more likely to compromise in its relations with the state: it follows the rule of law and authority. Second, democratic civil society tries to improve the stability, predictability, and governability of a democratic regime. In addition, democratic civil society tries to facilitate stability, bargaining, and the growth of cooperative networks. Third, democratic civil society uses internal democratic processes of decision-making and leadership selection. Thus, it respects democratic values and practices, such as constitutionalism, representation, transparency, accountability, and rotation of elected leaders. Fourth, organizations of democratic civil society compete with each other, and the competition helps to ensure accountability and representativeness by giving members the ability to join other organizations.

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<sup>107</sup> Eva-Lotta Elisabet Hedman, "In the Name of Civil Society: Contesting Free Elections in the Post-Colonial Philippines," (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1998).

In addition, democratic civil society plays several important roles in a society.<sup>108</sup> One important role is to provide a basis for limiting state power in order to control the state by society. In addition, democratic civil society works to undermine the legitimacy of an authoritarian regime and force the regime to negotiate with the opposition in the democratic transition process. Second, active democratic civil society can stimulate political participation, increase political efficacy and skills of democratic citizens, and promote an appreciation of the obligation as well as the rights of democratic citizenship. Particularly, under authoritarian rule, democratic civil society has often played the role of an opposition party, suppressed by the regime, and it has negotiated with the regime in the democratic transition process. Third, democratic civil society develops democratic values and principles, such as tolerance, moderation, willingness to compromise, and a respect for opposing viewpoints. In addition, democratic civil society contributes to the development of political culture through educating people and struggling with the authoritarian regime.<sup>109</sup>

Fourth, democratic civil society supplements the role of the political party. That is, democratic civil society plays a role of integrating, articulating, and representing public interests. In addition, democratic civil society recruits and trains new political leaders. Through being active within groups and organizations of civil society, leaders of civil society learn not only technical and administrative skills but also normative standards of public accountability and transparency.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, 230-31.

<sup>109</sup> Maria Rosa deMartini and Sofia de Pinedo, "Women and Civic Life in Argentina," *Journal of Democracy* 3 (July 1992): 138-46.

<sup>110</sup> Dette Pascual, "Organizing People Power in the Philippines," *Journal of Democracy* 1 (winter 1990): 102-9.

However, pro-democracy civil society in Third World countries is different from the ideal. The democratic civil society in Third World countries, especially authoritarian countries, has a clear intention to struggle for democratization. In the Korean case, several social groups transformed to pro-democracy groups, which had a common goal and strong aspirations for democratization, right after the installation of the Yushin regime, and struggled with authoritarian regimes. Although each group or organization of democratic civil society had different goals, they agreed that the transition to democracy was a necessary and sufficient condition for achieving their individual goals. These natures of democratic civil society are clearly different from those of non-democratic civil society.

Because of this struggling nature, in addition, democratic civil society under authoritarian regimes has undemocratic features, such as using violence and undemocratic ideologies. In addition, members of democratic civil society in the Third World countries have a more democratic and critical perception of the regime as compared with members of conservative and government-controlled civil society. Democratic groups and organizations in civil society, such as students, workers, and religious leaders and organizations, have more chances to meet democratic values and principles than do other groups and organizations because of democratic education or active involvement through social and political activities. In addition, those democratic groups and organizations of civil society are more autonomous from the state than are groups and organizations of civil society, controlled by an authoritarian regime. This autonomy from the state makes democratic groups and organizations of civil society ready to sacrifice and actively struggle with the authoritarian regime. In addition, under



an authoritarian regime, democratic civil society is not well institutionalized due to the harsh suppression, and it usually disintegrates after democratic transition occurs.

In these respects, unlike the ideal type of democratic society, roles and characters of democratic civil society under an authoritarian regime are different. Thus, under the authoritarian regime, democratic civil society can be defined as groups and organizations that are independent from the state in their activities, have a clear intention to struggle with the authoritarian regime for democratization, and directly and indirectly participate in the democratic movement.

## 5. Key Variables

In order to examine the evolution of democratic civil society and the change of its character, this study will examine influence of several internal and external elements that can possibly affect the character of Korean civil society during the 1970s and 1980s. Those factors not only respectively affect the character of civil society, but also reciprocally influence each other. Because of the complicated relationships, it is necessary to examine dynamic relationships among these variables and their influences on the character of civil society. Those factors are political culture, economic development, political opportunity structure, and external environments.

First, political culture is an important element because it constrains not only people's thoughts and behaviors but also affects the relationship between the state and civil society.<sup>111</sup> As Almond and Verba point out, civil society cannot play its active roles

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<sup>111</sup> In this study, political culture is defined as "a people's predominate beliefs, attitudes, values, sentiments, and evaluation about the political system of a country and the role of the self in that system." Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: political attitudes and democracy in five nations, an analytic study* (Boston: Little Brown, 1965).

in “parochial” and “subject” political culture. On the contrary, in the “participant” political culture, civil society can be involved more actively in the decision-making process.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, development of political culture significantly affects the character of civil society and its democratic movement. As seen in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia, the development of political culture plays an important role in determining the character of civil society.<sup>113</sup>

The development of political culture affects the character of civil society several ways. First, the change of political culture influences the character of civil society by affecting the relationship between the state and civil society.<sup>114</sup> When traditional political culture, like Confucianism, dominates a society, civil society is more likely to have a passive stance toward to the state. Thus, it is difficult for the public to participate actively in democratic civil society. Due to this passive and isolated character, civil society is limited in struggling with and challenging the state. On the other hand, through development of the political culture, civil society can develop favorable political and social environments for its activities, such as struggling to attain counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime.

Second, the change of political culture strongly influences the public opinion and behaviors.<sup>115</sup> Along with development of political culture, people come to have political

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<sup>112</sup> Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture*.

<sup>113</sup> Giuseppe di Palma, “Legitimation from the Top to Civil Society: Politico-Cultural Change in Eastern Europe,” *World Politics* 44, no. 1 (October 1991): 49-80; James L. Gibson, Raymond M. Duch, Kent L. Tedin, “Democratic Values and the Transformation of the Soviet Union,” *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 2 (May 1992): 329-71.

<sup>114</sup> Ronald Inglehart, “The Renaissance of Political Culture,” *The American Political Science Review* 82, no. 4 (December 1988): 1203-30.

<sup>115</sup> James L. Gibson, “Political and Economic Markets: Changes in the Connections Between Attitudes Toward Political Democracy and a Market Economy Within the Mass Culture of Russia and Ukraine,” *The Journal of Politics* 58, no. 4 (November 1996): 954-84.

consciousness and become critical of authoritarian rule.<sup>116</sup> The influence of political culture on the middle class is especially crucial in changing the character of civil society. Generally, the middle class in developing countries with traditional political culture is more interested in economic prosperity and political stability than in political development. However, the change of political culture stimulates the middle class to be interested in political development, and they become more critical of the authoritarian regime. It may also lead them to participate more actively in the democratic movement of civil society without fear of suppression. This active participation of the middle class can make civil society have a more united and aggressive character, and help civil society struggle actively with the authoritarian regime. In this respect, the change of political culture is an important element that can affect changing a character of civil society. Although the political culture is not a sufficient for the change of civil society, it is a certainly necessary condition.

In the Korean case, the waning of the traditional Confucian political culture and the spread of the Western democratic civic culture have gradually influenced civil society and its democratic movement throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Through the change of political culture during the 1970s and 1980s, more groups and organizations in civil society became more actively involved in the democratic movement. For example, the middle class, influenced by the spread of democratic civic culture, began to change its perceptions and values, and became more interested in political development than in their economic prosperity from the early 1980s. The change of perceptions and active

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<sup>116</sup> For instance, Almond and Verba conclude that stable democracy requires certain cultural characteristics widely shared among the people. These cultural traits include: a sense of political competence, feeling of obligation to participate in politics through such activities as elections and party

participation of the middle class decisively helped civil society to attain counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime in the mid-1980s.

In the Korean case, the traditional political culture has been changed particularly by two socioeconomic phenomena. One was successful economic development, and the other one was broad and deep penetration of Christianity. As many modernization theorists point out, economic development provided more opportunities for education, civil understandings, and supports of democratic institutions and practices.<sup>117</sup> In this respect, successful economic development contributed to providing an important condition for changing political culture in South Korea. In addition, the rapid spread of Christianity during the 1970s and 1980s played an important role in changing the traditional Confucian political culture. Along with the spread of Christianity, more people could contact with and practiced democratic values and principles, such as respect for human rights and political equality, through religious organizations and rituals. This in turn caused the Korean society's vertical structure to change to a horizontal structure. With the changed political culture, influenced by economic development and the spread of Christianity, more people became involved in democratic organizations of civil society, and this caused civil society to be more united and assertive, as evidenced by massive striving for autonomy and counter-hegemony. Therefore, the change of political culture was a necessary condition for changing the character of civil society.

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events, trust in and willingness to cooperate with others and other institutions, and so on. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture*, 337-69.

<sup>117</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*, chapter 2 and 14; Larry Diamond, "Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered," 450-99; Larry Diamond, "The Globalization of Democracy: Trends, Types, Causes, and Prospects," in *Global Transformation and the Third World*, eds. Robert O. Slater, Barry M. Shutz, and Steven R. Dorr (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993); Paul R. Abramson, Ronald Inglehart, "Education, Security, and Postmaterialism: A Comment on Duch and Taylor's "Postmaterialism and the Economic Condition" (in Exchange)," *American Journal of Political Science* 38, no. 3 (August 1994): 797-814.

Second, economic development is another important variable that can influence the character of civil society. Economic development not only directly influences the character of civil society, but also indirectly affects the character of civil society by influencing other variables, such as political culture and political opportunity structure. Major proponents of the modernization theory argue that economic development significantly enhances the growth of democratic civil society. For instance, economic development pluralizes and empowers civil society by encouraging the spread of information and knowledge and by increasing the capacity and density of independent organizations. Economic development also makes it possible to facilitate creation of more associations and organizations and to establish more complex and broader social networks in a society.<sup>118</sup> With economic development, civil society gains more social and economic resources for influential democratic struggles under harsh repression. Therefore, economic development is an important element that provides a foundation for changing the character of civil society.

Moreover, economic development provides a strong motive for the middle class, whose role is crucial in the democratic movement, to change their attitudes and behaviors toward authoritarian regime.<sup>119</sup> As many modernization theorists point out, one of the most important contributions of economic development is to facilitate creation of the middle class and to reinforce its power in society regardless of the intention of the regime. As a result, civil society can secure broader support from them to struggle actively and effectively against the authoritarian rule. On the other hand, economic

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<sup>118</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited: 1993 Presidential Address," *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 1 (February 1994): 1-22.

<sup>119</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "How Countries Democratize," *Political Science Quarterly* 106, no. 4 (winter 1991 - winter 1992): 579-616.

development also affects civil society by influencing other elements, such as political opportunity structure and political culture. For example, through the economic development, an educational opportunity is expanded, and society is more urbanized. This socioeconomic development favorably affects the development of political culture, and expands space where civil society can become involved in the political process. Through these processes, the character of civil society gradually changes. Economic development can also change strategies or policies of the regime in dealing with the resistance of democratic civil society. This change of strategies or policies toward civil society may expand or narrow the political opportunity structure.

Economic development also influences the relationship between the regime and civil society, both favorably and unfavorably. As an unfavorable influence, the authoritarian regime can attain legitimacy through successful economic performance. Under this situation, it is difficult for civil society to draw popular support to challenge the hegemony of the regime. In addition, it can be also difficult for civil society to be assertive and united with respect to the authoritarian regime. On the contrary, successful economic development can cause a crisis of legitimacy to the regime. As mentioned before, economic development facilitates creation of the middle class who is critical of the authoritarian regime and provides a strong motive for them to support civil society. As a result, the authoritarian regime faces a challenge from civil society that the middle class actively supports. In this case, economic development stimulates civil society to vitalize and challenge the hegemony of the regime. Therefore, economic development is a necessary, if insufficient condition for changing the character of civil society.

**In the Korean case, successful economic development decisively influenced the character of civil society by affecting the political opportunity structure in early 1980s. The Chun regime, which based its confidence on successful economic performance, implemented a decompression policy toward the opposition force to solve its legitimacy problem. Unlike planners' intention, the decompression policy caused the political opportunity structure to expand and revitalize democratic civil society. Democratic groups and organizations of civil society began to re-organize and establish a coalition among social groups and organizations and with the opposition party. In this regard, the expansion of the political opportunity structure, strongly affected by successful economic development, favorably affected changing the character of civil society.**

**In addition, economic development indirectly influenced the character of civil society by affecting the development of political culture. Along with successful economic development, political culture gradually changed from the traditional Confucian culture to a "civic culture." This change of political culture led the middle class to have a more critical perception of the authoritarian regime and finally join in the democratic movement led by democratic civil society. The active participation of the middle class in the democratic movement decisively influenced the character of civil society and became a foundation of attaining counter-hegemony. The successful economic development also provided economic and social resources to civil society, and thus democratic groups and organizations of civil society could more effectively resist against the harsh suppression. For instance, due to successful economic development, more pro-democracy organizations could be established, and their democratic struggles could be more influential based on economic resources and social networks that**

economic development provided. In this respect, economic development was a very important element that affects the character of civil society.

Third, the political opportunity structure greatly affects the character of civil society.<sup>120</sup> The political opportunity structure is defined as dimensions of the political environment that provides incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure.<sup>121</sup> In many cases of democratization cases in the Eastern European and Asian countries, the character of civil society has been altered by a political opportunity structure. Although the economy develops and political culture changes, it is difficult for civil society to be active, united, and influential under harsh suppression. On the other hand, when the political opportunity structure is opened or expanded, civil society comes to have more chances to actively challenge the regime.<sup>122</sup> In addition, because the political opportunity structure usually changes suddenly, it becomes possible to explain why and how the active struggle of civil society with a regime occurs at a certain point and why the character of civil society dramatically changes from defensive to assertive. Therefore, the creation or expansion of political opportunity structure acts as a catalyst in changing the character of civil society.

Although political opportunity structure plays a crucial role in changing the character of civil society, it is impossible for civil society to have the capacity to force authoritarian regimes toward a democratic transition process with expansion of the political opportunity structure by itself. In order for civil society to attain the capacity, other factors, such as economic development, political culture, and external

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<sup>120</sup> Dingxin Zhao, "State-Society Relations and the Discourses and Activities of the 1989 Beijing Student Movement," *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 6 (May 2000): 1592-1632.

<sup>121</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*, 85.



environments, should support the change of political opportunity structure. For example, Although the political opportunity structure is opened or expanded, if pro-democracy civil society is not ready to change its character, the influence of the political opportunity structure will be diminished by suppression. Therefore, the political opportunity structure cannot be a sufficient condition for changing the character of civil society.

The creation or expansion of the political opportunity structure influences the character of civil society in several ways. For instance, the political opportunity structure provides more space for civil society to revitalize and struggle actively with the authoritarian regime. In addition, the political opportunity structure makes it possible to draw popular supports more easily.<sup>123</sup> With expansion of the political opportunity structure, the middle class can join civil society organizations and participate in the democratic movement without fear of repression. As seen in many cases of democratic transition, popular support, especially by the middle class, is crucial to the political struggle of civil society. In this sense, the active participation of the middle class with its broad support to civil society strongly influences the character of civil society. Especially, when the expansion of the political opportunity structure combines with other variables, such as economic development, development of political culture, and external influence, the impact of political opportunity structure on the character of civil society is even stronger.

In the Korean case, the political opportunity structure decisively affected the changing a character of civil society and the democratic movement in the mid-1980s.

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<sup>122</sup> John A. Booth, Patricia Bayer Richard, "Repression, Participation and Democratic Norms in Urban Central America," *American Journal of Political Science* 40, no. 4 (Nov. 1996): 1205-32.

<sup>123</sup> Doug McAdam, *The Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 23-35.

The expansion of the political opportunity structure in South Korea took place during the regime's implementation of the decompression policy in late 1983. After the authoritarian regime implemented the decompression policy, democratic civil society rapidly revitalized and began to build coalitions with the opposition party. Since then, pro-democracy civil society began to directly challenge the regime and to struggle to attain counter-hegemony. This change of civil society's character greatly contributed to the attainment of counter-hegemony and to the democratic transition in 1987.

Additionally, the expansion of the political opportunity structure led to the emergence of a strong opposition party in 1985, which in turn led civil society to have a more active, united, and assertive character in the struggle with the regime. Although the opposition party failed to gain a majority, it did win enough seats to struggle with the ruling party in the National Assembly. Furthermore, the emergence of a strong opposition party by expansion of the political opportunity structure favorably affected changing the character of civil society. As a result, civil society became able to struggle more effectively with the regime through establishing a coalition with that opposition party. In this respect, the expansion of the political opportunity structure of 1983 became a turning point in changing a character of civil society from inconsequential to influential.

Fourth, external environments, such as support from the U.S. government and successful democratic transitions in other countries, can also influence the character of civil society.<sup>124</sup> Although external environments are not as important as domestic factors, they play an important role in changing the character of civil society. In the Korean case, the external environments affected the character of civil society, both favorably and

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<sup>124</sup> Yun-Ham Chu, Fu Hu, and Chung-In Moon. "South Korea and Taiwan: The International Context."

unfavorably. As an unfavorable influence, the U.S. defeat in the Vietnam War strongly restricted the democratic movement in the mid-1970s. On the contrary, when the external environment is favorable to civil society, civil society is more likely to be active, assertive, and influential. When the Carter administration pursued a strong human rights policy in the late 1970s, many civil society organizations were emboldened to struggle with the regime over human rights in spite of the threat of suppression.

In addition, successful democratic transition in other countries, especially by the active political struggle of civil society, positively affects the character of civil society. In the Korean case, the successful democratic transition in the Philippines strongly influenced civil society and the democratic movement. The success of the democratic transition based on vigorous social action encouraged democratic civil society struggle more actively with the authoritarian regime. Furthermore, it made Korean civil society have confidence that its democratic movement could also succeed in South Korea as it did in the Philippines. Additionally, the indirect support of the U.S. government to the democratic movement of civil society constrained possible options of the authoritarian government to deal with its political crisis. These external influences strongly encouraged civil society to use aggressive strategies and ideologies in struggling with the authoritarian regime. In this regard, external environments play an important role in changing the character of civil society.

## **6. Hypotheses**

Hypothesis I: The changing character of civil society throughout the 1970s and 1980s was a necessary condition for the successful Korean democratic transition in 1987. Civil

**society, which had been divided, isolated, and inconsequential during the 1970s and early 1980s, gradually transformed to active, united, and assertive by the mid-1980s. This change of character decisively affected civil society to have the capacity to force the authoritarian regime toward democratic transition. Especially, simultaneous and favorable influence of internal and external elements on the character of civil society in the mid-1980s was decisive for democratic civil society to have the capacity to attain counter-hegemony against the regime.**

**Hypothesis II: The political culture had influenced the character of civil society, both favorably and unfavorably during the 1970s and 1980s. The traditional Confucian political culture which emphasized hierarchical order of society obstructively affected the democratic movement of civil society and public participation in the movement. On the contrary, since the early 1980s, development of political culture, influenced by socioeconomic development, had favorably affected civil society. Therefore, the development of political culture was a necessary condition for changing the character of civil society.**

**Hypothesis III: Successful economic development influenced the character of civil society, both negatively and positively. Successful economic development during the 1970s and early 1980s had unfavorably affected the character of civil society through providing legitimacy to the regime. On the other hand, the economic development sponsored the middle class to evaluate the authoritarian regime critically and supported democratic civil society. Furthermore, the decompression policy in late 1983 was a result**

of the regime's confidence of the successful economic performance, and it expanded the political opportunity structure. Therefore, the economic development of the mid-1980s was a necessary condition for changing the divided, isolated, and inconsequential character to active, united, and assertive character.

**Hypothesis IV:** The expansion of the political opportunity structure in late 1983 and the emergence of the strong opposition party in the general election of 1985 influenced changing a character of civil society. After the Chun regime implemented a decompression policy toward civil society in late 1983, the political opportunity structure became favorable to civil society and its struggle with the regime. In addition, the emergence of the strong opposition party in the general election of 1985 was another outcome of expansion of the political opportunity structure. By the expansion of the political opportunity structure and emergence of the strong opposition party, character of democratic civil society changed to active, assertive, and united, and civil society could struggle more effectively with the regime. Therefore, the expansion of political opportunity structure is a necessary condition of changing character of civil society.

## **7. Research Methodology**

This study of the evolution of civil society and its impact on the democratic transition of South Korea is a case study. The great advantage of case studies is that by focusing on a single case, that case can be intensively examined even when the research resources at the investigator's disposal are relatively limited. The scientific status of the case study method is somewhat ambiguous, because science is a generalizing activity.

Indirectly, however, case studies can make an important contribution to the establishment of general propositions and thus to theory-building in political science.<sup>125</sup> By interpreting the history of Korean democratization, this study will seek to confirm the hypothesis that the evolution of civil society, especially the change of civil society's character, strongly influenced the democratic transition. This study will try to examine internal and external elements and their explicit and implicit influences on civil society and the regime. Not only specific policies and strategies of the authoritarian regimes toward civil society but also the reactions of democratic civil society under authoritarian regimes have not been fully disclosed. Thus, it is necessary to examine and then interpret important actions and reactions of both the regime and civil society.

In addition, this study will prove hypotheses - related to the nature of civil society and democratization – by examining differences between Korean civil society of the 1970s and that of 1980s. Finally, this study will seek to demonstrate that the evolution of civil society was a necessary condition that eventually forced the Chun regime to comply the democratic transition in 1987. Thus, the results of this study will be used in other studies of democratization as a hypothesis. Although this study cannot make a general law-like proposition based on a single case, this study can provide hypothesis well worth examining in future research.

There are several reasons to choose South Korea as a case study. First, South Korea achieved a successful democratic transition and entered the democratic consolidation process. In some countries of the Third World, it is not clear whether they

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<sup>125</sup> Joe R. Feagin, Anthony M. Orum and Gideon Sjoberg, eds., *A Case for Case Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 1-26; Isadore Newman and Carolyn R. Benz, *Qualitative-Quantitative Research Methodology* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998).

have really made the transition from an authoritarian system to a democratic system. In this sense, South Korea is a good example because most scholars agree that it already passed through the transition period and is currently in the consolidation process.<sup>126</sup> Second, the role of civil society was indispensable to the democratic transition process of South Korea. Therefore, the Korean case is useful for suggesting that civil society garners attention in the study of the democratic transition. Third, there are many competing theories and interpretations of the Korean democratic transition. Most studies have tended to focus on describing the process of the Korean transition without systematically applying a particular democratic theory or model. Fourth, although democratic transition occurred in 1987, South Korea has a long history of the democratic movement. Thus, the Korean case is useful in examining the long-term evolution process of civil society. As such, South Korea is a worthwhile as a case study of the democratic transition that character of civil society and its influence greatly contributed.

This study will use primary and secondary sources to examine the evolution process of Korean civil society and its interactions with the authoritarian regime. First, in the analysis of major political and social forces, such as the regime, political parties, and civil society organizations, this study will use political platforms, public statements, handbills, newsletters, and magazines of the ruling and opposition parties and democratic groups and organizations of civil society. Because many civil society organizations disappeared after the transition in 1987 or were suppressed by the authoritarian regime, it is difficult to get information about those organizations and their activities. Moreover,

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<sup>126</sup> Frank Gibney, *Korea's Quiet Revolution: From Garrison State to Democracy* (New York: Walker and Company, 1992); *International Forum for Democratic Studies, Democracy in East Asia: Conference Report* (Washington D.C.: International Forum for Democratic Studies, 1996); *New York Times*, "Winning Ways in South Korea," 28 December 1992. Christopher Sigur, *Korea's New Challenges*

because publications of those groups and organizations in civil society were tightly censored, it is very difficult to get information about their specific demands. Thus, this study will also use interviews to collect hidden and lost information about organizations of civil society that no longer exist, to obtain more historical facts, and to try to discern the political intentions of both the regime and civil society. Interviews will also provide more specific information of interactions between civil society and the regime and conflicts within civil society. In order to examine political and social groups and organizations in spheres of civil society and institutional political arena, this study will use politicians' and journalists' reminiscences and interview information because most strategies and ideologies of civil society organizations and of the authoritarian regime were not openly expressed. In addition to these first and second references, this study will use newspapers and magazines to collect information about important events in the democratization process through the 1970s and 1980s.

Through those first, second sources, and interview information, this study will build two databases: one on organizational profiles, and the other on events. The organizational profiles database will be composed of those pro-democracy organizations of civil society, which were established or actively involved in the democratic movement from 1972 to 1987. These organizations of civil society are divided into four general categories: students, religious communities, the Jaeya force, and labor organizations. Because this database will focus on ideologies and strategies of pro-democracy organizations of civil society, it will be very useful to examine not only the ideological orientation but also the changing character of civil society. Also, this database will

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and Kim Young Sam (New York: Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, 1993): *Wall Street Journal*, "Democracy Wins One," 22 December, A 12.



**provide an idea about the evolving political environment through the time-series analysis, and it will be useful to examine the evolution of democratic civil society through comparing strategies and ideologies of civil society organizations in the 1970s and 1980s.**

**The events database (type of event) will be composed of important democratic struggles of civil society and of responses by the authoritarian regime, between the years 1972 and 1987. This database will describe important events of civil society and the authoritarian regime between 1972 and 1987: demonstrations, terrorist acts, public statements, and prayer meetings, and responses from the authoritarian regime. By using these two databases, this study can confirm not only changing strategies and ideologies of civil society organizations, but also changing responses of the regime toward civil society. In addition, this study can confirm the expansion of civil society and transforming hegemony through analyzing the scale of the democratic movement and size of participants in protests and demonstrations. Moreover, this study will analyze the process of attaining counter-hegemony of civil society against the regime by looking at the relationship between the degree of suppression and the frequency and intensity of democratic struggles of civil society. Through event analysis and time-series analysis of these two databases, this study will examine the evolution process of civil society and its influence on the democratic transition.**

**Second, in order to examine the change of the middle class in its perception of and behavior toward the authoritarian regime, this study will use survey data. In addition, this study will use various socioeconomic data, which were published by the government and private institutions, to analyze the influence of social and economic development on the changing character of civil society.**

In order to collect data and thereby understand political and social situations of the democratic transition period, a field research will be necessary. Field research can provide opportunities to meet with and interview people who were deeply involved in the process of democratic transition. Particularly, because much printed information about civil society organizations is limited or else has disappeared, a field research is indispensable in getting this information. The field research concentrated on getting unofficial publications about civil society groups and organizations and interviews with people who were actually deeply involved in the democratic movement of civil society and who were part of the decision-making process.

## **8. Organization of Dissertation**

This study will be composed of seven chapters. The first chapter is an introduction of this study. I have presented research questions, literature review, key variables, hypotheses, the methodology, and organization of this study. In the second chapter, I will provide a survey of post-war Korean history, culminating in the transition of 1987. The third chapter will cover the *Yushin* authoritarian period (1972-1979). Not only the background and nature of the *Yushin* regime, including the ruling ideologies, but also the nature of civil society and its struggles with the *Yushin* regime will be examined. In addition, interactions between the regime and democratic civil society, such as students, the Jaeya force, the religious communities, and labor organizations, will be examined. I will also examine why and how several autonomous civil society groups transformed to pro-democracy groups in the early 1970s and struggled with the authoritarian regime. Furthermore, conflicts within civil society groups and

organizations will be also examined. Through examining interactions between civil society and the *Yushin* regime, I will focus on what kinds of restrictions hindered the democratic movement of civil society. I will also examine not only which political and social factors influenced pro-democracy civil society and its democratic movement but also which internal and external factors affected the collapse of the *Yushin* regime.

In Chapter Four (1979-1983), I will focus on the resurrection of civil society and its democratic struggles in the new political environment, from Park's death in 1979 to the implementation of a decompression policy toward democratic civil society and the opposition party in late 1983. The changed political and social conditions after Park's death and their impacts on the character of civil society and the relationship between civil society and the regime will be analyzed. Especially, I will examine the "Kwangju Democratic Movement" of 1980 and its long-term impact on the democratic movement of civil society. I will also examine why the great chance for the democratic transition in 1980 was aborted in the perspective of character of civil society.

Chapter Five (1983-1985) will focus on the decompression policy of the regime toward civil society and its influence on the character of civil society. I will demonstrate that successful economic development provided not only a concrete political foundation for the regime but also an opportunity for civil society to revitalize and work more actively against the regime. In addition, I will examine what made the regime implement a decompression policy and how the political opportunity structure expanded by the decompression policy decisively affected civil society and its democratic movement. Moreover, I will examine change of the middle class and the establishment process of coalitions among various democratic groups and organizations. Finally, I will examine

**how changed character of civil society and the critical middle class affected the general election of 1985.**

**In Chapter Six (1985-1987), I will examine outcomes of the general election in 1985 and how it influenced the character of civil society and the democratic movement in the mid-1980s. I will also examine what kinds of political and social factors influenced the outcomes of the general election, and analyze how outcomes of the election affected character of civil society. In particular, I will examine and analyze how civil society organizations, revitalized by the decompression policy and the outcome of the general election, established a grand coalition with the opposition party, and forced the authoritarian regime to accept the actual democratic transition in 1987. Also to be examined will be the political and social factors that contributed to attaining counter-hegemony of civil society against the authoritarian regime in the middle of the 1980s.**

**In addition, I will focus on major strategies of the coalition of democratic civil society, the opposition party, and the middle class, for attaining counter-hegemony against the regime. I will also examine how civil society influenced negotiations for constitutional revision between 1986 and 1987. In addition, not only ideological and strategic conflicts among various civil society organizations and groups but also dynamic relationships between civil society organizations and the opposition party during the process of democratic transition will be examined. In addition, this chapter will demonstrate that the active participation of the middle class in the democratic movement was a very important factor that influenced changing a character of civil society. Finally, I will examine how civil society that attained counter-hegemony played a decisive role in the democratic transition in 1987.**

**Chapter Seven will conclude this study. This chapter will conclude that the changing character of civil society through the 1970s and 1980s significantly affected the democratic transition in 1987. I will emphasize that various internal and external elements significantly influenced the character of civil society and this change of character was an important in attaining counter-hegemony against the regime. In particular, the simultaneous and favorable influence of those factors on civil society was essential to democratic transition in 1987.**

## **CHAPTER II**

### **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN SOUTH KOREA**

On 29 June 1987, Roh Tae-Woo, a presidential candidate of the ruling Democratic Justice Party, publicly announced the democratization program after a long period of violent confrontations between the authoritarian regime and the opposition force. The “June 29 Declaration” was the democratic breakthrough in the contemporary history of South Korea. In the “June 29 Declaration,” a direct presidential election, revision of the Constitution, release of political prisoners and other democratic measures were included. Until Roh’s declaration, there had been many individual and organizational sacrifices and violent confrontations between the authoritarian regime and democratic civil society.

The democratic movement of civil society that began from the early 1970s had been inconsequential, and barely influenced the political institutional arena until the mid-1980s. Because of suppression and internal conflicts, civil society had been divided, and its democratic movement did not reach the point that civil society could challenge the authoritarian regime. However, after the mid-1980s, democratic groups and organizations of civil society, gradually supported by the opposition party and the middle class, began to attain counter-hegemony against the Chun regime, and force the regime to move toward the democratic transition process. Especially, in June 1987, the nationwide democratic movement of civil society paralyzed the society, and put the regime in political crisis. Under the crisis, the regime did not have many options for solving the

**political crisis. After long and violent confrontations between the regime and democratic civil society, the Chun regime had to accept the democratic demands of civil society through Roh's declaration on June 29.**

**However, the democratic movement of civil society did not suddenly appear in the middle of the 1980s. In the early 1970s, pro-democracy groups and organizations of civil society, mainly focusing on the restoration of the democratic constitution, began to organize and develop into anti-authoritarian groups and organizations throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In this evolutionary process, democratic civil society had faced many internal and external restrictions, such as ideological and strategic conflicts and harsh repression. Nevertheless, democratic civil society had survived, and grew into a strong social force that could challenge the authoritarian regime.**

**Since the civilian government, based on a democratic constitution, was established in July 1948, the government and its people had difficulties in exercising democratic principles because of the traditional Confucian political culture and Japanese colonial rule for a long period. Furthermore, because of the division of the Korean peninsula, the influence of the military in domestic politics was getting stronger. Moreover, the Korean War from 1950 to 1953 increased the political status of the military, and national security became the most important policy of the regime. These internal and external factors impeded political development, and encouraged President Rhee Syng-Man to abuse power. By the late 1950s, President Rhee had made the political system practically his own by controlling political parties and civil society. Because of the autocratic characteristics of the regime, the hallmarks of the First**

**Republic (1948-1960) were President Rhee's arbitrary executive power and the opposition movement against his tyranny.**

**However, the Rhee regime had not eliminated the anti-government civil society and its activities. Beginning in early April 1960, university and high school students began to protest against Rhee's dictatorship. This set off major student demonstrations, followed by repression and violence. Students, exposed to and influenced by Western political ideas, strongly criticized the regime because of their dissatisfaction with 1) the lawless and corrupt Rhee regime, 2) the society ruled by violence, 3) the corrupt society, 4) economic depression, and 5) the arrogance of the privileged class. Criticism of the dictatorship reached a peak on April 19, 1960, when student group protested on streets throughout the country against Rhee's dictatorship. After this huge demonstration on April 19, President Rhee finally announced he would step down from the presidency.**

**The Second Republic (August 1960-May 1961) was established after the National Assembly election of July 29, 1960. In the election, the Democratic Party, which had been the opposition party under the First Republic, became a majority party in the National Assembly. However, the Democrats disintegrated into factions, and Chang Myon became the Prime Minister on August 19, 1960 by a narrow margin. Because of the experience of dictatorship and political corruption in the presidential system, the Second Republic adopted a cabinet system led by the Prime Minister. However, the Chang Myon government disappointed the Korean people when it imposed anti-democratic measures. Unlike people's expectation, political and social instability during the Second Republic was more serious than that of the First Republic. Although more democratic than the First Republic in the institutional aspect, the Second Republic lost its**



control over political, social, and economic sectors because of the weak institutionalization of governance and intense political struggles among many political parties.

In this unstable situation, the military, with its emphasis on political and social stability for the sake of national security, began to have a critical view of the Chang Myon regime. In addition, the military leaders felt threatened by North Korea and thus began to seek political change through direct intervention in politics. Furthermore, many young military officers were strongly dissatisfied with their promotions. Eventually, the military, led by Major Gen. Park Chung-Hee, carried out a military coup on May 16, 1961. Once the coup had toppled the civilian government, they took over the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the state and organized a Military Revolutionary Committee, consisting of five generals. In addition, martial law was proclaimed and remained in force until late 1963. Although some politicians, like President Yun Bo-Sun and Prime Minister Chang Myon, attempted to resist the coup of young military officers, it did not succeed. On May 18, the thirteen-member cabinet held its last meeting and resigned. The Second Republic was formally declared dead.

After the successful coup, military leaders gave two-reasons to justify their intervention. The junta claimed that military intervention was inevitable because of political instability and ineffective economic policy. After three years of direct military control, Park publicly announced that he would retire from active duty, and play an effective role in the future civilian government. He resigned from active military service on August 30 and promptly joined the Democratic Republican Party (DRP), established mainly by retired military officers and former opposition politicians. Park Chung-Hee

became a presidential candidate of the ruling DRP and won the election held on October 15, 1963. In addition, his party gained a majority of seats in the November 1963 general election. Through these two elections, President Park created a political foundation for ruling the country, and the Third Republic was established.

Although the Third Republic was established by the military coup, the regime had a democratic constitution, and its power was exercised by democratic procedures in the period from 1963 to 1971. The Park regime defined the national goals to be economic development and national security. The Park regime succeeded in achieving economic development and national security. Nevertheless, from the beginning of the Park regime, the opposition party took issue with the regime's legitimacy. Moreover, in the presidential election of 1971, Park barely won over Kim Dae-Jung, the candidate of the major opposition party. President Park understood that his narrow margin in the election was a result of ineffectively dealing with the opposition force and of the problem of legitimacy. Thus, President Park needed to do something to overcome the legitimacy problem in order to maintain his political position.

Based on the existing constitution, the Park regime had political and legal limits in defending itself from the anti-government movement of the opposition force. Thus, President Park decided to change the political system so he could more easily deal with threats and challenges of the opposition force. To do this, President Park needed a new political and legal foundation to effectively suppress anti-regime the democratic movement of the opposition without legal and political restrictions. The first step was the inauguration of the *Yushin-revitalizing reform-Constitution* in 1972. Park stated the new constitution was necessary to eliminate the conditions fostering disorder and inefficiency

and to develop the free democratic institutions best suited for Korea.<sup>127</sup> The *Yushin* Constitution, adopted indirect presidential election, allowed the President an indefinite number of six-year terms. After Park was indirectly elected as the president, the regime suppressed not only the opposition party but also democratic civil society through powerful presidential emergency decrees and state power apparatuses.<sup>128</sup>

After the inauguration of the *Yushin* regime in 1972, democratic civil society, led mainly by students, the *Jaeya* force,<sup>129</sup> workers, and religious communities, began to struggle with the *Yushin* regime for restoration of the democratic constitution. Because of harsh repression, however, the struggle for the democratic transition did not succeed during the 1970s. More importantly, democratic civil society was not well organized and did not have unified strategies and ideologies for their struggle. In spite of these internal and external difficulties, however, democratic civil society continued to struggle with the regime during the 1970s.

The collapse of the *Yushin* regime began with the economic crisis in late 1978 when the underlying difficulties became manifest and the economy began to falter. The economic crisis of 1978, caused the unbalanced investment and unstable international economic environment, brought the political crisis of 1979. Workers and the white-collar middle class, who had traditionally supported the *Yushin* regime, began to defect and criticize the economic policies of the regime. This anti-government struggle developed

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<sup>127</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 18 October 1972, 1.

<sup>128</sup> Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset, *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1990), 273.

<sup>129</sup> *Jaeya* means extra-institutional opposition force. The term, *Jaeya* is a somewhat ambiguous concept because dissident students, workers, urban poor, and farmers are not included in this category, although they are outside of the institutional political arena. In this respect, the *Jaeya* can be defined as a broad category of opposition notables with middle class origins, who have been involved in anti-regime political activities working outside the officially sanctioned political space. Yun Sang-Chul, *80nyundae*

into the democratic movement. The confrontation between democratic civil society and the regime reached the point at which the regime might use the military to suppress the democratic movement by the end of 1979. Along with the violent confrontation between the regime and civil society, a politically important event took place in the institutional political arena. The ruling party and government ousted Kim Young-Sam, one of the opposition party leaders with influence in the democratic force of civil society, from the National Assembly. This political incident provoked an uprising in Busan and Masan. Although the democratic struggle of civil society was not sufficient to break down the regime, it was enough to make political and social conditions unstable as well as provoke a political crisis for the regime in 1979.

In this crisis, the ruling coalition was divided into hardline and moderate factions based on their strategies for dealing with the political crisis. The moderate faction aimed to solve the political crisis through compromise with the opposition force, whereas the hardliners wanted to suppress democratic civil society by use of the military. However, because the President himself and the hardliners of the ruling coalition controlled the decision making process of the regime, the opinion of the moderate faction could not be accepted. Internal conflict within the ruling coalition grew to the point where Kim Jae-Kyu, one of the moderate faction, decided to assassinate President Park. For Kim, this was the only way to solve the political crisis peacefully. Thus, Kim Jae-Kyu, the Chief of Korean Intelligence Agency (KCIA), assassinated President Park on 26 October 1979. With Park's death, the authoritarian *Yushin* regime collapsed, and South Korea faced a new political situation in the 1980s.

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*Hankookui Minjuhwahanggwajung* (The Process of Democratic Transition of South Korea in the 1980s), 75-6.

Park's sudden death not only caused political and social instability, but also provided an opportunity for democratization. In the politically and socially unstable situation, democratic civil society became actively involved in transitional politics. Many new democratic organizations were established and struggled to attain autonomy from the state. At the same time, they began to force not only the opposition party but also the ruling party to reach an agreement for the transition to democracy. On the other hand, in the institutional political arena, the DRP and the opposition New Democratic Party (NDP) began to negotiate the process of democratic transition right after Park's death. Moreover, the acting president Choi Kyu-Ha, Prime Minister under the Park regime, agreed and supported negotiations for a democratic transition.

However, negotiations for the democratic transition could not reach an agreement because neither the DRP nor the NDP had complete autonomy from civil society or hardliners in the military. That is, under the politically unstable situation, the real power was in the military because it was the only state institution that was well-organized to use physical force. After the intra-military coup in December 12, 1979, the new military force, led by Chun Doo-Hwan, emerged as a real political actor in transitional politics.<sup>130</sup> Under the influence of the new military force, the Choi government was gradually reduced to a puppet regime controlled by the military hardliners. The new military force started to suppress democratic civil society, especially students and workers. Thus, the democratic movement of civil society, that had just begun to vitalize and get actively involved in transitional politics, began to shrink, and the initiative of the transitional process went back to the government. The plan of the new military force for taking

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<sup>130</sup> Choe Po-Sik, "Je 5 Gongwhakook junya: 12. 12Pyun" (The Eve of the Fifth republic: The 12. 12 Phase), *Wolgan Chosun*, (May 1996): 497-631.

power did not stop here; it sought an excuse to intervene directly in politics. As an excuse of direct military intervention, the new military force chose the democratic uprising in Kwangju, and harshly suppressed the “Kwangju uprising” in May 1980, through the expansion of martial law. The new military force tried to justify their direct intervention in politics in order to eliminate political and social disorder in Kwangju. As a result of the suppression, the best opportunity for democratization since the early 1970s was aborted, and the Korean people had to wait a long time for democratization to occur.

Furthermore, the new military force’s plan for taking power continued after the “Kwangju Uprising.” The new military force gradually occupied important governmental and military positions, and pressured president Choi to step down from the presidency. President Choi resigned on 16 August 1980, and Chun Doo-Hwan, a retired Army General, was elected a president by the Electoral College (National Unification Conference) in August and was inaugurated on 1 September 1980. On October 22, a referendum for revision of the Constitution was held, and it passed with 91.6 percent approval, with 95.5 percent voter turnout. On October 27, Chun dissolved the National Assembly and all political parties and instead installed the Legislative Council for National Security (LCNS). After the LCNS passed various laws for suppressing not only civil society but also the opposition party, Chun lifted martial law. However, the repressive policy toward the opposition force was even harsher than that of the *Yushin* regime. However, democratic civil society, such as students and the Jaeya force in the early 1980s, continued to develop ideologies and strategies and waited for the right time when they could attain counter-hegemony against the military authoritarian regime.

On the other hand, the Chun regime concentrated its resources and efforts on economic development and political and social stability through a repressive policy on economic, political, and social sectors. Consequently, the Chun regime did accomplish successful economic development and political and social stability. The regime, thus, succeeded in facilitating creation of a “new middle class” who supported the Chun regime.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, the Chun regime could not avoid the fundamental problem of its legitimacy. The regime needed to solve the legitimacy problem for effective and stable governing in the future. Thus, the Chun regime implemented a decompression policy to expand the political foundation and overcome the legitimacy problem in late 1983.<sup>132</sup>

Unlike planners of the decompression policy, however, the decompression policy provided a great opportunity for democratic civil society to revitalize and effectively struggle with the authoritarian regime. In addition, democratic civil society responded to the decompression policy by strengthening ties with the opposition party. Diverse and heterogeneous pro-democracy groups consolidated into a centralized nationwide organization in order to establish a unified direction and to coordinate among diverse social movement organizations. When the Chun regime recognized the unexpected outcome of the decompression policy, they tried to regain the control over civil society and the opposition party by returning to a repressive policy.

However, it was too late for the regime to serve the initiative on the political situation. The public dissatisfaction with the authoritarian regime clearly appeared in the general election of 1985. The opposition New Korean Democratic Party, established just before the election, got more than one-third of the National Assembly seats and was able

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<sup>131</sup> Dong-A Ilbosa, *Dong-A Yongam* (Dong-A Year Book 1984), 527.

to play a significant role in the democratic movement. In addition, the NKDP's success in the general election of 1985 was also very meaningful to democratic civil society. Democratic civil society perceived the result of the election as turning the people's support away from the authoritarian regime. Based on this perception, democratic civil society could struggle more actively and aggressively with the Chun regime, and thus develop into a political and social force that could challenge the hegemony of the state. In addition, the successful outcome of the election made the NKDP struggle more offensively with the regime in the institutional political arena.

On the other hand, democratic civil society that recognized that public supports had begun to move toward the opposition force began to strongly pressure the ruling and opposition party to negotiate for the constitutional revision. In a response to pressure from civil society and the opposition party, the Chun regime implemented an even harsher repressive policy than before. However, in spite of suppression, democratic civil society continually forced the ruling party and regime to negotiate with the opposition party for the constitutional revision. Because of continuing refusal by the ruling party and the government to revise the constitution, however, the NKDP gave up the strategy of compromise and adopted a maximalist strategy, such as democratization through the "street politics," in 1986. This shift of NKDP's strategy was welcomed by democratic civil society, and the uncomfortable relationship between civil society organizations and the NKDP was healed. The new cooperative climate developed into the formation of a united front between the opposition party and democratic civil society.

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<sup>132</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *1980snyundae Hankookui Minjuhwaehaenggwajung* (The Process of Democratic Transition in the 1980s), 91-110.



**This coalition of the opposition party and democratic civil society was a great success. Although student groups were the most active participants among various groups of democratic civil society, the participation of industrial workers, farmers, and low-paid service workers broadened the popular base of the democratic movement. Especially, the United Minjung (masses) Movement for Democracy and Unification (UMMDU), established in March 1983, played a key role in organizing mass rallies in the mid-1980s. A distinctive characteristic of the popular mobilizations in this period was that it indicated the multi-class, multi-sectoral nature of the democratic movement.**

**The initial reaction of the Chun regime to the democratic movement of civil society and the opposition party after the general election was to crack down on the petition drives by mobilizing thousands of police. However, this repression could not stop the democratic struggles of civil society, revitalized after the decompression policy by active participation of the middle class. The enormous pressure from below finally succeeded in forcing the Chun regime to open the dialogue for the constitutional revision on 30 April 1986. However, the negotiation between the ruling and opposition party faced difficulties from the beginning because both parties could not act independently of hardliners in the ruling coalition and civil society.**

**During the negotiation, democratic civil society continually pressed the Chun regime to revise the authoritarian constitution. In spite of this pressure, the negotiation between the DJP and NKDP was not successful. Thus, democratic civil society that was disappointed by the negotiation process began to strongly criticize both parties and to struggle directly with the Chun regime. Many ordinary people, especially the middle class, came to distrust the intentions of the Chun regime for the constitutional revision,**

and they began to express their dissatisfaction toward the regime. Furthermore, various democratic organizations began to unite under nationwide umbrella organizations, and the coalition between those organizations and the opposition party was more consolidated. Under the situation, the Chun regime began to lose control over civil society and its democratic movement, and the social instability began to grow.

On 13 April 1987, President Chun announced a suspension of the negotiation for the constitutional revision until after the 1988 Summer Olympic Games. He claimed that consensus among opposition parties was not possible and that time was running out before the elections. Instead, the government offered to the NKDP, which strongly wanted a return to direct presidential elections, a parliamentary system as a compromise. Lee Min-Woo, president of the NKDP, replied that his party would consider the proposal of the government if the ruling party adopted seven major political reforms.<sup>133</sup> Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung, who were *de facto* leaders of the NKDP, rejected this initiative. They strongly criticized the attempt to compromise, broke away, and formed their own Reunification Democratic Party on 8 April 1987.<sup>134</sup> Through this process, the opposition party was split, and the opposition raised doubts over their ability to handle power responsibly.

Right after Chun's announcement of suspending negotiations, democratic civil society and the opposition party began to protest strongly against the Chun's decision.<sup>135</sup> This protest developed into a violent confrontation between the regime and the opposition force. A couple of incidents occurred during this confrontation. One was that a

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<sup>133</sup> 1) adoption of local self-governing system, 2) guarantee of freedom of press, 3) guarantee of association and basic rights, 4) neutrality of government officials, 5) guarantee of more than two party system, 6) fair election laws for congressmen, and 7) release and restatement of political prisoners.

<sup>134</sup> *Joongang Daily*, 8 April 1987.

university student's death (Park Chong-Chul) by the police torture was disclosed by a religious organization and the other was that another university student (Yi Han-Yol) was killed during the demonstrations. These two tragic incidents emotionally and politically affected not only democratic civil society but also the middle class. These incidents motivated radical and moderate groups and organizations of civil society to unite and struggle more actively and effectively. In addition, these incidents strongly induced active participation of the middle class, who had traditionally supported the authoritarian regime or had been quiet. The middle class clearly began to change their attitude and behavior toward the authoritarian regime. Furthermore, they even began to participate in the democratic movement. Based on the influence of those two incidents and active struggle with the regime, democratic civil society began to attain counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime. In spring of 1987, the Chun regime lost control over the democratic movement of the opposition coalition established by united civil society organizations and the opposition party, and it faced a serious political crisis.

On 10 June 1987, two important rallies changed the future of Korean politics.<sup>136</sup> One was that the ruling DJP held its party convention to nominate Roh Tae-Woo, who was a president of the ruling party, as its next presidential candidate. The other important rally was a nationwide demonstration, led by the National Coalition for Democratic Constitution (NCDC),<sup>137</sup> to denounce the cover-up of the torture and murder of Park Chong-Chul and the scheme to maintain the current constitution. Under this

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<sup>135</sup> *Hankook Daily*, 27 June 27 1987.

<sup>136</sup> John Kie-Chiang Oh, *Korean Politics: The Quest for Democratization and Economic Development* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 91.

<sup>137</sup> The National Coalition for Democratic Constitution (NCDC), which consisted of religious and intellectual dissenters, was established on 27 May 1987. The founding statements of the NCDC emphasized human rights and the restoration of formal procedural democracy such as a direct presidential

circumstance, the Chun regime had only two options for solving this national political crisis. One option was harsher suppression toward civil society and the opposition party through use of the military. The other was a negotiation with the opposition party that civil society strongly supported and adoption of the demands of the opposition force.

Eventually, on 29 June 1987, Roh Tae-Woo, the presidential candidate of the ruling DJP, announced a democratization program with the President Chun's consent. The declaration on June 29 constituted a fundamental agreement for the Korean democratic transition. The eight points of the declaration were: 1) constitutional revision for the directly elected presidential system, 2) revision of presidential election law, including the end of restrictions on campaigning, 3) restoration of political rights of Kim Dae Jung and release of political prisoners, 4) full respect for basic human rights, 5) freedom of the press, 6) local government autonomy and self-regulation for educational institutions, 7) provisions for full political activities, and 8) elimination of crime and corruption. By adopting the main demands of the opposition force, Roh seized the initiative in the approaching election. He turned mass opposition to his candidacy into a new legitimacy and began to isolate the radical students from the Catholic church and the support of the middle class. After the June 29 declaration, South Korea entered into the democratic transition process, and the ruling and opposition party negotiated a schedule for the constitutional revision and a presidential election.

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election. The formation of the NCDC meant the establishment of moderate leadership in the opposition coalition.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SHIFT TO THE YUSHIN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME AND CIVIL SOCIETY (1972-1979)

#### 1. The Inauguration of the Yushin Regime

The formal democratic political system was broken by the installation of the *Yushin* (Revitalization) Constitution in 1972, and shifted to an outright authoritarian political system. The Yushin regime had many similar characteristics to typical bureaucratic authoritarian regimes.<sup>138</sup> The popular sector was politically and economically excluded under the Yushin regime. In the political area, competitive elections were abolished, any kind of strike was virtually prohibited, the labor union organizations were severely restricted, and human rights were violated arbitrarily. In the economic area, the primary concern of the economic policy was not the improvement of the standard of living of the lower classes but rapid and quantitative growth of the economy.

In spite of these common characteristics, the background of inaugurating the Yushin regime was quite different from those of Latin American countries. First, there was no economic crisis before the inauguration of the Yushin Constitution. The economic growth rate was at 5.8% in 1972, although it declined from the rate of 9.4% in 1971, unemployment rate lowered to 4.5% in 1972 from 7.4% in 1965, and the export

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<sup>138</sup> Im Hyug-Baeg, "The Rise of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism in South Korea," 239-40.

growth rate of 52.1% was much higher than the rate of 22.6% in 1971.<sup>139</sup> Second, the so called “deepening” of the productive structure didn’t precede the inauguration of the Yushin Constitution. Many Latin American countries, such as Venezuela, changed their political system to an authoritarian system to suppress workers’ demands and protect the bourgeoisie class from an unstable economic condition.<sup>140</sup> However, in South Korea, there was no active labor movement, and thus there was no particular reason for the regime to change the political system to suppress the labor movement. Third, before the inauguration of the Yushin regime, the political struggle by democratic civil society was not serious enough to threaten the ruling coalition. For example, the number of people involved in political struggle was higher in 1971 than before, but declining by 1972. In addition, most civil society organizations did not have autonomy and were divided because they had been financially supported or institutionally controlled by the regime.<sup>141</sup>

Then, why did an outright authoritarian regime emerge in South Korea under different circumstances from those presupposed by Guillermo O’Donnell’s bureaucratic authoritarian model? Since Park Chung-Hee took power in 1961, the regime had concentrated on an economic development policy to broaden the popular support, and the effort had been successful. As a result, the regime could draw public support, and the ruling coalition had no problem in dealing with workers in the process of promoting labor

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<sup>139</sup> Economic Planning Board, *Major Statistics of the Korean Economy* (Seoul: Economic Planning Board, 1980).

<sup>140</sup> Anibal Romero, “Venezuela: Democracy Hangs On” *Journal of Democracy* 7, no 7 (October 1996): 33-6.

<sup>141</sup> Simone Chambers called this kind of civil society a “bad civil society,” and this bad civil society develops when groups fail to live up to the ideals of democratic citizenship: when groups advocate hate, organize around xenophobia, and generally contribute to an atmosphere of distrust, and suspicion between social actors. In extreme cases, where, for example, violence is suspected, the state can step in and censure the group. Simone Chambers, “A Critical Theory of Civil Society,” in *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society*, eds. Simone Chambers and Will Kymlicka (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 100-5.

intensive exports because the market conditions had kept wages low even without state intervention. However, this economic condition began to change from the late 1960s.<sup>142</sup> When the unlimited supply of labor ended, the regime faced a new situation that the exhaustion of the labor surplus pressured wages up. In this situation, the regime needed suppress the wage increase through the inauguration of the Yushin regime in 1972.

However, this economic factor is not enough to explain the transformation of the regime. Although the shortage of labor naturally tends to enhance wages, if there is no one organized to represent workers' interests, there is no incentive for the ruling coalition to change the regime from formal democracy to authoritarianism. What happened in 1971 was that a new political coalition was established around the labor issue. The outcome of two elections in 1971 showed that formal democratic institutions couldn't provide the new coalition with a formidable instrument to assert their interests.<sup>143</sup> Under this circumstance, the ruling coalition closed democratic institutions in order to continue the economic system based on an export-oriented economic policy because the existing balance of force heavily relied on the ruling coalition.

In addition, there was a purely political and personal reason.<sup>144</sup> In the presidential election of 1971, the margin between President Park and Kim Dae-Jung, a opposition

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<sup>142</sup> At the end of 1960s, the Korean economy faced the first major problem in export-led industrialization. The major cause of this economic problem was foreign debt. The interest gap between domestic and foreign loans and a corporate tax structure which made interest payments on business borrowings tax deductible drove a large number of firms, which had overextended themselves through foreign borrowing in the middle of 1960s, to the brink of bankruptcy. The government had to take over 30 "ill managed" companies in 1969, together with the burden of paying back their foreign debts. Woo Jung-En, *Race to the Swift: State and Finance in Korean Industrialization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 106-17.

<sup>143</sup> In the general election on 25 May 1971, the opposition party achieved good results by winning 69 of the 204 seats. The DRP no longer enjoyed a two-thirds majority as before (1967: 73.7%), but they still held a majority of 113 seats (55.4%). Juergen Kleiner, *Korea: A Century of Change* (New Jersey: World Scientific, 2001), 149-50.

<sup>144</sup> John Lie, "Democratization and Its Discontents: Origins of the Present Crisis in South Korea," *Monthly Review* 42, no. 9 (February 1991): 40-1.

presidential candidate, was very close. The difference between these two persons in the election was less than 1,000,000. President Park, seriously challenged in the election, needed political, social and cultural restructuring to hold concrete political power. However, there was a limitation in the current formal democratic political system because it restricted presidential power. This political environment provided President Park a strong motive to change the political system to authoritarianism. In this regard, the Yushin inauguration was the ruling elites' preemptive strike against the possible emergence of the alternative opposition force.

## **2. Political, Ideological, and Economic Restructuring**

### **1) Political Restructuring**

The major goals of the political restructuring were to depoliticize all institutional political arenas, including party politics, and to consolidate Park's political power. The Park regime replaced party politics with bureaucratic politics. Bureaucrats were assigned to implement what Chalmers Johnson calls "plan rational" economic policies rather than "market rational" ones. In order to implement the "plan rational" economic developmental projects, Park insulated and immunized economic bureaucrats from the influence of party politics as well as from the special interests of big business.<sup>145</sup> In addition, under the Yushin Constitution, the President was empowered not only to dissolve the National Assembly but also to appoint one-third of the congressmen, who formed a bargaining body called "*Yuchunghoe*." Through the power to appoint one-third

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<sup>145</sup> Chalmers Johnson argues the developmental states like Japan and South Korea pursue a "plan rational" strategy rather than market rational strategy. According to Johnson, the evaluative standard of plan rationality is effectiveness while that of market rationality is efficiency. Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), 21.



of the congressmen, Park could put the National Assembly under his control. So, the legislative power of the ruling party was emasculated so that it became a rubber stamp of the executive branch.<sup>146</sup>

Park carefully applied a strategy of “divide and rule,” and thus important state institutions, such as the military, had not taken a firm and fixed place in politics. Furthermore, he didn’t allow any internal division within not only the military-as-institution but also other state institutions. At the same time, Park provided economic and political incentives to the ruling coalition to obtain their loyalty. These economic and political incentives made the relationship between President Park and the ruling coalition groups more solid.<sup>147</sup> Through a combination of economic and political incentives and of harsh suppression, President Park successfully maintained his power.

## 2) Ideological Restructuring

President Park tried to justify the inauguration of the Yushin regime as promoting the unification of the country, coping with the volatile international situation, and carrying out rapid socio-economic development. Particularly, the economic development policy that had been emphasized since the military coup in 1961 was crucial for the regime to justify authoritarian rule.<sup>148</sup> He also tried to justify the authoritarian regime with the national security ideology. His argument was that all national resources and

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<sup>146</sup> Stephan Haggard and Moon Chung-In, “The State, Politics, and Economic Development in Postwar South Korea,” in *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*, ed. Hagen Koo, 76.

<sup>147</sup> Yang Byung-Ki, “Hankookui Gunbu Jungchie kwanhan Yongu” (The Study on the Political Military), *Korean Political Science Review* 27, no. 2 (1993): 183-84.

<sup>148</sup> According to President Park’s speech, President Park said “We will have to do various things well in order to live well. We will need to do politics well, do economic construction well, strengthen national defense, do diplomacy well, and develop culture and art. Yet, I believe that the basic way to achieve all of them and the fundamental solution to the difficulties and evils that have existed for a long

energies should be effectively and efficiently managed by the centralized state until the threat from Communist North Korea vanished. Thus, he defined the Yushin regime as a transitional one to cope with an emergency. Because of this transitional nature of the ruling ideology, the regime was vulnerable to pressure from the opposition force when the causal factors that brought the regime into existence disappeared, were satisfied or were accomplished.

Nevertheless, the ideology of national security couldn't provide a sufficient rationale for the abolition of liberal democratic institutions and procedures. Thus, President Park had to rely more heavily on economic development as a rationale for the inauguration of the Yushin regime. Park argued that superior economic performance was essential to triumph over Communist North Korea in any peace time confrontation. In order to achieve this goal, the country's energy and resources should be organized with maximum efficiency, the kind of efficiency that could only be achieved through concentrating all the power in the state.

### 3) Economic Restructuring

The regime that lost legitimacy in the conversion of a formal democracy into outright authoritarianism tried to recover the loss of legitimacy by promising a better economic life to people. Thus, over-ambitious economic goals were presented to the people as a rationale for keeping the authoritarian regime, i.e., the achievement of national grandeur and the upgrading of the nation's economic, political, and military

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time in our society is to build our economy rapidly and establish a self-sustaining economy." Park Chung-Hee's speech on April 29, 1967.

status in the international system.<sup>149</sup> So, the economic policy became politically propagandized and severely politicized to compensate for the loss of political legitimacy. In order to achieve this economic goal, the Park regime launched a new phase of industrialization based on heavy and chemical industries in 1973. The import substitution industry was not enough to achieve this goal, and thus the regime needed an export-oriented economic policy.

In addition, the change of economic policy was aimed at the attainment of a political imperative in response to the changing world market. Since the beginning of the 1970s, developed countries began to strengthen their protectionist barriers, especially on labor intensive consumer non-durable goods from NICs. In addition, the push into the HCI was motivated by the need to upgrade the capability of military self-reliance in the face of the U.S. troop withdrawal announced in the Nixon Doctrine in 1970.<sup>150</sup> Because of this combination of constraints and new opportunities, the regime shifted the emphasis from exports of labor intensive, consumer non-durable goods to labor intensive assembly works of heavy industries.<sup>151</sup>

In order to concentrate the export oriented economic policy, the state encouraged the formation of big business groups.<sup>152</sup> This policy concentrated on exports in the largest export firms, and put the small firms under the networks of big trading firms as

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<sup>149</sup> For example, President Park promised the people that he could attain the economic goal of \$1,000 per capita income and 10 billion dollars in exports by 1980. Federation of Korean Industries (FKI), *Chunkyungryun 20nyunsa* (The Twenty Years History of the FKI), (Seoul: FKI, 1983), 267-68.

<sup>150</sup> The Nixon Doctrine stressed self-defense among the U.S. allies. The Nixon administration made a partial withdrawal of U.S. military troops from South Korea in 1971 and announced that they would withdraw U.S. troops within five years. President Park, a former General, felt a crisis of national security and determined to promote key defense-related industries.

<sup>151</sup> Stephan Heggard and Moon Jung-In, "The South Korean State in the International Economy: Liberal, Dependent, or Mercantile?" in *The Antinomies of Interdependence: National Welfare and the International Division of Labor*, John Gerard Ruggie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 173.

subcontractors. Therefore, the HCI drive increased the power of the bourgeoisie class and, as a consequence, identified the state more closely with conglomerates and made the regime more vulnerable to populist and leftist critique.<sup>153</sup> The result of nurturing the capitalist class ultimately increased the power of the bourgeoisie class in the national economy, and caused the state to be a hostage of the bourgeoisie class in the crisis period.<sup>154</sup>

### 3. The Nature of the Yushin Regime and Its Coalition

#### 1) Nature of the Yushin Regime

A unique characteristic of the *Yushin* regime was harsh suppression of civil society and opposition parties. The Yushin regime controlled most civil society groups and organizations through institutional and financial restrictions, and suppressed civil society that transformed to pro-democracy civil society in early 1970s because the regime was afraid of expansion of democratic civil society and its democratic movement. The regime also controlled opposition parties and their political activities by supporting a cooperative leadership and prohibiting political activities of key opposition politicians.

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<sup>152</sup> For example, General Trading Companies were built generally as the overseas marketing arms of the *Chaebol* to realize maximum efficiency in penetrating overseas markets. Hagen Koo, *State and Society in Contemporary Korea* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 79.

<sup>153</sup> According to Peter Evans, the state's performance for foreign loans over foreign direct investment had a political motivation because the state's discretionary power over the allocation of foreign loans provided an additional leverage over local bourgeoisie. Peter Evans, "Transnational Linkages and the Economic Role of the State: An Analysis of Developing and Industrialized in the Post-World War II Period," in *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Evans, Reuschmeyer, and Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>154</sup> Chung Jae-Yong and Richard J. R. Kirkby, *The Political Economy of Development and Environment in Korea* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 117.

Thus, while the ruling coalition came to have a solid political foundation, the role of civil society and opposition parties continued to shrink.<sup>155</sup>

Under the outright authoritarian regime, functions of the institutional political arena had been structurally restricted, and the institutional political arena, such as political parties, National Assembly, and courts, had been used to obtain justification of the policy-making process. Neither the ruling nor opposition parties represented the public interest. In addition, they did not have a close relationship with civil society, and provided only legal justification for the regime. The National Assembly, completely controlled by the ruling party, could not be a place for discussing political and social issues for the public interest. Instead, it was used to legalize state power as a part of the state institutions. The Yushin regime also controlled the judiciary branch with the president's appointment power and restriction of judges' roles. Through harsh suppression and legal and institutional restrictions, the regime could control not only the institutional political arena but also most groups and organizations of civil society.

## 2) The Ruling Coalition of the *Yushin* Regime

### (1) Military

When the direct rule of the military junta that started with the military coup in 1961 ended in 1963, the military withdrew from politics, and only military-turned-civilians could participate in national politics. After taking power, Park didn't allow the military to be directly involved in politics and used the military to resolve internal

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<sup>155</sup> The Yushin Constitution, which legalized repressive measures of the state power apparatuses, banned every anti-government political activism, and any criticism of the Yushin Constitution. The Yushin Constitution provided a legal foundation of harsh punishing up to the death penalty. Geir Helgesen,

political problems as little as possible. Although the military was not directly involved in politics, however, its potential power gradually increased after the installation of the Yushin regime.

In addition, the military strongly influenced the ruling ideology of the Yushin regime. Just as Abrahamsson points out the common orientation of the military in the Third World, the military of South Korea also considered political and social order to be very important.<sup>156</sup> Especially, the confrontation with North Korea made the military consider social order and political stability to be even more important. This ideological orientation of the military provided basic directions to the political and economic policies of the *Yushin* regime. In this respect, the military was a strong supporter of the *Yushin* regime as well as providing ideological and human resources to the *Yushin* regime.<sup>157</sup>

After the inauguration of the *Yushin* regime, Park's policy toward the military was more careful because a personalized dictatorship required tighter control over the military since it remained the only contender for power. In order to control the military effectively, Park strengthened the power of the security community, such as the Defense Security Command of Army, within the military since the regime needed to enforce more discipline and surveillance on regular army groups that didn't commit themselves to the

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*Democracy and Authority in Korea: The Cultural Dimension in Korean Politics* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1998), 70.

<sup>156</sup> Bengt Abrahamsson, "Elements of Military Conservatism: Traditional and Modern," in *On Military Ideology*, ed. M. Janowitz (Belgium: Rotterdam University Press, 1971), 68. In fact, the main reason of the military coup in 1961 was political and social instability. The young military officers, led by Gen. Park Chung Hee, were worried about the political and social instability under the situation of the divided nation. Thus, in order to stabilize political and social order, the military intervened in politics, and directly ruled for three years.

<sup>157</sup> During the Yushin period, key cabinet members, related to the national security and political affairs, and national security, came from the military, and those ministers rotated important posts. The main reason of this was that those who came from the military were people who President Park could trust. In addition, President Park used those appointments as an incentive for loyalty to his regime. The Institution of the Army History, *Hankookgungwa Kookkabaljun* (Korean Army and State Development), (Seoul: Hwarangdae Yongusil, 1992), 112.

repressive regime. The major role of the Defense Security Command of Army was to prevent prominent officers in regular military organizations from emerging as contenders to Park or from forming a civil-military alliance against the regime.

Park's discriminatory policy of favoring political officers over regular career officers was harmful to the internal unity of the military and created latent splits in the late *Yushin* regime. Although not explicitly exposed, suspicion, dissension, distrust, feuds and even hostility had existed between these two groups within the military during Park's reign. However, this conflict did not threaten or challenge Park's political power.<sup>158</sup> The emergence of internal division within the military generated different strategic stances on how to maintain authoritarianism. The career professional officer group was neutral in the struggle between an authoritarian regime and democratic opposition forces because the continuing military confrontation with North Korea eliminated the possibility of dismantling the military. On the other hand, the security community group, composed of hardline supporters, was directly responsible for the suppression of anti-authoritarian dissidents and had no skill other than surveillance, intimidation, interrogation, torture, etc. Therefore, they had a vital interest in perpetuating the authoritarian regime as long as possible. In spite of this internal split, Park had carefully maintained a balance of power between those two groups, and thus no individual or group within the military could oppose Park's dictatorial hold on power. As a result of Park's careful policy and a close relationship with Park, the military had

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<sup>158</sup> According to former Army Gen. Lee So- Dong, this internal conflict within the military did not affect the control of President Park over the military. It was an internal struggle for taking a leadership in the military. There was no question about the loyalty of these two groups to President Park. That is, the career professional officers had relative deprivation in their promotion and the relationship with President Park. This internal element caused the split of the military.

remained as an important part of the ruling coalition and supported the regime until its collapse in 1979.

## (2) Bourgeoisie

The Korean state has become strong and autonomous through the implementation of industrialization projects since the early 1960s. With the economy devastated by the war, the state came to dominate the economic and financial sectors through receiving and allocating foreign aid. Through this process, economic elites came to owe their socioeconomic status to the good graces of the regime in power.<sup>159</sup> However, although the state has been strong and independent, the state has been always pressured from the private interests. It is paradoxical that increased penetration of the state into civil society increases the likelihood that societal interests will attempt to invade and divide the state.<sup>160</sup>

The prelude of the *Yushin* installation in the economic sector appeared in the “Presidential Emergency Measure for Economic Stability and Growth” on 3 August 1972.<sup>161</sup> It was a fatal blow to private financiers in the curb loan market while the industrial bourgeoisie benefited the most. Small and medium business was in a relatively disadvantaged position. The fact that big business, individually through private channels

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<sup>159</sup> Choi Jang-Jip, “Political Cleavages in South Korea,” 22.

<sup>160</sup> Dietrich Reuschmeyer and Peter Evans, *Bringing the State Back In*, 69.

<sup>161</sup> The main components of the August 3 Measure were: 1) to freeze repayment of all private curb market loans for 3 years of grace period, 2) to repay the loans equitably over a 5-year period at an interest rate far below the market rate, and 3) to replace 30% of the short term high interest loans of firms with long-term low interest loans from the central bank which were to be repaid over 5 years after a 3-year grace period. *Chosun Daily*, 3 August 1972; Jung Yong-Duck, “Regulatory Policy in Korea: An Evaluation of the Presidential Emergency Decree for Economic Stability and Growth of August 3, 1972,” *Korean Social Science Journal* 13, (1986-1987): 44-77.



and collectively through a business association (Federation of Korean Industries: FKI),<sup>162</sup> lobbied hard before the announcement of the Measure tells of the need for collective action on the part of the bourgeoisie even under an authoritarian regime that nurtured domestic capitalists. The case of the “August 3 Measure” showed that the Korean bourgeoisie in the 1970s had already attained high degree of class cohesiveness and was capable of making collective action to promote their common interests in spite of state intervention.

By organizing the business association, large conglomerates could formulate a collective strategy to influence the state and society. In fact, under the authoritarian regime, to organize economic associations was more influential than to organize political parties to realize and to defend collective interests of a class because party politics was generally displaced and frozen by the regime. Besides organizations and associations of the large conglomerate, the bourgeoisie class increased its influences on the state through informal connections with high ranking bureaucrats. Moreover, the bourgeoisie class tried to influence public opinion by the various mechanisms, such as newspaper companies and broadcasting stations, and recruited prominent public opinion leaders in the non-economic sector of the political, military, academic, and cultural circles.<sup>163</sup> After

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<sup>162</sup> The Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) was established by 13 CEOs on 16 August 1961. When it was established, its name was the Association of Korean Businessmen. In its first general assembly, Lee Byung-Chul, CEO of the Samsung Group, was elected as the first president. In 1960s, this organization suggested an export-led economic development strategy and inducement of foreign capital. In addition, this organization concentrated its effort on enhancing status of the economic community after the “May 16 Revolution.” On August 1968, the name of the association was changed to the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) and affiliated 50 industry level associations under its umbrella. In the 1970s, the FKI dedicated export promotion, and supported the growth of the heavy and chemical industries as core national industries. FKI, *Chunhyunryun 20nyunsa* (The 20-years History of Federation of Korean Industries), (Seoul: FKI, 1983).

<sup>163</sup> For example, the Samsung Group established the Joongang Daily and Dong-A Broad Casting System to advocate interests of the bourgeoisie class and influence public opinion.

the regime pursued the HCI projects, every individual capitalist competed with each other to be chosen by the state as the investor and manager of specific HCI projects.

By the end of the *Yushin* regime, the bourgeoisie attained more strengths in the relationship with the state and society through collective actions. The “*Chunkyungyuchak* (close ties between an economic class and political elites)” didn’t strengthen the consolidation of the authoritarian regime because the ties lessened the degree of freedom of the authoritarian state, making the state increasingly reliant on repression at the time of crisis. The close ties between bourgeoisie and the state created disenchantment among medium and small industrialists, and also created cracks in the authoritarian ruling coalition in the late 1970s. Nevertheless, the bourgeoisie class served as an economic foundation of the *Yushin* regime. That is, the successful economic performance of the bourgeoisie class was very important for the regime to obtain its legitimacy. As compensation for being a foundation of economic development, the bourgeoisie class could be supported economically and politically by the regime.<sup>164</sup> In this respect, the regime and the bourgeoisie class had a reciprocally dependent relationship, and the bourgeoisie class had been an important ruling coalition group.

### (3) Bureaucrats

Along with the military and bourgeoisie, bureaucrats had also played a very important role as a part of the ruling coalition during the *Yushin* period. Particularly, bureaucrats played a significant role in the regime’s implementation of economic and

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<sup>164</sup> The bourgeoisie class, especially the chaebol, was offered subsidized interest rates (negative in real terms), preferential credit allocation, tax incentives and exemptions, and license to operate in the lucrative domestic market where they enjoyed a quasi-monopolistic positioning. Chung Jae-Yong and Richard J. R. Kirkby, *The Political Economy of Development and Environment in Korea*, 63.

social policies. In the authoritarian political system, bureaucrats could expand their power in the name of technical rationality and accomplishment.<sup>165</sup> During the Yushin regime, bureaucrats sought their political and economic interests through serving President, and thus could remain as a pillar of the ruling coalition groups.

Another reason why bureaucrats became powerful during the *Yushin* regime was that many retired military officers who had a close relation with President Park were recruited for important positions in the bureaucracy. Thus, bureaucrats could maintain a close relationship with the military, a powerful group within the ruling coalition, and could continuously expand their power. Additionally, bureaucrats played the role of mediator between the state and the bourgeoisie class during the *Yushin* period. Through the bureaucrats' mediation, conflicts between the regime and bourgeoisie could be solved, and thus this bureaucrats' mediation role enabled them to grow as one pillar of the regime's ruling coalition.

More importantly, Park's emphasis on the role of bureaucracy in socioeconomic policies changed the balance among ruling coalition groups. Park's favor and emphasis gradually moved from the military to bureaucrats. He needed professional bureaucrats, who did not have political ambition, to set and implement economic policies of the regime. In addition, the regime believed that the bureaucracy could effectively control the *Jaebul* with complicated regulatory measures, and supported the bureaucracy.<sup>166</sup> Through special favors to bureaucrats, Park could maintain a stronger and more effective authoritarian regime than had any previous regimes. With the increasing importance of

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<sup>165</sup> Kim Ho-Jin, *Hankook Jungchichejeon* (The Theory of Korean Political System), (Seoul: Barkyoungsa, 1990), 371.

bureaucrats, the power of the military within the ruling coalition gradually decreased albeit the military remained an important ruling coalition group. The reason was that President Park gave autonomy to bureaucrats for the effective implementation of policies, while he didn't allow the military to have any autonomous power.<sup>167</sup>

### 3) Institutional Political Arena

In the 1970s, one unique characteristic of the institutional political arena was its lack of autonomy. The internal and external environment made it difficult for the political institutional arena to be independent from the state. For example, because of the international political situation of the Cold War and confrontation with North Korea, liberals and leftists in the society found it difficult to express their voices, and there was not much space for political struggle by the opposition force. Along with civil society, therefore, tight control of the ruling coalition and external political environment caused the institutional political arena to be weak and passive. This weak institutional political arena made the regime easily justify and propagandize political and economic policies.<sup>168</sup>

The opposition and ruling parties did not politically represent civil society because of weak connection with civil society and the tight control of the regime. Although party politics genuinely has a function of articulating and integrating demands and interests of civil society, the party politics ignored public interests and demands.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Meredith Woo-Cumings, "Miracle as Prologue: The State and the Reform of the Corporate Sector in Korea, in *Rethinking the East Asia Miracle*, eds. Joseph E. Stiglitz and Shahid Yusuf, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 361.

<sup>167</sup> Kim Young-Myung, *Hankook Hyundai Jungchisa* (The History of Korean Modern Politics), (Seoul: Eulyumunhwasa, 1992), 344.

<sup>168</sup> Yu Jae-Il, "Hankook Jungchisahoii Gujohyungsonggoa Byunhwa" (The Structure and Change of Korean Political Society), *A New Tendency of Korean Political Society* (Seoul: Nanam, 1993), 186.

<sup>169</sup> Choi Han-Soo, *Hyundaejungdangron* (The Theory of Modern Political Party), (Seoul: Eulyumunhwasa, 1993), 195-218.

Rather, the institutional political arena played a negative role in representing civil society that was not well enough organized to pressure the political parties. Under this circumstance, political parties could not have a close relationship with civil society, and therefore could not represent the civil society.

Another characteristic of the institutional political arena was an unfair competition rule and undemocratic behaviors, and procedures. The party politics in South Korea had never had other types of party systems except for the “dominant-party democracy,” which Lucian Pye once mentioned.<sup>170</sup> Because the Korean party politics had been formed by the ruling party and the major semi-loyal opposition party, fair competition among political parties and the appearance of new parties, which would genuinely represented interests of civil society, could not be expected. Especially, the election laws had not been fair or just, and had always been twisted by the ruling and opposition party for attaining majority seats in the National Assembly and interests of the major opposition party to prevent other social forces from the institutional political arena.

During the Yushin period, the ruling DRP had remained the majority party through advantageous election laws and the influence of state intelligence agencies. On the other hand, the major opposition NDP had been weak and divided in spite of efforts to integrate anti-government opposition forces. More importantly, the regime controlled the NDP through controlling its leadership, and thus it was difficult for it to criticize the regime or become actively involved in the anti-government struggle.<sup>171</sup> In this sense, the

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<sup>170</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 41-3.

<sup>171</sup> Juergen Kleiner, *Korea: A Century of Change*, 159.

Korean party system was 1.5 party system because there was no fair competition between the ruling and opposition party.<sup>172</sup>

The DRP, in spite of its political status as the ruling party, could not be in the center of political power. Rather, it was just one part of the state power because President Park privatized the ruling party through recruiting retired military officers and using bureaucrats. On the other hand, the NDP didn't have any power resource except for party organizations. The first priority of the NDP was to take power and the issue of democratization was a secondary matter. The NDP also had a conservative character, especially in terms of ideology.<sup>173</sup> The NDP was much more conservative than the mainstream of the dissident movement.<sup>174</sup> Because of this conservative orientation, the NDP didn't show any difference from the DRP, especially in dealing with issues of anti-communism, pro-American policy, and unification policy. The NDP also supported the position that extreme liberals and radicals of the society should be excluded from the institutional political arena. This conservative character of the NDP made it difficult for the NDP to establish a coalition with democratic civil society.

The imbalance of power between the ruling and opposition party was also reflected in the National Assembly. The National Assembly, firmly controlled by the ruling party, was used as a political instrument to provide legitimacy to the authoritarian regime. Thus, it was not easy for the opposition party to criticize and struggle with the

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<sup>172</sup> Yu Jae-II, "Hankook Jungchisahoiiui Gujohyungsonggoa Byunhwa" (The Structure and Change of Korean Political Society), 198.

<sup>173</sup> According to A. Lowell, political party can be divided into three (liberal, reform, and conservative party) in the ideological aspect. Based on his classification of political party, Korean opposition party of the *Yushin* period belonged to conservative political party. It did satisfy status quo, and it was not optimistic about reform. Yun Jung-Suk, "Bosuwa Jinbo Hankookjuk Sanghwoang" (Conservatism and Progressivism: the Korean Situation), *Jungkyung Moonhwa* (Politics, Economy and Culture), (October 1985): 82-91.

<sup>174</sup> Choi Jang-Jip, "Political Cleavages in South Korea," 35.

regime in the National Assembly. For example, there were many procedural and institutional restrictions on the opposition party's ability to struggle with the authoritarian regime in the National Assembly. In most cases, the opposition party had to be satisfied with issuing public statements.<sup>175</sup>

#### **4. The Crisis and Collapse of the Yushin Regime**

##### **1) Economic Crisis**

When the regime began to pursue the HCI economic policy in the early *Yushin* period, it enjoyed autonomy from the social classes. However, as the state became deeply involved in planning, constructing infrastructure, financing, and regulating workers, and thereby legitimizing the policy of the HCI projects, the autonomy of the regime in adjusting economic policy in the face of a volatile international economic environment had gradually decreased.<sup>176</sup> The large investment on HCI projects satisfied only one of economic factions, the large conglomerates. As a result, high industrial concentration and monopolization were created, and the welfare of the whole society became dependent on the capacity for the capital accumulation of the bourgeoisie. In addition, the HCI drive changed the financial structure of the domestic economy. The share of investment in expenditure on gross national product rose from 26% in 1976 to an unprecedented 37% in 1978.<sup>177</sup> The over-investment was caused by the requirements for

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<sup>175</sup> For example, the NDP publicly announced that the Yushin regime should stop repression toward school, and return to democratic political system. *Dong-A Daily*, 4 April 1975.

<sup>176</sup> Hagen Koo and Kim Eun-Moe, "The Developmental State and Capital Accumulation in South Korea," in *States and Development in the Asian Pacific Rim*, eds. Richard P. Appelbaum and Jeffrey Henderson (Newbury Park: Sage, 1992), 135.

<sup>177</sup> Paul W. Kuznets, "The Dramatic Reversal of 1979-1980: Contemporary Economic Development in Korea," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 1, no. 3 (1982): 75.

expansion in the heavy and chemical industries. Between 1977-1979, for example, 80% of investment went to the heavy industry sector.

Table 3-1

Incremental Capital Output Ratios (1955-1980)  
(ICOR: Gross Investment/Output Change)

	1955-60	1960-65	1965-70	1970-75	1975-80
Gross Investment	1257	1657	4993	10607	21266
Change in GDP	425	1038	2459	3637	4390
ICOR	2.96	1.60	2.03	2.92	4.84

Source: *World Bank*, Korea, 47

There were several serious problems in over-investment in the HCI project. First, the growth of exports and export competitiveness in the world market declined as a result of focusing on the HCI projects. Second, the over-investment on the HCI project caused a high rate of inflation, and the domestic economy began to be de-stabilized.<sup>178</sup> This high inflation led people to become dissatisfied with the economic performance of the regime, and their support began to move toward the opposition force. Third, the HCI drive created acute labor shortages in the skilled labor market. While non-agricultural employment rose 8% in 1977 and 10% in 1978, employment in skilled occupational categories increased 26% and 17% respectively.<sup>179</sup> This unbalanced labor market forced many light manufacturing industries to close, and made the unemployment rate high. These problems structurally caused the regime to face an economic crisis in late 1978.

The over-ambitious HCI drive narrowed the regime's support base in the longer perspective. The middle class and other conservative social groups and organizations

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<sup>178</sup> Tony Michell, "What Happens to Economic Growth When Neo-Classical Policy Replaces Keynesian? The Case of South Korea," *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin* 13, no. 1 (1982): 60-7.

<sup>179</sup> Paul W. Kuznets, "The Dramatic Reversal of 1979-1980: Contemporary Economic Development in Korea," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 1, no. 3 (1982): 77.



that had traditionally supported the Yushin regime began to turn their backs on the regime and supported the opposition force.<sup>180</sup> Thus, the formerly dormant middle class began to express economic discontent with the authoritarian regime. This dissatisfaction of the middle class was evidently expressed in the general election of 1978. The outcome of the election showed that the regime already lost its power base. Nevertheless, this dissatisfaction of the middle class had never become a threat to the authoritarian regime because the number was small and there was no certain organization to lead them to join the anti-government movement. However, this breaking down of the solid supporting base directly caused the regime to face a political crisis in 1979.

## 2) Political Crisis

The economic crisis destabilized the authoritarian equilibrium. Before the crisis, the Yushin regime could defend itself against incessant challenges from the opposition force with its huge repressive state apparatuses and with the material resources coming from an unprecedented economic boom. When the economic crisis started in 1978, however, the regime's choices in responding to the crisis had already been narrowed because of the structural dependence on capital created by the HCI drive. The choice of the regime was limited to transferring the costs to the politically weak social groups. Thus, it inevitably generated a mass defection of the social forces which had previously supported, or at least acquiesced to the authoritarian regime.

In spite of this economic problem, the crisis, which originated in the structural economic condition, needed new political situations in order to be developed into a

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<sup>180</sup> Stephan Haggard and Moon Chung-In, "The State, Politics, and Economic Development in Postwar South Korea," 81.

political crisis leading to the eventual collapse of the Yushin regime. The new political situations were the election of 1978 and the ensuing confrontation between the regime and the opposition force. The general election, held on 12 December 1978, at first drew little attention because it was meaningless in deciding the locus of power in the Yushin period. As expected, 68 candidates of the ruling DRP and 61 candidates of the opposition NDP were elected by direct popular votes. The outcome itself didn't give the regime any trouble in controlling the legislative body because the regime could maintain a solid majority by adding the one third (77 seats) of the National Assembly seats, appointed by the president.<sup>181</sup> Nevertheless, the outcome of the election was a disaster to the regime because the NDP gained more popular votes than the ruling party: 32.8% vs. 31.7%. It gave a tremendous symbolic victory to the opposition party and democratic civil society.

After the election, the NDP began to struggle for the restoration of democratic politics based on the fact that they gained more popular votes in the election. The NDP claimed that the result of the election showed people's lack of confidence in the Park regime, so they demanded the release of political prisoners and revision of the Yushin Constitution. In addition, democratic civil society began to establish nationwide organizations for influential struggle with the regime and began to criticize the inauguration of the 9<sup>th</sup> President. For example, the National Coalition for Democracy<sup>182</sup> issued a public statement in which they criticized the repression policy toward democratic

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<sup>181</sup> C. I. Eugene Kim, "Significance of Korea's 10<sup>th</sup> National Assembly Election," *Asian Survey* 19, no. 5 (1979): 523-32.

<sup>182</sup> The National Coalition for Democracy (*Minjujuui Kookmin Yonhap*) was established by social movement activists and Jaeya leaders, such as the former President Yun Bo-Sun and Ham Suk-Hun, on July 5, 1978. This organization focused to struggle for peaceful democratization through cooperation with other social, political, and religious organizations. In addition, it emphasized to coordinate the individual movements and 12 affiliated organizations at the national level. *Joongang Daily*, 2 March 1979.

civil society and demanded improving human rights conditions, abolition of emergency decrees, and release of every political prisoner. In a response to these demands, the regime released opposition political leader Kim Dae-Jung and 106 other dissidents, hoping thereby to ease the tensions with the opposition force.<sup>183</sup>

Especially, the successful outcome in the general election caused an internal power struggle within the NDP to intensify. In May 1979, Kim Young-Sam regained the leadership of the NDP by defeating Lee Chul-Seung who had been accommodating to the Park regime. Kim Young-Sam's victory signified the emergence of a disloyal opposition in South Korean politics.<sup>184</sup> After winning the internal power struggle, Kim Young-Sam pledged to fight the Park regime both inside and outside the National Assembly. "Outside" the National Assembly clearly meant that he would cooperate more closely with democratic civil society such as the National Coalition for Democracy and the National Coalition for Democracy and Reunification. In addition, the Jaeya force, as the extra-institutional opposition force, realized the importance of the political party as a bridge that connected civil society and the regime.<sup>185</sup> It increased efforts to change the semi-opposition NDP to a genuine autonomous opposition party that could be a leading political institution to replace the authoritarian regime.

Faced with intensified opposition forces, the ruling coalition began to split in dealing with political opponents and workers' protests. The internal division didn't reach the point of breaking down the ruling coalition, but was a matter of personal differences in the solution of the political crisis. For example, hardliners, represented by the Head of

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<sup>183</sup> *Washington Post*, Saturday, 23 December 1978, A1.

<sup>184</sup> Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 27-38.

Presidential Bodyguards, Cha Ji-Chul, argued for harsher suppression to crack down on any kind of anti-regime opposition. On the other hand, softliners like the Chief of KCIA, Kim Jae-Kyu, took a more pragmatic stance toward the opposition and advocated dialogue rather than confrontation.<sup>186</sup> However, the voice of the softliners had to be silenced because Park actively supported the hardline strategy, and thus suppression of democratic civil society and the opposition party was carried out.

Starting with the brutal suppression of the striking workers and their supporters in the YH incident,<sup>187</sup> the regime ousted the intransigent NDP leader, Kim Young-Sam, not only from the party president post, but also from the National Assembly membership using judicial maneuvering and rubber-stamp national assemblymen.<sup>188</sup> The ousting of Kim Young-Sam from the National Assembly generated widespread anti-regime political repercussions from the popular masses and international public opinion.<sup>189</sup> For instance, in Kim's hometown, a full-scale anti-government uprising erupted and spread to the

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<sup>185</sup> The Jaeya force, extra-institutional opposition forces, can be defined as a broad category of opposition notables with middle class origins, who have been involved in anti-regime political activities working outside the officially sanctioned political space.

<sup>186</sup> Cho Gap-Je, *Yugo* (Mishap), (Seoul: Hanghilsa, 1987), 95. The Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) was established in June 1961 with Kim Jong-Pil as its head. The KCIA was granted powers that went far beyond those of American CIA and included domestic as well as international surveillance, besides the right to investigate other intelligence agencies. Within three years, the KCIA had established an extensive network of agents in South Korea and abroad. Eventually, the KCIA came to symbolize the sophisticated and systematic repression of the Park era. Carter J. Eckert, Lee Ki-Baik, Lee Young-Ick, Michael Robinson and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea, Old and New: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 361.

<sup>187</sup> On 7 August 1979, the owner of Y.H. Industrial Co. shut down his factory and dismissed all workers, approximately 350 poorly paid young women, and fled to the US. The factory had originally produced wigs and later ski suits but had gotten into trouble. The female workers anted their jobs back and demonstrated for that goal. Juergen Kleiner, *Korea: A Century of Change*, 165.

<sup>188</sup> Robert E. Bedeski, *The Transformation of South Korea: Reform and Reconstruction in the Six Republic Under Roh Tae-Woo, 1987-1992*, 25.

<sup>189</sup> Park Hyun-Chae, "79nyun Bumasataeui Yoksajuk Baekyunggwawa Uiui" (The Historical Background of Puma Incident and Its Meaning), in *HankookMinjokminjungundonguongu* (The Study of Korea National Minjung Movement), eds. Baek Nak-Chung and Jung Chang-Ryul (Seoul: Dure, 1989), 178.

entire city. The so called “*Buma Hangjaeng*” (Uprising in Busan-Masan)<sup>190</sup> was the first democratic movement that the masses and the middle class participated in since the Student Revolution on April 19, 1960. The student demonstrators’ shouts of “abolition of the Yushin regime and dictatorship” spread to the city, and citizens of Busan city participated in student demonstrations. Despite the fact that the regime ordered universities to close, the demonstration didn’t stop, and students of other universities joined the demonstration. Eventually, the regime invoked the Garrison Decree, and suppressed demonstrators by using the military.<sup>191</sup> This *Busan-Masan Uprising* influenced democratic movements in other areas. For example, about 5,000 students of Seoul National University issued a resolution demanding withdrawal of martial law and abolition of the Yushin regime.<sup>192</sup>

In addition, the U.S. government recalled Ambassador William Gleysteen as a protest against Kim’s removal from the National Assembly. When President Carter visited South Korea, he and Senator Kennedy met Kim Young-Sam as a sign of U.S. support for him.<sup>193</sup> In that meeting, Kim told them that the U.S. government faced a time when it would have to decide to stop supporting authoritarian regimes that ignored people’s passion for democratization.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> The direct cause of the Busan-Masan Uprising lay in the expulsion of Kim Young-Sam from the National Assembly but more fundamentally, the uprising reflected ordinary citizens’ anger toward an authoritarian regime that didn’t respect democratic rules and that arbitrarily suppressed political opponents. Kim Sun-Hyuk, *The Politics of Democratization in Korea: The Role of Civil Society*, 63.

<sup>191</sup> Nam Koon-Woo, *South Korean Politics: The Search for Political Consensus and Stability* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), 169.

<sup>192</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 3, (Seoul: Catholic Publisher, 1997), 207.

<sup>193</sup> In spite of the State-Visit, President Carter met opposition politicians and leaders of democratic civil society as many as possible after the short meeting with President Park. In the meeting with opposition leaders, he expressed his support to the democratic movement of civil society implicitly. Lee Sang-Woo, “70nyundae Hankookui Minjuhawa Mikookui Apnyuk” (Democratization of South Korea and Pressure of the United States in the 1970s), *Sindong-A*, (1990): 202.

<sup>194</sup> *Washington Post*, Wednesday, 10 October 1979, A24.

More importantly, the “Busan-Masan Uprising” and the ensuing turmoil across the country generated a split within the ruling coalition in dealing with the political crisis. In spite of the split, Park himself and Cha Ji-Chul supported the continuation of a hardline policy toward democratic civil society. On the other hand, Kim Jae-Kyu, Director of the KCIA, argued that the hardline approach had only exacerbated public discontent with the government, and that a more flexible stance would have defused the situation. Kim realized that resolution of the political crisis through a compromise with the opposition force was impossible because Park himself was the staunchest protagonist of the hardline policy. Thus, he believed that the only way to avoid national disaster in a violent confrontation between the regime and democratic civil society was to assassinate Park and to restore democracy.<sup>195</sup> Kim eventually killed Park and Cha Ji-Chul at a secret KCIA compound near the Blue House on 26 October 1979. This was the tragic demise of Park’s 18-year-old authoritarian regime. However, this collapse of the Park regime without removing diehard protagonists of the authoritarian regime didn’t immediately bring democracy; in fact, it complicated transitional politics.

## **5. Democratic Civil Society and the Opposition Party**

The transformation of civil society in early 1970s was closely related to the installation of the Yushin Constitution. Along with the installation of the Yushin Constitution, the regime began to suppress civil society and established cooperative relationships with most civil society groups and organizations through political, economic, and ideological restructuring. As a result, those state-controlled civil society organizations could not strongly criticize the installation of the Yushin regime. The

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<sup>195</sup> Nam Koon-Woo, *South Korean Politics: The Search for Political Consensus and Stability*, 173.

**Yushin regime also effectively controlled opposition parties through institutional and financial supports. Under these circumstances, several confrontational social groups, such as students, workers, the Jaeya force, and religious communities, transformed to alternative social forces in the struggle for the restoration of a democratic constitution. Leaders of those civil society groups strongly believed that they were the only groups who could mobilize their members to struggle for a restoration of democratic constitution. Those democratic groups that had autonomy and a clear goal of democratization began to struggle against authoritarian rule from the early 1970s.**

**The suppression by the regime focused on destroying those democratic groups and organizations and isolating them from the public. Under continuing threats and suppression, those democratic groups continued to establish organizations, and to struggle for restoration of a democratic constitution. For example, on 27 November 1974, leaders of the religious communities and the Jaeya force, such as Yun Bo-Sun, Kim Young-Sam, Ham Se-Ung, and Kang Won-Yong, established the National Congress for the Restoration of Democracy to struggle for democratization with the regime through peaceful methods.<sup>196</sup>**

**The democratic movement was also represented by two other organizations in late Yushin regime. One was the National Coalition for Democracy (*Minjujuui kookmin yonhap*), and the other one was the National Coalition for Democracy and National Reunification (NCRD). The National Coalition for Democracy, established by social movement activists and Jaeya leaders on 5 July 1978, pursued peaceful democratization by cooperating with other social, political, and religious organizations, and by concentrating its efforts on coordinating individual movements and organizations at the**

national level.<sup>197</sup> The NCRD, established by leaders of the Jaeya force in January 1979, struggled for abolition of the *Yushin* Constitution and building liberal democracy. Its strategy was to build a coalition with 13 other Jaeya organizations, including the Korean Council of Human Rights Movement of the KNCC and the National Conference for Restoration of Democracy, and to support students and workers' democratic movements against the *Yushin* regime. Participants in the NCRD included religious organizations, (e.g., the National Catholic Priests' Corps for the Realization of Justice, NCPCRJ), intellectual organizations (e.g., the Korean Council for Human Rights Movement), and writers' organizations (e.g., the Council of Writers for Practicing Freedom).<sup>198</sup>

The transformed democratic civil society in the early 1970s had several characteristics that were different from conservative co-opted organizations of civil society. Whereas the more conservative civil society groups and organizations were controlled by the institutional and financial support of the regime, democratic groups and organizations of civil society were independent from the regime.<sup>199</sup> For example, because of a unique social and political status of the religious communities, it could either avoid harsh suppression by the regime or were ready to endure the suppression.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 28 November 1974.

<sup>197</sup> *Joongang Daily*, 7 July 1978.

<sup>198</sup> The Korean Council for Human Right Movement, established by 32 religious leaders and journalists on 29 December 1977, focused to struggle for improvement of human rights. This organization mainly used public statements and comments about certain policies or reactions of the regime as a strategy for struggle. *Dong-A Daily*, 30 December 1977. Pak Tae-Kyun, "Hankook Minjujuui JudoSeryuk" (The Leading Force of South Korean Democratization?), in *Hankook Minjujuuiui HyunjaejukKkwaje: Jedo, Kaehyuk mit Sahoe Undong* (Current Tasks for South Korean Democracy: Institutions, Reforms, and Social Movements), ed. Korea Council of Academic Groups (Seoul: Changjakgwa bipyungsa, 1993), 169.

<sup>199</sup> Those newly transformed civil society groups in the early 1970s recognized the state support took their autonomy away, and didn't need financial aid from the state because they were not well organized institutionally. For example, students didn't need much money because they could use circle rooms as their offices, and lived in campus. In addition, they could manage political struggles with other students' financial supports albeit it was not enough money.

<sup>200</sup> According to Park Eun-Sook, a former student movement activists and currently social worker of the *Heungsadan*, in the 1970s student movement activists who truly believed their movement could



Thus, pro-democracy civil society could criticize the regime more freely and actively despite harsh suppression. Another characteristic was a diversity of ideologies and strategies within the groups and organizations. This diversity made the regime nervous because diverse demands of civil society made the regime difficult to deal with various demands of civil society. On the other hand, this diversity made various democratic groups and organizations difficult to unite in fighting against the regime, and thus caused the democratic movement to be ineffective during the Yushin period.<sup>201</sup>

From the beginning of the Yushin regime, those democratic civil society had clear and firm goals in its movement, such as a restoration of democratic constitution, improvement of human rights condition, liberalization of schools, improvement of working conditions, and economic justice. Because of these diverse goals, it was initially difficult for democratic civil society to struggle effectively with authoritarian regime. However, from the mid-1970s, those democratic organizations began to recognize that they could not achieve their individual goals without breaking down the authoritarian regime that suppressed them.<sup>202</sup>

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change political system, and struggled for restoration of democratic constitution. In addition, in order to achieve their goal, they were ready to be suffered by the authoritarian regime. There was a tendency that student movement activists were proud of the experience of torturing and imprisonment by the state power apparatuses. Park Eun-Sook, interviewed by author, Seoul, 13, 14, and 15 September 1999.

<sup>201</sup> According to Lee Tae-Bok, Ham Se-Ung and Park Eun-Sook, workers were more interested in economic issues, such as wage and working environment, student movement concentrated on school liberalization in the early Yushin regime, and the religious communities struggled for improvement of human rights with the regime. Because of diversity of goal, it was difficult for democratic groups and organizations to unite for influential struggles with the regime. However, those democratic groups and organizations realized that the fundamental problem started from the installation of the Yushin regime and they struggled for abolition of the Yushin regime from the middle of the 1970s. Lee Tae-Bok, interviewed by author, Seoul, 21 October 1999. Lee Tae-Bok was a labor movement activist in the 1970s and 1980s, and he is currently a president of the Nodong Sinmoon Inc. (The Labor Newspaper). Ham Se-Ung, interviewed by author, Seoul, 12 October 1999. Ham Se-Ung is a Catholic priest, and he had been actively involved in the democratic movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Because of active involvement, he had been arrested many times by the regime.

<sup>202</sup> From the mid-1970s, it was easy to find political slogans or demands in the democratic movement of most democratic organizations. For example, on March 31, about 500 students gathered in Korea University, and discussed about the Yushin Constitution. They demanded withdrawal of the Yushin

In addition, democratic civil society of the 1970s had an institutional weakness. Because of harsh suppression, it was very difficult for democratic organizations to develop institutional organizations, and thus they were easily destroyed by the state power apparatuses.<sup>203</sup> Instead, to survive from the suppression was the first priority of those groups and organizations. Related to the repressive policy, democratic civil society often used violence as a means of struggle with the regime. Especially, students and workers often used violence, such as street demonstration involving the throwing stones, fire-bottles and violent confrontations with the police, in their struggle with the regime.<sup>204</sup> During the Yushin period, democratic groups and organizations adopted a parallel strategy of the Gramscian term “war of movement” as a main strategy for struggle with the regime. That is, violent demonstrations and protests were believed to be more influential in expressing their demands and dissatisfaction because the police and other state power apparatuses completely blockaded democratic movements of civil society.

Then, what made the democratic movement of civil society inconsequential during the Yushin regime? First and foremost was a repressive policy of the Yushin regime toward democratic civil society. The regime didn't allow democratic civil society

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Constitution, and warned that the regime should not use confrontation with North Korea in politics. *Dong-A Daily*, 31 March 1975. On 1 March 1976, 20 Protestant ministers, Catholic Priests, and about 700 believers gathered to pray for current Korean political situation in Myungdong Catholic church, and demanded stepping down President Park from the presidency. *Myungdong Catholic Church, Hankook Catholic Inkwon undongsa* (The History of Human Right Movement of Korean Catholic), (Seoul: Myungdong Catholic church, 1984), 350-53. At the same day, former president Yun Bo-Sun publicly announced that democracy was impossible under the Park regime, and said that the Park regime was more authoritative than the previous Lee regime. He also said that South Korea could not win over North Korea, and there was no way except for democracy in order to win the confrontation with North Korea. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 2, 469.

<sup>203</sup> According to the interview with Chun Yong-Ho, student movement activists continuously changed names of organizations, or established new organizations to avoid suppression by the regime. According to his personal experience, he established six organizations for a day. Chun Yong-Ho, interviewed by author, Kwangju, 4 September 1999.

<sup>204</sup> Hagen Koo, “Strong State and Contentious Society,” 237-40.

to criticize and challenge the regime. The Emergency Decree was the most effective means for suppressing the opposition forces. For example, as Table 3-2 shows, the regime declared 16 Emergency decrees and martial laws whenever special measure was necessary.

Table 3-2

Emergency Measures and Martial Law under the Park Regime

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May 16, 1961:	Declaration of Martial law, nationwide
June 3, 1964:	Declaration of Martial law in Seoul
Aug. 26, 1965:	Declaration of garrison decree in Seoul
Oct. 15, 1971:	Declaration of garrison decree in Seoul
Dec. 6, 1971:	Declaration of state of national emergency
Oct. 17, 1972:	Declaration of Martial law, nationwide
Jan. 8, 1974:	Declaration of Emergence Measure(EM) 1 and 2
Jan. 4, 1974:	Declaration of EM 3
April 3, 1974:	Declaration of EM 4
Aug. 23, 1974:	Declaration of EM 5 (removal of the EM 1 and 4
Dec. 31, 1974:	Declaration of EM 6 (removal of the EM 3)
April 8, 1975:	Declaration of EM 7 (closure of Korea University)
May 13, 1975:	Declaration of EM 8 (removal of the EM 7)
May 13, 1975:	Declaration of EM 9 (included points of the EM's 1, 4 and 7)
Oct. 18, 1979:	Declaration of Martial law in Pusan
Oct. 20, 1979:	Garrison decree in Masan and Changwon

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Source: *Dong-A Daily*, 24 January 1981, 9; Kim Ho-Jin, *Hankook Jungchichejeon* (The Theory of Korean Political System), (Seoul: Bakyounsa, 1993), 265-66.

The second reason could be found in the diversity of ideologies and strategies within the democratic civil society. Each group or organization of civil society had different goals, strategies, and ideologies. Because of this diversity, they during the Yushin period had to face internal conflicts, and these conflicts led their democratic

movement inconsequential.<sup>205</sup> The third reason was that the lack of public support, especially from the middle class, was a serious obstacle to the influential struggle of democratic civil society. There were several political, cultural, and economic reasons for this. First, the middle class didn't have a clear identity as an important constituency of civil society. Moreover, most of them didn't have political consciousness or critical perception of an authoritarian regime.<sup>206</sup> They considered that participants in the democratic movement and democratic civil society had totally different ideologies from theirs. Thus, they were reluctant to join democratic organizations of civil society and participate in the democratic movement during the 1970s. The democratic movement without popular support had a limitation in struggling with the regime.

Second, the economic consideration was also an important reason why the middle class didn't actively support and participate in democratic groups and organizations and their democratic movement. During the 1970s, most people were much more interested in their economic prosperity than in political development and didn't want to slow down rapid economic development by uncertain political change.<sup>207</sup> Thus, they were critical of violent and radical protests of democratic civil society. Particularly, they were critical of

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<sup>205</sup> According to Park Eun-Sook, a former student movement activist, the internal conflict made democratic groups and organizations difficult to concentrate the democratic movement during the Yushin period. During the Yushin regime, student movement activists had to face internal conflicts about approaches for effective struggle with the regime. Park Eun-Sook, interviewed by author, Seoul, 13, 14, and 15 September 1999.

<sup>206</sup> According to John Kie-chiang Oh's work, a large majority of Koreans began, from about the mid-1970s toward the end of the Park regime, to identify themselves probably for the first time as members of the middle class. John Kie-chiang Oh, *Korean Politics: The Quest for Democratization and Economic Development*, 66.

<sup>207</sup> The 1971 survey asked the respondents the following: With regard to modernization, which do you find more important, economic aspects such as better income and economic stability or political aspects such as greater freedom and political stability? 54% of 409 citizens and 55% of 105 legislators considered economic aspects more important, while 37% of citizens and 39% of legislators chose political aspects. Lee Young-Ho, "Economic Growth vs. Political Development: The Issue Relative Emphasis in Modernization," *Korea Journal* 12, no. 5 (1972): 5-11.

students and labor movements with leftist ideologies and violent strategies.<sup>208</sup> Third, the middle class were afraid of joining democratic organizations and their democratic movement because of possible suppression by the regime. Fourth, the middle class who had been used to the traditional Confucian political culture was more familiar with authoritarianism than with democracy. They, more conservative than democratic groups, preferred strong leadership more than compromise or negotiation.

For these reasons, the democratic movement had been inconsequential and easily suppressed by the regime. Nevertheless, the political struggle by democratic civil society continued, and its character slowly changed. At the beginning of the Yushin regime, restoration of a democratic constitution and guarantees of liberal democratic values, such as a protection of political freedom and equality, the end of dictatorial rule, and political corruption, were the ultimate goals of the democratic movement. However, in the late Yushin regime, democratic civil society struggled for complete abolition of the authoritarian regime and democratization. However, democratic civil society was not mature enough to develop united strategies and ideologies for an influential revolutionary democratic movement. In terms of a strategy, students and labor movement activists preferred violent means whereas the Jaeya force and religious communities relied on non-violent strategies such as peaceful demonstrations, public statements, and prayer meetings.<sup>209</sup> In this sense, ideological and strategic difference was a serious obstacle to the establishment of a coalition among the various democratic groups and organizations and with the opposition party.

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<sup>208</sup> Kim Jin-OKyun and Cho Hee-Yen, "Bundankwa Sahoesanhwange dehayo" (The Relationship between divided nation and social situation), *Bundansidaewa Hankooksahoe* (The Age of Divided Nation and Korean Society), (Seoul: Kachi, 1985), 422.

## 1) The Democratic Movement of Civil Society

Some scholars, like Nam Koon-Woo, argued that major causes of the downfall of the *Yushin* regime in 1979 were the growth of democratic civil society and its political struggle.<sup>210</sup> However, this argument is not appropriate because the democratic struggle of democratic civil society was not strong enough to overthrow the regime despite the fact that they actively struggle for democratization. Although pro-democracy groups and organizations actively struggled for democratization, their movement had been inconsequential during the *Yushin* period because of lack of public support, internal division, and suppression by the regime. Nevertheless, the democratic movement of civil society in the late 1970s was strong enough to destabilize the political situation and divide the ruling coalition in dealing with the political crisis. Especially, along with the change of the leadership in the opposition party, the protest for human rights and the autonomization of schools developed into a political movement that demanded the abolition of the *Yushin* Constitution and the restoration of a democratic constitution.<sup>211</sup> Consequently, the ruling coalition was divided into hardliners and moderates in dealing with the political crisis, and this internal conflict within the ruling coalition led to the collapse of the regime.

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<sup>209</sup> According to Park Eun-Sook and Lee Tae-Bok, during the *Yushin* period, students and workers didn't have other strategies for struggle against the repressive regime except using violence to express their demands and dissatisfaction toward the *Yushin* regime.

<sup>210</sup> Nam Koon-Woo, *South Korean Politics: The Search for Political Consensus and Stability*, 131-203.

<sup>211</sup> During the *Yushin* period, there were several changes of leadership in the opposition party (New Democratic Party), and the character of the party was changed according to the leadership. For example, when Lee Chul-Seung controlled the party, the opposition party was more likely to cooperate with the regime. On the other hand, when Kim Young-Sam took control of the party, the party came to have more combative and critical characteristics.

### (1) The Opposition Party

Under the Yushin regime, the major goal of the NDP was to survive as a political institution. Because the bureaucrats and repressive state apparatuses monopolized state functions, the opposition party accepted the role of what Linz calls “semi-opposition party,” i.e., “those groups that are not dominant or represented in the governing group but that are willing to participate in power without fundamentally challenging the regime.”<sup>212</sup> Under an authoritarian regime, the role of the opposition party belongs to “loyal opposition,” and the Korean case was no exception until the mid-1970s.

However, when the *Jaeya* force and student movement activists pressured the NDP to change a role of the party from a legal semi-opposition to a genuine autonomous opposition party, a dissident group emerged within the NDP. After Kim Young-Sam took over the leadership in late 1974, the NDP began to attack the lack of legitimacy of the *Yushin* regime and demanded restoration of a democratic political system. This change of the leadership in the NDP created a short standoff between the regime and the opposition forces, mainly the NDP, the *Jaeya* force, and student movement activists. Eventually, President Park responded by taking the issue to a national referendum on the *Yushin* Constitution on 12 February 1975. However, the result of the referendum could be easily anticipated since the public discussion about the referendum was prohibited, and boycott of the referendum was strongly discouraged.<sup>213</sup> In this respect, the hegemony of the regime was established through the election.

In this situation, an unfavorable event to not only the opposition party but also civil society took place. The United States was defeated in the Vietnam War, and fear of

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<sup>212</sup> Juan Linz, “Opposition to and under an Authoritarian regime: Spain,” in *Regimes and Opposition*, ed. Robert Dahl (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 191.

domino-like communist expansion spread in East Asia. The U.S. defeat calmed the voices of the new leading opposition faction, led by Kim Young-Sam, and strengthened the position of the compromising faction, led by Lee Chul-Seung. Thus, an external event unfavorably affected the development of the opposition party and caused another internal power struggle within the NDP. After the intense internal power struggle, the loyal semi-opposition regained control with the help of the state apparatuses' manipulation through a violent party convention on 11 September 1976.<sup>214</sup> Since then, the NDP had remained a calm, docile and submissive semi-loyal opposition party until 1979.

In addition, the NDP had been originated within the anti-Communist landed class and covered a broad spectrum, from conservative to centralist. It was not the "nomenclature for a class."<sup>215</sup> Thus, the NDP was unclear as to whose interests they represented. Being divided by factional allegiances, the party became vulnerable to manipulation by the regime. This lack of organizational cohesion and ideological commitment, weakness in coalescing interests and formulating policies, and strong personalism of leadership were the main characteristics of the NDP in the Yushin period. Because of these weaknesses, the center of the democratic movement moved to democratic civil society, such as the Jaeya force, students, religious dissidents, and workers, and made it virtually impossible for the democratic movement to formulate a unified and coherent strategy against the authoritarian regime.

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<sup>213</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 13 February 1975.

<sup>214</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 12 September 1976.

<sup>215</sup> Eugene Kim and Kihl Yong-Whan, *Party Politics and Elections in Korea* (Silver Spring, Maryland: The Research Institute on Korean Affairs, 1976), 14.



## (2) Labor Movements

When organized collectively with well-defined common interests and a collective identity, the labor movement can be more threatening politically to authoritarian regimes than any civil society groups such as students, church related organizations, and neighborhood associations. Collective action by workers can directly disrupt the whole national economy through work stoppage.<sup>216</sup> This is why the Yushin regime began with a repressive policy toward the labor movement.<sup>217</sup> For instance, the enactment of the “Law Concerning Special Measure for Safeguarding National Security” in December 1971 forbade the right of collective action in the public sector. Amendments to the labor laws in 1973 permitted the state to intervene in labor disputes and did not allow any national union or industry level unions to control company or floor unions.<sup>218</sup>

Nevertheless, even the harshest authoritarian regime could not completely eliminate labor organizations. Instead, they allowed workers’ organizations that were heavy-handedly controlled. As Samuel Valenzuela mentioned, the Yushin regime had two strategies, the “corporatist strategy” and the “market strategy.”<sup>219</sup> The corporatist strategy is employed when the state directly involves itself in the creation of vertically

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<sup>216</sup> Samuel Valenzuela, “Labor Movements in Transition to Democracy: A Framework for Analysis,” *Comparative Politics* 21 (July 1989): 448.

<sup>217</sup> According to Lee Tae-Bok, from the late 60s, the economic situation was getting worse, and thus workers’ dissatisfaction toward the regime gradually reached an uncontrollable situation. Thus, the Yushin regime, emphasized economic development, needed to stabilize a labor movement, and thus implemented the harsh repressive policy toward the labor movement. In addition, the regime was worried about possible establishment of a coalition between workers and students in the anti-government movement. Because of these reasons, the Yushin regime focused to suppress the labor movement along with suppression on the student movement.

<sup>218</sup> Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC), *1970myundae Nodong Hyunjanggwa Jeungun* (The Witness to Working Place in the 1970s), (Seoul: Poolppit, 1984), 224-32.

<sup>219</sup> Samuel J. Valenzuela, “Labor Movements in Transition to Democracy: A Framework for Analysis.”

structured and state-sanctioned labor organizations for the regulation of labor conflicts.<sup>220</sup>

The state is involved not only in screening leaders but also in controlling the collective bargaining process. Unions were designed to collaborate with employers and the state and to promote social peace. On the other hand, a market strategy aims at reducing the functions of labor organizations to a minimum by discouraging rank and file membership and by decentralizing collective bargaining to such a degree that workers can not develop concerted labor actions.<sup>221</sup> By employing the market strategy, the state tries to minimize the economic impact of union activities by decentralizing collective bargaining and by incapacitating strike efforts through the use of strike breakers, lockouts, and prohibitions on work stoppages in the key strategic areas of industry.<sup>222</sup>

The *Yushin* regime adopted a combination of these two strategies. The regime adopted the corporatist strategy of labor control by involving itself in organizations of national-level and industry-level union federations run by leaders who supported the *Yushin* regime. The Labor-Management Council at the factory level and the Factory *Saemaul Undong* (factory new community movement)<sup>223</sup> were state-initiated and directed organizations designed to transform industrial relations based on class conflict into relations based on capital-labor cooperation so as to be harmonious, hierarchical and patrimonial. Besides these strategies, the regime mobilized the mass media to accuse

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<sup>220</sup> Philippe C. Schmitter, "Still The Century of Corporatism?" *Review of Politics* 36 (1974): 85-131.

<sup>221</sup> Samuel Valenzuela and Jeffrey Goodwin, *Labor Movements under Authoritarian Regimes* (Cambridge, MA: Center for European Studies Monographs on Europe, 1983), 5 and 7.

<sup>222</sup> Samuel Valenzuela, "Labor Movements in Transition to Democracy: A Framework for Analysis," 450.

<sup>223</sup> The *Saemaul Undong* introduced in 1971 was a comprehensive rural community development program with its main focus being the improvement of rural life. However, it is argued that the *Saemaul* ideology was used to dismantle traditional values, seen as barriers to rural modernization. As such, it constituted a hegemonic project aimed at mobilizing society behind the state. The Factory *Saemaul Undong* also had a same goal for controlling labor organizations and their labor movement.

labor movement activists of being supported and controlled by the North Korean Communist party.<sup>224</sup>

Throughout the Yushin period, the labor movement could not be influential because of harsh suppression and internal division. Moreover, the labor movement had to focus mostly on economic issues, such as improvement of working conditions and wages because of workers' lack of political consciousness. According to Lee Tae-Bok, a former labor movement activist, economic issues, such as wages, working environment and economic justice, were much more important to workers in the 1970s.<sup>225</sup> More importantly, the labor movement did not receive strong support from other democratic groups or from ordinary people because of its radical character and different social background. However, in spite of these difficulties, the labor movement of "democratic unions" and external-institutional movement organizations survived because of a very important change in the late Yushin period: the main target of the labor movement shifted from their employers to the regime. Thus, the labor movement showed promise that it could develop into a political movement. Additionally, from the late part of the decade, a coalition between workers and other democratic groups began to appear in spite of harsh suppression and their internal tensions. These changes within the labor movement influenced the democratic movement of the 1980s.

Labor unions during the Yushin regime can be divided into three kinds: official (*Oyong*) unions, "democratic" unions, and extra-institutional unions. First, during the

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<sup>224</sup> Hagen Koo, "The State, Minjung, and Working Class in South Korea," *State and Society in Contemporary Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 136.

<sup>225</sup> Lee Tae-Bok, interviewed by author, Seoul, 21 October 1999.

1970s, so called *Oyong* unions (collusive company dominated unions)<sup>226</sup> were organized with the support of the state apparatus, especially the KCIA. This organizing official unions was a result of regime's suppression and an attempt to organize state corporatist labor unions. The *Oyong* unions were composed of the FKTU (*Nochong*) at the national confederation level, 17 industry level union federations and numerous company level and plant level unions.<sup>227</sup> Besides this FKTU, the National Agricultural Cooperatives Federation (NACF, *Nonghyup*) was also a pro-regime union, recreated in 1961 by the military government. These pro-government labor unions were readily manipulated by the KCIA, and remained "unfailingly loyal" to the Yushin regime.<sup>228</sup> The leaders of these *Oyong* unions abandoned the collective bargaining power of the unions and instead acted as intermediaries between the state and workers and between employers and workers, discouraged strikes, and adhered to collaborative capital-labor relations.

Another important role for these official unions was to support the authoritarian regime. For instance, the FKTU publicly announced its support when the Yushin regime was inaugurated in 1972.<sup>229</sup> Furthermore, the FKTU supported a series of amendments to labor codes in 1973 and 1974 which denied the system of industry level union federation, expanded the public sectors in which the organization was not permitted, and allowed the

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<sup>226</sup> *Oyong* union means unions that are closely tied with employers and the authoritarian regime. Generally, their leadership and finance were supported by the regime. Therefore, those *Oyong* unions didn't have autonomy from the state.

<sup>227</sup> The regime made it illegal to organize independent national union confederation except the FKTU and dissolved other radical union confederations in 1963. KNCC, *1970myundae Nodong Hyunjanggwa Jeungun* (The Witness to Working Place in the 1970s), (Seoul: Poolppit, 1984), 56-7.

<sup>228</sup> George E. Ogle, *South Korea: Dissent within the Economic Miracle* (London: Zea Books, 1990), 159.

<sup>229</sup> Because of the support to the Yushin regime, the FKTU was blamed by various civil society groups and organizations. For example, on 5 January 1994, 19 Catholic and Protestant organizations stated that Federation of Korean Trade Unions (*Hankook Nochong*) should be dissolved because it didn't reflect workers' demands. According to them, the FKTU, controlled by the regime, was not a civil society organization. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul: 7, 80nyundae Jeungunkwa Minjuhwa*

increase of regulation by state agencies. Thus, the FKTU, supported and controlled by the regime, could not represent workers' real interests, and were used to control labor movements.<sup>230</sup>

Second, the harsh repressive policy and the creation of official unions could not prevent the emergence of a new group of unions, so called "Democratic Unions," within the legal structure of labor organizations.<sup>231</sup> The democratic union focused its efforts on overcoming the obstruction of the regime through the grassroots level struggle and representing workers' real interests.<sup>232</sup> Democratic unions resisted repressive interference from capitalists and the state as they struggled for the economic interests of union members. Especially, they implemented intra-union democracy and sought to overcome the limitations of isolated individual company-level unions by encouraging solidarity among members of different democratic unions. For example, when a worker, Min Jong-Jin, was killed by gas suffocation in 1977, 200 workers from Seoul and Incheon gathered in solidarity with Min's colleagues to protest the miserable working conditions and the repressive labor policy of the regime.<sup>233</sup> Furthermore, they tried to induce

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*undong* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), (Seoul: Catholic Publisher, 1996), 486.

<sup>230</sup> Choi Jang-Jip, "A Corporatist Control of the Labor Unions in South Korea," *Korean Social Science Journal* 11 (1984): 37.

<sup>231</sup> The "Democratic unions," established as a name of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions in the late 1980s, traces its roots to the nascent workers' struggles ignited by the self-immolation of a garment worker Chun Tae-il on 13 November 1970. The tenacious struggles of female workers in export-oriented light industries laid the foundation of the modern labor movement. As light industries gave way to heavy industries as the focal point of the export economy in the 1980s, the early militancy inspired the awakening of the regimented workforce in large-scale industries which became the hotbed of the Great Workers' Struggle of 1987. The explosion not only galvanized the uniformed workers of industrial complexes and the neck-tie corps of office buildings, but shook the entire society. Choi Jang-Jip, "A Corporatist Control of the Labor Unions in South Korea," 33.

<sup>232</sup> According to Choi Jang-Jip, about 20 to 30% of all labor unions were autonomous union in the late 1970s. Choi Jang-Jip, "A Corporatist Control of the Labor Unions in South Korea," 38.

<sup>233</sup> Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC), *1970myundae Nodong Hyunjanggwa Jeungun* (The Witness to Working Place in the 1970s), 586-89.

intellectuals and religious organizations to participate in the labor movement, so as to establish a coalition among workers, intellectuals and religious activists.

In spite of these efforts, however, the democratic labor movement remained at the level of economic struggle.<sup>234</sup> Because of this, most labor movement activists did not have much knowledge of the socio-political structure which constrained the labor movement outside the economic arena. Thus, they didn't attack the dependent economic structure and repressive authoritarian regime, the bases of labor repression. As a consequence, the democratic unions failed to develop into a strong social force that could challenge the authoritarian regime. Democratic unions also failed to establish solidarity among themselves or to establish a national level confederation and industry level federations as alternatives to the state-controlled *Oyong* unions such as the FKTU. For example, because of ideological and social differences, other democratic groups and organizations, such as the Jaeya force, were reluctant to cooperate with labor unions in resisting the authoritarian regime.

Nevertheless, the democratic movement succeeded in changing the main target of workers' struggles from capitalists to the authoritarian regime. This happened when labor movement activists realized that the major obstruction to the labor movement was not capitalist but the regime. As a response to this change, the regime suppressed workers more harshly and tried to justify its suppression as necessary for national security.<sup>235</sup> Because of this suppression, democratic unions became more violent and radicalized. However, it was impossible for them to directly challenge the regime that

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<sup>234</sup> Chung Dae-Yong, "Jaeya Minjunodongdongeui Jungaegwajungwa Hyunhwang" (The Development and the Present Status of Democratic Labor Union Movements of the Jaeya), in Korea Christian Industrial Development Institute, ed. *Hankook Nodongundongeui Inyum* (The Idea of Korean Labor Movement), (Seoul: Jungamsa, 1988), 177-78.

monopolized the physical force. What democratic unions could do against the regime was to struggle for economic interests sporadically. As a result of the emergence of democratic unions, capitalists came to support the regime more firmly.<sup>236</sup>

The third kind of labor movement was an “Extra-Institutional Labor Movement.” Some dissident workers resorted to extra-institutional or extra-legal means of protest against the repressive regime. Dissident workers, former student activists and intellectuals who were denied access to existing legal and institutional labor organizations tried to organize politically motivated protests. This worker’s movement was very often allied with radical student organizations and dissident intellectuals. This group of the labor movement was more active in establishing a coalition with other democratic groups and organizations, and its leaders were interested more in political issues than economic issues. The main goals of these external-institutional labor organizations were to break up the state sanctions toward the labor movement, and to develop the labor movement into a political struggle for democratization. Only in this way would it be possible to realize the workers’ interests.

In addition, the extra-institutional labor movement had a unique character, different from that of other democratic civil society groups and organizations. This radical labor movement group was critical of church-led labor movements. For them, religious organizations helped workers not from the standpoint of a class struggle under capitalist society but out of a sense of moral responsibility for their oppressed working neighbors. In this sense, this radical labor movement group viewed social conflicts as a

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<sup>235</sup> Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>236</sup> Lee Tae-Wook, “*Hankookui Sanuphwakoajungesuui Kyungjeminjuhwa*” (Economic Democratization in the Process of Korean Industrialization), *Donga Yongu* 15, (Seoul: Sogang University, 1988): 178.

class struggle, and the solution for this social conflict should be a workers' revolution. Thus, the government considered them as an enemy of social and political stability, and thus harshly suppressed them.<sup>237</sup>

Because of harsh suppression and internal divisions within the labor group, workers' collective activities were spontaneous, sporadic, and strictly limited to economic issues throughout the *Yushin* period. In particular, workers failed to establish their position as a serious social force within the opposition force as well as within the political system at large.<sup>238</sup> Union organizations became polarized into either *Oyong* unions or democratic independent unions. Both "*Oyong*" and "Democratic" unions were decentralized because the repressive policy toward the labor movement was unprecedentedly harsh. The combination of these internal and external circumstances surrounding the labor movement made not only the labor movement but also the democratic movement inconsequential.

### (3) Student Movements

Students have been considered as the "conscience" of South Korean politics for a long time. Their political consciousness came from the successful experience of the student movement in the early 1960s. Since then, students had led protests against diplomatic normalization with Japan, rigged elections in 1967, and the revision of the Constitution allowing Park a third term in 1969. Through these actions, the student group

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<sup>237</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, the regime considered those labor movement activists as a revolutionary group that attempted to overthrow the state. Based on this judgement of the labor movement activists, the state harshly suppressed and tried to destroy its related organizations of civil society. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>238</sup> Choi Jang-Jip, "A Corporatist Control of the Labor Unions in South Korea," 180.



came to be known as the “only conscious force of the society.”<sup>239</sup> In addition, the student movement was not integrated to the ideological hegemony of the state. Thus, President Park, who early recognized the importance of controlling the student movement so as to maintain the Yushin regime, harshly suppressed them.

In fact, students first broke the masses’ silence under the *Yushin* repression. On 2 October 1973, students of Seoul National University held a rally demanding the establishment of liberal democracy.<sup>240</sup> However, this initial efflorescence of the anti-Yushin struggle subsided as a result of another round of government crackdowns, symbolized above all by the Emergency Decree no. 9, promulgated in May 1975, which banned any criticism of the Yushin Constitution. Student demonstrations spread to almost all campuses, and they received widespread support from intellectuals, church human rights groups, and opposition party leaders, thus igniting the democratic movement in other sectors of the society.<sup>241</sup> For example, the National Coalition for Democratization organized the “One Million Signature Campaign for the Revision of the *Yushin* Constitution” in December 1973.<sup>242</sup> The Park regime reacted to the signature

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<sup>239</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *80nyundae Hankookui Minjuhwaenggwajung* (The Process of Korean Democratization in the 1980s), 77.

<sup>240</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 3 October 1973; Harry Magdoff, “Are there lessons to be learned?” *Monthly Review* 42, no. 9 (February 1991): 42. In addition, about 300 students of Seoul National University demonstrated against the authoritarian regime, and demanded the restoration of democracy on October 5. *Dong-A Daily*, 9 October 1973. Before October, there were students’ several demonstrations, but those demonstrations were not planned, and students’ dissatisfaction was accidentally erupted. For example, students gathered in each university campus, and celebrated the “4.19 Student Revolution” on April 19, 1973. After the celebration, they protested against the Yushin regime, and demanded restoration of a democratic constitution and withdrawal of the dictatorial regime. *Dong-A Daily*, 19 April 1973.

<sup>241</sup> For example, on 5 November 1973, about 300 students of Kyungbook University in Daegu City distributed anti-government handbills, and demonstrated against the regime for restoration of the democratic government. *Dong-A Daily*, 8 November 1973. In addition, on November 14, about 70 students of Korea University gathered in campus, and demanded release of arrested students, autonomization of university, and exercise of liberal democracy. *Dong-A Daily*, 14 November 1973.

<sup>242</sup> Thirty leaders of church, academic circle, and the press group started the signature campaign on 4 December 1973, and surprisingly gathered 0.3 million signatures in days despite severe interference from the authorities. Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, *1970nyundae*

campaign with Emergency Decree no. 1 on 8 January 1974 which “banned any activity to deny, oppose, distort or slander the Constitution.”<sup>243</sup>

In spite of the Emergency Decree, student demonstrations did not end completely. In the spring of 1974, a group among student activists established a national student organization, the National Democratic Youth Student Alliance (*Minchunghakryun*).<sup>244</sup> The *Minchunghakryun* was significant because it was a national coordinating organization of individual college level democratic movement and tried to build a coalition with other democratic groups of civil society. In addition, this organization raised labor issues in connecting with democratization for the first time since the installation of the *Yushin*.<sup>245</sup> The regime responded to the establishment of the *Minchunghakryun* with a new Emergency Decree no. 4, imposed to quell a specific student organization, on 3 April 1974.<sup>246</sup> After the regime lifted Emergency Decrees no. 1 and 4 on August 23, student demonstrations flared up again, provoking the onset of the democratic movement among the press, intellectuals, and the opposition party.<sup>247</sup> For a short period, student protests contributed to a standoff between the regime and the opposition force, and forced the regime to hold a national referendum for the *Yushin*

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*Minjoowhaundonggwa Kidoggyo* (Democratization Movements and the Church in the 1970s), (Seoul: CISJD, 1983), 130-37.

<sup>243</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 25 October 1974.

<sup>244</sup> The National Democratic Youth Student Alliance (*Minchunghakryun*), established by student movement activists on 27 March 1974, struggled for the restoration of democratic institutions, denying *Yushin* constitution and military dictatorship. *Dong-A Daily*, 28 March 1974.

<sup>245</sup> KNCC, *1970nyundae Minjooundong: Kidoggyoinkwonundonggeul Joongsimetro* (The Democratization Movements in the 1970s: with Special Reference to Christian Human Rights Movement), (Seoul: The Committee for Human Rights, KNCC, 1987), 355-57.

<sup>246</sup> *Chosun Daily and Dong-A Daily*, 3 April 1974. For example, the KCIA announced that the “uncovering” of the “National League for Democratic Youth and Students (Junkook MinJu CheongNyeon HakSaing ChongYeon Maing)” fabricated organization of student leaders, religious and scholars.

<sup>247</sup> On 7 October 1974, the opposition NDP proposed to establish a “committee for the Constitutional Revision” in the National Assembly. On October 24, journalists of *Dong-A Daily* started the “Movement for Practicing Free Press” with “declaration of practicing free press.” On November 17, dissident literary men established “the Council of Literary men for Realizing Freedom. In addition, a group

Constitution on 12 February 1975 and to release most political prisoners on February 15.<sup>248</sup>

After the referendum, the regime pursued an even harsher repressive policy toward not only the student movement but also political, social, and economic struggle of other democratic groups and organizations. For example, President Park promulgated the Emergency Decree no. 7 for the sole purpose of closing Korea University campus on April 8, 1975.<sup>249</sup> However, the news of the collapse of Vietnam on 30 April 1975, aroused a new security concern among people against Communist North Korea, and gave the regime a new rationale for suppressing internal dissidents for the sake of national security. This disadvantageous external environment remarkably weakened the student movement. Thus, in the latter half of 1975, there were no massive student demonstrations except a few incidents such as distributing political handbills and small size demonstrations.<sup>250</sup> For example, as Table 3-3 shows, the number of student political prisoners was 27 in 1976 and 90 in 1977, which were quite small compared with 165 in 1973 and 246 in 1974.

Table 3-3

Number of Political Prisoners (1971-1980)

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Students	43	1	165	246	126	27	90	230	267	468
Workers & Farmers	69	7	49	5	5	1	7	58	41	230

of dissident leaders made the "Declaration of People" and established the "National Conference for the Restoration of Democracy" on November 27.

<sup>248</sup> In the referendum, 79.84% people of the eligible voters voted, and the regime gained 73%. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheuksokui hwoibul: 7, 80ryundae Minjuwha Undongui jeungun*, (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 1, 509.

<sup>249</sup> *Chosun Daily*, 9 April 1975.

<sup>250</sup> Lee Hae-Chan, "Yushinchejewa Hakdaengundong" (*Yushin Regime and Student Movement*), in *Yushin Chejewa Minjuhwaundong* (The *Yushin Regime and Democratization Movements*), ed. Han Seung-Hun (Seoul: Samminsa, 1984).

Table 3-3—continued

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Clergymen		1	3	12	4	22	11	7	22	4
Religious Activists			1	5			1	8	35	8
Journalists & Literary men	3	2		13	14	1	6	20	20	33
Teachers		1	2	12	1	8	2	5	21	31
Politicians	12	3	5	10	6	5	1	14	14	40
White Color Workers			4	3		2			24	14
Businessmen	3		1	11		1	2	1	16	19
Marginals	1	1	4	8	2	1		1	25	4
Civil Servants									2	12
Others and Unclassified	25	23		3	2	3		3	752	67
Total	156	39	234	331	160	71	120	347	1239	930

Source: KNCC; *1970nyundae Minjoohwaundong: Kidoggyoinkwonundongeul Joongsimetro* (The democratization movements in the 1970s: with special reference to Christian human rights movement), (Seoul: The Committee for Human Rights, KNCC, 1987), 2066-67.

In the late 1970s, student movement activists developed new strategies for the democratic movement. One was the so-called “*Hyungjang Joonbiron* (Strategy of Preparation at Workplaces).” This strategy was based on realization mere confrontation with the authoritarian state apparatus on the street would inevitably result in mass defeat. Therefore, the proper strategy of the student movement was to realize that the true transforming force would be workers not students. The necessary task of the student movement was to go into workplaces to educate workers and thus raise their class-consciousness in order to prepare for struggle at the moment of crisis. In this sense, student movement activists realized a necessity of a parallel strategy of the Gramscian term “war of position” for an influential democratic movement.

Another strategy was the so-called “Strategy of Political Struggle,” which criticized the *Hyunjang Joonbiron* on the grounds that it neglected the role of political struggle, thereby avoiding the necessary and imminent confrontation with the authoritarian regime. Preparation at the work place, according to this radical strategy, was secondary to political struggle.<sup>251</sup> Since the late 1970s, many student movement activists in the “Preparationist group” infiltrated factories disguised as workers to raise workers’ political consciousness. Other students, who insisted on the priority of political struggle, consistently tried to organize student demonstrations on the street as well as on campus. However, without the joining of the middle class, urban marginals and workers, the democratic movement of a student group could not be influential. It was not until late 1979 that the student movement succeeded in gathering their support and thus becoming a popular movement capable of threatening the regime, as was shown in the mass uprising in Busan and Masan.

Unless linked with other democratic groups and organizations, the student movement had not been influential albeit student movement activists actively struggled.<sup>252</sup> To make things worse in the 1970s, the student movement neither achieved inter-university solidarity among individual campus level organizations nor developed joint strategies. Internal division within the student movement was another important limitation, and it continued in the 1980s. Thus, as Figure 3-1 illustrates, the active

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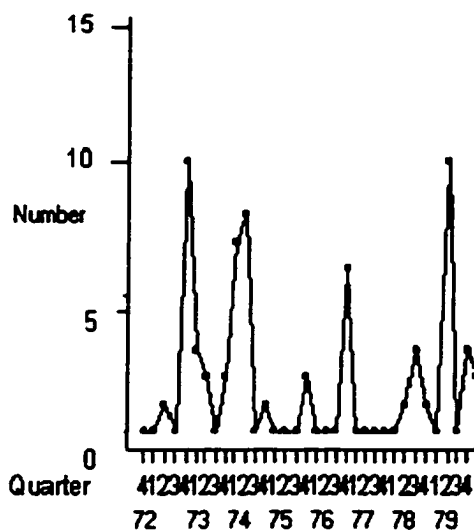
<sup>251</sup> Lee Jong-Oh, “80nyundae Nodongundongroneui Jungaewa Jungeeu ihaereul wuihayu” (For the Understanding of the Development of Labor Movement Strategies in the 1980s), *Hankook Nodongundongeeui Inyum* (Ideology of Korean Labor Movements), (Seoul: Jungamsa, 1988), 230-31.

<sup>252</sup> Bret L. Billet, “The History and Role of Student Activism in the Republic of Korea: the politics of contestation and conflict resolution in fledgling democracy,” 23-34. According to Park Eun-Sook and Chun Yong-Ho, major obstacles for the active struggle with the Yushin regime were harsh suppression of the state power apparatuses and internal split. Particularly, student movement activists were divided by ideologies and strategies, and they had to concentrate on internal power struggles for taking leadership of

student movement and suppression by the regime had repeated throughout the Yushin regime.<sup>253</sup> However, in spite of these internal conflicts and external suppression, the student group was the most intransigent opposition force to the *Yushin* regime.

Figure 3-1

Tendency of Students-Involved Events, 1972-1979



#### (4) Religious Communities

Under the Yushin regime, only religious communities could provide sanctuary for the opposition forces.<sup>254</sup> In the beginning of the *Yushin* regime, democratic groups and organizations had to concentrate on their survival under harsh suppression. Thus, the religious communities remained the only sanctuary tolerated by the regime and could thus provide shelter for the democratic force of civil society. At the same time, the religious communities were actively involved in the democratic movement. For example,

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the student movement. In most cases, hardliners won the internal struggle, and led student movement. Thus, student movement became radical and violent.

<sup>253</sup> For example, the number of the student demonstrations sharply increased in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 1972, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 1974, the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 1976, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 1978, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 1979. In contrast, the student movement during the rest of the Yushin period was relatively dormant because of harsh suppression.

the religious communities were leading groups, which initiated the “One Million Signature Campaign for the Revision of the *Yushin* Constitution” in 1973-1974.<sup>255</sup>

However, this active role could not continue because the *Yushin* regime began to pressure the religious communities to disconnect from other democratic groups and organizations. This policy of the *Yushin* regime caused the religious communities to become more actively involved in the democratic movement of the 1970s. For example, the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-Soon strongly influenced the Catholic Church to get involved in the democratic movement. Since this incident, the religious communities and related organizations became a crucial component of the democratic movement.<sup>256</sup>

Since the labor issue became politicized under the *Yushin* regime, the church became increasingly concerned with labor issues both for political and missionary reasons.<sup>257</sup> Since the late 1960s, many organizations of the religious communities became increasingly critical of the capitalist notion of economic growth as a means to resolve poverty, marginalization, and other social problems. Along with this change of attitude, the Protestant church became polarized so that the progressive wing took an assertive and active role in opposing the regime’s political and economic policies while

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<sup>254</sup> Hagen Goo, “The State, Minjung, and the Working Class in South Korea,” 139.

<sup>255</sup> Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development (CISJD), *1970nyundae Minjoowhaundonggwa Kidoggyo* (Democratization Movements and the Church in the 1970s), (Seoul: CISJD, 1983), 130-37.

<sup>256</sup> The active political struggle of the religious communities started when the *Yushin* regime arrested Bishop Chi as a charge of leading the *Minchunghakryun* incident in 1974. In this regard, the suppression of the state on the religious communities was a significant reason for the active involvement of the religious communities in the democratic movement.

<sup>257</sup> Chun Tae-II’ death in 1970 became a turning point and strongly influenced the religious communities. After this incident, the religious communities with other civil society groups and organizations came to involve in social and political movements. Choi Jang-Jip, “Political Cleavages in South Korea,” in *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*, ed. Hagen Koo (London and Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 33-4.

the majority of churches remained “conservative, fundamentalist and anti-intellectual.”<sup>258</sup>

The progressive churches challenged the fundamentalist, dogmatic theology that was introduced by American missionaries, and they adopted their own missionary principle for the masses, i.e., so called “*Minjung* (mass popular) theology.”<sup>259</sup> The *Minjung* theology, influenced by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Harvey Cox, and Jurgen Moltman as well as by Latin American liberation theology, aimed to fit theological principles to the reality of Korean culture, society, and politics.<sup>260</sup> Rather than individual salvation, the *Minjung* theology emphasized salvation of the people who were politically oppressed, economically exploited and deprived, and socially and culturally alienated and marginalized from the main power structure of the society.<sup>261</sup>

In the early Yushin period, on the other hand, the Korean Catholic Church’s main hierarchy retained a conservative position on the participation of the church in the popular movement. Only Catholic lay organizations such as the JOC,<sup>262</sup> expressed a deep concern for social issues at the grassroots level. However, encouraged by the conclusion

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<sup>258</sup> Suh, David Kwang-Sun, “Forty Years of Korean Protestant Churches: 1945-1985,” *Korea and World Affairs* 9, no. 4 (1987): 813.

<sup>259</sup> Harry Magdoff, “Are there lessons to be learned?,” *Monthly Review* 42, no. 9 (February 1991): 42-43. *Minjung* is defined in terms of several overlapping meanings. First, in the context of capitalist production relations in the contradiction between capital and labor, the *minjung* is made up of workers, peasants, the lower middle class, and the urban poor. Second, at the political level, the *minjung* consists of those who are made peripheral to, or alienated from, the political process because of direct and indirect restrictions placed on political participation by the authoritarian regime. Third, the *minjung* is made up of the dependent and subordinated relationship to the United States. Last, while the *minjung* exists objectively, as outlined above, the actual social composition of the *minjung*, at the level of praxis, is constituted by a collective historical consciousness can be traced back to the experiences of the *minjung* during the great “Tonghak Revolution” at the end of the nineteenth century. Thus, the *minjung* is not a fixed or limited sociopolitical entity, but embodies a dynamic, liberating subjectivity that arises from a history of oppression.

<sup>260</sup> According to Suh, David Kwang-Sun, while liberation theology has been developed in the socio-economic situation of Latin American context, *Minjung* theology has been developed in the socio-political situation of 1970 Korea. Suh, David Kwang-Sun, “Forty Years of Korean Protestant Churches: 1945-1985,” 815.

<sup>261</sup> Suh, David Kwang-Sun, “Forty Years of Korean Protestant Churches: 1945-1985,” 816.

<sup>262</sup> The Jeunes Ouvriers Chretiens (*Ganochung*, JOC), established by religious labor movement activists in 1958, concentrated its efforts on supporting the labor movement.



of the Second Vatican Council (1965), the Korean Catholic Church paid more attention to the promotion of justice, welfare of popular classes, and democratization of the political system.<sup>263</sup> Although South Korea is not considered as a Catholic nation, as Huntington mentioned, the South Korean case is an important case in dealing with religious changes. As his interesting expression, the choice between an authoritarian and a democratic political system is a conflict between a dictator and Cardinal.<sup>264</sup>

The imposition of the authoritarian *Yushin* system changed the church-state relationship in the 1970s. That is, some leaders of both Protestant and Catholic churches began to criticize the authoritarian regime and participate in the democratic movement. For example, the “Easter Morning Service on Namsan” on 22 April 1973 was the first public anti-regime demonstration organized by a leading clergy, Rev. Park Hyung-Kyu. Because of the meeting, Rev. Park was arrested for the charge of organizing subversion of government.<sup>265</sup> In addition, Bishop Chi Hak-Soon was arrested on 6 July 1974 on the charge of instigating a civil war and providing financial assistance to students involved in the *Minchunghakryn* incident.<sup>266</sup> Those arrests of dissident clergy stimulated anti-regime antipathy even within politically conservative church factions. As a result, an individual clergy’s struggle with the *Yushin* regime developed into a collective struggle of church organizations.

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<sup>263</sup> According to the interview with Catholic priest Kim Seung-Hoon, after the Second Vatican Council, young clergy demanded that church should express a voice of suppressed, and should represent the poor. According to him, this was the most important mission of the church. Based on these beliefs, many Catholic clergy came to be involved in democratic civil society and its democratic movement.

<sup>264</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the late Twentieth Century*, 76.

<sup>265</sup> KNCC, *1970nyundae Minjooхваundong: Kidoggyoinkwonundonggeul Joongsimetro* (The Democratization Movements in the 1970s: with Special Reference to Christian Human Rights Movement), 254-74.

<sup>266</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 7 July 1974.

The “Declaration of Korean Christians” of 1973 was the first historical statement for democratization by the Korean Protestant Church. In the declaration, the church defined the *Yushin* regime as an “absolute dictatorship” that was “created by satanic groups for their domination and interests” and characterized the inauguration of the *Yushin* regime as “the rebellion against the people.”<sup>267</sup> Furthermore, the church vowed to reject all laws, decrees, policies, and procedures made after 27 October 1972, and tried to form solidarity with world Christian movement.<sup>268</sup>

In the democratic movement of the religious communities, the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK), focused mainly on human rights, has been the main coordinator of six national anti-regime Protestant church denominations.<sup>269</sup> For example, the NCCCK met the issue a human rights declaration in 24 November 1973. In the declaration, the NCCCK said that human rights and people’s sovereign power in South Korea were infringed upon by the authoritarian regime and asserted that church leaders had to struggle for improvement of human rights condition. Other national organizations involved in the anti-government movement were the KSCF (Korean Student Christian Federation),<sup>270</sup> EYC (Ecumenical Youth Council)<sup>271</sup> and the UIM (Urban Industrial

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<sup>267</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 15 June 1973.

<sup>268</sup> KNCC, *1970nyundae Minjoohwaundong: Kidoggyoinkwonundonggeul Joongsimetro*, 250-53.

<sup>269</sup> The six religious bodies that had participated in the NCCCK were Korean Christian Prebyterians, Korean Jesus Prebyterians, Korean Methodists, Korean Salvation Army, Korean Anglican Church, and Korean Gospel church.

<sup>270</sup> The Korea Student Christian Federation (KSCF, *Hankook Kidok Haksaeng Chongyonmaeng*) was established by Protestant student movement activists, such as Oh Je-Sik and Na Sang-Ki, on 25 April 1948. The KSCF, strongly influenced by the liberation theology, focused its efforts on struggling for democratization. This organization often participated in demonstrations with other social movement organizations and supported other democratic organizations.

<sup>271</sup> The Korean Ecumenical Youth Council (EYC, *Hankook Kidok Chongyun Hyupuihoe*) was established by youth members of 6 Protestant organizations (about 750,000) on 6 March 1973. The EYC struggled for realization of social justice, improvement of human rights, and democratization. In addition, the EYC that had a close relationship with Jaeya groups and other student organizations supported the democratic movement. This organization was destroyed by the regime on 25 September 1976.

Mission).<sup>272</sup> The KSCF especially focused its activity on grassroots organizing, such as the forming of base communities among the urban poor, while the UIM focused on organizing autonomous unions through educating young female workers.<sup>273</sup>

In the Catholic Church, after the arrest of Bishop Chi, Catholic priests organized the NCPCRJ to support and struggle effectively with the authoritarian regime on 24 September 1974.<sup>274</sup> The Catholic priests' body sometimes contradicted the upper echelon of the Catholic Church hierarchy, such as the National Conference of Korean Bishops, that tried to avoid deep involvement in secular politics. Instead, the conservative bishops tried to put the young liberal priests' organization under the control of the official church hierarchy by recognizing the Committee for Justice and Peace, established on 10 December 1975.<sup>275</sup> The priests' organization formally accepted the decision of the Bishops Conference, but didn't stop organizing public rallies and prayer meetings in protest against the Yushin regime. In addition to protesting human rights violations, young Catholic Christians and priests organized grassroots movements for farmers and

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<sup>272</sup> The Urban Industrial Mission (*Dosi Samup Sunkyoehwi*, UIM), established by religious leaders, such as Cho Seng-Juk, Cho Hwa-Soon, Ahn Kyung-Soo, Chung Jin-Dong, and Cho Ji-Song on 4 February 1957, concentrated its efforts on struggle for improving human rights conditions and continuously demanded social and economic justice. It also demanded release of arrested workers, and punishment of people who suppress workers.

<sup>273</sup> This organization contributed a great deal in organizing democratic unions in Wonpoong Textile Co., Bando Trading Co., Dongil Textile Co., Control Data Co. They helped worker's struggles in Samwon Textile, Yurim Chemical, Dongnam Electric, Taekwang Industry, Simdo Textile, and Yurim Trading. It organized the struggle for Eight Hours working day in Confectionery, Lotte Confectionery, and Bangrim Textile. Chung Jae-Yong and Richard J. R. Kirkby, *The Political Economy of Development and Environment in Korea*, 64-5.

<sup>274</sup> The National Catholic Priest's Corps for the Realization of Justice (*Catholic Priests' Association for Justice*) was established by some Catholic priests who are interested in social movement, such as Lee Seung-Hoon, Moon Kyu-Hyun, and Ham Se-Ung, on 23 September 1974. The NCPCRJ attempted to effectively fight against the authoritarian regime after the arrest of Bishop Chi. In addition, the NCPCRJ played the role of the national organization of the anti-regime Catholics and consistently defended human rights and opposed the state's social, political and economic policies. *Dong-A Daily*, 24 September 1974.

<sup>275</sup> The Committee for Justice and Peace was especially interested in human right movement, and contributed to realization of social justice, development of social justice and improvement of peace. This

workers. The JOC and Catholic Farmers Association (*Kanong*)<sup>276</sup> tried to organize grassroots movements for workers and farmers, respectively.

In spite of the active role of the progressive faction of Korean churches, the majority of Korean churches either remained silent to the abuse of *Yushin* authoritarianism or openly supported the regime. For example, conservative Protestant ministers started the “Morning Prayer Meeting for the President” on 1 May 1968 and continued the meetings after the *Yushin* inauguration by changing the name to the “Morning Prayer Meeting for the State.” In addition, in November 1974, the *Daehan Kidokyo Yenhapwoui* (DCC) publicly announced that the NCKK could not represent all Protestant churches because it integrated only 6 branches of the church, and expressed that the participation of Protestant churches in anti-government demonstration was not right.<sup>277</sup> Especially, conservative church leaders opposed the political participation of churches, and instead supported the government stance on religion, i.e., the separation of church and state based on the theological position of non-interference by the church in matters of the secular state.<sup>278</sup> On the other hand, in the Catholic Church, the anti-government movement, led by liberal clergy, was constrained by the uncooperative bishops in the upper hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

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organization mainly supported social and political movement for democratization and improvement of human rights through issuing public statements.

<sup>276</sup> The Catholic Peasant Association (KCFM, *Kanong*), established on 17 October 1966, played an important role in organizing peasant grassroots movements. The KCFM concentrated its efforts on struggle for improvement of peasants' conditions, overcoming social contradiction. In addition, it tried to involve in political struggle against the authoritarian regime, and struggled for urban and rural community. The *Kanong* tried to organize grassroots movements for farmers.

<sup>277</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 27 November 1974.

<sup>278</sup> NCKK, 1970 *myundae Minjoohwaundong: Kidoggyo Inkwonundongeul Joongsimetro* (The Democratization Movements in the 1970s: with Special Reference to Christian Human Rights Movement), 502-8.

In spite of the repressive policy and internal division within the church, Catholic and Protestant churches played a significant role in supporting other democratic groups and organizations and their democratic movement, and sometimes became directly involved in the democratic movement during the *Yushin* regime. Because of the unique status of the church in a society, they could criticize the authoritarian regime more easily than other democratic groups and organizations.<sup>279</sup> However, under harsh suppression, it was difficult for the religious communities to establish firm solidarity with other democratic civil society such as students, workers, and the *Jaeya* force. Thus, the religious communities had to be satisfied with indirect supports to the democratic movement of civil society, such as holding prayer meetings and issuing public statements to criticize the authoritarian regime.<sup>280</sup>

#### (5) The *Jaeya* Force

Under the situation in which the NDP was a semi-loyal opposition party, a group called the *Jaeya* force emerged outside the formal institutional political arena.<sup>281</sup> The term, *Jaeya* is somewhat ambiguous because dissident students, workers, urban poor, and farmers are not included, although they are outside of the institutional political arena. The *Jaeya* force can be defined as a broad category of opposition notables with middle

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<sup>279</sup> For example, under harsh suppression, the riot police did not enter the church, especially the Myungdong Cathedral to suppress the democratic movement. Thus, leaders of the democratic movement ran into the church to temporarily avoid state suppression, and the clergy tried to protect and negotiate for their safety with the state repression apparatuses. This special status of the church in society caused the religious communities to have relatively autonomous position in the relationship with the state.

<sup>280</sup> For example, on 28 November 1973, dozens of Protestant church ministers and 200 believers gathered in Seoul, prayed for the nation, and demanded to stop repressive policy toward churches. In the prayer meeting, the riot police took 21 ministers and believers to police station. *Dong-A Daily*, 28 November 1973.

<sup>281</sup> “*Jaeya*” or “*Jaeya* movement circle” had been sometimes used to refer generally to the opposition party and dissident movement together. The authoritarian regime and the ruling bloc

class origins and consisted of a wide range of occupational categories from former professional politicians to university professors, religious clergy, journalists, and lawyers.<sup>282</sup> They were a group of people who raised social issues such as improvement of civil rights and representation of isolated classes. In addition, Jaeya leaders presented a direction of the democratic movement and encouraged active political struggle during the Yushin regime.<sup>283</sup> Thus, with a student group, the Jaeya force was very important in leading the democratic movement by civil society. For example, the Jaeya force acted as the opposition party under the *Yushin* regime because the major opposition NDP was controlled by the regime and thus could not play the role of coordinating the democratic movement or leading democratic civil society.

The National Council for the Safeguard of Democracy, formed on 19 April 1971, was the first national organization, established by the Jaeya force. The council played an important role in preventing rigging of the election by sending 6,100 election observers to electoral precincts. After the inauguration of the Yushin regime in 1972, the Jaeya force, like other democratic groups and organizations in civil society, had to be silent because of harsh suppression. However, Jaeya leaders eventually broke their silence and

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particularly preferred such a genetic usage. The regime often described the Jaeya force as communist-instigated.

<sup>282</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *80nyundae Hankookui Minjuhwaehanggwajung* (The Process of Democratic Transition of South Korea in the 1980s), 75-6; Park Tae-Kyun, *Hankook Minjujuuiui Judoseryuk* (The Leading Force of Democracy of South Korea), (Seoul: Changjakgwa bipyung, 1994), 171-72.

<sup>283</sup> For example, on March 1, Jaeya leaders, including former President Yun Bo-Sun, publicly announced that democracy was impossible under the Park regime, and also said that the Park regime was more authoritative than the previous Rhee regime. In addition, South Korea could not win over North Korea, and there was no way except for democracy in order to win the confrontation with North Korea. On 22 March 1977, Jaeya leaders, such as Yun Bo-Sun, Jung Gu-Young, Chun Kwoan-Woo, Yun Hyung-Jung, Ji Hak-Soon, Park Hyung-Kyu, Yang Il-Dong, Jung Il-Hyung, and Cho Hwa-Soon, publicly announced statements for abolition of the Yushin constitution and guarantee of human rights. In addition, on 9 January 1978, Jaeya leaders publicly announced that the Yushin regime and emergency law should be abolished, and the regime should guarantee workers' living rights. In addition, they asserted that any election could not be justified the authoritarian regime. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 2 and 3.

launched the first organized anti-regime movement, the “One Million Signature Campaign for the Revision of the *Yushin* Constitution” on 24 December 1973.<sup>284</sup> In addition, 71 Jaeya leaders, such as Yun Bo-Sun, Kim Young-Sam, Ham Se-Ung, and Kang Won-Yong, established the National Conference for the Restoration of Democracy. on 27 November 1974 to reconstruct the disassembled National Council of the pre-*Yushin* period.<sup>285</sup>

After that, there were cycles of protest, confrontation, repression and reconstruction. The first cycle of the struggle between the Jaeya force and the authoritarian regime was from 1973 to 1974. It began with the “One Million Signature Campaign for the Revision of the *Yushin* Constitution” and ended with the Emergency Decrees no. 1 and 2 in 1974. The second cycle started with the establishment of the National Congress for Restoration of Democracy (*Minjuhoebok Kookmin Hoeui*), and ended with the Emergency Decree no. 9 on 13 May 1975. After the promulgation of the Emergency Decree no. 9, the democratic movement of the Jaeya force had to stop due to unprecedented harsh repression. Nevertheless, the Jaeya force acted as a bridge that connected other democratic groups and organizations with the opposition party. After another quiet period, the Jaeya movement’s political struggle for democratization began in early 1976.

The “Declaration of Democratic National Salvation” on 1 March 1976 at the Myungdong Cathedral was the first organized protest of the Jaeya force after the Emergency Decree no. 9. In the declaration, the Jaeya force strongly requested Park to

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<sup>284</sup> Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development (CISJD), *1970myundae Minjoowha Undonggwa Kidoggyo* (Democratization Movements and the Church in the 1970s), (Seoul: CISJD, 1983), 130-37.

<sup>285</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 28 November 1974.

restore the democratic constitution, to release political prisoners, and to resign from office.<sup>286</sup> The “Myungdong Incident” was the beginning of the third cycle of protest and suppression which showed the unyielding resistance of the Jaeya force against the regime in spite of unprecedented harsh suppression under the Emergency Decree no. 9. Between 1977 and 1978, many Jaeya organizations, such as the Council of Ousted Professors,<sup>287</sup> Council of Democratic Youth for Human Rights, and Council of Korean Human Rights Movements, were established.<sup>288</sup> In order to coordinate individual movements and organizations at the national level, Jaeya leaders re-established a nationwide organization, the “National Coalition for Democracy” on July 5, 1978. Its goal was peaceful democratization through cooperation with other democratic forces of civil society. In order to do so, this organization focused on coordinating individual movements and organizations at the national level. There were 12 affiliated organizations under its umbrella.<sup>289</sup> However, those affiliated organizations were not under the tight control of the National Coalition, but were loosely connected with each other under the umbrella organization of the National Coalition for Democracy. On 1 March 1979, the National

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<sup>286</sup> *Washington Post*, Wednesday, 2 March 1977, A10; John K. C. Oh, “South Korea 1976: the Continuing Uncertainties,” *Asian Survey* 17, no. 1 (1977): 73.

<sup>287</sup> The Council of Ousted Professors, established by ousted professors, such as Kim Dong-Kil, Kim Yong-Jun, Rho Myung-Sik, Kim Chan-Kook, Lee Young-Hee, Han wan-Sang, and Lee Woo-Jung, on 2 December 1977, struggled for democratization, overthrow of the Yushin constitution and the military dictatorship. This organization mainly used public statements, and criticized governmental policies and reactions toward democratic forces. *Dong-A Daily*, 3 December 1977.

<sup>288</sup> The Council of Korean Human Right Movement was established by 32 religious leaders and journalists, such as Cho Nam-Ki, Father Kim Seung-Hun, on 29 December 1977. This organization struggled for improvement of human rights. As a strategy of the struggle, this organization mainly issued public statements and comments about certain policies or reactions of the regime.

<sup>289</sup> Those organizations were the Council for Korean Human Rights Movement, Catholic Priests Body for the Realization of Justice, Council of Ousted Professors, Council of Literary Men for the Realization of Freedom, Council of Families of Conscientious Prisoners, Council of Korean Christian Social Mission, Council of Democratic Youth for Human Rights, Committee of Dong-A Daily for the Struggle of Safeguarding Free Press, Committee of Chosun Daily for the Struggle of Safeguarding Free Press, Council of Prisoners for the Restoration of Democracy, National Committee of Workers for Human Rights, and National Committee of Farmers for Human Rights. KNCC, *1970nyundae Minjookwaundong*:



Coalition for Democracy changed its name to the National Coalition for Democracy and Unification.<sup>290</sup> Especially, Jaeya leaders played an important role in refurbishing the NDP into a genuinely autonomous opposition party in May 1979 under the leadership of Kim Young-Sam. After that, a coalition between the NDP and the Jaeya force was built, and intensified the pressure on the Yushin regime until Park's death.

However, because most constituents of the Jaeya force were from highly diversified professional and intellectual groups with a middle class background, they were in a difficult position to establish coalitions with other democratic groups of civil society such as workers, farmers, the urban poor, or students. Thus, the democratic movement of the Jaeya force without the popular support could not be influential. Second, the organizational strength and cohesiveness of the Jaeya force was too weak to mobilize mass followers. Thus, there was a limitation in maximizing their struggle with the regime and thus its political struggle had been inconsequential.<sup>291</sup> Third, the diverse ideological and occupational nature of the Jaeya force made it difficult to coordinate a coherent and unified strategy against the regime. More importantly, harsh suppression was a serious obstacle to their struggle with the Yushin regime.

In spite of these difficulties, however, the Jaeya force, composed of socially and politically respected people, was the only group in the democratic movement able to strongly criticize and influence the authoritarian regime. Thus, the authoritarian regime could not just ignore their political struggle. However, this active political struggle of the

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*Kidoggyo Inkwonundongeul Joongsimetro* (The Democratization Movements in the 1970s: with Special Reference to Christian Human Rights Movement), 1719.

<sup>290</sup> *Joongang Daily*, 2 March 1979.

<sup>291</sup> In spite of struggle for democratization, participants of the Jaeya force had respectively different goals. For example, former opposition politicians in the Jaeya force had a strong political ambition. Therefore, the cohesiveness of the Jaeya force was relatively weaker than other democratic groups and organizations of civil society.

Jaeya force unfavorably affected the opposition party during 1970s. The active involvement of the Jaeya force in the democratic movement made the NDP weaken, and thus making it impossible for the NDP to lead the democratic movement. As a result, the regime and the ruling party considered the Jaeya force, consisting of many respected political and social leaders, as its counter-part instead of the NDP. In this respect, the active Jaeya movement influenced obstructively the development of the opposition party during the Yushin regime.

## 2) Changes of Democratic Civil Society

The unique characteristic of democratic civil society was that most democratic groups and organizations agreed that the restoration of a democratic constitution was a necessary condition for achieving their individual goals, such as improvement of human rights conditions, social and economic justice, and political freedom. Having a common goal made various democratic groups and organizations cooperate easier in their democratic struggle. Nevertheless, they differed in ideologies and strategies, thus making it difficult to build a coalition within civil society.<sup>292</sup> As a consequence of this internal division, the political struggle of democratic civil society had not been influential during the 1970s in spite of active struggle.

The harsh repressive policy was another important element that hindered the influential democratic movement of civil society. The Yushin regime anticipated that the emergence of an active opposition movement could destabilize the political, social, and

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<sup>292</sup> According to Park Eun-Sook, a former student movement activist, various ideological differences from liberalism to Marxism had existed within a student group during the Yushin period. As a result, student groups had to face both internal power struggle and external suppression by the regime. Park Eun-Sook, interviewed by author, Seoul, 13, 14, and 15 September 1999.

economic situation, and thus the main goal of the repressive policy was to destroy the autonomous democratic civil society. Along with the harsh suppression on democratic civil society, the regime also tried to isolate democratic groups and organizations from the public.<sup>293</sup> These efforts of the regime made the democratic struggle of civil society inconsequential, and caused democratic civil society difficult to overthrow the regime.

Thus, it was impossible for democratic civil society to draw popular support and participation from outside their organizations because of the solid power base and cohesiveness of the ruling coalition. Rather, most democratic groups and organizations were isolated from the public by threats of the regime and manipulation of the government controlled mass media. Thus, during the Yushin period, the size of the democratic movement could not be large, and demonstrations of democratic civil society took place only in certain places such as university campuses and churches.<sup>294</sup> In addition, there were many cases in which the public did not know whether there were protests due to limited locations, tight governmental censorship, and tight control of the mass media. As a result, the democratic movement grew more frustrated, more radical, and inconsequential. In spite of this inconsequential democratic movement, however, democratic struggle of civil society indirectly but significantly contributed to the collapse of the Yushin regime.

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<sup>293</sup> According to the interview with Hong Seung-Sang, the regime was very cautious about the connection between students and workers because the establishment of a coalition between two groups could threaten the regime. Thus, the regime prevented possible establishment of a coalition and suppressed those groups through using every state power apparatus. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>294</sup> During the Yushin period, university campuses and churches were not even safe places because the police usually stayed in campuses to spy on the students' movement, and the riot police entered campuses to suppress the student movement. Furthermore, the police entered churches to arrest wanted personals. Thus, there were not many places where democratic groups and organizations could express freely their dissatisfaction toward the regime.

In terms of character, an inconsequential character of civil society had not much changed during the Yushin period because of several restrictions. Democratic civil society had been organizationally weak, divided by various ideologies and strategies, and had not been supported by the middle class. Because of this inconsequential character, democratic civil society was vulnerable to suppression and could not maximize its resources in struggling with the Yushin regime. However, it did not mean that democratic civil society did not contribute to anything in the collapse of the Yushin regime. Along with the economic crisis in 1978, active political struggle of democratic civil society contributed to destabilizing political situation, and made the ruling coalition split.<sup>295</sup> In addition, several internal and external factors had favorably and unfavorably affected the character of civil society during the Yushin period.

First, political culture, which had authoritarian and parochial characters, did not much changed, and thus it had not favorably influenced changing the character of civil society during the 1970s. Especially, the Confucian political culture had unfavorably affected changing the character of civil society. In the early 1970s, the middle class who had been influenced by the traditional political culture for a long time was more concerned with economic justice and prosperity than political development. For example, the 1971 survey, intended to tap the Korean attitudes toward modernization, asked the respondent the following: "With regard to modernization, which do you find more important, economic aspects such as better income and economic stability or political aspects such as greater freedom and political stability?" Fifty-two percent of the respondents considered economic issues more important than political issues. Although this number was not significantly larger than the opposite respondents, economic issues,

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<sup>295</sup> See Juergen Kleiner, *Korea: A Century of Change*, 164-70.

such as economic justice and economic development, were considered as the more important than political issues, such as democratization, during the 1970s.<sup>296</sup>

As another consequence of the domination of the traditional political culture, political consciousness of Korean people had remained low during the Yushin period. As Huntington points out, "Confucian political culture is generally hostile to social bodies independent of the state, and the culture was conceived as a total entity, no part of which could be changed without threatening the whole."<sup>297</sup> During the Yushin regime, the traditional Confucian political culture, which had firmly remained in most parts of the society, contributed to maintaining the vertical structure of the society and superior status in the relationship with the public, including civil society.<sup>298</sup> For example, most people, concerned with possible political and economic instability from political struggles of civil society, assented or supported the repressive policy toward democratic civil society, and also supported a strong leadership, at least before the economic crisis in 1978.<sup>299</sup> Unlike democratic civil society groups, such as student, religious clergy, and the Jaeya force, ordinary people did not have many opportunities and channels to meet democratic values and principles. Rather, they had been familiar with the traditional political culture and thus could not have critical attitudes and perceptions toward the authoritarian regime. In this sense, the Confucian political culture strongly influenced people, especially the middle class, to be passive in their relationship with the state, and made them accept

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<sup>296</sup> Lee Young-Ho, "Modernization as a Global Vale in Koran Society," *Korean Journal* 12, no. 4 (1972): 35-6.

<sup>297</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" *Political Science Quarterly* 99, no. 2 (1984): 208.

<sup>298</sup> Simone Chambers and Will Kymlicka, *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 194-96

<sup>299</sup> Robert A. Scalapino, "Democratizing Dragons: South Korea & Taiwan," *Journal of Democracy* 4, no. 3 (July 1993): 73.

authoritarian rule more easily. In particular, the passive middle class and their favorable attitude toward authoritarian rule made the character of civil society difficult to change.

Although the traditional Confucian political culture slowly changed to the democratic civic culture along with successful and rapid economic development and spread of Christianity in this period, its influence on the character of civil society during the 1970s had been insignificant because of a couple of reasons. First, the change of the traditional Confucian political culture did not reach the point that could advantageously influence changing the character of civil society in the 1970s. Because of this insignificant influence, in the Korean society of the 1970s, parochial and authoritarian characters had still broadly remained and influenced thoughts and behaviors of individuals and organizations.<sup>300</sup> Therefore, it was not easy to artificially change the political culture by socioeconomic development in a short time. Second, the outright authoritarian regime kept away the influence of the changing political culture on civil society through state power apparatuses and government-controlled mass media.

In addition, the middle class, familiar with the Confucian political culture, did not have a clear identity as a part of civil society throughout the Yushin period.<sup>301</sup> In particular, they had been passive in the relationship with the government because of influence of the traditional political culture that emphasized a vertical relationship between the state and people. This dominance of traditional political culture made the

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<sup>300</sup> According to interviews with Chun Yong-Ho, Park Eun-Sook, and Lee Tae-Bok, former student movement activist and labor movement activist, the existence of traditional Confucian political culture was a major obstacle in their democratic movement. According to them, the most difficult task of the democratic civil society was to draw support from the public who had been influenced by the Confucian political culture. Thus, as a means for drawing the public attention, those democratic groups used violence.

<sup>301</sup> Although the size of the middle class increased to 32.2 % in 1985 from 14.8 % in 1960, the size of the middle class was still small in the 1970s. Pak Kwang-Ju, "Kookgaronul tonghan Hankook Jungcui Paradaim Mosaek" (The search for a Paradigm of Korean Politics through a Theory of State), *Hyusangkwa Insik* 2 (1985): 30-78.

**middle class reluctant to support the democratic movement and caused them to be isolated from democratic civil society. Thus, democratic civil society failed to draw popular support, especially from the middle class who was essential for changing the character of civil society. Without strong support and active participation of the middle class, democratic civil society had a limitation in changing from inconsequential to influential in the democratic movement.**

**The traditional Confucian culture also unfavorably affected building solidarity among various democratic groups and organizations because those groups and organizations were very heterogeneous in terms of culture and ideology.<sup>302</sup> For example, the labor movement had been excluded from other democratic groups that had higher educational and social backgrounds.<sup>303</sup> For instance, the Jaeya force did not actively pursue to build a coalition with the working class because of the ideological and cultural differences. This exclusion of the working class from other democratic groups made the democratic struggle inconsequential, and made building a coalition within civil society difficult during the Yushin regime. In this respect, the political culture that had been slowly changing did not positively affect the character of democratic civil society in the 1970s. Rather, it unfavorably affected not only the relationship between the state and civil society but also the relationship among various democratic groups and organizations. That is, the Korean society had remained a society, dominated by a vertical social structure, and there was no balance of power between the state and civil**

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<sup>302</sup> Under the traditional Confucian culture, the working class had been considered as an inferior class by other social classes in Korean society. This social division made civil society difficult to unite and build a coalition for the more active and effective struggle for democratization. In addition, there were only few numbers of the political struggle by coalitions among various democratic civil society groups and organizations.

<sup>303</sup> Larry Diamond and Kim Byung-Kook, *Consolidating Democracy in South Korea*, 13-4.

society during the 1970s. In this situation, the traditional political culture functioned as an advantage for the Yushin regime and its maintenance.

In addition, this unfavorable political culture indirectly influenced the character of civil society by affecting other factors such as external support and political opportunity structure. First, the political culture during the Yushin period negatively affected the external environment. The dominance of the traditional political culture in the 1970s made it difficult for other countries, such as the U.S., to support Korean civil society and its democratic movement because they considered Korean civil society too weak to challenge the authoritarian regime. Under the situation, it was meaningless for the U.S. to support Korean democratic civil society for democratization. In this respect, political culture of the 1970s unfavorably affected external factors, and the unfavorable external environment negatively influenced the character of democratic civil society.

Second, the political culture also unfavorably influenced the political opportunity structure during the 1970s. The parochial and authoritarian characteristics of political culture facilitated the establishment of the authoritarian Yushin regime and affected the response of the regime toward democratic civil society. Because of this negative influence of political culture, there was no strong resistance by ordinary citizens and democratic civil society to the installation of the Yushin regime or the suppression on democratic civil society. In addition, because of the closed political opportunity structure, strongly affected by political culture, provided an excuse for harsh suppression of the democratic movement. In this situation, the authoritarian regime did not need to open the political opportunity structure to relax the suppression of civil society and the opposition party; it had maintained a repressive policy toward democratic civil society



during the Yushin period. Therefore, the political culture during the Yushin period not only impeded the changing character of civil society, but also other factors.

Second, economic development is also an important factor that can directly and indirectly affect the character of civil society. For example, economic development can provide people more opportunities for education and facilitate creation of the large middle class with political consciousness. The middle class who is qualitatively and quantitatively grown by successful economic development becomes a power base of democratic civil society, and helps civil society become actively involved in the political process.<sup>304</sup> The economic development can also indirectly affect the character of civil society by affecting other factors such as political culture and political opportunity structure. Therefore, economic development is a very significant factor that can change a character of civil society.

During the Yushin regime, however, successful economic development obstructively influenced the character of democratic civil society and its political struggle. That is, the Yushin regime took advantage of successful economic development in the 1970s as a justification for its authoritarianism.<sup>305</sup> Based on successful economic performance, the Yushin regime received strong support from the middle class. Consequently, democratic civil society failed to draw popular support. Thus, democratic civil society had been isolated from the public, and its democratic struggle was inconsequential despite its active struggles. The rapid and successful economic

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<sup>304</sup> Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture*; Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*; James S. Coleman, "Introduction: Education and Political Development," in *Education and Political Development*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960); David H. Karmens, "Education and Democracy: A Comparative Institutional Analysis," *Sociology of Education* 61, no. 2 (1988): 114-27.

<sup>305</sup> Park Sung-Ung, "Culture, Ritual and Political Change: the democratic transition in South Korea," *Hankook Sahoehak* 32, no. 1 (1998): 40.

development of the 1970s was not enough to influence to change the character of civil society. In spite of the successful economic development, as Table 3-4 shows, the per capita GNP was still low. Thus, it was not a period for people to think about political development such as democratization. Instead, it facilitated to create the middle class who was more interested in economic prosperity than political development. Thus, the regime could obtain support from the middle class until the late 1970s. In this respect, democratic civil society was not ready to take advantage of successful economic development to change its inconsequential character in this Yushin period.

Table 3-4

Economic Indicators (1972-1979)

Year	GNP (current price)*	Per capita GNP (US\$)	Export (in million of \$)	Economic Growth rate (%)
1972	4177.5	318	1624.1	5.3
1973	5355.5	395	3225.0	14.0
1974	7564.5	540	4460.4	8.5
1975	10064.6	590	5081.0	6.8
1976	13818.2	797	7715.3	13.4
1977	17728.6	1008	10046.5	10.7
1978	23936.8	1392	12710.6	11.0
1979	30741.1	1640	15055.5	7.0

\* in billions of won

Source: John Kie-chiang Oh, *Korean Politics: The Quest for Democratization and Economic Development*, 62.

Unlike the unfavorable influence of the economic development, the successful economic development in the late 1970s facilitated creation of the middle class and provided a foundation to the middle class for changing their perception of the authoritarian regime in the future. For example, from the late 1970s, the middle class began to be critical of the regime and its economic policies albeit their dissatisfaction was

not clearly expressed.<sup>306</sup> In this respect, the successful economic development had positively influenced the political culture. The change of the public perception, strongly influenced by socioeconomic development and change of political culture, began to influence the character of civil society favorably. From the late 1970s, democratic civil society that realized the change in public opinion showed a more active and aggressive character in its democratic struggle. For instance, in the general election in 1978, the opposition party gained more popular votes than the ruling party: 32.8% vs. 31.7%. This active and assertive character of democratic civil society appeared in the demands and slogans of the democratic movement in the late 1970s. On 1 October 1979, a large number of citizens and thousands of students gathered and marched through the streets, chanting anti-government slogans such as “abolition of the Yushin regime.”<sup>307</sup>

In this respect, successful economic development in the 1970s affected the character of democratic civil society, both favorably and unfavorably. In the unfavorable perspective, the successful economic development provided legitimacy to the Yushin regime.<sup>308</sup> In the positive perspective, serious economic problems, caused by the rapid economic development, triggered a political crisis in the late 1970s, and led to a collapse of the regime in 1979. Therefore, the economic development during the 1970s not only helped the Yushin regime to justify its authoritarian rule, but also provided a potential and a foundation for the change of civil society in the following years. However, in the Yushin period, the rapid and successful economic development had affected the character of democratic civil society more negatively than positively. Thus, democratic civil

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<sup>306</sup> Roger L. Janelli, *Making Capitalism: The Social Construction of a South Korea Conglomerate* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 81-8.

<sup>307</sup> Nam Koon-Woo, *South Korean Politics: The Search for Political Consensus and Stability*, 169.

society had a limitation in struggling for restoration of a democratic constitution with the Yushin authoritarian regime.

The political opportunity structure is another significant factor that can influence the character of democratic civil society. If the political opportunity structure is opened, civil society can have more opportunities to increase its resources and establish strong alliances. However, during the Yushin regime, the political opportunity structure had not been opened because of various internal and external reasons. One of them was the controlling power of the regime over not only civil society but also the ruling coalition. Because of this controlling power, any opening or expansion of the political opportunity structure had not taken place during the whole Yushin period, and thus it was impossible to expect a change of character of civil society by the expansion of the political opportunity structure. Rather, democratic civil society had to concentrate its efforts and energy on survival and be satisfied with passive movements such as distributing anti-government handbills and issuing public statements.<sup>309</sup> In addition, the Yushin period was a difficult period for democratic civil society to draw popular support because the regime implemented a harsh repressive policy to isolate democratic civil society from the public. This lack of popular support unfavorably affected opening of the political opportunity structure, and thus it was difficult for democratic civil society to have a united and aggressive character and struggle effectively with the regime.

Moreover, there had been no serious fragmentation within the ruling coalition until the collapse of the regime, and the relatively cohesive ruling coalition prevented the

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<sup>308</sup> John Kie-Chiang Oh, *Korean Politics: The Quest for Democratization and Economic Development*, 51-8.

political opportunity structure from expanding or being created. For example, the regime used both a repressive policy and political and economic incentives to control the ruling coalition and prevent possible breaking up of the ruling coalition.<sup>310</sup> Through this dual policy, the ruling coalition could maintain its cohesiveness, and the political opportunity structure had not been opened until Park's death. Thus, this closed political opportunity structure obstructively affected the character of civil society, and the democratic movement had remained inconsequential during the 1970s.

In addition, most external events were unfavorable to democratic civil society during the 1970s, except for the strong pressure of the Carter administration for improving human rights in the late Yushin regime.<sup>311</sup> Instead, most external events, such as the U.S. defeat in the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Nixon doctrine, and the confrontation with North Korea, made it easy for the Yushin regime and to justify suppressing democratic civil society. In this respect, the external environment had unfavorably affected the political opportunity structure, and the closed political opportunity structure negatively influenced the character of democratic civil society. In addition, the external environment had hindered development of political culture. For example, the Cold War made the middle class consider national security and economic development as more importantly than democratization. As a result, the external environment made it more difficult for not only the middle class but also civil society to criticize authoritarian rule. Therefore, the external environment during the 1970s

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<sup>309</sup> According to Park Eun-Sook, especially under emergency decree, neither students nor other democratic groups and organizations could resist and struggle against the repressive regime. Park Eun-Sook, interviewed by author, Seoul, 13, 14, and 15 September 1999.

<sup>310</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *80myundae Hankookui Minjuhwaenggwajung* (The Process of Korean Democratization in the 1980s), 61-2.

<sup>311</sup> Robert E. Bedeski, *The Transformation of South Korea, Reform and Reconstruction in the Six Republic under Roh Tae Woo, 1987-1992*, 25.

impeded the development of democratic civil society by affecting other important internal factors such as the political opportunity structure and political culture.

Despite the fact that most external factors unfavorably affected the character of democratic civil society, some factors favorably influenced the character of democratic civil society in the late 1970s, both directly and indirectly. As a direct influence, in the late Yushin regime, the Carter administration pressured the Park regime to improve human rights conditions, and expressed its support to the opposition force as a means of the pressure. This pressure caused the ruling coalition to divide into hardliners and moderates in dealing with the political crisis. However, the Park regime could not accept the U.S. demand to improve human rights conditions because accepting the U.S. demand meant giving up its authoritarianism. Although the U.S. pressure didn't completely change the inconsequential character of civil society, it certainly affected democratic groups and organizations to have more united and aggressive character, and encouraged them to struggle more actively in the late 1970s. For instance, when President Carter visited South Korea in June 1979, he met Jaeya leaders and encouraged their democratic movement.<sup>312</sup> In addition, international economic condition in 1970s positively affected the economic development and evolution of political culture. This positive influence strongly contributed to facilitating creation of the middle class who had political consciousness. In particular, this positive influence of the external environment advantageously affected the democratic movement of civil society in the late Yushin regime, and contributed to the collapse of the Yushin regime.

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<sup>312</sup> Kim Yeonk-Kwang, "Interview with Park Jun-Kyu," *Wolgan Chosun*, (February 2002): 281-319. For example, When President Carter met Kim Young-Sam, Kim said "the U.S. government had supported Korea militarily and financially. However, it had also neglected the military government that suppressed people. Why did not the U.S. government overthrow this undemocratic government?"

During the 1970s, those four factors had not favorably and consistently affected the character of civil society. Rather, most factors unfavorably affected democratic civil society. Under these circumstances, the divided, isolated, and inconsequential democratic civil society did not change much, and remained the same throughout the Yushin period. Nevertheless, there was a small but important change in the democratic movement of civil society in the 1970s. The main target of the political and economic struggle of democratic civil society began to change from the mid-1970s. In the early Yushin period, democratic groups and organizations respectively had different goals, such as improvement of human rights conditions, political freedom, and economic justice, and thus they had different targets such as the authoritarian regime, and employers. Because of these different goals and targets, the democratic movement of civil society had been inconsequential, and democratic civil society could not have the capacity to overthrow the regime in spite of its active struggle. However, after the mid-1970s, democratic groups and organizations began to realize that the diversity of goals and targets was one of the major reasons for the inconsequential democratic struggle against the repressive regime. Thus, democratic civil society showed more united and political character in its struggle with the regime in the late 1970s. This changed character greatly contributed to destabilizing political situation, and the active political struggle by civil society caused the ruling coalition to divide the moderate and hardline factions. After all, this split of the ruling coalition led the Yushin regime to its collapse in 1979. In addition, democratic civil society could not get active support from the middle class nor have an active, united, aggressive, and influential character because of unfavorable influence of those factors.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FAILURE OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION AND EMERGENCE OF THE FIFTH REPUBLIC (1979-1983)

#### 1. Aborted Democratic Transition

Right after the collapse of the Yushin regime, political and social conditions were favorable to the democratic transition. Park's sudden death weakened suppression on democratic civil society, and provided a great chance for democratic civil society to vitalize. Many democratic organizations in various sectors were established and actively involved in the transitional process by mobilizing their members and public.<sup>313</sup> Another favorable condition for democratic transition was that Park's sudden death pushed the military and ruling DRP in internal power struggle. This power struggle made the military and the DRP difficult to be involved actively in the transitional politics. Thus, democratic civil society could more space to vitalize and get involved in the transitional politics. In addition, the U.S. government also showed outright support for a peaceful transition to democracy, and warned the military not to intervene in politics.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Kim Young-Myung, *Hankook Hyundaejungchisa: Jungchibyundonggwa yokhak* (The Modern Political History of South Korea: Political Change and Dynamics), 321-27.

<sup>314</sup> Chu, Yun-Ham, Hu Fu, and Moon Chung-In. "South Korea and Taiwan: The International Context," in *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*, eds. Diamond, Larry, Plattner Marc F., Chu, Yun-han, and Tien Hung-mao (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). The new policy of the United States toward South Korea can be summarized as follows. First, although Park's death was a domestic matter of South Korea, the U.S. government should actively involve in the Korean political situation. Second, the authoritarian regime like the Yushin regime was more advantageous to prolong the pro-American regime. Third, the transitional process should be accomplished under the Choi regime. Fourth, the Korean military should not intervene in the transitional process and a new government. Fifth, when these processes progressed smoothly, the U.S. government should officially and unofficially support the transitional process. Chung Sang-Yong and Yu Si-Min, *Kwangju Minjung Hangaeng* (The Kwangju Democratic Movement), (Seoul: Dolbege, 1990), 37.



In spite of these favorable political and social conditions, however, the democratic movement of civil society was not influential because of several internal and external reasons. First, democratic civil society did not have enough time to become organized and set unified strategies for the democratic struggle.<sup>315</sup> The internal conflict within democratic civil society still existed after the collapse of the Yushin regime. Rather, ideological and strategic conflicts within democratic civil society were more clearly expressed, and those conflicts made the democratic movement inconsequential in the critical moment for democratization.<sup>316</sup>

Second, there was a serious legal restriction in political activities of democratic civil society and political parties because acting President Choi proclaimed martial law immediately after Park's death. Martial law prohibited every political activity of not only political parties but also civil society. For example, the military-guided government imposed total martial law, one of a series of moves that included the arrest of prominent opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung, the banning of all political activity and the closing of all universities throughout the country.<sup>317</sup>

Third, there was a little cooperation between democratic civil society and the opposition party. Opposition politicians worried that the active political involvement of democratic civil society could trigger direct military intervention in the transitional politics. Thus, opposition politicians did not want democratic civil society to be actively

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<sup>315</sup> According to Park Eun-Sook, a former student movement activist and currently social movement activist, most democratic groups and organizations did not have a specific plan to involve effectively in the transition process, and did not know how to achieve their ultimate goals. Moreover, along with Park's death, internal conflicts in some groups of democratic civil society, such as students and the Jaeya force, were getting more severe. Under this circumstance, democratic civil society had a limitation in taking advantage of Park's death.

<sup>316</sup> Yun Sung-Yi, "Sahoiundongui Kwanjumesu Bon Hankook Kwonuijuicheje Byundong: jugchikihoejuo gainyumul jungsimeuro" (The Change of the Authoritarian Regime in the Perspective of the Political Opportunity Structure), 116.

involved in the transitional politics. On the other hand, democratic civil society saw and criticized the opposition party. Democratic civil society saw the opposition party was more interested in their political interest than the peaceful democratic transition. In this situation, influential democratic struggles, based on a coalition between democratic civil society and the opposition party, were impossible.

Unlike inconsequential struggle of civil society, negotiations for democratic transition between the ruling and opposition parties progressed.<sup>317</sup> Even though the ruling and opposition party faced re-structuring and internal power struggle, they tried to be main actors in the transitional politics through cooperation with each other.<sup>318</sup> However, the real power went to the military as the executor of martial law. The military was the only group that could fill the power vacancy left behind by Park's death. Nevertheless, the military also faced a serious internal power struggle between the politically oriented junior officers and moderate senior officers.<sup>319</sup> The hardliners of the military sought to take control the transitional politics over the moderate faction that had controlled the political situation since Park's death. In addition, the hardliners did not want to rush into dismantling the Yushin structure and move too quickly toward democratization because the hardliners had been the main beneficiaries of Park's patronage for a long time.<sup>320</sup> The new military force that took real power strongly influenced the Choi government, and began to express its intention. For example, in

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<sup>317</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 27 October 1979.

<sup>318</sup> *Washington Post*, Sunday, 18 May 1980, A1.

<sup>319</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 5 December 1979.

<sup>320</sup> Moon Byung-Joo, "Democratic Transition and Consolidation in Korea: With Special Reference to the Relationships and Internal Dynamics of the State-Political Society-Civil Society," (Ph.D. diss., Kunkook University, 1994), 79.

<sup>321</sup> *The New York Times*, 2 November 1979.

acting President Choi said that the Constitution would be revised by the end of 1980, and a direct presidential election would ensure within 6 months.<sup>322</sup>

On the other hand, democratic civil society began to express accumulated discontent and aspirations for democracy. On 3 May 1980, a large student meeting denounced the country's military-backed government, and demanded an immediate end of the martial law and the removal of officials left in power after Park's death.<sup>323</sup> However, despite the change of political situation and vitalization of civil society, democratic transition didn't take place because existing political structure was tailored to execute authoritarian rule.<sup>324</sup> Less than two month after Park's death, a group of junior Generals, led by Chun Doo-Hwan, seized power through the intra-military coup on 12 December 1979.<sup>325</sup>

After the intra-military coup, the new military force slowly approached the center of the transitional politics, and began to suppress democratic civil society more harshly. At the same time, the new military force began to exercise the plan for taking power.<sup>326</sup> In order to do so, the new military force needed an excuse for a direct involvement in the transitional politics. In fact, civilian politicians and democratic civil society that had

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<sup>322</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 7 December 1979.

<sup>323</sup> *Washington Post*, Saturday, 3 May 1980, A7. In addition, 531 professors of Yonsei University signed a declaration for democratization on May 7. In the declaration, they expressed that 1) support resolution of students association of Yonsei University, 2) abolition of the martial law, 3) democratization, 4) freedom of press and guarantee of workers' rights, 5) reinstatement of expelled students and professors, and 5) changing policy of students' military training. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, (Seoul: Catholic Publisher, 1997), 506.

<sup>324</sup> Geir Helgesen, *Democracy and Authority in Korea*, 71.

<sup>325</sup> Major Gen. Chun and his followers moved some 7,500 troops including 6,000 Special Forces of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division stationed at the truce line to Seoul without permission of Gen. John A. Wickham, the United States-ROK Combined Forced Commander. They arrested the former Army Chief of Staff and Martial Law Commander General Chung Seung-Hwa and 15 other Generals, on the pretext of suspicion of involvement in Park's assassination. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 28 December (1979): 13.

been cautious of the possible military intervention tried not to provoke the direct military intervention. Thus, democratic civil society and opposition party didn't mobilize masses but instead asked students and workers to restrain themselves from escalating militant protests. Furthermore, the ruling and opposition party agreed to lift martial law, and to restore normalcy when the National Assembly would open on May 22.<sup>327</sup>

Under these circumstances, the new military force, fearing that it might lose an opportunity to rule the country, began to fabricate conditions to justify their direct intervention in politics. As a strategy, the new military force left student demonstrations and labor strikes unchecked and made them uncontrollable. In spite of civilian actors' cautiousness, a democratic uprising took place in Kwangju on 17 May 1980. The new military force used the suppression of the Kwangju uprising as an excuse for direct intervention in transitional politics. Along with the harsh suppression, martial law commander, who was a Chun's strong supporter, declared the extension of martial law on 17 May 1980, and prohibited all kinds of political and social activities, politically oriented assemblies, and rallies.<sup>328</sup> In particular, the new military force concentrated on destroying and suppressing leaders and organizations of democratic civil society. Thus, democratic civil society became rapidly shrink, and faced a crisis of their existence. In this situation, democratic civil society could not play a significant role in the transitional politics, and the great chance for democratization was aborted. In this respect, the failure

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<sup>326</sup> However, according to the interview with Chun Doo-Hwan, he did not have a plan to take a control over the government, and also did not intend to be a president. Roh Jae-Hyun, *Chunghwadae Bisusil* (The Secretary's Office of the Blue House), vol. 3, (Seoul: JoongangIlbosa, 1994), 319-23.

<sup>327</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 17 May 1980.

<sup>328</sup> *Washington Post*, Sunday, 18 May 1980, A1. The new martial law from the earlier one in that its enforcement was extended to the whole country and, more importantly, that the military—the Martial Law Command, the Defense Security Command, and the Special Forces, in particular—was granted, in effect, full power to run the country by cutting the Cabinet out of the decision making role of the president. The

of the democratic transition in 1980 was a result of internal divisions and the emergence of the new military force.

## **2. Emergence of the New Military Force**

After the collapse of the Yushin regime, democratic civil society and political parties paid close attention to the military, and made every effort to lure the military to their side. Nevertheless, this effort could not prevent direct military intervention in the transitional politics. The direct military intervention was closely related to the internal power struggle within the military. The internal conflict within the military that had existed since the early 1970s began to appear more clearly after Park's death. One faction, consisting of high-ranking career military officers in the regular hierarchy of the Army, advocated the integrity of the military-as-institution and a return to barracks after order was restored. Leaders of this faction consisted of the first generation of Korean military officers, trained by the Japanese Army, or educated and trained in a short course at the Korean Military Academy (KMA) during the infant days of the Army.<sup>329</sup> Thus, its cohesiveness was very low and most of them acted on their individual interests.

Because this faction had not been directly involved in politics, they did not have to be afraid of retribution of civilian democratic rule.<sup>330</sup> This disinvolvement of suppressive activities in the past made the moderate faction to share a view on liberalization and democratization with democratic civil society. Considering the situation that a return to Yushin-like authoritarianism trigger violent confrontations with

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sudden announcement of martial law on May 17, 1980, has been called the new military's "second coup," the first being the intra-military coup against General Chung on December 12, 1979.

<sup>329</sup> Lee Chong-Sik, "South Korea 1979: Confrontation, Assassination, and Transition," *Asian Survey* 20, no. 1 (1981): 63-76.

the already mobilized popular masses, the best strategy for them was the liberalization of authoritarian rule. The second best option was democratization with a guarantee. Therefore, this group was willing to open dialogue with the opposition force if the military institutional interests were protected.

The other faction consisted of politicized military officers in the security force, such as officers in the Defense Security Command and the Capital City Defense Division, and other officers who were close proteges of Park under the Yushin regime.<sup>331</sup> This group was composed of the first generation of the regularly educated (four-year course) graduates of the KMA and had maintained a high internal cohesiveness.<sup>332</sup> This group wanted the continuation of authoritarian rule because this faction had been directly involved in suppression, torture, clandestine operation, and interrogation. Thus, they had no other option except to defend the authoritarian regime. This group, therefore, sought to return to Yushin-like authoritarianism with the repression of popular demands for democratization.

In the beginning of the transitional period, the power of the military went to the moderate military officers, led by the martial law commander and the Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Chung Seung-Hwa. Immediately after becoming the Martial Law Commander, Gen. Chung publicly stated that the military did not intend to intervene in civilian politics, the transition process in particular.<sup>333</sup> Gen. Chung and other senior officers were willing to accept a gradual restoration of civil rights and a democratic

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<sup>330</sup> Lee So-Dong, interviewed by author, Seoul, 15 July 1999.

<sup>331</sup> Lee Jong-Gak, "Jeohgonghwakukkwonryukeui Poori: Hanahoe" (The Roots of Power of the Fifth Republic: Hanahoe), *Sin Dong-A*, (January 1988): 312-23.

<sup>332</sup> The leaders of this faction were the graduates of the first regularly educated KMA class but, in record, they were the 11<sup>th</sup> graduates of the KMA.

<sup>333</sup> Chung Seung-Hwa, "Chung Seung-Hwa Speaks," cited from *Mijoo Joongang Daily*, 5 January 1988.

transition in exchange for some guarantees for the military as an institution. Because the prime objective of the moderate faction was to defend its institutional integrity, they could assure civilian politicians of the military's neutrality in the transitional process.

Although Gen. Chung was at the top of the military command hierarchy and, indeed, had the real power to influence the political situation, he was vulnerable in exercising power as a martial law commander. At the time of Park's assassination, he was a few hundred yards away from the spot of assassination, and the assassin, Kim Jae-Kyu escorted him to the commanding headquarter of the Army to control the situation. Chun Doo-Hwan, the chief investigator of the President's death, did his best to exploit Gen. Chung's personal weakness. Thus, Gen. Chung attempted to transfer him to a powerless post as the East Coast Defense Commander far away from Seoul. Then, Gen. Chun, as the Defense Security Commander, detected Chung's every move and struck back in advance of Chung's move by staging an intra-military coup<sup>334</sup> against senior officers on the night of December 12, 1979.

After the night of an exchange of shooting on 12 December 1979, Chun's faction gained control over the military despite the protest of the U.S. commander Gen. John Wickham who was enraged about the move of the frontline 9<sup>th</sup> Division without the permission of the U.S. military authorities.<sup>335</sup> On the day after the violent shoot-outs, Chun's faction pressured President Choi to appoint Chun's supporter, Gen. Lee Hui-

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<sup>334</sup> According to the new military force, led by Chun Doo-Hwan, this military operation was an indispensable confrontation with a moderate faction within the military to investigate General Chung Seung-Hwa. Thus, they did not agree that this was a military coup because they did not take power right after the military confrontation. Nevertheless, this incident was defined as a military coup, the hardline faction of the military force tried to take power, in the court in 1994.

<sup>335</sup> Asia Watch, *Human Rights in Korea* (New York: the Asia Watch Committee, 1985), 32. Gen. Wicham protested Chun's move because by the treaty between Korea and US during the Korean War, the Korean military has been formally under the command of US Army Commander in Korea and thus could not move an army unit without permission of the US military authorities.

Sung, to the new Army Chief of Staff and Martial Law Commander. Thereafter, the precarious balance between these two factions was broken, and Chun became the *de facto* ruler of the military and even in the country. The influence of the moderate military faction on the government as well as the military organization sharply decreased, and the repressive power apparatuses were in the hands of hardline military officers. However, Chun's hardline military faction did not come to the political foreground. They publicly claimed that the December 12 coup was an internal military matter to clean up corruption within the military, and had no intention to intervene in the transitional process.<sup>336</sup> In fact, they first needed time to consolidate power within the military before they could become directly involved in transitional politics. As hardliners took control of the military, the transition process entered a new phase. Under the powerless civilian Choi government, the transition game became an open process that no body could control. Although major civilian political forces watched the movement of the military more closely, the new military force did not give up their plan for taking power.

### **3. The Failure of Negotiations for Democratic Transition**

After Park's death, the ruling DRP elected Kim Jong-Pil as a new president of the party. However, the party decided not to nominate Kim Jong-Pil as a candidate for President to succeed Park. Although the Yushin regime collapsed, the repressive state apparatuses were intact, and thus the party would have to take heavy risks if it promoted

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<sup>336</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 18 December 1979. However, senior military officers agreed and considered the internal coup as a mutiny by younger generation of generals, Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo. Mun Gu-Kang, "The Military Seizure of Power in 1979-1980 in Korea: Analysis and Implications for Democracy," *The National Community and State Development* (Seoul: Korean Political Science Association, 1989), 196-97. However, because the leadership of the military, which was the powerful force in that period, was changed, it can be considered as a military coup.



its candidate to succeed Park without the consent of hardliners of the ruling coalition.<sup>337</sup> Thus, the DRP decided to concede the presidency to a technocrat controlled by the military. The DRP chose to transform itself under the tutelage of the power apparatus to an autonomous mass-based party preparing for democratic competition in the post-transitional period.

On the other hand, the opposition NDP also needed time to recover from internal factional infighting. The internal power struggle and restructuring prevented the NDP from leading the democratic movement of civil society in the early transitional period. The first priority of the NDP was the election of the interim president who would preside over the transition. Kim Young-Sam, president of the NDP, tacitly agreed with the acting President Choi with the caretaker government's schedule in exchange for a couple of conditions.<sup>338</sup> This tacit agreement cleared the last obstacle for the acting president, Choi Kyu-Ha, to be elected President in the special election held on 6 December 1979.

Thus, taking control of the transition process from the Choi government and hardline military officers was more important for the DRP and NDP than fighting each other on the nature and course of the transition. Because of this common interest, the DRP and NDP reached an agreement to compromise the future schedule of the transitional process. Yet, both the DRP and NDP had not been a center of power even though political parties had been reinvigorated after Park's death. When political parties do not have the capacity to initiate the transition, the possibility of an extra-systemic

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<sup>337</sup> According to a DRP congressional representative, Kim Chang-Geun, both military leaders and technocrats who were close associates of Park opposed the Kim Jong-Pil's succession to Park's presidency. Cho Gap-Je, *Yugo* 2, (Seoul: Hanghilsa, 1987), 196-97.

<sup>338</sup> Those conditions were 1) the new president, who would be elected by the rule of Yushin constitution, serves provisionally until the next election by the new constitution and 2) the parties and the National Assembly, not the caretaker government, should initiate and control the process of the new constitution drafting. *Chosun Daily*, 18 November 1979 and *Chosun Daily*, 23 November 1979.

solution to the transition increases. As Antonio Gramsci suggests, this kind of situation makes “conflicts between the representatives and represented reverberate out from the terrain of parties throughout the state organism, reinforcing the relative power of the bureaucracy of high finance, the church, and generally of all bodies relatively independent of the fluctuation of public opinion.”<sup>339</sup> As a mechanism of parties for political inter-mediation had been destroyed by Park’s dictatorship, the political mediation fell into the hands of irresponsible extra-party actors such as the military.

Under this situation, the DRP tried to restore the leadership in the transition politics by making a compromise with the NDP on the course of the transition. However, the compromise solution between the two parties did not work well because of the emergence of the new military force. After the power struggle within the military, the Choi government, controlled by the new military force, changed its neutral position on the transition process. On 18 January 1980, President Choi announced that the government, not the parties, should initiate the project of constitutional revision and dispatched a dual system of government.<sup>340</sup> Choi’s announcement revealed the intention of the new military force to take power.

The plan of the government differed from that of the political parties on the timetable for the constitutional revision, the fundamental structure of the government, and who initiates and controls the process. According to the tentative drafts of the two parties presented on February 9, both the DRP and RDP easily agreed on the basic provisions of the new constitution, including the governmental structure based on a

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<sup>339</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, ed., Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: international Publishers, 1971), 210.

<sup>340</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 19 January 1980.

directly elected presidential system.<sup>341</sup> On the other hand, according to the plan of the government, the new constitution would be a form of the dual system of the government under which the President takes charge of national security and foreign policy and the Prime Minister, elected by the National Assembly, manages internal affairs. In addition, the draft of the new constitution needed a year and more to prepare, and the revision process should be initiated and controlled by the government, not only the National Assembly and political parties.

Besides these differences, both political parties had another problem. The DRP and NDP did not represent the government and opposition force. The DRP had not been assured of support from the power apparatuses of the military hardline. Rather, the DRP conflicted with the power apparatuses on the matter of transition. The dilemma lay in two contradictory requirements for the party. On the one hand, the DRP needed to expand its popular base to be a competitive political force, and on the other hand, the party should not be excluded from the power apparatuses that supported authoritarianism in order to maintain a status of ruling party. Because of the lack of representativeness and ambiguous status, democratic civil society and the opposition party did not regard the DRP as the viable counterpart in the negotiation for the transition to democracy. On the other hand, the NDP was not able to control the diverse voice of the opposition democratic force. Democratic civil society that had seen the NDP critically did not provide unconditional support to the opposition party. The weak representativeness of the NDP made democratic civil society difficult to cooperate actively with the NDP in the democratic movement.

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<sup>341</sup> In addition, two parties agreed that the Constitution should be revised as soon as possible but no later than in six months and the whole process of the revision should be initiated by the political parties

Both ruling and opposition party also faced an internal conflict between hardliners and moderates. Because of this internal conflict, hardliners and opportunists of the RDP gradually defected from the party, and secretly collaborated with the new military force to organize a new party.<sup>342</sup> In addition, the NDP also experienced a severe internal power struggle. The more radical dissident faction, led by Kim Dae-Jung, was displeased by the party's timid stance towards the power apparatuses. This radical faction first tried to take leadership of the party through an internal power struggle, and later tried to establish a new more intransigent opposition party when gaining control of the party became hopeless.<sup>343</sup> Because of this internal power struggle, the party could not concentrate on, and lead the democratic movement of civil society. In this respect, both the RDP and NDP were weakened by internal power struggles and mass defection, and it was impossible for them to reach an agreement for peaceful democratic transition.

#### 4. The Kwangju Democratic Movement

When democratic civil society began to be resurrected by Park's death, the hardline military officers who had taken charge of suppression during the Yushin regime began to be afraid of their future. Thus, they had to strike preemptively to control the political situation before civilian politicians took action. In order to do so, the new military force needed to create a situation that only they could handle because they could not justify any suspension of the constitutional system by the Martial Law Decree no.

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which was the sole representative of the people. *Dong-A Daily*, 9 February 1980.

<sup>342</sup> In early 1980, persistent rumors were spread that the new military elites and technocrats tried to organize a new party of their own, excluding the DRP from ruling power bloc. *Doong-A Daily*, 24 January, 22 February, and 25 April 1980.

<sup>343</sup> *Chosun Daily*, 24 February; 9 March, and 13 April 1980; *Dong-A Daily*, 3 March and 7 May 1980; *Hankook Daily*, 4 April 1980.

10.<sup>344</sup> In the meantime, political parties, especially the NDP, began to accommodate requests from democratic civil society. For example, on May 14, the NDP submitted to the National Assembly a resolution to lift emergency martial law with the signatures of all members of the National Assembly in the party. The DRP also planned to show a positive attitude toward the lifting up of martial law at the temporary meeting of the National Assembly scheduled on May 20, because of the increasing crucial awareness of the new military force that had prolonged its power through martial law.

After the agreement between the DRP and NDP, the new military force was more frustrated, and looked for excuses for direct military intervention. The uprising that took place in Kwangju provided the basis of its reign of terror as an excuse for direct intervention. The only way for the new military force to quiet people who had hopes for a democratic transition was through brutal suppression. Thus, Kwangju City was chosen to be an example case of the brutal suppression.<sup>345</sup> Although there were many demonstrations and protests by democratic civil society in early 1980, the Kwangju uprising from May 18 to May 27 was the first direct violent confrontation between the

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<sup>344</sup> This was a response of the hardline military force toward the eruption of civil society. The content of this Martial Law Decree no. 10 was to prohibit any kind of political activities, to close every university, and to arrest or house arrest Kim Dae-Jung and Kim Young-Sam. *Chosun Daily*, 20 May 1980.

<sup>345</sup> There are many hidden stories why the new military chose Kwangju City and how the democratic uprising was taken place in Kwangju City. Some group of people said that it was closely related to strong regionalism of South Korea, and other group of people said that it was closely related to deployment of the military troops at that time. However, according to interviews with related people who were actively involved in the Kwangju democratic movement, there were major two reasons. One was that there were relatively well-organized student organizations even under harsh suppression, and thus the uprising, led by the student group, was possible to develop to the massive uprising. The other was closely related to the deployment of the military after Park's death and strong intention of the military to take power. That is, after Park's death, the regime and the new military force put large scale of troops in this area, and thus it was easier for the military to induce a uprising and suppress it. In addition, this city had been isolated and excluded from economic development policy since the early 1960s. Thus, Kwangju citizens had extreme relative deprivation, and this dissatisfaction led to them to support Kim Dae-Jung. The new military regime used this anti-regime feeling for direct military intervention in the transitional politics. Ahn Chong-Chul, interviewed by author, Kwangju, 3 September 1999.

military and democratic civil society and became a turning point in the history of the democratic movement in South Korea.<sup>346</sup>

### 1) The Outbreak of the Uprising

In early 1980, the most powerful civil society organization that could be an obstacle in the taking of power by the military force was a student group. After the intra-military coup on December 12, the student movement changed its character from a campus autonomization movement to the political struggle. In addition, other civil society groups and organizations also concentrated their energies and efforts on the political struggle for democratization. The reaction of the military controlled-government toward political struggles of democratic civil society was harsh suppression. For example, the regime expanded the emergency Martial Law no. 10 to the whole country.<sup>347</sup>

The Martial Law Decree no. 10 made the whole country stunned and silent. The new military force broke the silence and provoked the people to push to the streets.<sup>348</sup> In Kwangju, a small group of Chunnam University students protested Kim Dae-Jung's arrest and against suppression of students' demonstration in front of the campus. Then, the special troopers raided Chonnam and Chosun University, and arrested tens of students and two professors on May 17. That morning, about 200 students of Chunnam University demonstrated against the overnight raid. The paratroopers over-reacted to a small group of demonstrators, indiscriminately beating and bayoneting the demonstrators,

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<sup>346</sup> Choi Jang-Jip, "Kwangju Hangjaengkwa Minjuaehyuk" (The Kwangju Uprising and Democratic Reform), *Hankook Daily*, 7 May 1995.

<sup>347</sup> *Washington Post*, Sunday, 18 May 1980, A1

resulting in several deaths. In this series of incidents, ordinary citizens and other democratic groups and organizations joined the student demonstrations, and they were violently confronted with paratroopers. At that point, the slogans that students and citizens shouted on their way were “lift the martial law,” “release Kim Dae-Jung,” “stop closing schools,” “down with Chun Doo-Hwan,” and “withdraw martial law forces.”

Along with students, citizens of Kwangju City began to be agitated with shock when students told them about the news of Kim Dae-Jung’s arrest and the suppression of students. Citizens of Kwangju City and Chunnam province had been identifying with the persecutions and hardships of Kim Dae-Jung because he was from their region. Kim Dae-Jung’s arrest was interpreted as the hopeless frustration of their desires and expectations for democracy. From that point, the public could not hide their anger and shock at the paratroopers’ cruel suppression of student demonstrations, and formed sympathy with students’ sacrificial struggles with the military. Moreover, they were no longer simply to be suppressed, but armed themselves with square bars, iron pipes, and kitchen knives to fight back against paratroopers. The so-called Kwangju incident was escalated into the Kwangju People’s Uprising.<sup>349</sup>

Citizens who did not become involved in the demonstrations in the beginning took to the streets as a means of self-defense as well as an expression of popular outrage at the brutality of the troops. Under the situation, the phase of demonstrations had already changed from defense to offense, and the public replaced the core participants (students) of demonstrations. As a response to violent demonstrations, the paratroopers

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<sup>348</sup> Donald N. Clark, *The Kwangju Uprising: Shadows over the Regime in South Korea* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988).

began to fire on demonstrators, killing dozens of unarmed civilians, and they isolated the city by blocking traffic and communications in order to prevent the expansion of the movement to other regions.<sup>350</sup> Violent confrontations between the military and democratic civil society escalated into mass insurrection. The rebellious citizens demanded democratic reform including the step-down of Gen. Chun, and an apology from the government for the brutality of the paratroopers.<sup>351</sup> However, the martial law authority responded to those demands with an armed invasion of Kwangju City. The regular army 20<sup>th</sup> Division was dispatched under the permission of the U.S. military commander, Gen. John Wickham, to put down the mass revolt and to reoccupy the city.

The Martial Law Commander announced the result of the investigation of Kim Dae-Jung. The reason the Martial Law Commander announced the result of the investigation so quickly was that the new military force tried to characterize the Kwangju democratic movement as a riot controlled and supported by the North Korean government. Thus, the Kwangju uprising came to be distorted in reports of the mass media.<sup>352</sup>

Beginning May 23, internal conflicts in citizens' army, democratic civil society groups, and organizations began to take place. For example, the Student Committee for Resolution of the Incident, which organized the previous day, agreed on many issues, but there was a strong controversy over the collection of weapons. One group of committee

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<sup>349</sup> Jang Eul-Byung, "Kwangju 5 wari Minjunhangjaengesuui Mujangtujaeng" (The Armed Struggle in the Kwangju Democratic Movement), in *Kwangju 5 wari minjunhangjaeng* (The Kwangju Democratic Movement), The Institute of Korean Modern History (Seoul: Pulbit, 1990), 154-76.

<sup>350</sup> Kim Jun, "1980nyunui Chungsebaljunkwa Daeripgudo" (The Political Situation and Confrontational Structure in 1980), in *Kwangju Minjunhangjaeng Yongu*, ed. Chung Hae-Gu (The Kwangju Democratic Movement), (Seoul: Sagejul, 1990).

<sup>351</sup> *Washington Post*, Thursday, 22 May 1980, A1

<sup>352</sup> Chung Sang-Yong and Yu Si-Min, *Kwangju Minjung Hangjaeng* (The Kwangju Democratic Movement), 253.



members wanted an unconditional return of weapons and another group wanted a conditional return. Contrary to the worsening conflicts within the Resolution committee, the city was recovering order gradually. On May 26, former members of the resolution committee, upon hearing of a possible attack by the martial law troops, persuaded people to escape from the Provincial Office, headquarters of the citizens' army. At midnight on May 27, the long distance telephone was disconnected from the control room in the Provincial Office, and the Office was completely surrounded by tanks of the martial law force in the early morning of May 28. The martial law forces attacked the Provincial Office and broke the resistance line of the citizens' army. The citizens' army was already out of ammunition, and it was impossible for them resist against the martial law force. Eventually, the martial law force accomplished their suppressive mission in 4 hours, and the democratic uprising was closed the 10 days.

## 2) The Interpretation and Significance of the Kwangju Democratic Movement

There were two interpretations of the Kwangju Uprising (democratic movement).<sup>353</sup> According to the official investigation report of the government, the Kwangju Uprising was a riot premeditated by Kim Dae-Jung and his followers.<sup>354</sup> However, the official investigation was erroneous because Kim Dae-Jung and his followers were already arrested on charge of mass agitation, a popular uprising, and the

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<sup>353</sup> There is still an argument about the official name of the Kwangju Uprising. Some group of people called it the Kwangju Democratic Movement, and some people called it Kwangju Uprising.

<sup>354</sup> Report on the "Investigation of Kim Dae-Jung, July, 1980" in *Korea under New Leadership: The Fifth Republic*, ed. Harold Hinton (New York: Praeger, 1983), 133-50.

overthrow of the government before May 17. In fact, it was not Kim Dae-Jung but the new military force that was responsible for triggering the uprising in Kwangju City.<sup>355</sup>

The second interpretation was that the Kwangju uprising was a premeditated plot by the new military force.<sup>356</sup> The evidences were: first, the new military force arrested Kim Dae-Jung to provoke a popular protest before the uprising; second, the new military force sent paratroopers, specially trained to put down armed insurrectionary revolts, instead of riot police, to Kwangju even before the martial law Decree no. 10 was proclaimed. According to this interpretation, the new military force tried to intimidate the whole country by setting an example in its response to the popular protest in Kwangju. The killing of between 200 and 2000 people was enough to intimidate any one.<sup>357</sup>

The Kwangju uprising was a watershed in the history of relation between the civilians and the military. After ordinary people saw that the paratroopers killed many unarmed civilians, they thought that the military would be willing to kill ordinary people for political ambitions.<sup>358</sup> Second, when the U.S. authority permitted the army unit to

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<sup>355</sup> According to leaders of the Kwangju Uprising, like Chun Yong-Ho, citizens of Kwangju City did not have a clear plan and political objective, such as overthrow of the government when the Kwangju uprising took place. They rebelled spontaneously and reacted to the provocation by harsh suppression of the military force. Their slogan and demands, such as the democratic reform, the release of Kim Dae-Jung, and the apology from the government, were developed later after the armed civilian occupied the City Hall of Kwangju City. Chun Yong-Ho, interviewed by author, Kwangju, 4 September 1999.

<sup>356</sup> According to interviews with Chun Yong-Ho, Ahn Chong-Chul, and Chung Hyun-E, many of those who were involved in the Kwangju Uprising did not agree that the Kwangju Uprising was a result of the plot of the new military force. They were more likely to think that the uprising was a spontaneous event as a response of harsh suppression of the military.

<sup>357</sup> According to the government and civil society, death toll was estimated from 200 (government figure) to 2000 (dissident). Asia Watch, *Human Rights in Korea*, 41-2.

<sup>358</sup> Donald N. Clark, "The Kwangju Uprising: An Introduction," 5. As an evidence of this, after the Kwangju democratic movement, civil society strongly demanded Gen. Chun's withdrawal from governmental and military position because he was a leader of the new military force that provoked the Kwangju uprising. In addition, after the democratic movement in Kwangju, the new military force was more actively involved in the transitional politics, and pressured acting president Choi to resign from the presidency. Therefore, many people believed that the harsh suppression in Kwangju City was a demonstration of the new military force for taking power.

quell the Kwangju uprising, anti-American sentiment sharply increased. Thus, the U.S. became increasingly considered not as a benevolent friend but as a neo-imperialist force trying to exploit the Korean popular masses politically and economically in alliance with the ruling power bloc of the military, bourgeoisie, and technocrats. Third, because of the Kwangju massacre, people believed that the political military officers' greed for political power was the main motive behind the intra-military coup of 1980. Since the coup, the power was believed to be illegitimate, and thus anti-government activities were justified as a high moral cause. In addition, the violent take-over of power by the new military force caused the student and labor movement radicalized.<sup>359</sup>

There were several important features of the Kwangju democratic movement. First, it reinforced the tradition of grassroots movements that have always been important in Korean history. The Kwangju democratic movement originally resisted the emergence of the new military force which had denied the democratic spirit of the "April 19 Revolution" through the military coup in 1961. Second, the Kwangju democratic movement was significant because it provided a great opportunity for democratic civil society to be seen as a driving force of the democratic movement in the 1980s. This was made possible by the recognition of its positions by all kinds of civil society groups, such as workers, farmers, paupers, students, religious leaders, cultural leaders, intellectuals and opposition leaders, thanks to its efforts of self-assessment and the success of its spirit and roles.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> After the military coup on 12 December, two of the labor disputes in April 1980 were marked by widespread violence: one at the coal mining town of Sabuk City in Kangwon province, and the other at the Tongkuk Steel Mill in Busan City. For example, in Sabuk City, miners blocked the approach of the police and paralyzed the whole town for four days. *Dong-A Daily*, 2 April 1980.

<sup>360</sup> In fact, those who were involved in the Kwangju democratic movement led establishments of many democratic organizations and their political struggles with the Chun regime in the 1980s.

Third, the Kwangju democratic movement became identified for the first time as a legitimate grassroots movement by a self-depending armed struggle. Although dismissed as a rebellion of armed mobs by the military government after the coup in 1980, it was later recognized as the Kwangju democratic movement. Fourth, it discredited the morality of the military government under the Fifth Republic, which had followed the oppressive dictatorship of the late president Park. Last, the Kwangju democratic movement played a key role in dismantling the repressive government of the Fifth Republic.<sup>361</sup> From this point of view, the Kwangju democratic movement enlightened the nation at the front-end of the national democratization movement throughout the 1980s.

## **5. Restoration of Authoritarian Regime**

### **1) The Establishment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic and Its Repressive Policy**

When the new military force emerged as a central force without a legitimate base, the only way to achieve its objectives was the systemic use of state terror.<sup>362</sup> The purge campaign of 1980 focused on depoliticizing the whole society. Thus, there could be no competition with the new military force for state power. Right after the Kwangju democratic movement, the new military force began to take over the formal state apparatuses, step by step. On 31 May 1980, for example, a junta, the 25 member Special

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<sup>361</sup> Since the Kwangju Democratic Movement, in Kwangju and other major cities, various democratic groups and organizations staged large-scale demonstrations in May of every year. For instance, on May 18 1980, about 2,500 citizens of Kwangju City celebrated 1-year anniversary of the Kwangju Uprising, and marched on streets. In the process of the demonstration, citizens confronted with the riot police. They wanted to urge the regime to change policies of peasants' matters and labor problems. In addition, on May 27, about 1,000 students gathered, and celebrated 1-year anniversary of the Kwangju Uprising. After the celebration, they demonstrated and demanded democratization. Their slogans were "abolition of fascist regime," and "abolition of the Chun regime." In the end of demonstration, Kim Tae-Hun fell down from a building, and died. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, 523.

Committee for National Security Measures (SCNSM) was established to reform the political system.<sup>363</sup> Under this situation, President Choi could not act as president because of the influence of the new military force. After all, he resigned on August 16, and Chun, the leader of the new military force, made himself the new president on August 27, 1980.<sup>364</sup>

Right after Chun became president, he drafted a new Constitution, on September 29, and promulgated it on 27 October 1980.<sup>365</sup> Although the new Constitution appeared to be less dictatorial, it was designed to produce similar consequences. However, the president was limited to a single seven-year term of office unlike the Yushin Constitution. The supplementary provisions of the new Constitution called for the dissolution of the National Assembly and all existing political parties.<sup>366</sup> Until the election of a new National Assembly, the new Constitution authorized the legislative body of the Junta, the Legislative Council on National Security, to enact all laws. Since October 28, the 81-member Legislative Council appointed by Chun had built up a legal structure for the new authoritarian regime.

The new military authoritarian regime also launched series of suppression to intimidate democratic civil society and the opposition party. The main targets of the suppression were dissident workers and students, politicians, journalists, and civilian bureaucrats. Thousands of students, workers, and dissident intellectuals were arrested and sent to military reeducation camps, called the “*Samchung* Education Camps,” in the

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<sup>362</sup> Paul G. Buchanan, “The Varied Faces of Domination: State terror, Economic Policy, and Social Repture during the Argentine Process, 1976-81,” *American Journal of Political Science* 31, no. 2 (1987): 344.

<sup>363</sup> Harold Hinton, *Korea Under New Leadership: The Fifth Republic*, 131.

<sup>364</sup> *Korea Newsreview*, 30 August 1980, 4.

<sup>365</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 28 October 1980.

name of cleansing society. In addition, the “Political Purification Law” was passed by the Legislative Council to prohibit politicians’ political activities.<sup>367</sup> This law seriously undermined the constitutionally guaranteed citizens’ political rights. For instance, 811 politicians were banned from running for public office, supporting or opposing others running for office, or joining any civil society organization and political party.<sup>368</sup> After a review of appeals, the regime trimmed the final list to 567 banned politicians on November 24.

The purification campaign was extremely harsh on democratic civil society, especially students and labor union leaders.<sup>369</sup> In the case of labor unions, 106 leading democratic unions were forcibly disbanded and 203 union leaders, including 12 presidents of industrial union federations, were purged from union activity on August 20.<sup>370</sup> Thus, as Table 4-1 shows, the number of unions between 1979 and 1980 sharply declined. The regime also revised the “Law on Assembly and Demonstration” to expand its range of application. First, it defined the “demonstration site” as places where the public freely passes to all roads and the outdoors. Second, the law provided imprisonment for up to five years, for those who prepare for, conspire, make propaganda for, or incite assemblies or demonstrations that could cause social unrest. In fact, the newly revised “Law on Assembly and Demonstration (*Jipsibup*)” was used to prevent

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<sup>366</sup> Lee Chong-Sik, “South Korea in 1980: The Emergence of a New Authoritarian Order,” *Asian Survey* 21, no. 1 (1981): 134.

<sup>367</sup> The Political Purification Law was created by the Legislative Council of National Security (LCNS) in November 1980.

<sup>368</sup> Asia Watch, *Human Rights in Korea* (New York: The Asia Watch Committee, 1985), 51-2.

<sup>369</sup> CISJD, *Bubgwa Minjoohwa* (Law and Democratization), (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1986), 69-89.

<sup>370</sup> Chang Myung-Kook, “Haebanghoo Hankooknodongwoongdongron 1, (Perspectives on Korean Labor Movements since Liberation, in *Hankook Nodongwoongdongron 1*, (Perspectives on Korean Labor Movements 1), eds. Kim Keum-Soo and Park Hyun-Chae (Seoul: Miraesa, 1985), 140.

peaceful assembly and free expression of political opinion in civil society.<sup>371</sup> The harsh suppression was only way for the new authoritarian regime to control democratic civil society and the opposition party.

Table 4-1

Union Membership and Number of Unions (1979-1984)

Year	Employees (thousand)	Unionized employees	Membership Rate(%)	Number of Unions
1979	6,519	1,088	16.7	4,947
1980	6,485	948	14.6	2,618
1981	6,624	853	12.9	2,141
1982	6,867	843	12.3	2,191
1983	7,184	811	11.3	2,238
1984	7,630	839	11.0	2,365

Source: FKTU, *Annual Report*; EPB, *Social Indicators in Korea*, 1985.

2) Creation of the Artificial Political Party System

The new authoritarian regime, after taking power, tried to institutionalize power through the establishment of a new party system, a hegemonic party system like a multi-party system with a hegemonic ruling party.<sup>372</sup> Under this system, opposition parties were not permitted to compete with the hegenonic ruling party in antagonistic terms and on an equal basis.<sup>373</sup> Thus, the new military regime not only established its own Democratic Justice Party (DJP) on 15 January 1981, but also artificially created loyal or semi-loyal opposition parties: the DKP (Democratic Korean Party) and the KNP (Korean National Party).

<sup>371</sup> Asia Watch, *A Stern, Steady Crackdown: Legal Process and Human Rights in South Korea*, (New York: The Asia Watch Committee, 1987).

<sup>372</sup> For example, President Chun mentioned in a press conference that he preferred a multi-party system to the previous two-party system because the latter had "prompted political polarization and confrontation, effectively immobilizing politics and the National Assembly, as well as precluding a climate conducive to compromise and cooperation." Secretariat for the President, *The 1980s Meeting a New Challenge: Selected Speeches of President Chun Doo Hwan*, vol. 1, (Seoul: Korea Textbook, 1981), 198.

In the process of creating semi-loyal opposition parties, members of those opposition parties were carefully selected by state power apparatuses, such as National Security Planning Agency.<sup>374</sup> There were some differences between the Yushin regime and Chun regime in the party politics. The Chun regime intended to control political agendas through institutionalized party politics whereas the Yushin regime excluded the institutional political arena from the decision making process. In addition, the electoral system was slightly different from that of the Yushin era, but virtually assured a solid working majority for the ruling party. The effect of institutional manipulation in favor of the ruling party was clear in the National Assembly election of 1981, in which the ruling DJP successfully elected 90 out of 92 electoral districts and 61 out of 92 seats allotted to PR seats. Thus, the new regime created an artificial multi-party system to prevent political challenge from opposition parties and to control them through institutional of the party system.<sup>375</sup>

Table 4-2

The Outcome of the National Assembly Election in 1981

	DJP	DKP	KNP	Fringe Parties	Independent	Total
District	90	57	18	8	11	184
P. R.	61	24	7			92
Total	151	81	25	8	11	276
Votes (%)	35.6	21.6	13.3	8.8	10.7	100

Source: Kim Young-Soon, "Gonggae jugdokkecheje Chungchi yukhakgwangye Tooyoung" (A Reflection on Political Dynamics of Open Dictatorial Regime), *Sasanggwa Chungchak* 5, no. 3 (1988), 231 and Central Election Management Committee: *Korean National Assembly Members Election Act*, Seoul 1983.

<sup>373</sup> Giovanni Sartori, "The Typology of Party System: Proposal for Improvement," in *Mass Politics*, eds. Erik Allart and Stein Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1970), 327-28.

<sup>374</sup> Choi Han-Soo, *Hankook Chungchiui Saedochun* (The New Challenge of Korean Politics), (Seoul: Daechungjin, 1995), 177. The military regime changed the official name of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency to the National Security Planning Agency because the former KCIA had many negative images to the people. However, the basic characteristic and missions of the National Security Planning Agency were same as those of former KCIA.

<sup>375</sup> *Hankook Daily*, 2 and 30 April, and 1 May 1991.



## **6. Democratic Civil Society and Its Democratic Movement**

Park's sudden death provided a great opportunity for democratic civil society to revitalize and struggle actively for democratization from early 1980. For example, on May 3, several thousand students from 13 colleges gathered and protested the transitional government. Students denounced the country's military-backed government, demanding an immediate end of martial law and the removal of officials left in power after Park's death.<sup>376</sup> Especially, as it became clear that political parties did not accommodate the aspirations, energy, and pressure of the masses, democratic groups and organizations took their demands directly to the streets by exploiting the new political space.

The first reaction to the weakening of suppression was the proliferation of autonomous organizations in civil society. For example, student movement activists organized autonomous representative bodies opposed to the existing student organizations that had been moderate during the Yushin period. They also tried to establish nationwide organizations coordinating differences among individual student representative bodies at the college level.<sup>377</sup> The democratic unions and labor organizations sought to reform existing unions, such as the FKTU.<sup>378</sup> The struggle of democratic civil society to attain autonomy spread to all sectors of civil society. However, this active struggle did not go smoothly because of the lack of preparation for taking advantage of favorable political and social situation. This internal problem

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<sup>376</sup> *Washington Post*, Saturday, May 3, 1980, A7.

<sup>377</sup> According to Chun Yong-Ho, a former student movement activist, after Park's death, many student movement activists, expelled by the Yushin regime, returned and concentrated their efforts on taking over the leadership of existing student organizations. There were some conflicts in strategies of the movement between the returned students and existing leaders of student organizations. After a series of internal struggles, the returned students came to control the student organizations. Chun Yong-Ho, interviewed by author, Kwangju, 4 September 1999.

<sup>378</sup> For example, workers succeeded in ousting Kim Young-Tae, who had actively collaborated with anti-labor Yushin authorities, from the chairmanship of the FKTU. *Chosun Daily*, 15 February 1980.

became an excuse for direct military intervention in the transitional politics as a central actor. After the new military force emerged, democratic civil society had to face harsh suppression that it had not experienced before. Thus, just-vitalized democratic civil society returned to being divided, isolated, and inconsequential, and this character had continued until until late 1983.

### 1) The Jaeya Force

There was no coherent strategy for democratic struggle of the Jaeya force because of internal splits and external suppression in this period. As an internal restriction, the Jaeya force had difficulty in setting united strategies and establishing networks among its various Jaeya organizations because of Park's sudden death. Although there were many organizations within the Jaeya force, such as the Youth movement, ousted politicians, priests, ousted professors, literary men, ousted journalists and relatives of political prisoners under the leadership of the NCRD, each group or organization had different strategies and ideologies for dealing with the transitional politics. Those organizations within the Jaeya force were divided into two major groups, depending on their strategies for the democratic struggle in the transitional period. One group was the "gradual line," and the other group was the "activist line."<sup>379</sup> Actually, there was no significant difference between these two lines on the path to democratic transition. Both lines suggested the same sequence of democratization; 1) the establishment of formal democracy with civilian government, 2) the expansion of the power base of popular forces, and 3) the realization of substantive socio-economic democratization.

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<sup>379</sup> Kim Young-Myung, *Hankook Hyundai Jungchisa* (The Modern Korean Political History), 345.

The major differences between these two lines were interpretation of democracy and strategy of achieving formal democracy. The “gradual line” had moderate members and was composed mainly of former politicians who had been restricted in their political activity under the Yushin regime. Because of their political and social backgrounds, the gradual line who pursued a procedural democracy had similar strategies as the NDP regarding the military and democratic transitions. On the military, the gradual line agreed with the NDP to oppose the radical mobilization of the masses because it might provoke military intervention in transition politics. The gradual line supported the strategy of the NDP for democratic transition through the election.<sup>380</sup>

However, the gradual line of the Jaeya force differed from the NDP on the matter of mass mobilization. Unlike the NDP that tried to avoid any kind of mass appeal, the gradual line argued for appealing directly to the people by revealing the conspiracy of the power establishment to extend authoritarian regime. Nevertheless, this line believed that the popular movement could not be the alternative to a political party in taking over the government. Thus, the popular movement should remain as a springboard to organize a new party in the case that the existing opposition party could not play its role of representing interests of the democratic opposition coalition. Later, supporters of the gradual line denounced the NDP for having too optimistic view about the new political situation, and this wasting of time since Park’s death provided time for the Yushin force

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<sup>380</sup> The “Opening through Elections” model emphasizes the role of democratic formalism which survives the authoritarian exacerbation. The constitutional continuity can provide the political space to opposition forces for democratization. That is, the transition from above and the hegemonic bourgeoisie model regard the democratic transition as a project of specific actors. However, the “Opening through Elections” model argues that transition is not the project but a process whose outcome is a result of the interaction among contending actors.

to regroup and counter-attack.<sup>381</sup> Thus, the Jaeya force tried, in early April 1980, to establish a new party under the leadership of Kim Dae-Jung after Kim announced that he would not to join the NDP. However, this line of the Jaeya force consistently opposed the massive student demonstrations on the streets in May 1980 out of their fear of provoking military intervention.

On the other hand, the “activist line” of the Jaeya force was composed mainly of the leaders of grassroots popular movements that had actively struggled with the Yushin regime, such as former student activists, progressive church leaders and radical dissident intellectuals. This line who pursued substantive democracy relied heavily on popular mobilization and direct pressure on the regime to negotiate at the elite level under the leadership of a political party. Thus, in order to appeal to the people, they used street demonstrations to reveal the danger of an authoritarian restoration by the new military force and the remnants of the Yushin regime. For example, this line of the Jaeya force held a rally to oppose the presidential election by the Electoral College in November 24, but they failed to draw mass followers.<sup>382</sup> In order to solve the problem of mass mobilization, the Jaeya force sent the returned students to press the incumbent student leaders on campus to change the direction of the student movement from the struggle for “campus autonomization” to political struggle. Many student demonstrations in the spring of 1980 were organized by this line of the Jaeya force. Although they relied on the students’ street power, they never tried to establish a coalition with workers. This line strongly believed that the middle class should initiate the democratic movement. Thus,

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<sup>381</sup> Lee Chong-Sik, “South Korea in 1980: The Emergence of a New Authoritarian Order,” 128; *Dong-A Daily*, 25 April 1980.

<sup>382</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 24 November 1979.

the Jaeya force could not be actively involved in the transitional politics because of divisions in terms of ideologies, strategies, and organizations.

As an external restriction, the Jaeya movement was limited because martial law was proclaimed, and thus many Jaeya leaders' political activities were prohibited. As a result, the Jaeya force was limited in restructuring its organizations and cooperating with other democratic groups and organizations. In spite of these internal and external limitations, the Jaeya force concentrated their efforts on criticizing the democratization process that the Choi regime led. For example, the NCRD and the Catholic Justice and Peace Committee<sup>383</sup> separately issued public statements objecting to acting president Choi's special statement of November 10<sup>th</sup> in regard to holding a presidential election based on the Yushin Constitution.<sup>384</sup> In addition, on 11 January 1980, the Council of Ousted Professors held a meeting to demand the reinstatement of arrested students and professors, claiming that this was the quickest way to achieve democracy.<sup>385</sup>

In this period, the main goal of the Jaeya movement was to achieve liberal democracy based heavily upon procedural terms. For example, the contents of major anti-government declarations included: abolition of the President's Emergency Measures, release and amnesty of political prisoners, guarantee of freedoms of the press, publication, and assembly, normalization of the legislature, and independence of the judiciary.<sup>386</sup> The active Jaeya movement was closely related to the unique characteristics of the Jaeya force, composed of socially and politically respected individuals. The

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<sup>383</sup> The Catholic Justice and Peace Committee was established on October 13, 1969. The main goals of this organization were to contribute to realization of human dignity and social justice and to support democratic struggle of democratic civil society during the Yushin period.

<sup>384</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 November 1979, 26.

<sup>385</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, 501.

<sup>386</sup> Kim Sun-Hyuk, *The Politics of Democratization: The Role of Civil Society*, 73.

intensity of suppression on the Jaeya force even under martial law was weaker than that for other democratic groups. In addition, the Jaeya force could avoid harsh suppression because their struggle with the regime fell within the domain of domestic laws.

However, after the Choi regime expanded the Martial Law to the whole country, the democratic movement of the Jaeya force came to face harsher suppression.<sup>387</sup> As with other democratic groups and organizations, the Jaeya movement sharply declined after the Kwangju uprising. Nevertheless, the military authoritarian regime could not completely control the Jaeya force; nor did it prevent their expression of dissatisfaction.<sup>388</sup> In short, despite active struggles, the Jaeya force showed many limitations in the democratic movement because of internal division, lack of preparation, and harsh suppression by the regime.<sup>389</sup>

## 2) Student Movements

The first priority of the student movement in this period was the “autonomization of campus.”<sup>390</sup> In order to achieve this goal, student movement activists needed

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<sup>387</sup> Kim Young-Myung, *Hankook Hyundai Jungchisa* (The Modern Korean Political History), 350. Through the Martial Law Decree no. 10, the new military force closed the National Assembly and universities, and prohibited any kind of political activity. In addition, leaders of the student movement and labor movement were arrested. Especially, Kim Dae-Jung was arrested for subversion of the state.

<sup>388</sup> Kim Young Sam, a former president of the New Democratic Party, started a hunger strike since May 17 to dramatize the popular desire for democracy. In his statement announcing the hunger strike, Kim demanded specific democratic reforms that include: release of all prisoners of conscience; restoration of the civil rights of those who have been deprived of them for political reasons; guarantee of freedom of expression; and rescinding of all antidemocratic laws. In addition, Kim also strongly criticized the U.S. support on the Chun regime. *The New York Times*, 9 June Thursday 1983.

<sup>389</sup> For example, the police arrested and house arrested 145 Jaeya and religious leaders right before President Reagan visited Korea. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, .

<sup>390</sup> According to Chun Yong-Ho, after Park's death, student movement activists who were expelled by the Yushin regime believed that guarantee of the absolute autonomy in campus was a necessary to struggle effectively with the uncertain political situation. Thus, they struggled for the “autonomization of campus.” In addition, they believed current student organizations were too weak and moderate to deal with the uncertain political situation, and the incumbent leadership should be replaced with those student movement activists, who had more radical and aggressive ideologies and strategies. In the process of

independent organizations and united strategies and ideologies. The so-called “campus autonomization” movement demanded the restoration of an autonomous student representative body, an independent campus press, the restoration of autonomous student activity circles, and the restoration of an independent faculty, and expelling professors and college managers who had collaborated with the Yushin regime.<sup>391</sup> However, it was not easy for them to attain autonomization because of internal divisions and a repressive policy. For example, there were serious conflicts about strategies and ideologies between returned student movement activists and incumbent student leaders.<sup>392</sup> When student activists expelled by the Yushin regime returned to campus, they denounced incumbent student leaders because they thought the incumbents did not try to develop the student movement into a coalition with other groups and organizations of civil society.

The incumbent student leaders criticized returning students as being adventurers without knowledge of the student movement. In addition, incumbent student leaders argued that the student movement first needed to accumulate the power base to struggle effectively with huge state institutions, such as the military. Thus, they insisted that the student movement should focus not just on raising students’ political consciousness but also on the struggle for campus autonomy. The incumbent students insisted that students go into the streets only when the power of the student movement becomes equal to that of the military.

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replacing leaders of the student movement, a serious conflict between these two groups took place. Chun Yong-Ho, interviewed by author, Kwangju, 4 September 1999.

<sup>391</sup> Kim Dong-Young, “80nyundaeui Hankook Chungchieui Sanghanggwa Koojo” (The Political Situation and Structure in Korea of the 1980s), in *80nyundae Hankooksahoe: Jaengjumgwa Chunmang* (The Korean Society in the 1980s: issues and prospects), eds. Kim Chung-Suk et al. (Seoul: Gongdongche, 1986), 49.

<sup>392</sup> Ilsongjung, “10. 26 ihu jungsedaeceunge kwanhan nonjaeng” (The Dispute about Political Situation after 10. 26), *Haksaengundongnonjaengsa I*, (The Dispute History of Student Movements), (Seoul: Ilsongjung, 1990), 14-20.

On the contrary, the returned student group argued that students should struggle with the military-controlled regime immediately because they considered that the intra-military coup of December 12 to be the first step in the new military force's taking power. According to them, it was too late to wait for accumulation of a power base. By the time they accumulated power, the authoritarian regime backed by the new military force would have already taken the power. Thus, returned student activists asserted that the student movement must focus on political struggle with the regime through organized student demonstrations and mass rallies. In April 1980, after an intense internal power struggle, the returned student group took over the leadership of the student movement and led the student movement. In spite of this different strategy, there were many things both groups shared in common. For example, both groups underestimated the workers' role in the democratic struggle and thus did not try to establish a coalition with workers.

Another student group advocated *Hyunjangron* (go to the workplace), and paid close attention to the potential of the labor movement in the democratic movement. According to this view, democratization could be possible only when the popular masses were organized politically as well as economically. Thus, they argued that students themselves should not initiate a democratic struggle with the authoritarian force but had to wait until the popular masses gained the ability to lead the democratic struggle. They asserted that struggle with the authoritarian regime without the accumulation of power would naturally lead to a disastrous political defeat.

Although this third student group was the most radical, they did not get actively involved in the democratic movement because of their ideological narrowness. Namely, their strategy of waiting until the working mass gained political consciousness tied their



hands. Later, this group was criticized for having a kind of populism that idolized and mystified the popular masses and also for its moralist tendencies.<sup>393</sup> In fact, they opposed going to the streets and instead went to work places to raise workers' political consciousness. Thus, they did not influence the transition process because they stayed in work places to educate workers when the transitional process began. Because of this diversity and conflict of strategies and ideologies, students groups had to spend their time for fighting each other rather than the democratic struggle with the regime. In spite of these ideological and strategic conflicts and suppression however, student organizations were gradually revitalized and came to lead the democratic movement in the early transitional period.

With the emergence of the new military force, the direction of the student movement dramatically changed. Student movement activists came to concentrate on a political struggle rather than campus autonomization. Characterizing the Choi regime as a mere extension of the Yushin dictatorship, student groups asked the government to lift the martial law immediately, to sweep out the remnants of the Yushin regime, and to accelerate the process of democratic transition. After a short period of early 1980, students' street demonstrations resumed in April. Students from most of the nation's colleges and universities gathered at Seoul National University and Korea University on May 2 and waged demonstrations, calling for the removal of Chun Doo-Hwan from all public posts.<sup>394</sup> In addition, the student association of Jungang University demanded 1) abolition of emergence martial law, 2) Chun Doo-Hwan, Choi Kyu-ha, and Shin Hyun-

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<sup>393</sup> Lee Jong-Oh, "80nyundae Nodongwoondongroneui Jungaewa jungeui Ihaereul Wuihayu" (For the Understanding of the Development of Labor Movement Strategies in the 80s), in *Hankook Nodongwoondongueui Inyum* (The Idea of Korean Labor Movement), ed. Korean Christian Industrial Development Institute (Seoul: Jungamsa, 1988), 230.

Hwak's removal from their official positions, 3) politicians' self-examination 4) release of political prisoners, and 5) urging professors at their university to express their opinion on the current political situation.<sup>395</sup> Student demonstrations culminated on May 15 when 70,000 to 100,000 students from 35 universities demonstrated in the heart of Seoul.<sup>396</sup> However, student movement activists faced a dilemma. Even though they admitted the necessity of active struggle with the regime, they were worried about possible military intervention. Thus, they eventually decided to call off further demonstrations because they might provide an excuse for direct military intervention in transitional politics.<sup>397</sup>

The peak of the student movement in 1980 was the Kwangju uprising on May 17 1980. Students played a major role in organizing and leading mass demonstrations.<sup>398</sup> As a result, the student group was a main target of suppression, and thus the student movement lost its leadership and organizations after the Kwangju uprising.<sup>399</sup> Until the decompression policy in late 1983, as Table 4-3 shows, the student movement had to be quiet even though there were some small-scale demonstrations and aggressive activities against the Chun regime and the U.S. government. For example, on 18 March 1982, a youth and student group violently occupied the Culture Center of the United States in Busan and protested the U.S. role in suppressing the Kwangju uprising.<sup>400</sup> This incident

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<sup>394</sup> *Washington Post*, Friday, 2 May 1980, A32

<sup>395</sup> *Washington Post*, Saturday, 3 May 1980, A7

<sup>396</sup> *The Dong-A Daily*, 16 May 1980.

<sup>397</sup> *Chosun Daily*, 17 May 1980.

<sup>398</sup> However, according to student leader (Chun Yong-Ho) of the Kwangju democratic movement, the Kwangju Uprising was accidentally occurred, and it was a self-defensive activity against the suppression of the military. In addition, student organizations were established by students, teachers of the "DeulBul Night School," and it was a place where provided ideological education to workers and other students. Chun Yon-Ho, interviewed by author, Kwangju, 9 September 1999.

<sup>399</sup> On June 12, South Korea's universities were warned that no student activism would be tolerated when classes are reopened. In a move to prevent a revival of student protests, the new education minister declared that all "collective actions" by students would be banned. *Washington Post*, Thursday, 12 June 1980, A21.

<sup>400</sup> *The Dong-A Daily*, 19 March 1982; *The New York Times*, 28 March 1982.

occurred in response to the barbaric massacre of the Kwangju uprising in 1980, during the General Chun's reign. However, most student movement activists could not leave their campuses, so they had to be satisfied with small scale and passive activities such as distributing handbills and shouting slogans.<sup>401</sup>

Table 4-3

Number of Student Demonstrations, Student Demonstrators, and Expelled Students Due to the Demonstration (1979-1983)

Year	Demonstrations	Demonstrators	Expelled Students
1979	17	25,970	46
1980	283	289,855	538
1981	43	15,666	300
1982	61	33,145	198
1983	-	-	235

Source: Ministry of Education, *Transformation and Characteristics of Korean Student Demonstration*, Seoul: Minister of Education, 1984.

In this suppression period, student movement activists engaged in rigorous self-criticism, reflected on the failure of the student movement, and established future strategies for democratization. Debate on their future direction centered on the proper relationship between the student movement and ordinary students and on the possibility of a coalition with other democratic groups and organizations. The major debate on strategies and ideologies was "*Moorim vs. Hakrim*." In December 1980-1981, this was the first debate among student activists on establishing proper strategies for the student

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<sup>401</sup> 1980: 1) returning the military to the front  
 2) to dissolve emergency martial law  
 3) to explain unclear political situation  
 1981-1983: 1) thorough examination of the Kwangju Democratic Movement  
 2) to overthrow military dictatorial regime  
 3) to stop suppression on students

movement against the new authoritarian regime.<sup>402</sup> Their different perspectives within the student movement caused internal conflict and wasting time and resources.

The *Moorim* group emphasized the protracted strengthening of movement organizations and thus argued that reckless demonstrations would bring about harsh suppression and the destruction of student organizations. According to them, the only force that had the capacity to struggle with the regime was a student group, not the working class. However, this student group was completely collapsed by harsh suppression in December 1980. On the other hand, the *Hakrim* group stressed continuous political struggle with the authoritarian regime. They felt that the *Moorim* group concentrated too much on organizational survival. After the *Moorim* group was collapsed in December 1980, the *Hakrim* group led student movements until the summer of 1981.<sup>403</sup> The *Hakrim* group thought the major reason for the failure of the democratic movement of 1980 was the weakness of the advance guard, such as the Federation of National Democratic Students.

Table 4-4

Comparisons of the *Moorim* and *Hakrim* Group of Students

	Moorim	Hakrim
Status in Student Movement	Leader of Student Movements	Guidance of Student Movements
Strategy for Struggle	Sublation of Struggle Preparation in Working Places	Guidance of Struggles Direct Confrontation
Organizational Orientation	Reinforcement of Mass Organizations	Establishment of Advance Guidance Organizations

<sup>402</sup> Kang Shin Chul, *80myundae Hankuksahwoiwa Haksangundong*, (Korean Society and Student Movements in the 1980s), (Seoul: Hyungsungsa, 1988), 38-40.

<sup>403</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, a former police officer, the police arrested leaders of this *Moorim* group that had led the student movement after Park's death, and its organizations were collapsed in December 1980. After the *Moorim* group was collapsed, the *Hakrim* group of students had led the student movement until summer of 1981. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

Through this internal conflict, several changes in the student movement took place. First was a change in the goal. Until early May 1980, student movement activists concentrated on autonomization of student organizations in campuses. In addition, student organizations tried to establish a foundation for real democracy by completely eliminating the remaining *Yushin* authoritarianism.<sup>404</sup> However, the main goal of the student movement changed dramatically after the intra-military coup and the Kwangju democratic movement. That is, student organizations agreed to stop the struggle for liberal democracy, and focused on realizing *Minjung* (masses) revolution. In this respect, the student movement of this period began to have anti-democratic character. That is, the ultimate goal of the student movement began to change from liberal democratic to popular democracy. However, this radical groups of students was still marginalized in this period.

Second, students' attitude toward the United States radically changed after the Kwangju uprising. Although anti-Americanism had existed since the Yushin regime, it was not strong and did not spread to the whole society. However, strong anti-Americanism spread widely among student activists because of the approval of using the military to suppress the Kwangju uprising. Furthermore, President Reagan reaffirmed that the U.S. government strongly supported the Chun regime when Chun visited the United States in February 1981. As a consequence, students' anti-Americanism manifested itself in concrete actions which were often violent. For example, student movement activists set fire to the United States Cultural Center in Kwangju and Busan on

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<sup>404</sup> Seoul National University Students, "Sikuk Seoneumun" (Declaration on the Situation), May 2, 1980, in *80myundae Hankuksahwoiwa Haksagundong* (Korean Society and Student Movements in the 1980s), ed. Han Young (Seoul: Chungnyunsa, 1989), 29.

9 December 1980 and March 1982 respectively.<sup>405</sup> In addition, on 22 April 1982, students at Kangwon University chanted “Yankee Go Home” and burned the American Flag.

Along with this change of characteristics, the student group strongly influenced the democratic movement and continued to struggle with the authoritarian regime under suppression. In addition, the student movement contributed to changing public perception of the authoritarian regime. Ordinary people who had witnessed the student movement for a long time began to grow critical of the Chun regime. In this regard, despite the fact that the student movement failed in its use of the strategy of the “war of movement” in the democratic movement, the tactic of the “war of position” slowly began to work.<sup>406</sup> In addition, the student movement stimulated and actively supported economic and political struggles of other democratic groups and organizations. For example, on 11 October 1982, students of Seoul National University distributed anti-government handbills and supported the statement of the *Wonpung* Apparel union about suppression process.<sup>407</sup>

Nevertheless, during this period, the fundamental problem of an internal division within the student group could not be solved. Moreover, under the repressive policy, the student movement deteriorated as did other democratic groups. In spite of these internal and external difficulties, student movement activists continuously struggled with the Chun regime even when the scale of the movement was relatively small and the means of the struggle were passive, such as demonstrations on campus and distribution of anti-

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<sup>405</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 19 March 1982.

<sup>406</sup> In fact, ordinary citizens had a very critical perception of student demonstrations because it was very violent and there were many pro-Communist slogans in demonstration. However, this critical

government handbills. For example, student movement activists established the Youth Council for Democracy Movement (YCDM) on 30 September 1983. The YCDM tries to facilitate discussion and debates on various theories of democratization, and contributed to the development of strategies for the influential democratic movement. It emphasized establishment of solidarity among conscious intellectuals, religious organizations, politicians, workers, and peasants, and struggled for democratization and national unification. The YCDM also emphasized following things for influential struggles; 1) restoration of the struggle potential; 2) collection of youth energies; 3) formation of concrete ties with other movement forces, such as labor, peasant, and student movements; 4) support for minjung (mass) movements as they seek solutions to their problems; and 5) investigations and research for the purpose of guiding the direction of movements. In addition, this organization published the "Path to Democratization" as a means of expression."<sup>408</sup> In this respect, the student movement in this period was active even under harsh suppression, but it could not be influential because of internal conflicts and suppression. In addition, anti-democratic elements within the student movement began to take place from this period.

### 3) Labor Movements

Like other democratic groups and organizations, labor movement activists at first tried to establish autonomous unions and replaced leaders of pre-existing unions.<sup>409</sup>

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perception began to change slowly. Sometimes, citizens protected students who chased by the policy in the process of demonstration. In addition, more people began to have sympathy for the student movement.

<sup>407</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 11 October 1982.

<sup>408</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 3 October 1983.

<sup>409</sup> For example, while in December 1979, workers in Hyundai Shipyard failed to organize autonomous unions, workers succeeded in organizing autonomous unions in several companies of the *Kuro Industrial Estate*. Since March 1980, the reformed FKTU and industry level union federations helped

Militant union leaders, jailed by the Yushin authority and later returned to work places, tried to organize new unions and to mobilize workers to attain autonomy.<sup>410</sup> Until the expansion of the Martial Law to the whole country, about 80,000 new workers joined unions including the nurse assistants' union and private high school teachers' union.<sup>411</sup> Labor movement activists also began to express their dissatisfaction and advocate an increase in wages, improvement of working environment, democratization of labor unions, and gaining autonomy from the state.<sup>412</sup>

However, their struggle had been unorganized and isolated from other democratic groups, organizations, and the public because of the relatively short history of the labor movement. Thus, the labor movement of the early 1980s quickly proved inconsequential even though some protests were successful in increasing wages and improving working conditions. The sporadic and spontaneous labor movement was easily broken down by suppression. Thus, labor movement activists realized that satisfaction of their demands was contingent on the democratization of the political system. Based on this realization, the labor movement slowly came to have a political character.

After the establishment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic, labor unions and organizations, like other democratic groups and organizations, were harshly suppressed. The new

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actively the workers' efforts to organize new autonomous unions in three Japanese companies in Masan Free Export Zone, Doosan Glass in Changwon Industrial Estate, and seven companies in Woolsan Industrial Estate. Even without the help of union federations, workers themselves succeeded in organizing 15 new unions in Kyungnam Province, 9 in Iri Industrial Estate, and 4 in Taegu area.

<sup>410</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, students who had radical ideologies and expelled by the Yushin regime began to penetrate actively in work places, and establish labor organizations. Especially, those who were former student movement activists had Marxist and Leninist ideologies, and led the labor movement to revolution. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>411</sup> Chang Myung-Kook, "Haebanghoo Hankooknodongwoondongueui Baljachwui" (The Trail of Korean Labor Movements since Liberation, on Kim Keum-Soo and Park Hyun-Chae et al., *Hankook Nodongwoongdong I* (Perspectives on Korean Labor Movement 1), 136-39.

<sup>412</sup> Um Joo-Ong, "Byunhyukjuk Nodongundongui Daejunghwawa gyegeupjuk jipyungui hwakdae" (The Popularization of Labor Movements and Expansion of Class Struggle), in *The History of Korean Social Movement*, ed. Cho Yen-Hee (Seoul: Jooksan, 1990), 145-49.



authoritarian regime considered the labor movement as a serious obstacle to national security and to their staying in power.<sup>413</sup> In addition, the new regime worried that the labor movement could delay economic recovery, so it strongly pursued a repressive policy to stabilize the economic sector. For instance, the regime arrested many leaders of democratic unions, dissolved active and uncooperative unions, and replaced them with cooperative and captive ones.<sup>414</sup> Because the regime was particularly anxious about the possibility of a coalition being established between students and workers, the suppression focused on disconnecting the relationship between workers and students.

Given government obstruction of the labor movement, other democratic groups and organizations were reluctant to establish a coalition with workers and even tried to hinder workers' political struggle. For example, the NDP tried to persuade labor movement activists not to radicalize their movement, even on economic issues. The Jaeya force also consistently insisted that the democratic movement should be based on mobilizing the politically awakened middle class and not on the working class. Even students, the most radical sector in the democratic movement, did not make sincere efforts to establish a coalition with workers. Because of their exclusion from other democratic groups, especially from the Jaeya force, the labor movement found it difficult to get involved in the democratic movement during the early 1980s.

The more serious limitation was the issue of the proper objectives of the labor movement. Union leaders and organizations concentrated their efforts on economic

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<sup>413</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, the regime dealt with the labor movement with ideologies of national security and anti-communism. Thus, the violent labor movement was considered as an anti-government and pro-Communist movement. Based on this perception of the regime toward the labor movement, the regime harshly suppressed the labor movement. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>414</sup> Yun Song-Chun, "Hankook Nodongge ottoke Dallajutna" (How the Labor Sector Changes in Korea), *Shindong-A*, (June 1981): 192-201.

issues after the collapse of the Yushin regime. Because workers had been excluded from the benefits of successful economic development since the early 1970s, their first priority was economic compensation for the previous suppression on workers. As a result, the number of labor disputes over economic interests sharply increased. For example, as Table 4-5 shows, the number of labor disputes increased dramatically from 102 cases in 1978 and 105 cases in 1979 to 848 cases in 1980. .

Table 4-5

Number of Labor Disputes, Labor Unions, Union Members, and Unionization Rates (1975-1983)

Year	Disputes	Number of Unions	Union Members (thousand)	Org. Rate (%)*
1975	133	3,521	750	18.8
1976	110	3,863	846	19.3
1977	96	4,046	955	20.1
1978	102	4,304	955	20.4
1979	105	4,392	1,088	20.2
1980	206	2,618	948	17.4
1981	186	2,141	967	16.7
1982	88	2,194	975	15.9
1983	98	2,238	1,010	15.4

\* Organisation rate: union members as proportion of total number of employed workers minus public employees and teachers [total number of union members/(total employed workers-total number of public employees and teacher)].

Source: *Nodong Kyungje Yongam* (Yearly Labor Review), (Seoul: Korea Employers Federation), 1985, 1996, and 1997.

By the means of collective action, autonomous democratic unions achieved a remarkable success in raising wages and improving working conditions. For example, the *Chunggye* garment union achieved a 34% wage increase, 150% bonus increase, and severance payment in the workplace for those who employed more than 10 workers. As Table 4-6 shows, the labor struggle, however, was achieved mostly through wildcat strikes that led to enormous mass violence. A typical case was the *Sabuk* miners' strikes.

Twenty five hundred miners, demanding a wage increase and the resignation of *Oyong* union leaders, seized the *Sabuk* mine town, and fought with the riot police for 4 days.<sup>415</sup> Although workers succeeded in securing a 30% wage increase and the resignation of corrupt union leaders, these achievements did not represent an improvement of workers' future relations of coping with the management.

Table 4-6

Number of Labor Disputes and Their Patterns (1979-1983)

Year	Total	Refusal to Work	Sit-in Strikes	Demonstration	The Other
1979	105	60	43	2	-
1980	206	76	100	5	25
1981	186	88	40	32	26
1982	88	67	16	3	2
1983	98	62	27	6	3

Source: "Adapted from Korea Employee's Federation," *Nodonggyungje Yongam 1984* (Yearbook of Labor Economy, 1984), 61

Because of the lack of labor mobilization and cooperation with other democratic groups, most labor mobilizations, such as the wave of strikes and street demonstrations, were organized by workers at the isolated shop floor level, and these mobilizations were not acted upon for any strategic political goal. Moreover, most workers' protests occurred in the labor-intensive manufacturing sector. The strategic sector of the HCI industries was unaffected by the wave of the labor movement during the transition period. As a result, labor mobilization could neither disrupt nor paralyze the national economy.

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<sup>415</sup> Chang Myung-Kook, "Haebanghoo Hankook nodongwoongdonggeui baljachwui" (The Trail of Korean Labor Movement after the Independence), in *Hankook Nodong Undongron 1* (Perspective on Korean Labor Movements 1), eds. Kim Keum-Soo and Park Hyun-Chae, 136-39; Asia Watch Committee, *Human Rights in Korea*, (New York: and Washington D. C.: Asia Watch Committee, 1987), 188-190. This strike began as a protest against their corruptive union chief who had privately agreed with management on a 20% wage increase, ignoring the guideline of national unions for 42.8% increase. In the beginning, the strike was not violent. However, the sit-in strike turned into a violent confrontation when a scared intelligence detective rammed into three miners blocking his exit while trying to escape from the angered crowd. This confrontation produced 70 casualties, and 28 workers were arrested.

Rather, the heightened labor mobilization provided hardliners within the authoritarian regime with a crucial weapon to provoke middle class backlashes against the turbulent transitional politics at the time of serious economic crisis. The business sector labeled “labor movement” as synonymous with “instability” or “chaos.”

With the respect to the democratic transition, the issue was not whether there existed a strong or a weak labor mobilization, but whether or not there existed a strategically controlled labor mobilization. Although strong labor mobilizations erupted in the spring of 1980, it was not controlled by political parties, political leaders, or national labor organizations. Most labor movements arose as a sporadic and spontaneous outburst of workers’ discontent not possible during the Yushin era. When the intense working class mobilization distance itself from a political strategy of democratic transition, the working class could not become a political resource for the democratic movement, and thus it could not greatly contribute to the democratic movement.

In this respect, the explosion of the labor movement was closely related to the political and economic situation after Park’s death. In the political perspective, the collapse of the Yushin regime naturally induced an active labor movement. Under the transitional regime, labor pressures for increasing wages, improving the working condition and establishing new unions became much less risky than before. Thus, labor movement activists attempted to reestablish or build new autonomous labor unions to struggle for economic issues. From an economic perspective, Korea had suffered severely since the late 1970s due to problems in the domestic economic structure, the second oil shock, and depression of the international market. This economic difficulty made workers dissatisfied with their economically unstable lives and with the economic

policies of the regime. Due to these changed political and economic situations, the number of labor disputes in 1980 dramatically increased over previous years.

After the new military force took power, the regime resorted to both legal restrictions and physical violence to suppress the labor movement and its leaders.<sup>416</sup> For example, the new government passed the “Guidelines for Labor Union Activity Under Martial Law” on 1 July 1980, “Guidelines for Purification of Labor Unions” on 21 August 1980, and the “Prohibition of Labor Activities by Purged Labor Union Cadres” on 4 November 1980. The new regime revised labor laws to control and isolate the working class from other civil society groups and organizations as parts of their strategy to weaken the labor movement. Furthermore, those revised labor-related laws made it harder to create autonomous labor unions and organizations.

Another strategy to suppress the labor movement was to expel union leaders through purification measures and violent union-busting. For example, the regime removed 12 leaders of the Federation of Korean Labor Unions and industrial unions on 20 August 1980. As the second purge of labor, 191 democratic union leaders were ousted and 106 local chapters were illegally dissolved on September 20. The regime sent those leaders of labor unions to the barracks of the “*Samchung* Education Camps” and brutalized them by subjecting them to insults and beatings and otherwise being treated

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<sup>416</sup> As Launius pointed out, Chun and his followers were clearly aware of the role that the militant activism of labor had played in endangering the political crises of 1979-1980. Accordingly, the new government was determined to take a more repressive stance on labor than the Yushin regime. Michael Launius, “The State and Industrial Labor: Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Korea’s Fifth Republic,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1990).

like dogs.<sup>417</sup> Through the use of distorted labor laws, the regime purged leaders of democratic labor unions, dissolved unions and replaced them with pliant unions. For instance, the *Chungkye* Textile Union, which had played a leading role in the labor movement since the Chun Tae-II's immolation in 1970, was forcibly dissolved by the regime in January 1981 and replaced by a compliant union on March 1981.<sup>418</sup> As a consequence, the number of union members and the rate of union density continuously decreased until the regime implemented a decompression policy in late 1983.

In spite of these limitations, however, the workers' realization of their potential in the democratic movement came to influence the future democratic movement in the mid-1980s.<sup>419</sup> In addition, the change of the labor movement's character in this repressive period was important for the future democratization movement. Moreover, workers began to be considered as an important democratic group of civil society on equal footing with the Jaeya force.

#### 4) Religious Communities

After the Yushin regime collapsed, the democratic movement of religious communities began to appear in three directions. First, under the transitional government, religious communities supervised the transitional process and presented a

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<sup>417</sup> Kim Jin Ok, "80nyeondae nodong undonggeui cheongae" (The Development of the Labor Movement in the 1980s) in *Nodong Hyunsilkwa Nodong Undong* (The Current Labor Situation and the Labor Movement), no. 2, in a series called *Hyunjang* (On the Scene), (Seoul: Dolbegae, 1985), 306.

<sup>418</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, 518.

<sup>419</sup> However, even though the workers' political struggle after the Kwangju Democratic Movement began to be considered significantly by other democratic civil society groups and organizations, the political struggle was not influential, and did not threaten the regime. Because of the state suppression not only on the labor movement activists but also on other democratic groups, it was difficult for them to cooperate with other democratic civil society groups and organizations in workers' political struggle. Under the situation, the workers' democratic movement could not be influential and threat to the authoritarian regime.

direction for political reform. For example, the National Catholic Priest's Corps for the Realization of Justice (NCPCRJ) sent a letter to the Chairman of the Special Committee of Revision of Constitution on 16 January 1980. In this letter, the church demanded freedom of press, withdrawal of the Emergency Martial Law, release and instatement of political prisoners, guarantee of the basic three labor laws, and exclusion from the transition process of people involved in the Yushin regime.<sup>420</sup> Moreover, the religious communities asserted that the will of the national unification should be expressed in the new constitution and emphasized the restoration of liberal democracy and the exercise of distributive justice.<sup>421</sup> In fact, the religious communities were critical of the transitional government from the beginning. For example, the NCPCRJ criticized the Choi transitional government for concentrating on crisis management of the political system rather than on transition to democracy. However, the capacity of the religious communities to observe and criticize was limited. They did not understand the significant role of the military in the transitional politics. As a result, the religious communities failed to respond appropriately to the changed political environment after the collapse of the Yushin regime.

Second, Catholic and Protestant organizations focused their efforts on the release and instatement of political prisoners and other individuals who were suppressed by the Yushin regime. For example, the NCPCRJ and Protestant church leaders strongly urged

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<sup>420</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheuksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, 76-78.

<sup>421</sup> Catholic Seoul Parish, *Seoul Jubo* (Seoul Weekly Newsletter), no. 96. In addition, on 3 May 1980, Kang Won-Yong who was a Chairman of the Council of Protestant Church publicly stated 5 demands. Those demands were 1) every power should be checked by people, 2) every political prisoner should be released and instated, 3) punishment of corrupt companies, 4) need to relax of intention between South and North Korea, and 5) revolution should be accomplished by peaceful democratic ways. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheuksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, 183.

newspaper companies, such as *Dong-A* and *Chosun Daily*, to reinstate expelled journalists.<sup>422</sup> In addition, the NPCRJ emphasized that freedom of the press was a necessary condition of democratization, and therefore demanded the restoration of freedom of the press. Whenever the religious communities expressed its demands to regime, the release and reinstatement of political prisoners was always included.<sup>423</sup>

The third direction of their democratic movement was to protect and represent weak democratic groups and organizations of civil society. One of those organizations was the Catholic Peasant Association (KCFM, *Kanong*). The KCFM, established in March 1972, struggled to improve peasants' conditions, overcome social contradiction, and support urban and rural community. It also tried to organize grassroots movements among farmers and bring up problems of social injustice related to peasants. The Council of Social Mission of Korea and the Korea Catholic Labor Youth Association<sup>424</sup> also focused their efforts on supporting the labor movement. Although both organizations focused on violation of human rights and problems of economic development policy by the authoritarian regime, they continued to play a role of popular advocate through expressing apprehension that they were considered as socialists.

However, the religious communities made a significant mistake in defining Park's assassination on 26 October 1979. The religious communities considered Kim Jae-Kyu, the assassin, as a leader of the democratic movement. For example, on 5 February

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<sup>422</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 29 February 1980.

<sup>423</sup> For example, on 20 February 1981, the NCC Committee of Human Rights suggested to President Chun to release arrested citizens and students who were arrested during the Kwangju uprising in 1980. On May 1981, about 800 Presbyterian ministers held a prayer meeting and demanded the release of 168 students and the reinstatement of 83 professors ousted from their jobs for political reasons. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 November 1981, 30.

<sup>424</sup> The Korea Catholic Labor Youth Association (*Hankook Catholic Nodong Chungnyunhwoi*), established by Catholic Youth workers in 1958, concentrated its efforts on supporting the labor movement



1980, the NCPCRJ evaluated that the Oct. 26 incident contributed to restoring human dignity, and Kim's action was the most effective and efficient way to restore democracy.<sup>425</sup> Moreover, the Catholic and Protestant church organizations declared that they would try to save Kim's life.<sup>426</sup> The church naively relied upon Kim Jae-Kyu's statement and thereby ignored the serious conflicts and tensions within the ruling coalition in dealing with the political and economic crisis. Because of this lack of capacity to observe and analyze the new political situation after Park's death, the religious communities could not anticipate the emergence of the new military force and of internal conflicts within the democratic opposition force. Thus, religious communities did not present appropriate responses based on objective judgements of the political and social situation that resulted from the collapse of the Yushin regime. In addition, the religious communities were too much optimistic about the transitional process, and their efforts were conducted by individual organizations within the communities, failing to build coalitions with other democratic groups and organizations.

Particularly, the limitation of the religious communities in the democratic movement appeared well in the Kwangju democratic movement. During the Kwangju democratic movement, the participation of the religious communities was limited to the local level and thus cooperation with other democratic groups and organizations of civil

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and establishment of labor unions and organizations. However, there were limitations in its activities because of its top-down structure.

<sup>425</sup> Park Jae-Jung, "Kookga, Siminsahoeui Catholickyohoeui gwangye" (The Relationship among the State, Civil Society, and the Catholic Church), *Korean Political Science Review* 29, no. 2 (1995): 312-3.

<sup>426</sup> For example, the NCPCRJ sent a petition letter for Kim Jae-Kyu's clemency to the commander of the martial law on 5 February 1980. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, 502.

society could not be expected.<sup>427</sup> For example, only Catholic and Protestant clergy and a few religious organizations that were in the Kwangju area could participate in the democratic movement because of the blockade by the military. Besides harsh suppression, the divided character of the religious communities also unfavorably influenced their democratic movement. Because of the internal split between church leaders and grassroots movement activists within the religious communities, Churches could not intensify their influence on the transitional process.

For example, on May 24, Archbishop Yun Gong-Hee stated that Kwangju citizens sacrificed for the sake of democratization, and he called the Kwangju democratic movement a misfortune.<sup>428</sup> Later, Cardinal Kim Soo-Hwan also publicly stated that the Kwangju democratic movement was a very sad incident and that it should be solved peacefully by people's reconciliation with each other. When a group of Korean bishops visited the Vatican in December 1980, Pope John Paul II emphasized unification of the church and suggested forgiving and reconciling with the military force. On the other hand, the NCPCRJ discussed the facts about the Kwangju democratic movement and demanded that leaders of the Catholic Church should insist that 1) the regime give the dead bodies of those killed in Kwangju City back to their families, 2) injured people be treated in hospitals outside Kwangju city, and 3) the regime release people who were arrested during the Kwangju democratic movement.<sup>429</sup> The passive reaction of the church leaders and the internal split within the religious communities provided a limited

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<sup>427</sup> When the Kwangju uprising occurred, the military completely blockaded the Kwangju area, and isolated the uprising from the public. In this situation, the religious leaders and organizations of other areas could not enter the Kwangju area, and furthermore they could not help the democratic civil society that struggled with the military.

<sup>428</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, 103-4.

legitimacy through emphasizing reconciliation, peace, and national unification, but did not deny the existence of the transitional regime itself.

Another limitation in the influence of the religious communities on the democratic movement of early 1980 can be found in the church structure, especially in the Catholic Church. The Church, divided into parishes since the colonial period, had been operated by different missionary organizations. Because of this church structure, parishes other than the Kwangju parish did not express any appropriate response to the Kwangju uprising. After the Kwangju uprising, in addition, the new military regime did not hesitate to suppress the religious communities and their democratic movement. For example, on July 2, suspicious group of people assaulted Catholic priest Park Chang-Shin, a leader of the Catholic Peasant Association, in his church.<sup>430</sup>

In spite of suppression and internal divisions, however, grassroots religious leaders and organizations were actively involved in the democratic movement. For instance, Catholic churches in the Kwangju parish directly participated in the democratic movement of civil society and tried to preserve detailed records about the Kwangju democratic movement. Archbishop Yun Gong-Hee sent a letter to President Choi on May 26, demanding a complete investigation of the Kwangju uprising and then disclosing the truth about the democratic movement. He also asserted that the government should punish military leaders for their violent suppression in Kwangju.<sup>431</sup> In this period, especially, the church concentrated its efforts on soliciting support for the democratic movement from outside the country. In response to this effort, the Chun

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<sup>429</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, 61.

<sup>430</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, 512.

regime attacked all radical democratic movement activists and organizations within the religious communities and tried to isolate the grassroots level movement of the church from the institutionalized church through the permanent use of violence and state ideological institutions. According to the National Intelligence Agency and the police, for example, the 0.065 percent of 10 million Christians claimed to follow the liberation theology were considered as impure religious forces.<sup>432</sup> State propaganda in the mass media emphasized the communistic character of the Catholic Church, and tried to isolate the religious communities from other democratic groups and organizations.

Because of active struggles of radical organizations in the religious communities, not only the Choi transitional regime but also the new authoritarian regime began to consider the churches to be a threat to social stability. In particular, some radicalized religious organizations and liberal clergy promoted the regime to intervene inside the church. The church, considered by the regime as a hegemonic instrument, became impure; thus, the state should protect the church from the crisis of impure elements. In fact, the church would automatically be considered as an enemy of the state if it did not return to its traditional role. In response to this ideological attack, the religious communities began to more actively support the democratic movement, and they considered the democratic movement as a social missionary movement.

More serious confrontations between the Chun regime and the church began with the arrest of Catholic priests such as Moon Bu-Sik.<sup>433</sup> On 18 March 1982, at the USIS (United States Information Service) in Busan, arson was committed by a student group,

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<sup>431</sup> Catholic Kwangju Parish Justice and Peace Committee of Korea, *Kwangjuigui jaryojip* (References of Kwangju Democratic Movement), (Kwangju: Bitgouil Publisher, 1985), 20-1.

<sup>432</sup> Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

including priest Moon Bu-Sik. They were protesting the barbaric massacre in the Kwangju democratic movement.<sup>434</sup> Several days later, Moon was arrested along with other participated students. This suppression of the clergy reawakened the religious communities which had been dormant since the Kwangju democratic movement.<sup>435</sup> Cardinal Stephen Kim strongly endorsed Father Moon's decision, saying it was a priest's job to show compassion to people in distress, including those pursued by the police.<sup>436</sup> In addition, after Moon's arrest, an ecumenical group called the Korean Christian Action Organization (KCAO),<sup>437</sup> blamed the U.S. approval of Chun's use of regular troops to quell the Kwangju democratic movement as providing ample cause for the fire at the U.S. Cultural Center in Busan. Thus, many religious organizations urged the recall of United States Ambassador Richard Walker, who called the South Korean people lemmings who would follow any political leader.<sup>438</sup> The Busan incident thus became a turning point in changing the character of the religious communities.

In spite of the activation of the religious communities, there was a fundamental limitation in their democratic movement. One fundamental problem was a sharp ideological division within the religious communities concerning the democratic

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<sup>433</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheuksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 5, 627.

<sup>434</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 19 March 1982; *The New York Times*, Sunday, 28 March 1982.

<sup>435</sup> For instance, Catholic clergy and believers gathered in Wonju on 18 April 1983 and prayed for father Choi Ki-Sik. In the prayer meeting, they publicly demanded that the regime should release Father Choi, and urged to release political prisoners. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheuksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 5, 63-1.

<sup>436</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheuksokui hwoibul*, vol. 5, 93-5; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 April 1982, 10. In addition, on 25 October 1982, the Catholic Justice and Peace Committee of Korea and NCC wrote a report about the investigation record of firing U.S. Culture Center. In this report, these two organizations pointed out that the investigation record of the government was not fair, and manipulated to suppress democratic civil society.

<sup>437</sup> The Korean Christian Action Organization (KCAO) was established by religious leaders, such as Kim Kwan-Suk, Oh Myung-Kil, Kang Won-Yong, Oh Jae-Suk, and Kim Kyung-Rak, on 14 January 1971. The goal of the KCAO was to realize social reform, and struggle for social justice. The KCAO

movement. Because most church leaders were conservative, they were critical of their junior clergy and liberal religious organizations that were deeply involved in the democratic movement. However, it did not mean that those church leaders were in favor of the authoritarian regime and against democratization. Differing opinions concerning the role of the church hindered unification of the religious communities and made it difficult for liberal junior church clergy and organizations to get deeply involved in the democratic struggle with the Chun regime.

The role of the religious communities in the democratic movement had altered based on the political environment and activities of other democratic groups and organizations. Right after Park's death, its role shrank because other democratic groups and organizations rapidly revitalized and got involved actively in the transitional politics. Thus, many democratic groups and organizations did not need protections and supports of the religious communities. However, when the new authoritarian regime implemented a harsh repressive policy, democratic groups and organizations sought a shelter to avoid harsh suppression and therefore came to gather under the church's protection once again. Under the situation that leaders of democratic civil society were arrested and their organizations were destroyed, the role of the religious communities was once again emphasized. Clergy and religious organizations actively participated in the democratic movement through various means, such as prayer meetings, the issuance public statements, and hunger strikes. For example, on 18 October 1981, about 800,000 Catholic priests and Christians gathered in 5.16 Plaza to pray. At the prayer meeting, Cardinal Kim stated that today's ultimate problem was disappearing humanity and the

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continuously criticized suppression by the regime on labor movement, and supported democratic movement of other civil society groups and organizations.

violations of human rights, and also said that these problems should be solved to restore democracy.<sup>439</sup> In particular, the religious communities contributed to integrating democratic groups and organizations, protecting leaders and organizations of civil society and educating people to grow in political consciousness. The religious communities in this period thus concentrated on the Gramscian strategy of the “war of position.”

## 7. Changes of Democratic Civil Society

Since the collapse of the Yushin regime, the character of democratic civil society began to change slowly. The change became obvious in the democratic movement during the transitional period although the divided, isolated, and inconsequential character did not completely change to a united, assertive, and influential character. In particular, the temporary expansion of the political opportunity structure by Park’s death allowed the rapid vitalization of democratic civil society. The size of student demonstrations became larger, and the means of democratic struggle was getting violent in cases of confrontation with the riot police. In addition, the number of the labor dispute sharply increased with Park’s death. Right after the collapse of the Yushin regime, various social groups dormant under the Yushin period began to participate in transitional politics. This change in democratic civil society was directly related to the temporary expansion of the political opportunity structure after Park’s death.<sup>440</sup> However, in spite

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<sup>438</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 May 1982, 54.

<sup>439</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 4, 369.

<sup>440</sup> According to student and labor movement activists, such as Park Eun-Sook, Chun Yong-Ho, and Lee Tae-Bok, the revitalization and active involvement of the democratic civil society in early 1980 was a consequence of sudden weakening of the suppression. As evidence, most democratic groups and organizations did not anticipate Park’s, and thus they did not prepare for the struggle after Park’s death. Hence, the democratic struggle right after Park’s death was not well organized and influential because democratic civil society was divided and did not have effective and united strategies and goals. Park Eun-

of the active democratic struggle in the early transitional period, democratic civil society were still weak and divided in terms of organizations, strategies, and ideologies, and not supported by the middle class.

The great opportunity for civil society to further evolves slowly fading with the emergence of the new military force. During the short period before the emergence of the new military force, both democratic civil society and the opposition party failed to take advantage of favorable political and social conditions. As a main reason, democratic groups and organizations were not ready to maximize their power because of internal divisions by ideological and strategic differences. Thus, after the collapse of the Yushin regime, student groups devoted most of their time and energy on internal struggle for taking leadership of organizations rather than concentrating on political struggles.<sup>441</sup> Another reason was harsh suppression by the regime, controlled by the new military force. Because of these internal and external restrictions, democratic civil society remained divided, isolated, and inconsequential in this period.

In spite of this inconsequential character, the opening of the political opportunity structure played a significant role in revitalizing democratic civil society. However, the revitalization of democratic civil society did not reach the point that led the transitional politics to democracy, and faced harsh suppression with emergence of the new military force. Therefore, the democratic civil society could not effectively struggle in the transition period. Furthermore, after the emergence of the new military force, democratic civil society faced harsh suppression and thus lost a great opportunity to be united,

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Sook interviewed by author, Seoul, 13, 14, and 15 September 1999; Chun Yong-Ho, interviewed by author, Kwangju, 4 September 1999; Lee Tae-Bok, interviewed by author, Seoul, 21 October 1999.

<sup>441</sup> In my observation, interestingly enough, the student group, who were supposed to be most democratic, was most undemocratic, divided, and their democratic struggle was most violent among



assertive, and influential. Besides the quick reverse of the political opportunity structure, other factors also unfavorably affected the change of civil society.

The more democratic political culture than that of the 1970s favorably affected civil society in this period. Although not many people joined democratic organizations and participated in the democratic movement, they firmly believed the collapse of the Yushin regime could bring democratization. The strong popular desires for democratization, influenced by the spread of democratic civic culture, advantageously affected political activities of democratic civil society. In particular, when the Kwangju uprising took place, citizens' active participation in the democratic movement was an expression of a hope for democratization and of the dissatisfaction toward suppression on democratic civil society. Although their participation in the democratic movement in Kwangju was not motivated purely by the change of political culture, the penetration of democratic civic culture certainly influenced them to participate more actively in the democratic movement.<sup>442</sup>

The 1981 survey of public opinion clearly indicates a change of political culture. As Table 4-7 illustrates, as many as 77 percent of the 1218 respondents believed that democracy should be realized even if it hindered economic development.<sup>443</sup> Compared with that majority people were interested in political stability and economic justice and development in the 1970s, the public opinion of the early 1980s dramatically changed. That is, more people began to believe that political development was more important than economic prosperity. Nevertheless, many people still wanted political and economic

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various democratic groups. In this respect, it was difficult to say that the change of political culture did significantly affect the character of democratic civil society.

<sup>442</sup> Chun Yong-Ho, interviewed by author, Kwangju, 4 September 1999.

stability, and had a critical perception of radical strategies and ideologies of the democratic movement.

Table 4-7

Value Preference for Democracy

Question: Should democracy be realized even if it hinders economic development?

Yes	No	Don't Know (DK)	Total
77	11	12	100 (1218)

	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 and up
Yes	84	70	77	77	77	72	78	79
No	11	11	10	12	12	14	8	10
DK	5	19	13	14	11	14	14	11
Total	100 (612)	100 (606)	100 (680)	100 (537)	100 (332)	100 (318)	100 (278)	100 (287)

Level of Education Completed

	Elementary School*	Middle School	High School	College and up
Yes	73	81	75	83
No	10	9	14	7
DK	17	10	11	10
Total	100 (483)	100 (214)	100 (302)	100 (143)

\* Including those who did not graduate from elementary school

Occupation

	Primary industry	Profess/Manage/Adm in	Self-employed	Manufacturing
Yes	76	80	82	77
No	13	13	7	10
DK	11	7	10	13
Total	100 (316)	100 (136)	100 (146)	100 (112)

Source: Kim Tong-II, "Kookminuisik ByunwhaYongu" (A Study of Change of National Consciousness), *Hyundae Sahoe*, (winter 1982), 103-47.

<sup>43</sup> Kim Tong-II, "Kookminuisik Byunwha yongu" (A Study of Change of National Consciousness), *Hyundae Sahoe*, (winter 1982): 103-47.

Thus, the early 1980s was a transitional period in which the traditional political culture was transforming to a democratic civic culture. In particular, the middle class of this period wanted both political and economic development. With influence of democratic civic culture, most people had strong desires for democratization.<sup>444</sup> At the same time, they did not want political and social instability by the democratic movement of civil society. Thus, they were still reluctant to openly support the democratic movement because of insecurity of political and social stability and possible suppression.

In addition, suppression also hindered the acceptance of the democratic civic culture by the society. Under the suppression, it was difficult for civil society to change its divided, isolated, and inconsequential character to an active, united and assertive character. However, the suppression could not completely stop the spread of the democratic civic culture in a society. The middle class began to view the new authoritarian regime critically and to express their desires for democratization over economic development. In this respect, this was time when democratic civil society could not act openly and become inconsequential because of suppression. Nevertheless, the spread of democratic civic culture greatly contributed to changing the public perception of the regime. Although the outcome of this shift did not obviously appear in this period, it favorably affected the character of civil society in the mid-1980s.

Second, economic development of this period affected the character of democratic civil society, both favorably and unfavorably. The economic slowdown, caused by rapid economic development of the late 1970s, provided a new justification for the direct military intervention in the transitional politics. In addition, after the establishment of the new authoritarian regime, as in the Yushin regime, the Chun regime also focused on

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<sup>444</sup> Kim Tol-II, "Kookminuisik Byunhwa Yongu," 103-47.

economic development policy to attain its legitimacy.<sup>445</sup> As a result of the regime's efforts, in 1980, real wages in the manufacturing sector dropped by 4.7%, and in 1981 they dropped by 2.6% despite sharp gains in labor productivity of 10.7% in 1980 and 15.8% in 1981.<sup>446</sup> This successful economic recovery and development, as Table 4-8 shows, facilitated creation of a "new middle class" who could support the regime.<sup>447</sup> Although the middle class had strong aspirations for democratization, they supported the economic performance of the regime and were satisfied with the political and social stability. In this respect, temporary slowdown of economy in the early 1980s made the middle class consider economic stability and prosperity more important.

Table 4-8

Major Economic Indicators (1980-1984)

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
GNP Growth Rate	-4.8	6.6	5.4	11.9	8.4
Per capita GNP (US\$)	1589	1719	1773	1924	2044
Current Account Balance (\$ billion)	-5.3	-4.6	-2.6	-1.6	-1.6
Consumer Price Index	28.7	21.6	7.1	3.4	2.3

Source: Economic Planning Board, *Major Statistics of Korean Economy*, 1988.

For example, right after the collapse of the Yushin regime, economic slowdown made the labor movement erupt and turn its focus to economic issues. As Figure 4-1 shows, although the number of labor struggles soared right after the collapse of the

<sup>445</sup> For example, President Chun emphasized the importance of economic development. In addition, he suggested to increase job opportunities through increased public investment, to improve working conditions, to close the wage gap, to provide economic security for workers and to improve labor management cooperation. Juergen Kleiner, *Korea: A Century of Change*, 79.

<sup>446</sup> Michael L. Launius, "The State and Industrial Labor in South Korea," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 16, no. 4 (1984): 9. Along with this restriction of wage increase, the new regime dropped the increasing rate of government budget from 21.9% in 1981 to zero in 1984. Economic Planning Board (EPB), *Economic Indicators* (Seoul: EPB, 1986).

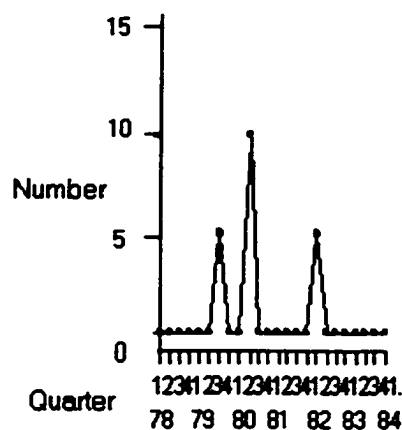
<sup>447</sup> Leaders of the authoritarian regime thought that the economic recovery and continuous development was only way to make people, especially the middle class, support the regime and to solve the lack of the legitimacy. Based on this consideration, the military regime concentrated the economic recovery and development policy.

Yushin regime, the main issue of the movement in the early transitional period was economic matters, such as working conditions and wages.<sup>448</sup> This concentration on economic issues made labor organizations isolated and difficult to build a coalition with other democratic groups and organizations that concentrated on political issues.

As a result of unfavorable influence of economic development, democratic civil society was limited in its democratic struggle because it was isolated from the middle class who supported the economic performance of the Chun regime. Thus, in the situation that the regime attained hegemony, successful economic development was used as an excuse for suppression on civil society, and democratic civil society failed to draw public support.

Figure 4-1

Tendency of Workers-Involved Events, 1978-1984



On the other hand, the economic development of this period contributed to development of political culture and to building a foundation for active participation of the middle class in the democratic movement of the mid-1980s. In addition, successful

<sup>448</sup> After the collapse of the Yushin regime, sit-down strikes, walk-outs and other labor protests, some of them violent, spread across South Korea in a wave of worker uprisings that were never tolerated

economic development in this period also influenced the regime's policy toward civil society and the opposition party in the future. The successful economic development provided the regime enough confidence in its power and changed its repressive policy to the decompression policy in late 1983.<sup>449</sup> This policy change greatly contributed to expanding the political opportunity structure and led to a more influential democratic struggle in the mid-1980s.

In this respect, successful economic development and its influence on other factors were not enough to change the divided, isolated, and inconsequential character of civil society in this period. Nevertheless, the economic development in this period provided a foundation for active supports of the middle class to the opposition force and changing the regime's policy toward civil society in the mid-1980s. This economic development also made it possible for the regime to hold the Asian and Olympic Games, and it strongly affected the regime to implement the decompression policy in late 1983. Therefore, economic development that influenced internal and external factors favorably affected social and political conditions of the early 1980s although its outcome did not clearly appear in this suppressive period.

Third, the suddenly opened political opportunity structure positively affected the character of civil society although it was soon reversed by the emergence of the new military force and their harsh suppression. For example, most democratic groups and organizations of civil society focused on internal restructuring and attaining autonomy

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during the reign of the late president Park Chung Hee. *Washington Post*, Thursday, 1 May 1980, A21.

<sup>449</sup> Im Hyug-Baeg, "Hankookesui Minjuhgwajung Bunsuk" (An Analysis of Democratization Process in South Korea), *Korean Political Science Review* 24, no. 1.

from the state.<sup>450</sup> In addition, the revitalized civil society began to express their demands and forced not only the ruling party and the regime but also the opposition party to reach an agreement for peaceful democratic transition. As Figure 4-2 shows, the number of democratic struggle sharply increased after the collapse of the Yushin regime. That is, the weakening of the suppression by Park's sudden death caused democratic civil society to become temporarily active in transitional politics.<sup>451</sup> In this respect, the expanded political opportunity structure constructively affected the character of civil society, at least in the early transitional period.

In addition, the expanded political opportunity structure positively influenced the external environment. The U.S. government expressed its support of a peaceful transition to democracy. This U.S. expression had favorably influenced the active involvement of civil society in the transition politics. Moreover, the expanded political opportunity structure accelerated the spread of democratic civic culture, and made not only civil society but also the public have strong aspirations for democratization. This strong desire for democratization made democratic civil society struggle more actively. In this respect, the expanded political opportunity structure of a short period significantly influenced not only revitalization of civil society but also the changing public perceptions of the authoritarian regime. However, because of the sudden and temporary expansion of the political opportunity structure, democratic civil society did not take advantage of this

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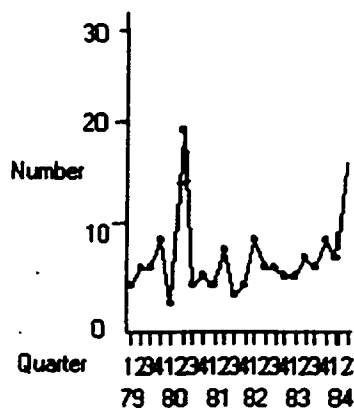
<sup>450</sup> After the Yushin regime collapsed, the first priority of democratic civil society was to replace leaders of the pre-existing organizations that were controlled by the Yushin regime. Through replacing the leadership, each group of democratic civil society tried to attain absolute autonomy and pursued their individual goals.

<sup>451</sup> According to democratic movement activists, the major reason why democratic civil society could rapidly vitalize and actively struggle with the transitional government was the weakening of suppression on democratic civil society. In addition, not only democratic civil society but also ordinary people felt that the Choi transitional government would tolerate the democratic movement of civil society.

great opportunity for changing its character and did not prevent the emergence of the military intervention.

Figure 4-2

Tendency of Democratic Movement, 1979-1983



On the contrary, the sudden expansion of the political opportunity structure also negatively influenced the character of democratic civil society. The sudden expansion of the political opportunity structure after a long period of suppression brought about an internal power struggle within civil society and opposition party. After Park's death, many political prisoners were released, and expelled students returned to campus.<sup>452</sup> In this process of revitalization, democratic groups and organizations could not avoid internal power struggles and conflicts of ideologies and strategies.<sup>453</sup> Consequently, they

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Because of these reasons, vitalization and active struggle of democratic civil society were possible even though it did not last long.

<sup>452</sup> The transitional Choi government released 63 political prisoners, 224 were acquitted of the charges against the regime, and the prominent opposition leader, Kim Dae-Jung, was freed from house arrest. On 23 January 511 ousted dissident students were allowed to return to campuses, and jailed workers were allowed back in the workplaces. On February 29, the government restored the civil rights of 687 dissident politicians, labor leaders, students, professors, journalists, and clergymen. Kim Ho-Jin, "Je 5 Gonghwakookui Jungkwonjuk Sunggyuk" (The Political Characteristic of the Fifth Republic), in *The Discussion about the Evaluation of the Fifth Republic* (Seoul: Dong-A Ilbo Press, 1988), 97.

<sup>453</sup> According to former democratic movement activists, such as Park Eun-Sook, Chun Yong-Ho and Lee Tae-Bok, democratic groups, especially students and the Jaeya force, spent too much time in the internal struggle within democratic civil society. Thus, democratic civil society could not struggle effectively for democratization in the short period before the emergence of the new military force.



wasted valuable time in restructuring organizations and developing strategies, and thus their movement could not be influential in this critical period. More importantly, this internal power struggle provided a strong motive for the new military force to intervene in the transitional politics. In this respect, the expansion of the political opportunity structure influenced the character of civil society, both favorably and unfavorably.

With the emergence of the new military force as a central actor after the intra-military coup and suppression of the Kwangju uprising, the expanded political opportunity structure was sharply reversed by harsh suppression of the Choi government, controlled by the new military force. The police arrested many leaders of democratic civil society and the opposition party.<sup>454</sup> The number of political prisoners was larger than that of the Yushin regime, and they were sentenced to longer terms than had occurred during the Yushin regime.<sup>455</sup> Thus, in spite of the temporary expansion of the opportunity structure, the divided, isolated, and inconsequential character of civil society did not much change because of internal conflicts within civil society and harsh suppression.

Along with the harsh suppression, there was no strong public and external support for changing a character of democratic civil society. Rather, unlike early this period, the new authoritarian regime received popular and external support. The middle class believed that the new authoritarian regime could stabilize political and social disorder albeit they were critical of the new regime. This public desire for economic prosperity and political stability made democratic civil society isolated from the public and their

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<sup>454</sup> The United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practice 1982* (Washington: GPO, 1983), 743; The United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practice 1984* (Washington: GPO, 1985), 813; International League for Human Rights and the

democratic struggle with the regime inconsequential. In addition, the U.S. government, which initially favored the democratization process, changed its policy and supported the authoritarian regime after the new military force emerged. The U.S. government tacitly approved moving the military into Kwangju to suppress the democratic uprising and then supported the establishment of the new military authoritarian regime.<sup>456</sup> The U.S. preferred political stability over political development because it considered its national interests in the Korean peninsula was more important than political development of South Korea.<sup>457</sup> In this respect, the change of the U.S. foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula influenced the reverse of the expanded political opportunity structure.

In addition, the middle class had mixed feelings about the political and economic development after the Yushin regime collapsed. On the one hand, they were critical of the new military regime because they realized the importance of democratization. On the other hand, they also strongly wanted political stability and economic prosperity. This ambivalence hindered the expansion of the political opportunity structure after the establishment of the new authoritarian regime. Under this culturally ambiguous situation, the Korean public chose political stability and economic prosperity over political development, thus showing that expansion of the political opportunity structure without strong popular support had a limited impact on the character of civil society. This support of the middle class to the authoritarian regime showed that the political culture of

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International Human Rights Law Group, *Democracy in South Korea: A Promise Unfulfilled* (New York: International League for Human Rights, 1985), 113.

<sup>455</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 December 1983, 43.

<sup>456</sup> This strong U.S. support on the new military force and government, especially the suppression on the Kwangju Democratic Movement, caused strong anti-Americanism of democratic civil society groups and organizations. Thus, anti-Americanism was one of common issues in democratic movement of this period. For example, student groups violently occupied U.S. governmental offices and demanded apology for supporting the new military force.

**this period was not completely changed to democratic civic culture and economic development did not reach the point that the middle class was concerned with political development, such as democratization.**

**In this respect, as in the Yushin period, most internal and external factors had obstructively affected democratic civil society and its political struggle. First, as in the Yushin period, economic development in the early 1980s had influenced the character of civil society, both unfavorably and favorably. Namely, slowdown of economic development and its recovery provided an excuse for the direct military intervention and establishment of the new authoritarian regime. Thus, economic development did not advantageously affect the character of civil society in this period. On the other hand, successful economic development advantageously influenced political culture as it did during the Yushin regime, but outcomes of the changed political culture by the economic development did not clearly appear in this period.**

**As Table 4-8 shows, in spite of successful economic development, the economic condition of this period did not reach the point in which the middle class could express their desires for democratization and dissatisfaction toward the authoritarian regime through political activities. Instead, the economic development during this period significantly influenced the policy of the regime toward the opposition force in the mid-1980s. The regime became confident of its rule based on successful economic performance and thus could implement a decompression policy to solve legitimacy problem in late 1983. Therefore, economic development that unfavorably affected the character of civil society positively influenced other factors, such as political culture and**

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<sup>457</sup> Steven W. Hook, "Inconsistent U.S. Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad," in *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality*, ed. Peter J. Schraeder, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 111.

the regime's policy in this period, and the positive influence advantageously affected the character of civil society in the mid-1980s.

Second, political culture, which changed to more democratic, also positively affected the character of democratic civil society in this period. Right after Park's death, the changed political culture was shown in the revitalization process of democratic civil society and peoples' strong desires for democratization. Nevertheless, this change of political culture did not prevent the emergence of the new authoritarian regime nor bring about political participation of the middle class. In addition, many people still believed that political stability and economic development were as important as political development in this period. Thus, democratic civil society found it difficult to draw popular support, so democratic struggles without active popular support had been inconsequential. In this respect, the spread of democratic civic culture did not reach the point that people who had political consciousness could explicitly support or participate in democratic organizations and their democratic struggles.

In addition, like economic development, the development of political culture also influenced democratic civil society indirectly but favorably although its outcome was not obvious in this period. For example, the development of political culture had advantageously influenced the future policy of the Chun regime toward democratic civil society. Along with the spread of democratic civic culture, the regime that recognized more people, especially the middle class, became critical of its authoritarian rule began to seek different strategies to control the middle class. This regime's effort appeared as an implementation of the decompression policy toward civil society in late 1983. Therefore, the spread of democratic civic culture in this period had more positively affected not only

the character of democratic civil society but also other factors than that of the previous period.

Third, the political opportunity structure, unlike the previous period, was temporarily opened by Park's sudden death. The opened political opportunity structure provided an opportunity for democratic civil society, which had been suppressed during the Yushin era, to vitalize and to be actively involved in transitional politics. Therefore, the political opportunity structure significantly and constructively affected the character of civil society, at least until the establishment of the new authoritarian regime. This expanded political opportunity structure made it possible for democratic civil society, such as students and the Jaeya force, to establish organizations and to struggle for democratic transition through mobilizing their members and supporters. In this respect, the expansion of the political opportunity structure in this period greatly contributed to changing the character of civil society even though it was rapidly reversed by the emergence of the new military force. In addition, unlike the Yushin period, the expanded political opportunity structure of this period favorably affected other internal and external factors. Although it was a short period, the expanded political opportunity structure provided a chance for the middle class to re-evaluate authoritarian rule. In this respect, unlike the Yushin period that the closed political opportunity structure unfavorably influenced development of political culture, the temporary expansion of the political opportunity structure positively affected the development of political culture.

Last, the external environment of this period, like the Yushin period, did not change much in favor of democratic civil society and its democratic movement. The Cold War and confrontation with North Korea remained; this harsh international

environment did not promote a change in the character of democratic civil society.

Furthermore, during this period, terrorist acts of North Korea made people think national security was very important,<sup>458</sup> and political struggles of civil society for democratization were often considered Communist activities, controlled by the North Korean government.

This harsh external environment provided a good excuse for the authoritarian regime to suppress democratic civil society and its struggles for democratization in this period.

Thus, as in the Yushin period, the external environment of this period did not constructively affect the character of civil society and other factors, such as political culture and the political opportunity structure.

In this harsh repressive period, most factors negatively affected the character of democratic civil society. Although there was an expansion of the political opportunity structure for a short period, democratic civil society was not capable to take advantage of the opportunity for changing its character. Other factors also impeded development of democratic civil society in this period. Compared with the Yushin period, however, influence of each element affected on the character of civil society more favorably in this period.

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<sup>458</sup> On 9 October 1983, 17 Korean cabinet members and president's secretaries were killed by exploring a bomb in Burma. Of course, President Chun was the main target of the attack. Fortunately, he did not arrive in the place when the bomb exploded. He cancelled the rest of the trip, which was to have included visits to India, Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand, and Brunei, and returned to Seoul. Later, two North Korean agents were arrested and confessed their intention to assassinate President Chun. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 October 1983; *Korea Times*, Special Edition, 10 October 1983; *Korea Times*, 11 October 1983.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DECOMPRESSION POLICY AND REVITALIZATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY (1983-1985)

#### 1. The Decompression Policy of the Chun Regime

In theories of democratic transition, the decrease of suppression level is defined as liberalization. Liberalization encompasses the more modest goal of merely loosening restrictions, and expanding individuals and group rights within an authoritarian regime. Thus, liberalization may include releasing political prisoners, decreasing media censorship, tolerating political opposition, reintroducing some legal safeguards for individuals and groups, and allowing greater freedom for the organization of autonomous working-class activities.<sup>459</sup> The decompression policy in South Korea can also be considered as a liberalization policy, but it is strictly limited in the political sphere.

In late 1983, the Chun regime announced a series of decompression measures designed to relieve some of the social tension that had arisen as a result of earlier political

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<sup>459</sup> Scott Mainwaring, "Transition to Democracy and Democratic Consolidation: Theoretical and Comparative Issues," in *Issues in Democratic Consolidation*, eds. Mainwaring, O'Donnell, and Valenzuela (Notre Dame, Ind.: Published for the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies by University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 295-302. In addition, O'Donnell and Schmitter defined liberalization as the process of making effective certain rights that protect individuals and social groups from arbitrary or illegal acts committed by the state or third parties. On the level of individuals, these guarantees include the classical elements of the liberal tradition: habeas corpus; sanctity of private home and correspondence; the right to be defended in a fair trial according to pre-established laws; freedom of movement, speech, and petition; and so forth. On the level of groups, these rights cover such things as freedom from punishment for expressions of collective dissent of government policy, freedom from censorship of the means of communication, and freedom to associate voluntarily with other citizens. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transition from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusion about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 7.

struggle by democratic civil society and the opposition party.<sup>460</sup> Those decompression measures included the reinstatement of expelled students and professors, rehabilitation of purged politicians, withdrawal of the police from campuses and the release of political prisoners. The decompression policy began with the “campus autonomization” policy.<sup>461</sup> 350 student movement activists were released from prisons, 1,363 expelled students were readmitted, 8 professors ousted for political reasons were reinstated, and the police detectives and informers stationed in the campuses were withdrawn.<sup>462</sup> The campus liberalization measures were followed by the lifting of the ban on political activities of 202 opposition politicians in February 1984.<sup>463</sup> As Table 5-1 shows, thus, the number of political prisoners sharply decreased between late 1983 and 1984.

Table 5-1

Number of Political Prisoners (1982-1984)

Time	Total	National Security and anti-communism	Law of meeting and demonstraton	Rebellion and inendarism	Others
1982. 11. 10	413	168	204	30	14
1983. 7. 7	428	137	285	3	-
1983. 11. 25	457	93	362	2	-
1984. 11. 27	109	-	-	-	-

Source: *Hankookkidokkyosahoeyonguwon* (The Social Institute of Korean Protestant), (Seoul: The Social Institute of Korean Protestant, 1986), 105.

<sup>460</sup> Gaston J. Sigur, Jr., “Prospects for Continuing Democratization in Korea,” *Current Policy* 829 (Washington: United States Department of State, 1986): 2.

<sup>461</sup> On 20 March 1984, President Chun’s new policy of leniency toward dissenting college students ushered in a new and unpredictable phase of the government-campus conflicts that marked South Korean politics for decades. In a reversal of strategy, Chun offered to let students expelled for antigovernment demonstrations return to classes, removed official police from the campuses, and turned campus discipline over to university authorities. *Washington Post*, Tuesday, 20 March 1984, A18.

<sup>462</sup> The United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practice 1983*, (Washington: GPO, 1984), 817; Wonmo Dong, “University Students in South Korean Politics: Patterns of Radicalization in the 1980s,” *Journal of International Affairs* 40, no. 2 (1987): 241.

<sup>463</sup> However, 99 politicians remained under the ban. In addition, the government released all politicians except for 15 politicians including the three Kims, Kim Young-Sam, Kim Dae-Jung, and Kim



There were several reasons that the Chun regime implemented the decompression policy toward democratic civil society and the opposition party. First, the Chun regime became confident not only in the economic development but also in institutional mechanisms, designed to detect, prevent, check, and control social resistance. For instance, the national economy began to return to steady growth, and unemployment gradually decreased. Unlike the Yushin regime, the Chun regime achieved relatively high economic growth with low inflation. As Table 5-2 illustrates, the rate of economic growth grew to 12.6% in 1983 from -3.7% in 1980, the unemployment rate decreased to 4.1% in 1983 from 5.2% in 1980, inflation was down to 3.4% in 1983 from 28.7% in 1980, and for the first time, the financial balance went into the black in 1983.

Table 5-2

National Economy Indexes (1982-1986)

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Economic Growth(%)	7.2	12.6	9.3	7.0	12.9
Unemployment(%)	4.4	4.1	3.8	4.0	3.8
Inflation(%)	7.2	3.4	2.3	2.5	2.8
Financial Balance(Billion)	-712.6	292.0	663.2	643.9	958.5

Source: Jung Woon Chan, *Sgonggeui Kyungjerul Pyunggahanda* (Evaluating the Economy of the Fifth Republic) in Dong-A Ilbosa, *Sgong Pyungga Datorongoi* (A Grand Forum on the Fifth Republic), (Seoul: Dong-A Ilbosa, 1984), 174 and 176.

Second, the regime started with a series of state-led social campaigns and anti-democratic laws that changed the nation's political atmosphere. Thus, the regime believed that institutional and legal measures, such as the Political Climate Renovation Law, the Basic Press Law, the laws regarding assembly and demonstration, and various

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Jong-Pil, on 30 November 1984. The United State Department of State, *Current Reports on Human Rights Practice 1983*, 817.

labor-related laws, could effectively block and stem any undesirable or unnecessary developments in both democratic civil society and the opposition party.<sup>464</sup>

Third, the ruling elites had confidence in the institutional mechanism of control. The restructuring of ideological apparatuses, such as the *Saemaul* (New Village) movement,<sup>465</sup> the Unification Study Institute, the Consciousness-Reforming Program, and the Research Institute on Spiritual Culture (*Chungsin Munhwa Younkoowon*, and *Hwarang* Program),<sup>466</sup> the hegemonic political party system, legal control mechanisms of the press, workers and students provided the regime safety valves in case of resurgent opposition. Fourth, the authoritarian regime needed to recover its damaged legitimacy by showing gestures of reconciliation toward the people because legitimacy of the regime was badly damaged by the brutal suppression of the Kwangju democratic movement.<sup>467</sup> The Chun regime had to obtain support from the middle class at the next National Assembly election, scheduled in February 1985. Thus, the Chun regime needed to seek a different strategy to isolate the democratic opposition force from the ordinary people, and choke off this possible venue for additional opposition to the authoritarian regime.

Besides these reasons, the decision for the decompression policy was based on the calculation of costs and benefits. The regime realized the ineffectiveness of a repressive policy.<sup>468</sup> State terror kept ordinary people quiet, but the repressive policy made some

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<sup>464</sup> Kim Sun-Hyuk, *The Politics and Democratization in Korea: The Role of Civil Society*, 81.

<sup>465</sup> For example, the Chun regime endeavored to galvanize Saemaul Undong, which had been effective in introducing developmentalism as well as obtaining political support from farmers.

<sup>466</sup> Gregory Henderson, "The Politics of Korea," in *Two Korea-One Future?*, eds. John Sullivan and Roberta Foss (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987).

<sup>467</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *1980nyundae Hankookui Minjuhwaihaengkwajung* (The Democratic Transition Process of South Korea in the 1980s), 100. For example, President Chun said that the establishment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic was a transitional regime, and had a clear goal of stabilizing political and economic condition. Thus, the Chun regime tried to re-produce legitimacy through a formal democracy, such as elections. Dong-A Ilbosa, *Dong-A Yongam 1984* (Dong-A Yearbook 1984), 549.

<sup>468</sup> Kim Jang-Sil, *Democratic Transition in South Korea, 1985-1988: The Electic Approach*, (Ph.D. diss., The University of Hawaii, 1991), 91.

democratic groups and organizations, in particular student activists, violent and radicalized. Furthermore, many ordinary people became more sympathetic to the democratic struggle of civil society. The suppression allowed the opposition a sense of moral superiority, and thus proved to be counter-productive.<sup>469</sup> This decompression policy was designed to reduce the costs of coercion by relying more on ideological indoctrination and less on physical suppression. Another means of control as a substitute for physical suppression was co-optation.<sup>470</sup> The Chun regime tried to isolate the radical opposition groups, and to strengthen the collaborationists through co-optation and bribery.

In addition, the regime tried to improve its image at home and abroad, and to broaden the support base of the technocrats, businessmen, and the middle class.<sup>471</sup> South Korea was scheduled to host two big international athletic games: the Asian Games in 1986 and the Olympics Games in 1988. Thus, the Chun regime needed to make most of these two occasions to demonstrate and publicize to the international community that South Korea was a legitimate and stable democracy. In order to do so, it was essential to allow and encourage a certain degree of free political contestation and participation. Therefore, the decompression policy was an alternative strategy to solve problems that the Chun regime faced with.

When the regime implemented the decompression policy, democratic civil society evaluated the policy by various ways. First, the Jaeya youth groups evaluated that the

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<sup>469</sup> Wonmo Dong, "University Students in South Korean Politics: Patterns of radicalization in the 1980s," *Journal of International Affairs*: 241.

<sup>470</sup> Jim Butterfield and Marcia Weigle, "Unofficial Social Groups and Regime Response in the Soviet Union," in *Perestroika from Below: Social Movements in the Soviet Union*, Jim Butterfield and Marcia Weigle (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1991), 176-78.

<sup>471</sup> Chang Baek-San, "The Phoenix of 1984: A Vibrant Democratic Mass Movement Erupts in South Korea," *AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review* 17, no. 1 (1985): 3.

decompression policy was a result of the ineffective suppression, the regime's effort for solving its legitimacy problem, and a means to expand the power base. The Jaeya force thought that the regime tried to change its authoritarian image, and prevent an establishment of solidarity within democratic civil society.<sup>472</sup> In addition, student movement activists were divided into two groups in evaluating the decompression policy. One group saw the decompression policy as a consequence of external pressure, and the other group saw this policy as a result of efforts by democratic civil society.<sup>473</sup> Nevertheless, these two groups agreed that the decompression policy was an alternative strategy for dealing with the political struggle of democratic civil society.<sup>474</sup> The response of the academic circle was not generally different from the Jaeya force and student groups.<sup>475</sup> That is, most democratic groups of civil society considered the decompression policy as a consequence of various internal and external elements: 1) pressure of mass mobilization from democratic civil society, 2) the U.S. pressure, and 3) a political strategy of the ruling coalition to maintain its political system.

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<sup>472</sup> Youth League for Democratic Movement, "Hanbando Jubyun jungsewa Hankookui Jungchikyungje" (Political Environment around Korean Peninsula and Korean Politics and Economy), *Minjuhwaui Gil* (Road to Democratization), 1 (March 25, 1994): 9.

<sup>473</sup> Yu Suk-Chun and Park Byung-Young, "Hankook Haksaengundongui Gujowa gineung" (The Structure and Function of Korean Student Movement), in *Hankook Sahoehakhoe* (Korean Sociology Association), *Hyundae HankookSahoeMoonjeron* (The Study of Korean Social Problem), (Seoul: Institute of Korean Welfare Public Policy, 1991), 102.

<sup>474</sup> Kang Sin-Chul, *80nyundae Haksaeng Undongsa* (The History of the Student Movement in the 1980s), (Seoul: Hyungsungsa, 1988), 52.

<sup>475</sup> For example, according to Choi Jang-Jip, the regime pursued the decompression policy because of the politically stable regime, the regime was stable politically, the effectiveness of suppression toward democratic civil society, and the influence of the Reagan administration. Im Hyug-Baeg asserted that the regime tried to divide the opposition forces through inducing the moderate opposition force to make conflict with the students and workers, and tried to consolidate and expand the political power base of the regime through the decompression policy. On the other hand, according to Cummings, the decompression policy was possible because the economic foundation was reinforced by economic liberalization that the United State initiated from the early 1980s. Choi Jang-Jip, "Hankookkookkawa Hyungtaebyunhwa daehan Eronjuk Jupkeun" (The Theoretical Approach on Korean State and Its Political Change), *Kyungjewa Sahoi* (Economy and Society), 4, (1989): 212; Im Hyug-Baeg, "Hankookesuui Minjuhwa gwajung Bunsuk" (The Analysis of Democratic Transition in South Korea), *Korean Political*

Despite those evaluations of democratic civil society, it was still unclear why the regime implemented the decompression policy. First, the pressure of mass mobilization was not strong enough to force the regime to implement the decompression policy in late 1983. Not only democratic civil society but also the opposition party did not have political and social resources nor nationwide organizations because of harsh suppression. For example, the regime arrested and house arrested 145 leaders of the Jaeya force and the religious communities in Seoul and other major cities right before President Reagan visited Korea on 9 November 1983.<sup>476</sup> As a consequence, democratic civil society could not have the capability to challenge directly or overthrow the regime. Moreover, the struggle of democratic groups and organizations was isolated from other social classes because of their violent characters and passive middle class. Under these disadvantageous conditions, not only democratic civil society but also opposition parties couldn't pressure the regime effectively to create special measures for dealing with the opposition force, such as the decompression policy.

Additionally, the explanation of external pressure was also weak. For example, the Reagan administration approved and supported the Chun authoritarian regime from its beginning even though the U.S. government showed an unclear stance to the emergence of the new military force in early 1980. Some people asserted that the U.S. government pressured the Chun regime to pursue political normalization because of the expanding anti-Americanism in the society.<sup>477</sup> In addition, the regime needed to improve its image to hold Asian and Olympic Games. As a strategy for this goal, the regime had

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*Science Review* 24, no. 1 (Seoul: Bupmoonsa, 1990); B. Commings, "The Abortive Abertura: South Korea in the Light of Latin American Experience," in *New Left Review*, 173, (1989).

<sup>476</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 5, 389.

to change its policy to a repressive policy. However, these explanations are weak in explaining the direct cause of the decompression policy.<sup>478</sup> There was still confrontation between South and North Korea, the U.S. government supported the Chun regime from the its beginning in spite of emergence of anti-Americanism. In addition, to maintain authoritarian rule was much more important for the Chun regime than to hold Asian and Olympic Games. In this respect, the explanation by external factors has a limitation in explaining the implemetation of the decompression policy.

In this respect, the decompression policy was an offensive strategy for overcoming problems of legitimacy and for consolidating the authoritarian power structure.<sup>479</sup> Thus, in spite of the decompression policy, the regime continued to supervise political activities of democratic civil society.<sup>480</sup> In addition, the political situation in late 1983 was an important element that made the regime decide to implement the decompression policy. In the middle of 1983, former opposition politicians began to cooperate with democratic groups and organizations of civil society. The former opposition politicians, who had disappointed people by the split of opposition party in early 1980, gradually gained the status that they had at the end of the *Yushin* regime. Thus, the ruling coalition tried to absorb those former opposition politicians in the institutional political arena, and to prevent building coalitions among democratic

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<sup>477</sup> Juergen Kleiner, *Korea: A Century of Change*, 206-7.

<sup>478</sup> Park Bo-Kyun, *Chunghwadaebisusil* (Secretary's Office of the Blue House), 3, (Seoul: Joongang Daily, 1994), 212-35.

<sup>479</sup> Robert Kaufman, "Liberalization and Democratization in South Korea: Perspectives from the 1970s," in *Transition from Authoritarian Rule*, eds. O'Donnell, Schmitter, Whitehead (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 180-96.

<sup>480</sup> According to Lee Tae-Bok and Park Eun-Sook, former labor and student movement activists, in spite of the decompression policy, the regime was cautious of the political struggle by the student and labor organizations, and more cautious of the possible establishment of a coalition between these two groups. Lee Tae-Bok, interviewed by author, Seoul, 21 October 1999; Park Eun-Sook, interviewed by author, Seoul, 13, 14, and 15 September 1999.

groups and organizations. Because of that, the opposition force, including the opposition parties, considered the decompression policy as the intent of the Chun regime to divide former opposition politicians and democratic civil society.<sup>481</sup>

However, this decompression policy did not work as well as its planners intended. After the regime implemented the decompression policy, the political and social situations became too difficult for the regime to control democratic civil society and democratic struggles. First of all, outbursts of autonomous democratic civil society, which had been decimated and pacified by the authoritarian regime's severe suppression between 1980 and 1983, began to reemerge. As Przeworski points out, the relaxation of a repressive policy provided an opportunity for attaining counter-hegemony by civil society.<sup>482</sup> The resurrection movement of autonomous civil society encompassed not only democratic groups and organizations but also a broad array of social classes, occupational, professional, and human rights groups.<sup>483</sup> During the suppression period, although the entire opposition movement was silenced, leaders of democratic civil society were preparing a counter-attack on the regime through the accumulation of an organizational base and the establishment of counter-hegemonic ideology.

Underground student groups cast off their clandestine nature and seized the official structures of student organizations on campuses in a very short time. In addition, leaders of democratic labor unions began to struggle for restoring the legality of the democratic unions. Particularly, a phenomenon of separation from the church emerged in the labor movement. In the 1970s, the role of church-led UMI was crucial in establishing

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<sup>481</sup> Youth League for Democratic Movement, "Hanbando Jubyun jungsewa Hankookui Jungchikyungje" (Political Environment around Korean Peninsula and Korean Politics and Economy), 9.

<sup>482</sup> Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 54-8.

labor organizations, whereas student-turned-workers played the leading role in organizing the labor movement in the 1980s. In this respect, a leadership of the democratic movement moved from intellectual and religious notables to the former student activist group in the popular democratic movement organizations in the 1980s.

Nevertheless, the so called “resurrection of civil society” was not allowed to threaten the regime in this period. As a matter of course, the newly revitalized democratic civil society was destined to clash with the Chun regime. Thus, the regime that faced with unexpected results of the decompression policy returned to a repressive policy in late 1984. However, returning to the repressive policy did not make the political struggle of democratic civil society end because democratic organizations and their networks were firmly constructed during the short decompression period.

In spite of this implementation of the decompression policy, democratic civil society of this period also faced with serious problems. Under harsh suppression, democratic groups and organizations could avoid internal conflicts because their first priority was to survive under the harsh suppression. However, along with weakening suppression, internal conflicts within civil society began to intensify, and hindered democratic civil society to concentrate their resources on the democratic struggle with the regime. In this respect, the ineffectiveness of the democratic movement was mainly caused by internal conflicts rather than returning to a repressive policy.

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<sup>483</sup> Sung Kyung-Ryung, “Hankookminjujuuiui Sahoijuk Giwon” (The Social Origin of the Korean Democracy), 110-111, and 123.



## 2. Democratic Movement of Civil Society

The decompression measures expanded the space available to the democratic movement of civil society. Since the regime had implemented the decompression policy, democratic civil society began to reestablish representative organizations that had collapsed in early 1980. For example, student movement activists established the Committee for Democratization Struggle (*Minjuhwa Chujin Wiwonhoe, Minchuwi*) on 18 May 1984.<sup>484</sup> Additionally, members of *minjung* movement organizations established the Minjung Democratic Movement (*Minjung Minju Undong Hyobuihoe-Minminhyup*) on 29 June 1984,<sup>485</sup> demanding the restoration of democracy and the guarantee of human rights. In addition, it tried to integrate various social, religious and political organizations of civil society for influential democratic struggle.<sup>486</sup>

One unique characteristic of the democratic movement in this period was that democratic groups and organizations made substantial efforts in establishing cooperative linkages between themselves by building sectoral and regional movement organizations.<sup>487</sup> They also explored opportunities for solidarity and unification among diverse organizations, possibly, even uniting their forces under leaderships of the nationwide umbrella organizations. Nevertheless, ideological conflicts among different student and labor organizations were only aggravated as time went on. Vehement

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<sup>484</sup> *Joongang Daily*, 20 May 1984.

<sup>485</sup> The definition of “Minjung” See p. 262.

<sup>486</sup> The Council of Minjung Democratic Movement had five goals: 1) to change the monopolistic economic system for a few privileged classes into an independent national economy which would ensure a decent life for the *minjung*, 2) to disclose the political and social causes that generate distrust, hatred, crime and decadence, 3) to clean up the polluted environments, 4) to find a peaceful way to national unification, and 5) to keep an eye on international politics around the Korean peninsula in an effort to create peace on the peninsula. In addition, this organization was linked to the Hanguk Nodongja Pokji Hyobuihoe, Minchongryun, Minjuhwa Chujin Hyobuihoe, Catholic Clergy for the Realization of Justice (*Chunjukyo Jungui Kuhyun Sajedan*), Christian Farmers’ Association (*Kidokyo Nongminhoi*).

<sup>487</sup> Kim Chong-Chan, Nodong Undong Danchui Hyunjuso (The Current Address of Labor Movement Organizations), *Shindong-A*, (December 1986): 480.

ideological debates brought about serious losses of movement resources, and undermined their capacity of the democratic struggle. For the development of their ideologies and wide access to other democratic organizations, the democratic force of civil society employed a diverse medium of propaganda, including newspapers, leaflets, stickers, posters, and tapes.

When the regime implemented the decompression policy, the middle class also began to slowly express its dissatisfaction with the regime. The policy made the middle class less afraid of suppression on expressing its dissatisfaction and participation in civil society and its movement. In fact, one strategy of democratic civil society in this period was to penetrate in the middle class and to draw their support. As a result of these strategies, many of the middle class began to pay more attention to the democratic movement and even participate in protest meetings. However, in spite of the change of perception, the middle class was still reluctant to actively express their political dissatisfaction until the general election of 1985. In this respect, the most distinctive characteristics of the opposition force in this period were the revitalization of democratic civil society and the changed perception of the middle class toward the regime.<sup>488</sup> The democratic civil society began to penetrate in the middle class and urban intellectuals, and thus could draw broader support from various social classes. Another characteristic of democratic civil society was radicalization of the democratic movement and establishment of a coalition among various democratic groups and organizations.

As a reaction to the revitalization of democratic civil society and the establishment of a coalition among democratic groups and organizations, the regime

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<sup>488</sup> Choi Jang-Jip, "Hankookkookkawa Hyungtaebyunhwa daehan Eronjuk Jupkeun" (The Theoretical Approach on Korean State and Its Political Change), 212.

changed its policy from the decompressive policy to a repressive policy. The regime realized that the decompression policy brought totally different results from the planners' intention. However, after the regime returned to the repressive policy, the democratic struggle of civil society was still active and assertive, and showed a more united character. For instance, democratic civil society established nationwide umbrella organizations, such as the National Conference for Democracy and Unification (*Minju Tongil Kookminhoeui*),<sup>489</sup> and resisted against the suppression under united leadership. Moreover, this active democratic movement by civil society also strongly influenced the emergence of a strong opposition party in the general election of 1985.

### 1) Student Movements

After the decompression policy in late 1983, a student group was the most actively revitalized among various civil society groups because most decompression measures focused on students' activities. For example, the regime withdrew the police detectives and informers from campuses.<sup>490</sup> With regard to student activities, student organizations were allowed to be autonomously organized and self-managed. However,

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<sup>489</sup> The National Conference for Democracy and Unification (*Minju Tongil Kookminhoeui*) was established on 16 October 1984. Its major goal was to support individuals and organizations of democratic civil society for democratization. This organization considered a divided nation as a root source of foreign dependency, military dictatorship, mental disarray, intra-national animosity, and uneven development. For the National Conference for Democracy and Unification, democratization and unification were inseparable and had to be achieved for the freedom and emancipation of the *Minjung*. It tried to undertake the grassroots movements towards democratization and unification. In order to induce and galvanize the nationwide mass mobilization. The *Minju Tongil Kukminhoeui* organized its branches in major cities and provinces, and published "Minju Tongil (Democracy and Unification)." *Dong-A Daily*, 18 October 1984.

<sup>490</sup> Even after the regime implemented the decompression policy, the government agents disguised as students and infiltrated the campus to observe student activists. This secret surveillance was often revealed and caused hostage situations. For example, in September 1984, four secret informers were exposed by students at Seoul National University 1984, and one of them was detained for 26 hours by students. These informers were beaten and forced to confess their identity and covert purposes. Asia Watch Committee, *Human Rights in Korea*, (New York and Washington D.C.: Asia Watch Committee, 1985), 105.

unlike the planners' intention, the regime did not achieve the policy objective, such as isolation of radical student movement activists from other students and democratic organizations. Rather, the decompression policy, the so called "campus autonomization" policy, provided radical students open space for anti-regime movements. Thus, after three months of preparation, radical students organized a committee for the promotion of campus autonomy in almost all college campuses as the preparatory organization for recapturing official student representative bodies.<sup>491</sup>

During March and April of 1984, radical students focused their efforts on the internal campus democratization.<sup>492</sup> In addition, radical student movement activists established their own media mechanisms, such as "Freedom Will," and "Democracy Wall."<sup>493</sup> They distributed a wide variety of underground publications to the public in order to reveal the hypocritical nature of the government's decompression policy, and challenged the regime's effort to isolate radical student activists from the public as well as from ordinary students.<sup>494</sup> In this sense, student groups, especially radical students, emphasized not only the strategy of the "war of movement" but also the "war of position." After the intense ideological struggle within student groups, the radical student organizations finally took over most official student representative bodies by May 1984, and expanded their activities from campus democratization to the political struggle with

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<sup>491</sup> Chun Yong-Ho and Park Eun-Sook, interviewed by author, Kwangju and Seoul, 4 and 13, 14, and 15 September 1999.

<sup>492</sup> Cho Hee-Yon, "80nyundae Hankooksahoiundonguijungaewa 90nyundaeui Baljunbanghyang" (The Development of Social Movement of South Korea in the 1980s and Its Future Direction in 1990s), *HankookSahoiundongsa* (The History of Social Movement in South Korea), (Seoul: Juksan, 1990), 17.

<sup>493</sup> Chang Baek-San, "The Phoenix of 1984: A Vibrant Democratic Mass Movement Erupts in South Korea," 5.

<sup>494</sup> For example, on 18 May 1984, students of three universities distributed anti-government handbills in each campus, and protested against the regime. In addition, on May 22, students of Sungkyunkwan University distributed anti-government handbills and protested against the regime. *Dong-A Daily*, 23 and 31 May 1984.

the regime. Furthermore, radical students and their organizations pursued the expansion of their solidarity with other democratic groups and organizations.

From the middle of 1984, the student movement focused on issues of “abolition of the military authoritarian regime,” “complete disclosure of investigation of the Kwangju democratic movement,” and “guarantee of human rights.”<sup>495</sup> At the same time, student movement activists sought to build a coalition with other democratic groups and organizations, and led most protests of this period.<sup>496</sup> Another characteristic of the student movement in this period was that the student movement became more violent. For example, on 10 October 1984, about 3,000 students demonstrated inside and outside of campus, and destroyed a near by police station by throwing stones and firebombs. They demanded the guarantee of student associations, abolition of laws that were related to student meetings, abolition of labor repressive laws, removal of the violent authoritarian regime, and the guarantee of the *Chunggye* labor union.<sup>497</sup> Especially, in this period, the student movement questioned the legitimacy of the liberal democratic framework and the U.S. role in the democratization movement. Particularly, two student organizations, the National Association of Student Representatives and the National Student Coalition for Democratization Struggle,<sup>498</sup> became actively involved in, and led

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<sup>495</sup> For example, on May 17, students of 26 universities demonstrated on each campus, and demanded democratization and total disclosure of records about the Kwangju uprising. The riot police confronted students, and forcefully made them disperse. *Dong-A Daily*, 18 May 1984.

Changes of Slogans in the Student Movement

1984: 1) to stop repression toward universities and colleges

1985: 1) thorough re-examination of the Kwangju Democratic Movement

2) release of arrested students

3) revision of constitution

<sup>496</sup> Choi Yon-Gu, *80myundae hakseaengundongui enyumjuk jojijjuk baljunggoajung* (The Ideological and Organizational Development of the Student Movement in the 1980s), (Seoul: Juksan, 1990), 251.

<sup>497</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 11 October 1984.

<sup>498</sup> The National Student Coalition for Democratization Struggle (*Chungkook Minjuhwa Tujaeng Hasaeng Yunhap*) was established by student movement activists of various universities on 3 November

the student democratic movement in this period. Under the leadership of these organizations, students began to directly challenge the authority of the regime.

As a sub-organization of the National Student Coalition for Democratization Struggle, the Committee for Democratization Struggle (*Michuhwa Chujin Wiwonhoe, Minchuwi*), established on 18 May 1984, foreshadowed a stronger anti-government protest during the summer of 1984. Armed with radical ideologies and strategies, this underground student organization defined students as the vanguard force of a revolution, workers as the main force, and farmers and the urban poor as the complementary force, and opted for the popular uprising by organized masses as the means of revolution.<sup>499</sup> The most theatrical event carried by this radical organization was its occupation of the headquarters of the ruling DJP on 14 November 1984. During two days of a siege demonstration, 264 students from five well-known universities in Seoul made 14 demands, including an end of the suppression on the labor movement, a lift of the political ban, the repeal of anti-democratic laws concerning assembly, demonstration, and the press, the approval of autonomous student associations, and the guarantee of a minimum standard of living for the *minjung*.<sup>500</sup>

From the beginning of spring semester, student movement activists organized councils for the promotion of campus autonomy, focusing on internal campus

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1984. This organization simultaneously pursued democratization of campus and society. In order to do so, this organization first resurrected the general student associations as a student body for self-government, which greatly contributed to the expansion of a mass base for the student movement, evolved later into the *Chundaeui*. Second, this organization established the Committees for the Democratization Struggle in major universities to lead anti-government activities and to stand up for the rights of the *minjung* that developed into the *Mintuhaknyun*. In addition, this organization tried to build a nationwide network of student movement organizations. Especially, it put a lot of energy into creating a structure of mass persuasion through posters, newsletters, handbills, and pamphlets. *Dong-A Daily*, 4 November 1984.

<sup>499</sup> Kang Shin-Chul and et al., *80myundae Haksaeung Undongsa* (The History of Student Movements in the 1980s), 67-8.

<sup>500</sup> *Hankook Daily*, 14 November 1984.

democratization. In addition, they put a lot of energy into creating a structure of mass persuasion through posters, newsletters, handbills, and pamphlets.<sup>501</sup> In this sense, student movement activists came to the conclusion that the strategy of the “war of movement” was not enough to struggle for democratization with the regime that had already attained hegemony. Thus, student movement activists adopted the strategy of the “war of position” with the “war of movement” in struggling with the repressive regime.

In terms of strategies, the student movement was carried based on joint demonstrations with other democratic groups and organizations, such as labor and Jaeya organizations. For example, in order to maximize the influence of demonstrations, several neighboring colleges carried out collective demonstrations. Another strategy for influential demonstrations was carrying them out in several places simultaneously.<sup>502</sup> Second, the student movement built a coalition with labor movement activists for maximizing the influence of the demonstrations.<sup>503</sup> Because third party intervention in labor organizations was prohibited by the new revisions of labor laws, many students worked as workers, educated workers, and helped to organize labor organizations during the repressive period.<sup>504</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> Kim Hae-U, “Jayuhwalul numo Minjuhwaro” (Going beyond Autonomization to Democratization), in Pak Hyun-Jae and et al., *Hyunsilkwa Junmang (Reality and Outlook)*, 2, (Seoul: Pulbit, 1985).

<sup>502</sup> For example, on May 18, 1984, several hundred students of three universities distributed anti-government handbills in each campus, and demanded democratization. The riot police arrested 16 students, and put them in jail for attempting to lead demonstrations. *Dong-A Daily*, 23 May 1984.

<sup>503</sup> As an example case, on 19 September 1984, about 2,000 students and workers demonstrated, and demanded a guarantee of the Chunggye Labor Union and three basic labor rights. In the confrontation process, the police arrested about 140 students and workers. *Dong-A Daily*, 20 September 1984.

<sup>504</sup> According to former student movement activists, such as Chun Yong-Ho and Park Eun-Sook, radical students who were expelled during the harsh suppression period from 1980 to 1983 went to workplaces to educate workers and helped to organize the labor movement. In the decompression period, those students played a crucial role in establishing a coalition with the radical student organizations. Chun Yong-Ho, interviewed by author, Kwangju, 4 September 1999; Park Eun-Sook, interviewed by author, Seoul, 13, 14, and 15 September 1999.

Third, the duality of student organizations was another distinctive characteristic of this period. Along with official student organizations, radical student movement activists established illegal violent student organizations. They struggled with the Chun regime through violent means, such as the occupation of governmental offices and violent confrontations with the riot police. Students threw stones, bricks, molotov cocktails, and torches to burn police boxes and vehicles. Finally, along with the radicalized student movement, the major goal of the student movement changed to a more radical direction in this decompression period. After student organizations were controlled by radical student movement activists, they applied radical ideologies in the democratic movement.<sup>505</sup> The ultimate goal of the radical student movement in this period was the realization of the social revolution. In this respect, an anti-democratic element within democratic civil society which began to emerge from the previous period became more widely spread, and this different goal of movement impeded the influential democratic movement of civil society.

Although the student group was actively revitalized and led the democratic movement, it could not avoid a fundamental problem, internal conflicts. There was a serious ideological and strategic conflict in struggling with the regime within civil society.<sup>506</sup> For example, because of internal divisions within the student group, student movement activists had difficulty in establishing coalitions with other democratic groups,

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<sup>505</sup> According to former police officer, Hong Seung-Samng, the state power apparatuses, such as the police and National Security Planning Agency, believed that the radical student movement was controlled by the North Korean government, and their ultimate goal of the movement was a social revolution not democratization. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>506</sup> For example, the "CNP" debate was a representative ideological conflict within the democratic civil society.



such as labor unions and organizations, the Jaeya force, and religious communities.<sup>507</sup> In spite of these ideological, strategic, and organizational divisions, the student movement created a concrete foundation for the future democratic movement, and established networks with other civil society organizations.

After the regime returned to a repressive policy in late 1984, the student movement was a main target of the repressive policy again. However, the repressive policy did not eliminate radicalized student organizations and their movements. Instead, the regime began to lose control over the student movement. Student movement activists continuously established their organizations, such as the National Student Coalition for Democratization Struggle and National Association of Student Representative, and actively struggled for democratization. Moreover, their political struggles were intensified along with the emergence of the new opposition NKDP. Student movement activists believed that the NKDP, led by two Kims, was different from previous opposition parties because it strongly supported students' democratic struggle.

From late 1984, the student movement focused on the general election of 1985. After the NKDP (*Sinhanminjudang*) was established in January, students voluntarily helped the election campaign of the new opposition party and fought for changing the unfair election laws. For example, the Committee for Democratization Struggle expressed that it supported for the NKDP from December of 1985.<sup>508</sup> In addition, on 29 January 1985, about 1,500 students from 15 universities in the Seoul area gathered and demanded 1) revision of election laws, 2) the guarantee of minimum wages, and 3) the

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<sup>507</sup> Oh Keun-Suk, *80nyundae Minjokminjuundong* (The National and Minjung Movement in the 1980s), (Seoul: Nonjang, 1988), 67.

<sup>508</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, the members of the Committee for Democratization Struggle (*Minchuwi*) held meetings to support the opposition party, and those meetings led to demonstrations. In

release and reinstatement of arrested politicians and students.<sup>509</sup> In this respect, a student group was the most actively revitalized democratic groups in civil society during the decompression period and showed radicalized ideologies and strategies in their movement, even after returning to a repressive policy.

## 2) Labor Movements

Labor organizations have been one of the most rapidly developed sectors in the decompression period although the decompression policy did not directly revitalize the labor movement. However, the decompression weakened the suppression of the labor movement. Consequently, labor movement activists came out to open ground and explored new strategies for the labor movement under the decompression period. First, labor movement activists demanded abolition of a blacklist that the regime made to prevent politicizing of the labor movement.<sup>510</sup> In addition, workers tried to organize new autonomous unions and to restore democratic unions that had been dissolved by the new military regime in the early 1980s. For example, in the year 1984 only, about 200 new unions were established, and the trend of diminishing number of unions and membership between 1980-1983 reversed.<sup>511</sup>

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addition, during the election campaign, students visited stumping places, and shouted anti-Chun regime slogans. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>509</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 6, 505. In addition, on February 2, about 150 students of three universities gathered in downtown Seoul, and distributed handbills, which asserted a need of a democratic election, to citizens.

<sup>510</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *1980nyundae Hankookui Minjuhwaengkwajung* (The Democratic Transition Process of South Korea in the 1980s), 108.

<sup>511</sup> Shin Keum-Ho, "Nodongdungeui Daejungjug Jungaewa Jojikhwaewi Gwaje" (The Development of Mass Labor Movement and Its Organizational Tasks, in *Chunhwan: 6wol Toochoonggwa Minjoohwaewi Jinro* (Turning-over: June Struggle and the Direction of Democratization, (Seoul: Sagyejul, 1987), 175.

In this period, two distinctive labor groups emerged with different strategies. One group, who were leaders of democratic unions in the 1970s and expelled by the new regime in the early 1980s, asserted the continuation of the tradition of democratic union movement. The other group, represented by student-turned-workers, had been actively involved in the student movement of the 1970s, and later participated in the labor movement as disguised workers. This group emphasized the importance of political struggle and direct street protests outside workplaces.<sup>512</sup> Thus, these two groups saw the decompression policy of the Chun regime differently. The first group saw the decompression was a new strategy for the regime to adjust to the changed situation. In contrast with this fired workers group, the former student group viewed the decompression policy as an outcome of the intransigent struggle against the regime.<sup>513</sup>

The fired workers group established the Korean Workers' Welfare Council (*Nohyup*) with Catholic priests and students on 10 March 1984.<sup>514</sup> It demanded 1) guarantee of basic standard of living, 2) revision of labor laws, 3) fair publication and broad casting of newspapers and media, 4) stopping repression of the regime toward students organization which educated workers, and 5) establishment of solidarity with religious, student, and peasant groups. The *Nohyup* struggled for 1) improvement for workers' welfare, 2) publications for individual development, 3) establishment of scholarships for workers, 4) medical support for workers' health, and 5) improvement for workers' human rights. It published its own magazine, "*Minju Nodong*" (Democratic Labor), to convey workers' voices that had not been represented in the institutionalized

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<sup>512</sup> Lee Tae-Bok, interviewed by author, Seoul, 21 October 1999.

<sup>513</sup> Lee Jong-Oh, "80nyundae Nodongwoondong roneui Jungaewajungeui Ihaereul Wuihayu" (For Understanding of the Development of Labor Movement Strategies in the 80s), 234-35.

<sup>514</sup> *Joongang Daily*, 10 March 1984.

media.<sup>515</sup> It called for educated workers to raise their consciousness about deprived rights, and to understand the structural problems that caused their impoverishment and alienation. The *Nohyup* led the petition campaign for the revision of repressive labor laws, and attempted to reconstruct democratic unions. On the other hand, the student-turned workers group denounced the *Nohyup* group for its economic unionism and its emphasis on the struggle within the workplace. Instead, this group stressed the struggle outside the workplace and organizing street rallies in alliance with radical students in the worker-concentrated areas.<sup>516</sup>

The labor movement often emerged sporadically over grievances about working conditions, as in the case of the taxi drivers' strikes in Daegu and Busan. Along with demonstrating for economic issues, labor movement activists continued to demand the revision of labor laws and criticized the repressive policies toward workers.<sup>517</sup> In each workshop, workers tried to organize new autonomous unions. For example, the *Chunggye* apparel labor union, dissolved by the military regime in 1981, was fully restored on 8 April 1984.<sup>518</sup> In addition, the *Nohyup* and *Chunggye* apparel labor union jointly launched a massive campaign against the arbitrary labor laws enacted by the

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<sup>515</sup> Hankook Nodongja Bokji Hyupuihoi (Korean Workers' Welfare Council), "Nodong Undongui Saeroun Chulbalul wihan Soron" (The Declaration for a New Start of Labor Movement), in *80nyundae Minjung Minju Undong Jayojip I* (The Data Collection of Minjung Democratic Movements in the 1980s), ed. Hankook Nodongja Bokji Hyupuihoi (Seoul: Hakminsa, 1984).

<sup>516</sup> Lee Jong-Oh, "80nyundae Nodongwoondong roneui Jungaewajungeui Ihaereul Wuihayu" (For Understanding of the Development of Labor Movement Strategies in the 80s), 237-38.

<sup>517</sup> Although the suppression on the labor movement was weakened compared with previous periods, the regime still suppressed labor movement activists and organizations with physical and legal means because the decompression measures focused the student organizations and their activities.

<sup>518</sup> Workers of labor unions in the *Chunggye* area established *Chunggye* Apparel Labor Union for improvement of working condition, raising working wage, guarantee of basic working rights. In addition, this organization tried to establish solidarity with students and other labor organizations, and supported other labor movements. It published "Chunggyenobo." The regime announced that this creation of union was a violation of the labor law, and the regime will strongly respond toward future activities of this organization. *Dong-A Daily*, 9 April 1984.

LCNS (Legislative Council for National Security) during the formative years of the Chun's authoritarian regime.

The most distinctive characteristic of the labor movement in this period was that it focused on building national or regional organizations to expand workers' solidarity.<sup>519</sup> Workers realized that an individual union was not strong enough to secure their demands, and thus umbrella organizations were required to collect and organize resources of isolated labor unions. The relaxation of the suppression on workers' collective actions created spontaneous outbreaks of workers' protests against the wage freeze policy, long working hours, and insecure working environments. Additionally, they tried to build solidarity with other democratic groups and organizations, especially with students, and struggled against the Chun regime. For example, about 2,000 students and workers demonstrated and demanded guarantees for the *Chunggye* labor union and three basic labor rights on September 19, 1984.<sup>520</sup> The major reason labor movement activists tried to build solidarity with students was that the students' role in educating workers through "night schools" was very significant in the success of the labor movement.<sup>521</sup> Through the "night school," workers could have a close relationship with students in their struggle with the regime. For example, the *Kuro* alliance strike in 1985 was an exemplary joint action of solidarity with students and the urban intellectuals involved in the strike.<sup>522</sup> For

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<sup>519</sup> Shin Keum-Ho, "Nodongwoondongueui Daejungjug Jungaewa Jojikhwaewui Gwaje" (The Development of Mass Labor Movement and Its Organizational Tasks), 175.

<sup>520</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 20 September 1984.

<sup>521</sup> According to democratic movement activists, many expelled students, became employees, concentrated on educating workers and supported the labor movement and labor movement. In the "night school," former and current students educated workers to have political consciousness. Especially, in the "night school," workers learned why they needed well-organized unions and needed to struggle with regime. Chun Yong-Ho, interviewed by author, Kwangju, 4 September 1999; Hagen Koo, "The State, Minjung, and the Working Class in South Korea," 151.

<sup>522</sup> As a consequence of this strike, 30 workers were arrested, 20 were charged, and more than 1,000 lost their job. Hangukyeoksa yeonguhwoi (A Society for the Study of Korean History), *Hanguk Hyundaesa 4* (Korean Modern History 4), (Seoul: Pulbik, 1991), 120.

two reasons, the *Kuro* alliance strike strongly affected a character of the labor movement. First, after this strike, class consciousness among workers was gradually developed. Second, after this event, the priority of the labor movement changed from an economic struggle to a political struggle against the authoritarian regime.<sup>523</sup>

However, along with returning to a repressive policy in late 1984, the labor movement, like other democratic groups and organizations, faced harsh suppression. The regime arrested leaders of labor unions and organizations, and tried to isolate the labor movement from other democratic groups and organizations, especially from student movement activists. In addition, the regime focused on finding expelled students in working places, and arrested them.<sup>524</sup> As a consequence of the harsh suppression on labor organizations, the labor movement sharply shrank and lost its movement direction.

### 3) The Jaeya Force

The political space opened by the decompression policy accelerated the reconstruction of the Jaeya force. Along with student groups, the Jaeya force played a active role in struggling for democratization. Due to the decompression policy, many Jaeya leaders were released and reinstated. For example, on 21 December 1983, the government announced that it released 172 political prisoners and reinstated 142 of them.<sup>525</sup> In fact, the regime intended to divide democratic civil society through absorbing Jaeya leaders into the institutional political arena. However, unlike the regime's

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<sup>523</sup> Um Joo-Ung, "Byunhyukjuk Nodongundongui Daejunghwawa Gyegeupjuk jipyungui Hwakdae" (Popularization of Revolutionary Labor Movement and Expansion of the Class Consciousness), 155.

<sup>524</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, the police caught more than 300 workers, who were expelled students, and investigated them from August 1983 to June 1984. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

intention, the Jaeya force played a significant role in revitalizing other democratic groups and in establishing the new opposition NKDP. For example, the Youth Coalition for Democratic Movement (*Minchungryun*)<sup>526</sup> was the first voluntary organization of the Jaeya force after the decompression policy was implemented. The *Minchungryun*, established by a group of former student movement activists on 30 September 1983, concentrated on supporting the political struggle of other democratic groups, such as professors, journalists, and other sympathetic intellectuals and professionals.<sup>527</sup> In addition, dissident artists, musicians, poets and novelists formed the Council of Minjung Culture Movement (*Minjung Munhwa Undong Hyupuihoe*)<sup>528</sup> in April 1984. In their view,

Culture which has thrived up to today in this society is the culture of slaves which tames masses and makes them spiritless and loyal subjects subordinated to capital and power. Thus, it was not national culture, but a colonial one; not a culture as an expression of the *minjung* (mass), but a government-manufactured one imposed unilaterally upon them by internal and external forces of domination; a culture oriented not to national unification, but to national division.<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 5, 658.

<sup>526</sup> The Youth Coalition for Democratic Movement (*Minchungryun*) was an organization for official and open democratic struggle against the regime. The *Minchungryun* emphasized to establish solidarity among conscious intellectuals, religious organizations, politicians, workers, and peasants, and to struggle for democratization and national unification. The *Minchungryun* tried to do following things for struggles: 1) the restoration of the struggle potential, 2) the collection of youth energies, 3) the formation of concrete ties with other movement forces such as labor, peasant, and student movements, 4) the support for *minjung* movements as they seek solutions to their problems, and 5) investigations and research for the purpose of guiding the direction of movements. It had a regular publication, *Path to Democratization*. *Dong-A Daily*, 3 October 1983.

<sup>527</sup> Choi Jang-Jip, *HyundaeHankookjungchiui Gujowa Byunhwa* (Contemporary Korean Politics: Structure and Change), (Seoul: Ggachi, 1989), 214.

<sup>528</sup> The Council of Minjung Culture Movement (*Minjung Munwha Undong Hyobuihoe*), established on 14 April 1984, concentrated on development of Minjung culture and guarantee of human rights. The *Minjung Munhwa Undong Hyobuihoe* endeavored to overcome the monopoly structure of culture and promote the creation and development of *minjung* culture, which represented the *minjung*'s aspiration to and practice for independence and human integrity. *Dong-A Daily*, 15 April 1984.

<sup>529</sup> Minjung Munhwa Undong Hyupuihoe, "Balkimoon (The Statement of the Foundation)," in *80nyundae Minjung Minju Undong Jayojip II* (The Data Collection of Minjung Democratic Movements in the 1980s), ed. Minjung Munhwa Udong Hyupuihoe (Seoul: Hakminsa, 1984), 14.

Thus, they endeavored to overcome the monopoly structure of culture and promoted the creation and development of the *minjung* culture,<sup>530</sup> which represented their aspirations for independence and human integrity. In addition, on March 24, discharged journalists established the Council of Discharged Pressmen (*Haejik Ollonin Hybuihoe*). It argued that maintenance of freedom of the press would be necessary for national unity and democratization by making it possible to articulate and mediate various opinions from all walks of life. This organization tried to connect itself with *minjung* groups and organizations by expressing its support for the *minjung*'s efforts to insure their rights to survival.<sup>531</sup> On 19 December 1984, Jaeya writers, such as Kim Yon-Han, Park Doo-Jin, Kim Chun-Han, Yang Sung-Woo, and Lee Ho-Chul, also established the Council of Writers for Freedom (*Chayu Silchun Munin Hyubuihoe*) to support other democratic groups and organizations through developing *Minjung* literature. It also laid its plans for establishing theories and methods for national and *minjung* literature, legally guaranteeing the freedom of literary expression, and strengthening the solidarity among literary men. This organization published the "*Silchun Munhak*" in order to convey its assertions<sup>532</sup>

Especially, the Council for the Promotion of Democratization (*Minchuhyp*),<sup>533</sup> formed by the co-chairmanship of the two Kims on 18 May 1984, strongly influenced the democratic movement of not only the Jaeya force but also other groups and organizations as well as the opposition party. The *Minchuhyp* resolved to wage struggles for the end

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<sup>530</sup> The "*minjung*" was different from the mass because the former was not simply the object of domination but the subject of history which could transform the relationship of domination from those who suppressed it. Yu Jae-Chun, "Seoron: Minjung Gaenyumui Naepowa Oewon" (Introduction: the Connotation and Denotation of the Concept of *Minjung*), in *Minjung* (Mass), ed. Yu Jae-Chun (Seoul: Munhak kwa Bipyung, 1984).

<sup>531</sup> *Joongang Daily*, 25 March 1984.

<sup>532</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 19 December 1984.



of military politics and the construction of liberal democracy to protect and expand citizen's rights to political participation.<sup>534</sup> It also professed to act in concert with the efforts of workers, farmers, the urban poor, and students for the *minjung's* right.

In order to enhance solidarity and cooperation among democratic groups and organizations and embark on more influential anti-government activities, two national organizations were established in 1984. First, leaders of the youth, labor, farmers, and religious communities formed a coalition organization, the Council of Minjung Democratic Movement (*Minjung Minju Undong Hyobuihoe-Minminhyup*),<sup>535</sup> on 29 June 1984. Later, the National Conference for Democracy and Reunification (*Minju Tongil kookmin Hoesui*), successor to the National Coalition for Democracy and Unification of the late 1970s, was established as a national organization for a number of anti-authoritarian coalition forces. After these two nationwide coalition organizations were established, numerous regional Jaeya organizations joined either the *Minminhyup* or the National Conference as affiliated organizations. In addition, the Jaeya force was also activated in local areas. For example, members of the Jaeya force in the Incheon area created the Incheon League of Social Movements (*Insayun*) on 19 November 1984, and

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<sup>533</sup> *Joongang Daily*, 19 May 1984.

<sup>534</sup> Minjuhwa Undong Chungnyun Yonhap, "Monjuhwa Donghyang" (The Tendency of Democratization), *Minjuhwaui Gil*, 3, (1984): 10-14.

<sup>535</sup> The Council of Minjung Democratic Movement (*Minjung Minju Undong Hyobuihoe-Minminhyup*), established under leadership of Kim Seng-Hun, Lee Boo-Young, and Kim Dong-Wan on 29 June 1984, demanded restoration of democracy, guarantee of human rights, and integration of various social, religious and political organization of democratic civil society. The *Minminhyup* also tried to enhance solidarity and cooperation among the movement groups and embark on more influential anti-government activities. It had five goals: 1) to change the monopolistic economic system for a few privileged classes into an independent national economy which would ensure a decent life for the *minjung*, 2) to disclose the political and social causes that generate distrust, hatred, crime and decadence and to take measures against them, 3) to clean up polluted environments, 4) to find a peaceful way to national unification, 5) to keep an eye on international politics around the Korean peninsula in an effort to bring peace to the peninsula. This organization linked with the *Hankook Nodongja Bokji Hyobuihoe*, *Minchongrun*, *Minjuhwa Chujin Hyobuihoe*, Catholic Clergy for the Realization of Justice (*Chunjukyo*

struggled for liberal democracy, improvement of human rights, and the constitutional revision. In addition, it tried to establish solidarity with other democratic organizations as a strategy for an influential struggle.

Especially, the Jaeya force was actively involved not only in the democratic struggle, such as issuing public statements and demonstrations on streets, but also in unifying diverse democratic groups and organizations, setting agendas, and coordinating the democratic movement. After the decompression policy, the Jaeya force was different than it had been in the 1970s. Most Jaeya organizations in the 1970s were established by the progressive middle class, such as religious and intellectual notables concerned mainly with human rights violations. Thus, those organizations paid secondary concern to the socioeconomic conditions of base popular masses, such as workers, peasants, and the urban poor. Such elitism prevailed in the Jaeya force of the 1970s to the extent that the popular masses were not a leading part of the movement but the object of mobilization and education. In contrast, the Jaeya force of the 1980s expanded their base at the grassroots level, and developed a mass character. As a consequence, the leadership of the Jaeya force shifted from the middle-class intellectuals to leaders of workers, peasants, and students. However, the largest and most powerful Jaeya force organizations were under the control of two Kims.<sup>536</sup>

With a change of the leadership, the Jaeya force faced an internal ideological conflict, as did student groups. The major issue of the conflict was an ultimate goal of the struggle. Whereas conservative Jaeya groups concentrated on restoring a democratic constitution and changing the political power structure, the progressive Jaeya groups had

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*Jungui Kuhyun Sajedan*), Christian Farmers' Association (*Kidokyo Nongminhoi*), and it published "*Minjung ui Sori (The Voice of Minjung)*." *Dong-A Daily*, 29 June 1984.

a violent and revolutionary character and demanded substantial democracy. In particular, the ideological conflict within the Jaeya force appeared as an ideological confrontation between these two Kims because most Jaeya organizations were strongly influenced by the two Kims. Kim Young-Sam's ideology and strategy for the democratic movement was a more moderate than Kim Dae-Jung's. Thus, radical factions of the Jaeya force came to gather under Kim Dae-Jung's leadership, and moderate factions supported Kim Young-Sam. This ideological confrontation functioned not only to obstruct the democratic movement in the decompression period, but it also prevented uniting presidential candidates in the 1987 election. Along with this ideological conflict within the Jaeya force, the participation of many Jaeya leaders, including Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung, in the new opposition NKDP unfavorably affected the Jaeya movement. In fact, the regime did not anticipate the establishment of a new opposition party at the time it implemented the decompression policy. Rather, the regime expected that the Jaeya leaders would be integrated into the pre-existing opposition parties that had been artificially established by the regime. Thus, the regime believed that it could control the Jaeya leaders and opposition party as it had controlled the former opposition parties.

Along with the establishment of the NKDP, the role of the Jaeya force began to decline and the center of democratic movement moved from the Jaeya force to the NKDP. Jaeya leaders' participation in the NKDP made the Jaeya force difficult to struggle effectively with regime, and the Jaeya movement that lost its prominent leaders became inconsequential. On the contrary, there was a positive effect. Democratic civil society was able to struggle more actively and effectively with the regime because the new opposition party, which Jaeya leaders participated in, strongly supported political

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<sup>536</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 12 October 1984.

struggles of civil society. Moreover, democratic civil society could build a coalition and cooperate more easily with the NKDP that understood and had a close relationship with democratic civil society. Therefore, the democratic movement of civil society came to be more influential and assertive. In this respect, Jaeya leaders' participation in the NKDP had both positive and negative effects on democratic civil society and its democratic movement.<sup>537</sup>

#### 4) Religious Communities

After the Chun regime implemented the decompression policy in late 1983, the role of religious communities changed again. During the suppression period from 1980 to 1983, religious communities had concentrated their efforts on behalf of the interests of labor unions, peasants, and the urban poor by protecting and supporting other democratic groups and organizations. For example, the Catholic Peasant Association (*Kanong*) carried out a movement that tried to destroy a structural contradiction for solving peasants' problems and to establish a genuine peasants community.<sup>538</sup> On the other hand, during the decompression period, the role of religious communities declined because other democratic groups and organizations, such as students and workers, came to have more leeway in opposing the authoritarian regime. Ironically, the expansion of the political opportunity structure weakened the role of religious communities.

Thus, religious communities sought new directions of their struggles. At the same time, religious organizations, such as the Council of Korean Human Rights Movement,

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<sup>537</sup> Yun Sang-Chul. *1980nyundae Hankookui Minjuhwa ihaengkwajung* (The Democratic Transition Process of South Korea in the 1980s), 111.

<sup>538</sup> Catholic Peasant Association, *Nongmin Haebanggoa Minjoktongileul hyanghaye* (For the Liberation of Peasants and National Unification), (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1986), 48.

established in December 1977, more actively struggled for improvement of human rights. In addition, religious communities realized the necessity of basing the democratic struggle on organizations. Thus, they concentrated their efforts on building a coalition with other democratic groups and organizations. For instance, Catholic and Protestant organizations protested President Chun's visit to Japan when they gathered and celebrated the Independence Day on 15 August 1984 with about 1,500 students and members of Jaeya organizations.<sup>539</sup>

Religious communities also supported democratic struggles of other democratic groups and organizations. Protestant workers established the Coalition of Korean Protestant Labor (*Kinoryun*) on 3 February 1985. The *Kinoryun* worked to improve working conditions, raise wages, and support the democratic movement by mobilizing workers. It also focused on building solidarity with a student group.<sup>540</sup> In addition, the Protestant church organizations, such as the UIM, supported struggles for the improvement of human rights conditions, social and economic justice, the release of arrested workers, and punishment of people who suppressed workers. In particular, the UIM concentrated on building solidarity with other democratic groups, such as labor organizations, and exchanging information with workers.<sup>541</sup>

Catholic clergy and organizations concentrated their efforts on educating people at the parish level and supporting struggles of other democratic groups and organizations. Through these efforts, the Catholic church and sub-organizations, like the Council of Catholic Social Movement, focused on social issues, such as the improvement of human

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<sup>539</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 16 August 1984.

<sup>540</sup> This organization also published newsletter the "Gitbal." *Dong-A Daily*, 5 February 1985.

<sup>541</sup> *Joongang Daily*, 5 February 1985.

rights conditions.<sup>542</sup> Along with this social movement, some religious organizations, such as the NCPCRJ, continued to criticize the authoritarian rule of the Chun regime and also worked on educating people to be politically aware. For example, the NCPCRJ sent a letter to President Chun on 31 October 1983, demanding an end to illegal arrest and torture, and pointing out the decrease in credibility of the Justice Department as well as the presence of discrimination inside jails and other violations of human rights.<sup>543</sup>

The Protestant church also sought ways to contribute to the democratic movement of civil society. One effort was to integrate various divided organizations for more influential struggles for democratization. For instance, the NCKK integrated various religious organizations of the Protestant church and supported other human rights movements in the early 1980s. In addition, the Korean Ecumenical Youth Council (EYC) issued a public statement on 16 January 1984 which strongly demanded to stop harsh suppression of students who served in the “night school” in working places and churches.<sup>544</sup> The Korean Student Christian Federation (KSCF, *Hankook Kidok Haksaeung Chongyonmaeng*), established on 25 April 1984, also strongly opposed the regime by cooperating with other democratic groups and organizations.<sup>545</sup>

However, the regime continued to constrain political activities of religious clergy and organizations through legal and physical measures under the decompression policy.

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<sup>542</sup> The Council of Catholic Social Movement, established by leaders of religious organization (Catholic) and members of Catholic social movement organizations in August 1984, was especially interested in improvement of human rights and improvement of conditions of the urban poor.

<sup>543</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 5, 654.

<sup>544</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 6, 616-17.

<sup>545</sup> In addition, this organization issued a public statement on October 30. In the statement, the KSCF demanded to stop suppression on the labor movement, and urged to guarantee the labor union of the Daewoo Apparel. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 6, 622, and 631.

For example, the regime's response to the establishment of new organizations, such as the Korean Workers' Welfare Council, was severe. The regime immediately defined these new organizations as anti-government organizations, and arrested their leaders.<sup>546</sup> In spite of the decline of their role in the democratic movement during the decompression period, both Catholic and Protestant churches were actively involved in social movements. Religious communities continued to establish social organizations and supported social movements of civil society at the organizational level. After the regime changed its policy to a repressive policy, religious clergy and organizations began to play an important role once again in the democratic movement. Especially, after the new opposition NKDP was established, religious communities became actively involved in the election campaign.<sup>547</sup>

### 5) Minjung Movement

In this period, no word came to mean more to anti-government activists and critical intellectuals than "*minjung*," in both its cognitive and moral aspects. A group of intellectuals became preoccupied with the people who were alienated and oppressed in the process of industrialization, calling them "*minjung*." Literally, "*minjung*" meant "the majority of people governed by a few power elites." The "*minjung*" was different from the mass because the former was not simply the object of domination but the subject of history.<sup>548</sup> Nevertheless, there has been no agreement over the precise definition of

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<sup>546</sup> Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>547</sup> Because *de facto* leaders of the NKDP, Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung, were Protestant and Catholic Christians, religious communities could involve naturally in the election campaign and supported the opposition party.

<sup>548</sup> Yu Jae-Chun, "Seoron: *Minjung* Gaenyumui Naepowa Oewon" (Introduction: the Connotation and Denotation of the Concept of *Minjung*), in *Minjung* (Mass), ed. Yu Jae-Chun (Seoul: Munhak kwa Bipyung, 1984).

*minjung*. *Minjung* scholars from various disciplines tried to identify the *minjung*, and understand their consciousness and the artistic expression of restrained feelings of anger, despair, and hope. The *minjung* ideology took shape in the process of and as the outcome of debates on the definition of *minjung*, the structure of domination and the historical mission the *minjung* took upon their shoulders. The discourse of the *minjung* tended to be against the ruling ideology because an analysis of the *minjung* involved a critical reading of the ruling ideology and the imaginary creation of a “better” world.

The *minjung* movement began from the early 1970s when the negative effects of rapid industrialization and authoritarian rule on civil society began to appear. One significant event that stimulated intellectuals was a worker’s suicide. On 13 November 1970, Chun Tae-Il burned himself to death during a labor strike to be treated as a human. It was a great shock not merely to the general public but, more profoundly, to many intellectuals.<sup>549</sup> Chun’s death turned the intellectuals’ attention to the dark side of industrialization, including labor problems, which had been overlooked due to the dominance of developmentalism. The immediate response to his death came from students. Student movement activists waged demonstrations for the protection of people’s rights, and tried to build a coalition with the labor movement. This incident awakened the concern for equality and social justice, and many liberal intellectuals came to embrace those issues under a general theme of democratization.<sup>550</sup>

The meaning of the “*minjung*” began to change to more radical from the early 1980s. The failure of the “Spring of Democracy” in 1980, which had ushered in new

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<sup>549</sup> Yi Tae-Ho, “1970nyundae Nodong Undong ui Kwejuk” (The Track of Labor Movement in the 1970s), in *Yushin Chejewa Minjuhwa Undong* (The Yushin Regime and Democratic Movements), ed. Han Sung-Hun (Seoul: Samminsa, 1984), 194.



hopes for establishing a democratic government after President Park's death, forced the *minjung* intellectuals to critically reflect upon the past theoretical discussions and their practical implications. They attributed the failure of democratization and frustration over the Kwangju democratic movement to several limitations of the democratic movement in the 1970s.<sup>551</sup> First, previous democratic movements were denounced as political romanticism which merely made a moral critique of political coercion and economic inequality without a perspective of or will to acquire political power and the transformation of the economic system. Second, the movement intellectuals understood the absence of a purposive vanguard that could change the autogenous mass movement into a system-transformative movement. Third, they pointed out the class limitations of the intellectual-led democratic movement of the 1970s and felt it necessary to encourage the politicization of the working class as a main force for the democratic struggle. Finally, self-criticism was undertaken for not recognizing the foreign force, particularly the United States, behind the military dictatorship.

In the discourse of the *minjung*, a more radicalized orientation that was unambiguously distinguished from the ideology of the 1970s' *minjung* intellectuals was shown. For example an unknown author claimed:

The revolution we want to achieve must be defined as the *minjung* democratic national revolution. Why is it the *minjung* democratic revolution? Because the subject of revolution is the *minjung* and the new political system the revolution will build is not bourgeois democracy in which the *minjung* dominates. Why the national revolution? Because it is the revolution against the imperial, comprador monopoly capital, and the

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<sup>550</sup> Sohn Hak-Kyu, *Authoritarianism and Opposition in South Korea* (London: Routledge, 1989), 34-5.

<sup>551</sup> Cho Hi-Yon, "80nyundae Sahoe Undong kwa Sahoegusungche Nonjaeng (Social Movements of the 1980s and Debates on Social Formation)," in *Hankook Sahoe Gusungche Nonjaeng* (The Debate on Korean Social Formation), 1, eds. Pak Hyon-Chae and Cho Hi-Yon (Seoul: Chuksan, 1989), 15.

new economic system the revolution will construct is an economy taking the form of national revolution.<sup>552</sup>

It is not difficult to find Marxist elements in the above statement. The new discourse of the *minjung* was constructed not from the ideals of liberal democracy which had occupied the hearts of the *minjung* intellectuals in the 1970s, but from the theoretical logic and ideology of Marxism and neo-Marxism. In contrast, democracy was understood as a political form of class domination or as a political means to realize class interest. In this respect, an anti-democratic element which began to emerge within radical student groups in the previous period spread to the Minjung movement.

### **3. Emergence of the New Opposition Party and the General Election in 1985**

One distinctive characteristic in the institutional political arena in this period was the appearance of a genuine opposition political party. Between 1980 and 1983, opposition parties, such as the Democratic Korean Party and the Korean Nationalist Party, had been unable and unwilling to criticize and challenge the regime because of tight control of the regime. What the authoritarian regime had in mind in implementing a series of liberalizing measures in 1983 and 1984 was further fragmentation of the opposition force and restoration of legitimacy.<sup>553</sup>

However, the decompression policy provided an opportunity for the establishment of a disloyal opposition party. In November 1984, the Chun regime lifted the ban on

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<sup>552</sup> Kidok Chungnyun Munhwa Yonguso, *Chiha Munso* (Underground Document), (Seoul: Komok, 1989), 14.

<sup>553</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *1980nyundae Hankookui Minjuhwaengkwajung* (The Democratic Transition Process of South Korea in the 1980s), 111.

political activities for 84 persons who had been on a blacklist.<sup>554</sup> Many of newly reinstated opposition politicians later actively participated in the establishment of the NKDP on 18 January 1985, immediately before the National Assembly election in February 1985. Moreover, Kim Dae-Jung, expelled to the United States by the Chun regime, announced his return to Korea.<sup>555</sup> Thus, Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung, veteran opposition politicians previously banned from political life, became *de facto* leaders of the NKDP.

The politics of the authoritarian breakdown began in earnest with the formation of the NKDP and its electoral alignment with democratic civil society. Although there were some radical groups and organizations in civil society that attempted to boycott the National Assembly election, the majority of civil society groups and organizations decided to participate in the election, raising the issues of democracy, a direct presidential election, and local autonomy. Furthermore, democratic civil society directly and indirectly supported the newly established NKDP. In January 1985, for instance, the Youth League for Democratic Movement publicly announced that its members would back the NKDP which represented “the pain of the people.”<sup>556</sup> Many student and religious organizations vigorously campaigned for the NKDP. In spite of the active support, leaders of the new NKDP were skeptical about the outcome of the election. Not only were election laws much more advantageous for the ruling DJP, but also there were many restrictions on individual and party campaign rallies. For instance, opposition

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<sup>554</sup> The United State Department of State, *Current Reports on Human Rights Practice 1983* (Washington: GPO, February 1984), 817.

<sup>555</sup> *Washington Post*, Thursday, 3 January 1985, A2

<sup>556</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *1980myundae Hankookui Minjuhwaengkwajung* (The Democratic Transition Process of South Korea in the 1980s), 121.

candidates were prohibited from using the term “dictatorship” in reference to the present government, and they suffered from physical attacks by government agencies.

Nevertheless, voters were excited by various pro-democracy slogans used by democratic groups and organizations, and also enthusiastic about the possibility of having a real opposition party. In particular, South Korean voters were particularly excited about the NKDP’s proposal of direct presidential election. Besides this issue, other important campaign issues were as follows; 1) the end of the military dictatorship, 2) the re-investigation of the Kwangju democratic movement and punishment of people who were involved in suppression, 3) the censure of injustice and corruption, and 4) the removal the prohibition of political activities and house arrest of Kim Dae-Jung and Kim Young-Sam.

The turnout in the National Assembly elections on 12 February 1985, was 84.6%, which was the highest since the 1950s. As Table 5-3 shows, the NKDP emerged as a leading opposition party, unexpectedly winning 29.26% of the votes, compared to 35.25% for the ruling DJP. After the election, the strategy of nationwide civil society organizations and the NKDP was to make the legitimacy question the only and the most important political issue.<sup>557</sup> The coalition between democratic civil society and the NKDP lived beyond the National Assembly elections, and later developed into a grand opposition coalition. The wind of the opposition party unexpectedly turned out to be a typhoon. One reporter observed that:

It was an explosion of public opinion that had been hidden so far. It was a “tornado of public opinion,” which neither the ruling party nor opposition parties, neither candidates nor the electorates could expect at all. The 12<sup>th</sup> general election of 1985 was a stern judgement to the parties and

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<sup>557</sup> James Cotton, “From Authoritarianism to Democracy in South Korea,” *Political Studies* 37 (1989): 251.

politicians that did not read the wishes of the people. It was a victory of the popular will reconfirming the common truth that people are not stupid, a positive advance for democracy in Korea teaching a lesson on the power of the people to bring about a change if necessary. It was a fearful election that neutralized money, organization, career, and prestige before firm judgements of the electorate.<sup>558</sup>

The NKDP emerged as a formidable disloyal opposition party through the general election. The “new party tornado” swept the entire country, shocking not only the authoritarian regime and the DJP but also the NKDP itself. Moreover, in early April, 29 out of the 35 newly elected legislators belonging to the Democratic Korean Party, the loyal opposition between 1980 and 1985, switched their allegiance to the NKDP. With additional defections from another minority party, the Korea Nationalist Party, the NKDP increased its representation to 102 seats in the 276-member National Assembly.

Table 5-3

Results of the National Assembly Election in 1985

Party	DJP	NKDP	DKP	KNP	Others	Total
Seats	148	67	35	19	7	276
Vote(%)	32.25	29.26	19.68	9.15	6.66	100.00

Source: CEMC(Central Election Management Committee), *Je 12 dae kookhow uiwon sungu chongram*, Seoul: CEMC, 1985.

Boosted by the election result and the defections of many legislators from other opposition parties, the NKDP vigorously began to press the ruling DJP and regime to open a dialogue for constitutional revision. Particularly, the new NKDP pressured the regime to adopt a direct presidential election system that had been the focus of its pledge during the election campaign.<sup>559</sup> However, the motions of the NKDP legislators to deal

<sup>558</sup> Yi Kyung-Jae and Kim Tae-Gon, “Minuiga whoiorichin Chongsun Hyunjang” (The Scene of General Election whirled by Public Opinion), *Shindong-A* (March 1985): 187.

<sup>559</sup> As strategies for the election campaign, the new party emphasized 1) cessation of the military regime, 2) complete investigation of punishment of its related people, 3) censure of injustice and

with the issue of the constitutional revision inside the National Assembly were only met by the categorical rejection of the DJP.

One distinctive change after the election was that the NKDP and civil society established a grand opposition coalition. Another change was that the center of the democratic movement moved from democratic civil society to the NKDP. The repression policy that resumed from late 1984 constrained the political struggle of democratic civil society. The policy focused on democratic groups and organizations, and less on the opposition party. Because of this dual policy of the regime, the opposition party struggled with the regime more actively than democratic civil society. Therefore, the emergence of the strong opposition NKDP was another important turning point in the democratic movement of the mid-1980s. As a result, the regime had to deal with the democratic struggle inside and outside the institutional political arena, and it was more difficult to control the democratic movement of civil society and the NKDP.

#### **4. Retreat to a Repressive Policy**

When democratic civil society continued to take advantage of the decompression measures, the government rescinded its decompression policy and returned to a repressive policy in late 1984. In particular, students' violent activities strongly affected the decision of the regime to return to a repressive policy. For instance, after students had occupied the headquarters of the DJP in November 1984, the government announced that it would investigate not only students who participated in the occupation, but also

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corruption, 4) increase of national debt, 5) demand of Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung's release from house arrest.

leaders who might have masterminded it from behind the scenes.<sup>560</sup> The government used the incident as an opportunity to eliminate radical democratic organizations and their leaders.<sup>561</sup> As a result, 102 students were dismissed in the seven months between March and October 1985, while only 47 students had been expelled from their schools in all of 1984.<sup>562</sup>

Besides the student movement, the Chun regime began to suppress other democratic groups and organizations, such as workers and religious communities. For example, on 23 November 1984, the police arrested Rev. Go Young-Geun because of the contents of his new book that criticized the government.<sup>563</sup> As a result of suppression, the political prisoner population also increased rapidly. While there were 109 political prisoners on 27 November 1984, this number swelled to 704 on 20 November 1985.<sup>564</sup> However, there was a big difference in the repression policy of this period. The regime was tolerant of political activities of the Jaeya force and opposition politicians whereas it harshly suppressed the student movement and labor movement activists. For instance, in spite of harsh suppression on democratic civil society, the regime released and reinstated former opposition politicians and Jaeya leaders, such as Moon Ik-Hwan and Lee Hae-Chan on 1 December 1984.<sup>565</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 17 May 1984.

<sup>561</sup> For example, on December 14, 1984, the police arrested Chairman of the *Minjuhwa Tujaeng Haksaeung Yonhap* for the occupation of the headquarters of ruling DJP. *Dong-A Daily*, 14 December 1984.

<sup>562</sup> *Chosun Daily*, 7 November 1985.

<sup>563</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 6, 632.

<sup>564</sup> Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, *1970nyundae Minjoowhaundonggwa Kidoggyo* (Democratization Movements and the Church in the 1970s), (Seoul: CISJD, 1983), 105.

<sup>565</sup> The United State Department of State, *Current Reports on Human Rights Practice 1983*, (Washington: GPO, February 1984), 817. Moreover, the regime reinstated 14 former politicians and Jaeya leaders, including Kim Young-Sam, Kim Jong-Pil, and Kim Dae-Jung on March 6, 1985. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 6, 637.

The goal of this dual policy of the Chun regime was to make democratic civil society quiet through harsh suppression, and to make the opposition parties activate. Through this policy, the regime attempted to break down the grand coalition, and to isolate civil society from not only the political party but also the public. In addition, the DJP tried to maintain majority status in the National Assembly through inducing split of the opposition parties by the dual policy.

However, the suppression of democratic civil society was not quite effective in this period. Under the suppression, democratic civil society struggled more radically and violently with the Chun regime. Furthermore, the support of the middle class to democratic civil society did not decline. For example, not only democratic groups and organizations but also the middle class did actively support and participate in the election campaign of the NKDP in spite of threats of the regime.<sup>566</sup> In this respect, the public discourse was slowly shifting from the regime to the opposition force. Unlike the expectation of the regime, the result of the dual repressive policy made a strong opposition party appear rather than split the opposition parties. The dual repressive policy also caused the center of the democratic movement to change from democratic civil society to the NKDP, and made democratic civil society have a more radical and violent character in struggling with the regime.

In this respect, the retreat to the repressive policy for controlling revitalized opposition force did not work. Rather, the regime was slowly losing its hegemony. Democratic civil society was more radicalized and actively struggled for democratization

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<sup>566</sup> This active support of the middle class to the opposition force was shown in the turnout. 84.2% of the turnout in the general election of 1985 was the highest turnout since the establishment of the Yushin regime. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 6, 636.



under harsh suppression. In addition, the emergence of the strong opposition party helped democratic civil society to be more assertive, active, united, and influential one.

### **5. Changes of Democratic Civil Society**

The decompression policy of the regime in late 1983 decisively changed the character of both democratic civil society and the opposition party. After the political opportunity structure was opened, democratic civil society rapidly developed into a strong social force that could directly challenge the regime. Although democratic civil society had struggled since the Yushin regime, its divided, isolated, and inconsequential character had rarely changed due to internal conflicts within civil society, harsh suppression, and passive middle class. However, the decompression policy weakened the suppression of democratic civil society and the opposition party, and made the middle class express its dissatisfaction and aspirations for democratization easily and clearly.<sup>567</sup> Thus, the expansion of the political opportunity structure allowed civil society to become active, united, and assertive.

In addition, democratic groups and organizations, especially students and the Jaeya force, actively supported the genuine opposition NKDP during the establishment process and election campaign. As a result, the NKDP became a strong opposition party and struggled for constitutional revision through its solidarity with democratic civil society. The expansion of the political opportunity structure thus significantly and favorably influenced the character of civil society. Besides the implementation of the decompression policy, other internal and external factors also influenced the character of

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<sup>567</sup> Yun Sang-Chul. *1980myundae Hankookui Minjuhwaengkwajung* (The Democratic Transition Process of South Korea in the 1980s), 107.

civil society. In particular, since this period, internal and external factors began to more favorably affect the character of democratic civil society than those of previous periods.

First, democratic civic culture, mainly brought by socioeconomic development, clearly and significantly influenced the character of democratic civil society in this period. For instance, democratic movement activists of this period were major beneficiaries of socioeconomic development, and thus they could have more opportunities to meet democratic values and principles through education. Thus, democratic movement activists' desires for democratization in this period was stronger than in any other periods, and their democratic struggle was enthusiastic.<sup>568</sup> Albeit the traditional political culture had changed to a more democratic direction since the early 1970s, its influence on the character of democratic civil society had not been significant until the early 1980s because of harsh suppression, lack of civil society's readiness for change, and the passive middle class.

Since the early 1980s, however, the regime found it increasingly difficult to control the public, who was being influenced by democratic civic culture, and their active supports. The regime thus implemented a decompression policy before public dissatisfaction erupted. In this respect, the implementation of the decompression policy was strongly influenced by the rapid and wide dissemination of democratic civil culture. The result of a survey on national consciousness conducted in 1983 showed a growing shift in value preference from national security and economic development to democracy. According to the result of the survey, 74.1 percent of 2,388 respondents regarded the establishment of democracy as more urgent than economic growth. In addition, 66.5

percent agreed that democracy should be realized even if it may cause some difficulties in national security.<sup>569</sup> These results of survey, as those of the previous period, can be seen as evidence of changing the public discourse and normative discontent with authoritarianism, and also they show the strong popular aspirations for democratization.

One of the regime's intentions in implementing the decompression policy was to embrace the middle class who had begun to turn away.<sup>570</sup> Because the middle class had increasingly gained political consciousness, the regime had to seek a different strategy to prevent eruption of the middle class and block the influence of the democratic civic culture. Its means of doing this was the decompression policy which expanded the political opportunity structure.<sup>571</sup> In addition, the regime needed supports of the middle class which was getting critical of the authoritarian regime in order to get the majority seats in the general election in 1985. Therefore, the spread of democratic civic culture influenced the regime to implement a decompression policy as an alternative strategy to control the middle class and democratic civil society, and this decompression policy positively affected the character of civil society.

Under the decompression policy, one distinctive change of democratic civil society was active support of the middle class to the democratic movement. This active support was based on the change of basic perception brought about in large part by the change of political culture. That is, a political value of the middle class, which emphasized "the rule of law" over "the rule of man" was influenced by the change of

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<sup>568</sup> Whang In-Joung, "The Korean Economy Toward the Year 2000," in *A Dragon's Progress: Development Administration in Korea*, eds. Gerald E. Caiden and Bun Woong Kim (West Hartford: Kumarian, 1991), 113-14.

<sup>569</sup> Hyundai Sahoe Yonguso, *Kukmin Uisike kwanhan Chosayongu* (A Survey Research on National Consciousness), (Seoul: Hyundai Sahoe Yonguso, 1983), 96.

<sup>570</sup> Shin Doh C., *Mass Politics and Culture in Democratizing Korea*, 1-2.

<sup>571</sup> Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

political culture.<sup>572</sup> This change appeared through active support to the opposition party in the general election. The middle class began to be aware of the problem about the indirect presidential election and expressed their dissatisfaction in the election through supporting the opposition NKDP.<sup>573</sup>

More importantly, after a short period of the decompression, the shift to a repression policy could not control the spread of democratic civic culture and the democratic movement of civil society. It was too late to control already revitalized democratic groups and organizations of civil society and their political struggles by using suppression.<sup>574</sup> Instead, the regime had to contend with the unified opposition force which became increasingly popular among the middle class and other segments of the population.<sup>575</sup> The successful outcome for the NKDP in the general election clearly showed that the effort of the Chun regime for controlling the opposition force failed. The success of the NKDP in the election was a result of the strong support given by the middle class and democratic civil society.<sup>576</sup>

As Figure 5-1 illustrates, the number of political struggles by democratic civil society did not sharply decline, but gradually increased, even under suppression. This continuous struggle of civil society was possible because the middle class, affected by democratic civic culture, showed active support to civil society. In this period, active support of the middle class and emergence of the NKDP, directly and indirectly influenced by the development of political culture, made democratic civil society more

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<sup>572</sup> Shin Doh C., *Mass Politics and Culture in Democratizing Korea*, 187.

<sup>573</sup> Shin Doh C., *Mass Politics and Culture in Democratizing Korea*, 2

<sup>574</sup> Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

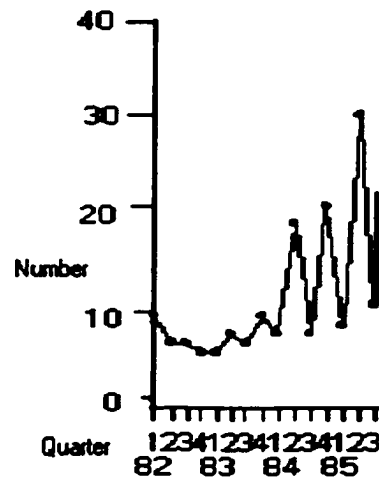
<sup>575</sup> Hsin-Hung Hsiao and Hagen Koo, "The Middle Classes and Democratization," in *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*, 312-33.

<sup>576</sup> *Minjuhwaui Gil*, "12dae Sungugyulgwa bon myukgaji Moonje" (Several Problems of 12<sup>th</sup> General Election), *Minjuhwaui Gil* (Road to Democratization) no. 8, (March 1985); 11.

active, united, and assertive. Therefore, the development of political culture in this period not only facilitated the expansion of the political opportunity structure, but also made the already expanded political opportunity structure difficult to be reversed by suppression. In addition, the development of political culture significantly affected outcomes of the general election that indicated the transfer of hegemony from the regime to the opposition force. Therefore, the development of political culture was an important factor that changed the character of civil society.

Figure 5-1

Tendency of the Democratic Movement, 1983-1985



Second, economic development of this period also significantly influenced not only the character of civil society but also the regime's policy toward the opposition force. Due to the regime's concentrating on economic policy, as Table 5-4 illustrates, economic conditions significantly improved in this period. Based on this successful economic development in the previous period, the Chun regime became confident of its rule and could implement the decompression policy to expand its power base and more effectively control the opposition party. In addition, the Chun regime realized that there

were limits to its control over democratic civil society and the middle class who had been strengthened by economic growth.<sup>577</sup> Thus, the regime implemented the decompression policy to control the opposition force more effectively.

Table 5-4

Major Economic Indicators (1983-1987)

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
GNP Growth rate	11.9	8.4	5.4	12.3	12.0
Current Account Balance (& billion)	-1.6	-1.4	-0.9	4.6	9.9
Consumer Price Index	3.4	2.3	2.5	2.8	3.0
Per capita GNP (US\$)	1924	2044	2194	2503	3098

Source: Economic Planning Board, *Major Statistics of Korean Economy*, 1988.

Despite these intentions of the Chun regime, democratic civil society came to have a great opportunity to attain autonomy and counter-hegemony, and change its character. The middle class also began to express more clearly its political dissatisfaction and desires for democratization. Even though economic development did not directly influence the character of democratic civil society, it did so indirectly through various channels. One indirect influence of the economic development was Chun's decision to implement the decompression policy based on the confidence in successful economic performance. As a result, the political opportunity structure was expanded, and thus democratic civil society could revitalize and express its voice more clearly and loudly.

After the political opportunity structure was expanded, many democratic organizations were established, and the grand coalition between civil society and the

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<sup>577</sup> Youn Jung-Suk, "Korean Democracy and the Limits of Political Engineering," in *A Dragon's Progress: Development Administration in Korea*, eds. Gerald E. Caiden and Bun Woong Kim, 68. Especially, university students of this period were beneficiaries of economic development. Thus, they had more chances to meet democratic values and principles. Therefore, it was very difficult for the authoritarian regime to control democratic groups, especially the student group.

NKDP was built.<sup>578</sup> Through the establishment of the coalition, the democratic struggle of civil society became more aggressive and influential, and their demands broadened to many political and social issues. For example, on 28 September 1984, about 350 students occupied the headquarters of the Democratic Korean Party, demanding an end of suppression on students.<sup>579</sup> In addition, students led by the *Minjuhwa Chujin Wiwonhoe* occupied the headquarters of the ruling DJP on November 14, 1984. During two days of siege, 264 students demanded 1) an end to the suppression of the labor movement, 2) withdrawal of the political ban, 3) revision of anti-democratic laws concerning assembly, demonstration, and the press, and 4) a guarantee of autonomous student associations.<sup>580</sup> In this respect, successful economic development decisively influenced democratic civil society to be aggressive, united, influential, and supported by the middle class.

For example, the weakening of suppression encouraged an upsurge in militant labor union activity. When the labor movement resurfaced in 1984, it demonstrated greater organizational strength and a higher level of political consciousness than ever before. Labor disputes sharply increased in frequency from 98 cases in 1983 to 113 cases in 1984, and to 265 cases in 1985.<sup>581</sup> More importantly, the focus of workers' struggles was no longer on isolated economic issues but on organizing new independent unions. Their new tactics centered on promoting solidarity among workers across several factories located within the same industrial area. The clearest demonstration of these

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<sup>578</sup> One example coalition organization in this period was the Korean Workers' Welfare Council (Hankook Nodongja Bokji Hyupuihwoi: Nohyup) which workers, Catholic priests, and students participated. *Joongang Daily*, 10 March 1984.

<sup>579</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 29 September 1984.

<sup>580</sup> *Hankook Daily*, 14 November 1984.

<sup>581</sup> Hagen Koo, "The State, Minjung, and the Working Class in South Korea," 115.

changes in the movement was the solidarity strike that occurred in the *Kuro Industrial Park* in June 1985.<sup>582</sup>

In addition, the strong support given by the middle class to the NKDP caused the dynamics of the institutional political arena to change. The appearance of the strong opposition party led democratic civil society to take on a more assertive character in the democratic movement by building a coalition. For example, the NKDP, after the general election, aggressively demanded a constitutional revision inside and outside the institutional political arena. This active struggle of the NKDP was possible because the middle class and democratic civil society, strengthened by economic development, strongly supported the NKDP. In this respect, economic development of this period indirectly affected the opposition party to be active in the institutional political arena. In addition, successful economic development led to the qualitative and quantitative growth of the middle class, and their active support became a foundation of the active and aggressive struggle of democratic civil society.<sup>583</sup> Therefore, economic development of this period constructively affected the character of democratic civil society. More importantly, this changed character of civil society remained even with the return to a repressive policy in late 1984.

In this period, the economic development also favorably affected other internal and external factors. As mentioned above, the successful economic development made the Chun regime confident in its rule and thus implemented the decompression policy that

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<sup>582</sup> According to Lee Tae-Bok, this characteristic change of the labor movement was influenced by students' efforts. One of them was student movement activists' "night school." Students educated workers to have clear political consciousness, helped them to organize unions, and connected the labor movement and student movement. Lee Tae-Bok, interviewed by author, Seoul, 21 October 1999.

<sup>583</sup> According to Hong Doo-Seung's study, population of the middle class increased to 39.9% in the early 1980s from 20.5% in 1960s. Hong Doo-Seung, "Jungsangcheng Sungjanggwa Sahoebundong" (Growth of the Middle Class and Social Change), (Seoul: Hanul, 1992), 257.



expanded the political opportunity structure in this period. The expanded political opportunity structure directly influenced revitalization of democratic civil society. In addition, the successful economic development also positively influenced the spread of democratic civic culture. This influence of economic development on political culture appeared as active supports by the middle class to the opposition party in the general election. In this respect, the economic development positively and consistently affected political culture and contributed to changing the character of civil society.

Third, the expansion of the political opportunity structure in this period strongly influenced the character of civil society. The decompression policy expanded the political opportunity structure by weakening suppression on democratic civil society. This expansion of the political opportunity structure was influenced by several factors. First, the development of political culture made the middle class think of the Chun regime as illegitimate, and the change in public perception influenced the regime to implement the decompression policy to solve the legitimacy problem.

Second, the Chun regime faced a limitation in controlling the democratic movement of civil society and public opinion through using harsh suppression. For example, although the number of demonstrations decreased under harsh suppression, democratic civil society became more radical and violent. For example, 22 September 1983, students of radical student organizations explored and occupy the U.S. Culture Center in Daegu. In the process of the confrontation with the riot police, one person was killed and four people were injured.<sup>584</sup> Democratic groups and organizations, especially student and labor organizations, needed violent demonstrations or protests that could

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<sup>584</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 6, 653.

draw public attention. In this situation, the Chun regime realized that a repressive policy was limited in being able to the changed public discourse and controlling active and radicalized democratic movement. Thus, the regime decided to implement the decompression policy, and the policy caused the political opportunity structure to expand.

Third, the Chun regime was confident it could safely implement the decompression policy. The economic growth rate had increased from -3.7% in 1980 to 12.6% in 1983, and the rate of unemployment decreased to 4.1%. In addition, the inflation rate had decreased to 3.4% in 1983 from 28.7% in 1980.<sup>585</sup> Based on this successful economic recovery and development, the regime believed that the public, satisfied by the economic performance of the Chun regime, continued to support the government, and it could therefore expand the power base.

After the political opportunity structure was expanded in the late 1983, many nationwide umbrella organizations were established to coordinate various democratic organizations in their struggle with the Chun regime. In addition, democratic groups and organizations began to cooperate actively not only with the opposition party but among themselves. For instance, the number of students who entered workplaces to help to establish unions and educate workers sharply increased. The number of students who entered workplaces increased to 800 on August 1985 from 50 on March 1980.<sup>586</sup> Thus, the labor movement also showed a different character in this period. Whereas the labor movement of the 1970s and early 1980s focused mainly economic issues, the labor

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<sup>585</sup> Im Hyug-Baeg, "5gongui Minjuhwa Tujaengkwa Jiksunje Gaehun" (Democratic Struggle and the Constitutional Revision for Direct Presidential Election), *5gong Pyungga Daetoronhoe* (The Conference about the Evaluation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic), (Seoul: Dong-A Ilbosa, 1994), 460.

<sup>586</sup> Kim Chong-Chan, "Nodong Undong Danchui Hyunjuso" (The Current Address of Labor Movement Organizations), 480; *Joongang Daily*, 7 November 1986.

movement from 1983 began to focus on political issues and became more violent and radical.<sup>587</sup>

More importantly, the establishment of a coalition between democratic civil society and the opposition party strongly influenced changing the character of civil society. Based on the coalition, democratic civil society could be more united, and struggle more actively and aggressively with the regime. In addition, the middle class became less afraid of supporting democratic civil society and its movement after the political opportunity structure was expanded. This active support also stimulated democratic civil society to become more united and assertive. These aggressive democratic movement and active support of the middle class strongly influenced the regime to return to a repressive policy.

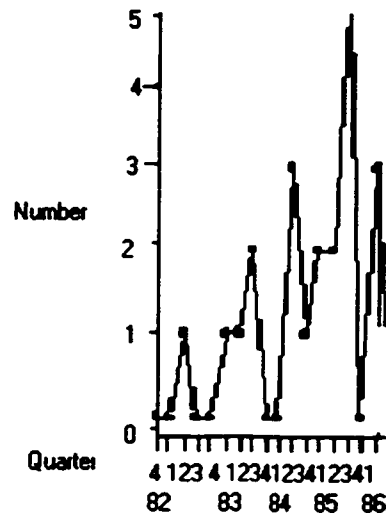
However, the expanded political opportunity structure was not easily reversed by renewal of the repression policy. As Figure 5-2 shows, the number of struggles that civil society organizations got involved did not dramatically decrease. Rather, the political struggle of democratic civil society became more aggressive. In addition, the political dissatisfaction of the middle class toward the Chun regime clearly appeared in results of the general election in 1985. The NKDP, supported by the middle class and democratic civil society, was successful even though it failed to become a majority party. In this respect, the regime's returning to the repression policy had a limitation in controlling the already expanded political opportunity structure. Therefore, the expansion of the political opportunity structure strongly affected the formerly divided, isolated, and inconsequential nature of democratic civil society in this period.

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<sup>587</sup> Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

Figure 5-2

Tendency of Civil Society Organizations-Involved Events, 1982-1985



In addition, the external environment of this period contributed to expanding the political opportunity structure and thereby provided space for democratic civil society to revitalize and struggle actively with the regime. For example, the Chun regime needed to show a politically developed image to the international society as a host country of the Asian and Olympic Games, so it implemented the decompression policy. As another external factor that influenced the opening the political opportunity structure was the U.S. policy for promoting democracy in the Third World countries, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).<sup>588</sup> These external events and pressure favorably influenced the expansion of the political opportunity structure and caused democratic civil society to have a more active, aggressive, united, and influential character in its democratic movement. In this respect, the external environment in this period constructively affected the character of civil society by influencing the political opportunity structure.

<sup>588</sup> Steven W. Hook, "Inconsistent U.S. Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad," 113.

In addition, the external environment indirectly contributed to spreading democratic civic culture. The expansion of the political opportunity structure, affected by external events and pressure, accelerated the spread of democratic civic culture. This spread of democratic civic culture encouraged continuous support of the middle class for the opposition force, even under harsh suppression, and decisively influenced the outcome of the general election. Thus, democratic civil society, supported by the middle class, could build a coalition with the opposition party, and showed a more united, aggressive, and influential character in its democratic movement.

In this period, those internal and external factors affected the character of democratic civil society much more favorably than those of the previous period. First, economic development of this period more constructively influenced the character of democratic civil society. Until the regime implemented the decompression policy, economic development had unfavorably affected the character of civil society, or the positive outcome of economic development had not appeared. However, in this period, economic development began to influence the character of civil society more advantageously than that of previous periods. For instance, the influence of successful economic development appeared as a change of the regime's policy toward the opposition force in this period. This policy change advantageously affected the character of civil society. In addition, the influence of successful economic development on political culture resulted active support of the middle class to the civil society in this period. Although it was possible because of the expansion of the political opportunity structure, the influence of economic development on political culture certainly contributed to active support of the middle class to civil society. Therefore, economic

development of this period more significantly and positively affected not only the character of civil society but also the middle class by affecting other factors.

Second, political culture was also an important factor that advantageously affected the character of civil society in this period as it did in the previous period. Especially, the middle class, influenced by democratic civic culture, supported democratic civil society more actively. Furthermore, unlike previous periods, the middle class with democratic civic culture strongly supported the opposition party, and the support caused the new opposition NKDP to be successful in the election.<sup>589</sup> This active support of the middle class became a foundation for changing the divided, isolated, and inconsequential civil society to an active, united, and aggressive one in this period. Therefore, positive outcomes of the changed political culture began to appear from this period as an active support of the middle class and expansion of the political opportunity structure.

Third, whereas the temporary expansion of the political opportunity structure in the previous period was accidental, the opening of the political opportunity structure in this period was planned by the regime albeit it did not work as its planners anticipated. Besides, there were a couple of differences in the expansion of the political opportunity structure between the previous and this period. One significant difference was that the expanded political opportunity structure in this period was not easily retracted by the suppression as it was in the previous period. Another difference was that democratic civil society effectively took advantage of the expansion of the political opportunity structure. Because of these differences, democratic civil society of this period could struggle more actively and aggressively with the authoritarian regime and began to attain

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<sup>589</sup> B. C. Koh, "The 1985 Parliamentary Election in South Korea," *Asian Survey* 25, no. 9 (1985): 890.

counter-hegemony after the general election in 1985. Therefore, the political opportunity structure, influenced by development of political culture, economic development, and external environment, decisively affected democratic civil society to have an active, united, and assertive character and encouraged the middle class to support more actively the democratic movement in this period.

Last, the external environment of this period also more constructively influenced democratic civil society by affecting other factors than that of the previous period. For example, the external environment positively influenced the opening of the political opportunity structure. The U.S. pressure and S. Korea's image as a host country of the Asian and Olympic Games strongly influenced the regime's decision to open the political opportunity structure, which in turn favorably affected the character of democratic civil society.<sup>590</sup> In addition, this external environment caused the regime not to suppress the democratic civil society as harshly as the previous period when the regime returned to a repressive policy from the decompression policy. Compared with the previous period in which the external environment unfavorably affected the character of civil society, the influence of the external environment affected the character of democratic civil society much more favorably in this period. Therefore, the external environment was an important factor that allowed democratic civil society could have a more active, united, and assertive character in its democratic movement.

There were several differences in the democratic movement of civil society in the 1980s from those of previous years. First, the ideological discourse of democratic civil society in the 1980s differently presented a different view of democratization from that of

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<sup>590</sup> Sung Kyung-Ryung, "Hankook Jungchiminjuhwaui Sahojjuk giwon: Sahoiungdongjuk jupgeun" (The Social Root of the Political Democratization: social movement approach), 110-11

the traditional institutional opposition. While traditional party politicians stuck to a liberal vision of democratization, such as the restoration of formal citizenship taken away by the military dictatorship and of procedural rules for contesting power, democratic groups and organizations tried to articulate a new concept of democratization which was broader in scope and more radical in ideological discourse.

The democratic force in the early 1980s understood democratization not as just a change in powerholders or the take-over of power by opposition politicians, but as the construction of democracy in every sector of society.<sup>591</sup> Because of this radical ideology and ultimate goal, an anti-democratic character of civil society, which began to appear in the previous period, spread. However, those anti-democratic groups and organizations were isolated by moderate democratic civil society that pursued liberal democracy. In addition, heterogeneous democratic civil society that had different goals and understanding of democracy was one of major obstacles for the influential democratic movement in this period.

Second, the democratic movement of civil society in the 1980s were strongly anti-imperialist, especially anti-American. A decade earlier, even radical civil society organizations had not been critical of the U.S. role in the maintenance of the authoritarian regime. These radical organizations regarded the U.S. as a benevolent superpower that had the capacity and will to check the authoritarian abuse of a client state like Korea. However, this benevolent image of the U.S. was shattered when the U.S. cooperated with the new military force during the Kwangju massacre. The U.S. was no longer regarded as a friend of democratic forces but as a key behind-the-scene force in the installation of an authoritarian regime by the new military force.



Third, a strongly anti-elitist attitude was dominant in democratic civil society of the 1980s, whereas the democratic movement was led by small group of social and political elites in the 1970s. Democratic groups and organizations of civil society doubted the ability of the opposition party to lead a democratic struggle and were especially wary of elitist democracy led by professional politicians. They thought that procedural democratization might hinder realization of the substantive demands for social justice. Thus, they were skeptical of the institutional approach to democratization. Instead, they believed that the heroic popular pressure of the democratic groups and organizations, including the middle class, was more influential.

Finally, democratic civil society in the 1980s explored counter-hegemonic ideological apparatuses. They realized that the regime maintained the authoritarian coalition through the control of ideological institutions, such as education, media, arts, and literature.<sup>592</sup> Thus, democratic groups and organizations started to rediscover and reformulate traditional popular arts, such as *talchum* (mask dance), *Pansori* (folk opera), *Nongak* (peasant folk music), *Madanggeug* (folk drama), and *madanggut* (folk exorcise ceremony).<sup>593</sup> The decompression policy furnished an opportunity to develop new forms of expression. That is, the popular democratic movement created alternative media,<sup>594</sup> education,<sup>595</sup> and arts. This counter-hegemonic cultural expression contributed to

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<sup>591</sup> UMMDU, *Minjoo Tongil* (Democracy, unification), vol. 3 (1985): 12-23.

<sup>592</sup> Louis Althusser, "Ideology and ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

<sup>593</sup> Chae Hee-Wan, "70nyundaeui Munhwa Undong" (Culture Movements in the 70s) in CISDJ, ed. *Munhwawa Tongchi* (Culture and Rule), (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1982).

<sup>594</sup> Several prominent magazines were *Minjoohwaeui Ghil* (Road to Democratization), *Minjoo Nodong* (democratic labor), *Minjunghwa* (Massification), *Chungmyun Yesu* (Young Jesus), and *Yusung Pyungwoohoe* (Women's Companion).

<sup>595</sup> For example, *Nodong Yahak* (night labor school), *Nonghwal* (village community activity), *Minjoo Daehak* (democracy college).

spreading ideas of the new popular movement to the masses, promoting solidarity among different movements, and forming a collective identity of counter-hegemonic bloc.

In this respect, democratic civil society in the 1980s was better developed, in terms of organization, strategy, and ideology, than it was in the 1970s. It encouraged the emergence of a strong opposition party and built a coalition with the new opposition party. However, the dual repressive policy aimed primarily at democratic civil society caused the coalition to break temporarily, and thus the democratic movement of civil society became inconsequential once again. In this respect, the dual repressive policy of the regime was effective in breaking a coalition between democratic civil society and the opposition party.

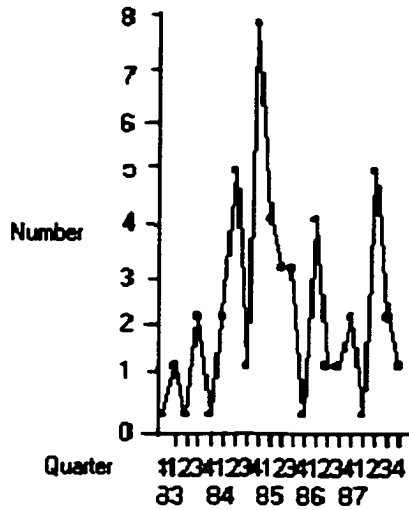
In spite of suppression, the character of democratic civil society in this period was radically changed by the decompression policy of a short period and emergence of the strong opposition party, and the changed character contributed to the influential struggle of civil society. Moreover, the middle class, began to actively support democratic organizations and participated in the democratic movement from this decompression period. In addition, heterogeneous democratic groups and organizations began to establish a coalition and cooperate for influential struggles even though it did not continue after the regime's change of the policy toward democratic civil society.<sup>596</sup> For example, as Figure 5-3 illustrates, the number of democratic organizations sharply increased in this period. As a result, democratic civil society became more assertive in its democratic struggle with the regime.

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<sup>596</sup> For example, in this period, major democratic organizations, such as the *Hankook Nodongja Bokji Hyupuihwoi* (workers, Catholic priests, and students), Council of Minjung Culture Movement (members of Minjung movement organization), Committee for Democratization Struggle (radical students of universities in Seoul), Council for the Promotion of Democratization (Opposition politicians and Jaeya

Figure 5-3

Tendency of Establishment of Democratic Organizations, 1983-1987



Then, why did not democratic transition take place in this period ? This question could be answered several ways. In general, despite the fact that various internal and external factors advantageously influenced the character of civil society, democratic civil society had not yet attained counter-hegemony against the regime in this period, primarily because the regime still had the capability of controlling the democratic movement of civil society.<sup>597</sup> In addition, democratic civil society itself had not yet fully prepared to maximize its force for an influential struggle. Although leaders of democratic civil society recognized the importance of merging their competing ideologies and strategies, they failed to do so.

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leaders), and Council of Minjung Democratic Movement (members of Minjung movement organization) actively established democratic organizations for the influential democratic struggle.

<sup>597</sup> The regime that monopolized physical and ideological apparatuses had confidence of suppressing democratic forces and their democratic movement. However, the regime hesitated to suppress harshly democratic forces and their democratic struggle because of internal and external restrictions, such as the image from the world society and legitimacy problem. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

Moreover, the decompression policy caused internal conflicts within democratic groups and organizations to surface. Under the situation of harsh suppression, democratic civil society had to focus on organizational survival, so they had to cooperate with each other. However, the self-restrained internal conflict between radical and moderate factions began to erupt under the situation of weakened suppression. As a result, democratic civil society had to concentrate its efforts on both internal power struggle and the democratic movement. The moderate-radical conflicts within the student groups and the Jaeya force were especially severe and made democratic civil society difficult to concentrate its efforts on the democratic struggle. In this respect, the decompression policy of the regime induced democratic civil society to face its internal conflicts. Therefore, this internal conflict made the democratic movement inconsequential. Another reason was the breakdown of the coalition between democratic civil society and the opposition party. The coalition lasted until the regime's opening of negotiations for constitutional revision, but began to come apart because of a conflict over the leadership of the democratic movement and the dual repressive policy of the regime. In particular, the discriminative suppression of the opposition force was another important reason for breaking up the coalition. This breaking the opposition coalition caused the democratic movement to become divided and inconsequential.

Finally, even though the middle class began to support the democratic movement in this period, the number of persons directly involved in street demonstrations was small. Most middle class citizens were still reluctant to participate in the democratic movement for two reasons.<sup>598</sup> One was fear of suppression. Although the role of

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<sup>598</sup> *Minjuhwaui Gil*, "12dae Sungugyulgwa bon myukgaji Moonje" (Several Problems of 12<sup>th</sup> General Election), 11.

intellectuals who had the middle class background is very important in changing hegemony, as Gramsci notes, most intellectuals of this period did not play an important role in the democratic movement.<sup>599</sup> The other reason was a negative perception of some radical groups and organizations of civil society. Most of the middle class also had a very negative attitude toward strategies and ideologies of these groups, especially radical student groups and labor organizations because of their radical ideologies and violent strategies.<sup>600</sup> This negative perception of violent democratic struggles made democratic civil society difficult to draw popular support, and made democratic civil society inconsequential in spite of active struggle.

For these reasons, democratic civil society did not achieve its ultimate goal of democratic transition in this period. However, it did show its potential for attaining counter-hegemony. Moreover, the opposition party also showed a possibility of leading the democratic movement inside and outside of the institutional political arena. However, democratic civil society and the the opposition party did not overcome the problems of internal conflict and coalition building between democratic civil society and the NKDP. In this respect, the Chun regime took advantage of this split between the opposition forces and thus could maintain its power.

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<sup>599</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebook*, 5-23.

<sup>600</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, the regime tried to show violence of the democratic movement and radical ideologies of certain democratic groups and organization to ordinary people through

## CHAPTER VI

### BEGINNING OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION (1985- June 1987)

#### 1. Outcomes of the General Election in 1985

The outcome of the general election in 1985 strongly influenced not only the ruling coalition but also the opposition force and its democratic movement. After the election, it was more difficult for the regime to control the democratic movement of civil society and opposition party, and the opposition force came to have the momentum to struggle for democratization. The most important consequence of the election was that not only the opposition party but also democratic civil society became sanguine about the prospect of democratization. The outcome of the election proved that the ruling coalition had been losing hegemony.<sup>601</sup> In this respect, the general election of 1985 had a very significant meaning to not only democratic civil society but also the authoritarian regime.

##### 1) The Government and the Ruling Party

Most people considered the general election of 1985 as a referendum on the legitimacy of the Chun regime.<sup>602</sup> Unlike the anticipation of the regime and ruling DJP,

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the government controlled mass media as a strategy for preventing the active participation of the middle class in the democratic movement. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>601</sup> According to Kim Hyun-Woo's analysis, 42.6% of people who voted for the ruling DJP in 1981 voted for the opposition party in 1985. This result also illustrates that there was serious defection of the urban middle class from the ruling party. Kim Hyun-Woo, "80nyundae Hankookinui Sunguhungtae," (The Voting Pattern of Korean People in the 1980s), in *Hankookui Sungu I*, (Election in Korea) I, (Seoul: Nanam, 1993), 213-14.

<sup>602</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *1980snyundae Hankookui Minjuhwaehaenggwajung* (The Process of Democratic Transition in the 1980s), 113-22.

the outcome of the election frustrated the ruling coalition about post-election politics. Although the DJP maintained a majority in the National Assembly, the outcome of the election caused the NKDP to have a strong position in the institutional political arena. As another important result, the artificially imposed multi-party system was replaced by a two-party system, and DJP no longer controlled the agenda of post-election politics.<sup>603</sup>

In addition, the success of the NKDP in the election created internal dissension within the ruling power bloc. Many ruling party politicians considered the result of the election as a clear signal that the disenchantment of the popular masses was so high that the regime could not be maintained without paying high costs. Thus, moderate politicians within the DJP strongly demanded a more open and accommodating stance toward the opposition force and a democratic reform of internal party decision-making processes.<sup>604</sup> As a response to these demands, President Chun changed several cabinet members and reshuffled rank and file members of the DJP.<sup>605</sup> He appointed Roh Tae-Woo, a strong potential presidential candidate, as the chairman of the DJP. After Roh became the president of the ruling party, he stressed the need for dialogue with the NKDP albeit he promised nothing with substantive content.<sup>606</sup> At the same time, Chun also appointed his hardline proteges to the key cabinet posts and repressive state apparatuses. For instance, Chang Se-Dong, the Chief of the presidential guard, was appointed as the director of the National Security Planning Agency, and Roh Sin-Young, the director of

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<sup>603</sup> The New Korea Democratic Party absorbed defecting members of the loyal opposition parties within a month after the election. As a result, other semi-loyal opposition parties gradually disappeared. James Cotton, "From Authoritarianism to Democracy in South Korea," *Political Studies* 37, no. 2 (June 1990): 251-52.

<sup>604</sup> Pak Seung-Sik, *Sunkubunsukeui Irongwa Silje* (Theory and Practice in Election Analysis), (Seoul: Daeyoung Moonhwa, 1985), 277-89.

<sup>605</sup> Yang Gil-Hyun, "Hankookui 1987nyun Minjuhwhaengkwawirobutuui Chaekryak" (The Democratic Transition of 1987 and the Strategy from the Upper), *Hankookkwa Kookjejungchi* (Korea and International Politics) 11, no. 1 (Seoul: Keukdong Moonjeonguso, spring/summer 1995): 118.

the NSPA, was transferred to the post of Prime Minister.<sup>607</sup> Despite the fact that some softliners<sup>608</sup> gained influence within the regime, the balance of power was still heavily tilted toward the hardline faction because Chun was a strong supporter of hardliners.

Unlike ruling coalition leaders' intention, the DJP failed to absorb key leaders of civil society, such as Jaeya leaders, and to divide the opposition force through the election. However, the artificially created multi-party system was re-established as a concrete two-party system, and the base of legitimacy of the regime became weaker than before because of the emergence of the strong opposition party. This unexpected result of the election caused the opposition force, including the polisation party, to build a coalition. In addition, the result of the election made the democratic movement of civil society uncontrollable, and the regime had to open the dialogue for constitutional revision. Therefore, the unexpected result of the election brought an unfavorable political situation for the regime, and it advantageously affected the character of civil society. Moreover, the result of the election showed that the public opinion was moving from the regime to the opposition force.

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<sup>606</sup> Interview with Roh, *Wolgan Chosun*, (April 1985): 80-91.

<sup>607</sup> Those persons, identified as hardliners of the ruling coalition, opposed any concession to the democratic force of civil society and the opposition party. Their basic strategy to maintain the authoritarian rule was to hand the presidency to one of Chun's loyal followers, according to the existing constitutional rules. Thus, after succession, Chun wanted to retain the power over the successive president. As one strategy of this, President Chun would keep the presidency of the ruling DJP, and had a plan to put Chun's successor as a vice-president of the ruling DJP. This strategy was designed to maintain the *de facto* power of the hardline incumbents through a formal succession process.

<sup>608</sup> The softliners of the regime consisted of a coalition of another military faction, who competed with the hardline faction in the succession struggle, and a group of civilian party politicians who were concerned more with the demand of the mass electorate to maximize votes. Softliners of the regime wanted to have dialogues with the moderate group of the opposition party for constitutional revision because they needed to break existing constitutional rules, which favored hardline incumbents in the struggle for succession.



## 2) Emergence of the Strong Opposition Party

After the election, many conciliatory opposition party politicians defected from their semi-loyal opposition DKP and KNP, and moved to the NKDP. Thus, the NKDP increased its member of the assembly from 67 to 102.<sup>609</sup> This number had a very significant meaning to not only the ruling party but also the opposition party. In the two-party system, the NKDP gained the power to open National Assembly sessions at any time without the consent of the ruling party, and to prevent attempts of the ruling party to pass any bill related to the constitutional revision. As a result, the ruling party had to deal with the autonomous NKDP as a counterpart.

After the election, however, the talks between the DJP and NKDP could not touch the core issues of post-election politics, such as student activism and labor unrest. Many issues raised at the negotiation table were not core issues of democratization, nonetheless, there were few productive outcomes because hardliners in the authoritarian regime rejected any agreement between the two parties. Moreover, the successful result of the election caused the close relationship between democratic civil society and the NKDP to split. Due to the successful result, the opposition NKDP became confident that it could achieve democratization through negotiations with the ruling party in the political institutional arena. Thus, the NKDP began to focus on the politics within the legislature, and the coalition with democratic civil society became peripheral.<sup>610</sup> Especially after the negotiation for the constitutional revision started, democratic civil society and the opposition party pursued separate courses in their movements without cooperating. In fact, keeping a distance from democratic civil society was a condition of opening the

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<sup>609</sup> Robert E. Bedeski, *The Transformation of South Korea: Reform and Reconstruction in the Sixth Republic Under Roh Tae Woo, 1987-1992*, 66.

negotiation for the constitutional revision. This split caused the democratic movement to be inconsequential and inefficient early in this period.

### 3) Democratic Civil Society

After the election of 1985, democratic civil society also significantly changed. Democratic civil society that confirmed strong popular support were more aggressive. With this significant change, democratic civil society faced a dilemma in formulating the post-election strategy. The dilemma was whether to delegate their power to the opposition party or to retain the power of mobilization outside the institutional political arena. In one sense, democratic civil society rediscovered the importance of the institutional political space for an influential democratic movement, and in another sense, the emergence of a strong opposition party might cost them the identity, organization and the power for direct actions. That is, the main issue for democratic civil society was who was the agent of whom.

In reality, however, the momentum of the democratic movement went to the opposition party after the election. It meant a shift from the fight for democratic principles to rule manoeuvring, from mass activism on the streets and workplaces to the National Assembly with authoritarian elites. In this situation, democratic groups and organizations of civil society decided not to give the party the monopoly status of representation of the opposition force.<sup>610</sup> They did not want to sacrifice principles for behind-the-door wheeling and dealing among elites, and to give up their power of direct

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<sup>610</sup> Kim Sun-Hyuk, *The Politics of Democratization: The Role of Civil Society*, 87.

<sup>611</sup> In fact, the split between the opposition party and democratic civil society began from Kim Dae-Jung's public announcement that denounced the militant position of some radical and violent

actions. Rather, democratic civil society tried to influence the NKDP such that it would not deviate from the people's will as expressed in the election. In order to do so, democratic civil society first established a nationwide umbrella organization outside the institutional political arena to coordinate concerted strategies and activities. Secondly, leaders of democratic civil society tried to link their organizations with others for effective resistance against the regime. The parallel organizations of civil society curtailed the influence of the opposition party, and made it difficult to establish coordinated strategies of the opposition as a whole.

In order for democratic civil society to struggle effectively, two national organizations, the Council of Minjung Democratic Movement (*Minminhyup*) and the National Conference for Democracy and Unification (*Minjoo Tongil Kukmin Hoeui*), merged and established a unified organization, the United *Mingjung* Movement for Democracy and Unification (UMMDU) by leaders of 23 organizations from dissidents, labor, the religious community, farmers, the poor and intellectuals, such as Moon Ik-Hwan, Kye Hoon-Je, Kim Seung-Hoon, Lee So-Sun, Song Kun-Ho, Lee Chang-Bok, and Baek Ki-Wan, on 29 March 1985. The UMMDU struggled for realization of social democracy, national unification by democratic force, the guarantee of a democratic labor movement. In addition, this organization tried to obtain a position that could integrate various democratic organizations, and play a political role outside a political institution. It emphasized the minjung movement for national unification, and criticized the NKDP that concentrated its efforts on the negotiation for the constitutional revision. In the mid-1980s, the UMMDU played a very significant role in producing cooperation and

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democratic organizations, such as radical student organizations, on 26 April 1986. *Dong-A Daily*, 26 April 1986.

solidarity among diverse movement sectors and organizations.<sup>612</sup> The UMMDU and other civil society organizations kept their distance from the NKDP and tried to impose movement logic upon the party strategy. Democratic civil society did not put itself under the party network, but regarded the party as their affiliation in the institutional political arena.

In order for democratic civil society to show its strong identity, democratic civil society, especially student organizations and labor unions, became more radical and militant. For instance, on 12 April 1985, about 3,000 workers and students held a street rally to demand the restoration of the *Chunggye* Garment Union, dissolved by the authoritarian regime in 1980.<sup>613</sup> The strike action was first confined to workplaces but soon expanded into the streets in working class districts, and became radicalized when students joined. It was the workers' first attempt to overcome the collective action problem among isolated shop-floor level unions through intra-solidarity among workers and inter-solidarity with other sectors in the sphere of civil society.

In order to carry out a more influential democratic movement, labor movement activists established workers' mass political organizations, such as the Seoul Area Labor Movement League (*Seonoryun*)<sup>614</sup> and the Incheon Area Labor Movement League

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<sup>612</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 29 March 1985; Selig S. Harrison, "Dateline from South Korea: A Divided Seoul," *Foreign Policy* 67, (1987): 154-75.

<sup>613</sup> The United Mingjung Movement for Democracy and Unification (UMMUD) et al., "Our Position to Support the Solidarity Struggle of Workers," (June 27, 1985). After this event, the UMMDU and 31 social movement organizations issued statements supporting the strikes, and provided shelters for striking workers.

<sup>614</sup> Labor movement activists and union members in the Seoul area established the Federation of Labor Movements in the Seoul Area (*Seonoryun*) on August 25, 1985. The *Sonoryun*, like any other minjung movement group, asserted that the constitutional revision must go beyond the issue of the direct presidential election to guaranteeing basic rights of workers, farmers, and the urban poor. The *Sonoryun* propagandized the *Sammin* revolution to doctrinize and organize the workers' struggle for increasing wages. The "Sunoryun Sinmoon" was its newsletter to advocate ideologies and strategies and criticize the authoritarian regime. *Joongang Daily*, 27 August 1985.

*(Innoryun)*.<sup>615</sup> Leaders of the *Seonoryun* and *Innoryun* emphasized that industrial action alone was not enough to achieve their goals because the authoritarian regime always suppressed workers' demands on behalf of employers. Thus, they concluded that the influential labor movement was not possible without struggling with the repressive regime. The emergence of the *Seonoryun* and *Innoryun* signified that the most radical sector of the working class was transforming workers' economic struggle within the confinement of labor unions into the political struggle against the authoritarian regime.

Student movement activists also established radical organizations, such as the National Federation of Student Associations (*Chunhakryun*)<sup>616</sup> and the Struggle Committee for Three Mins: People, Nation, and Democracy (*Sammintuwi*), as a political arm of the *Chunhakryun*. The major goals of the *Sammintuwi* were: 1) to promote the labor-student solidarity (*Nohak Yundae*), 2) to struggle politically against Chun's authoritarian regime through establishing a coalition with opposition politicians and other civil society organizations, and 3) to directly attack U.S. policy that colluded with the military dictatorship.<sup>617</sup> The most radical incident by this student organization was the three-day occupation of the United States Information Service building from May 23-25,

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<sup>615</sup> Labor movement activists in the Incheon area established the Federation of Labor Movements in the Incheon Area (*Innoryun*) on February 17, 1986. The *Innoryun* had a very similar internal structure, goals, and strategies as the *Seonoryun*. It criticized the conservative NKDP for having too narrow a definition of democracy by equating it with a direct presidential election. It published the "Nodongja Sinmoon" as a newsletter. *Dong-A Daily*, 8 February 1986.

<sup>616</sup> Nationwide student organization members of 23 universities established the National Federation of Student Association (*Chunhaknyun*) on 17 April 1985. The *Chunhaknyun* was especially interested in Minjung democracy and struggled to overthrow the dictatorial regime and for democratization. In particular, this organization opposed the main position of the opposition party. In addition, this organization tried to control various student organizations and tried to maintain common strategies and ideologies through communication with other student organizations of every university and college. In order to mobilize students and violently struggle against the regime, the *Chunhaknyun* linked with various student organizations, including *Sammintuwi*. *Joongang Daily*, 18 April 1985.

<sup>617</sup> The Struggle Committee for Three Mins: People, Nation, and Democracy (*Sammintuwi*) was established by radical university students on 17 April 1985. Its ideologies were based on Leninism, and it

1985.<sup>618</sup> This emergence of radical organizations and movement created the political space for the NKDP to maneuver and constrained moderates of the DJP.

Although democratic civil society intended to maintain a cooperative relationship with the NKDP for an influential democratic movement, the cooperative relationship gradually changed to a competitive relationship, especially after the NKDP agreed to open the negotiations with the regime for constitutional revision. Thus, democratic civil society became more radical and violent because the NKDP emerged as a leading force of the democratization.<sup>619</sup> This radical and violent character caused democratic civil society to divide into radical and moderate factions and put them in ideological and strategic conflicts. Nevertheless, compared with previous periods, democratic civil society became more active, assertive, united, and influential in the general struggle for democratization, and the middle class increasingly supported the democratic movement.

## **2. Negotiations for the Constitutional Revision and Suppression of Civil Society**

### **1) Politics of the Constitutional Revision between the DJP and NKDP**

Opposition forces succeeded in forcing the regime to open negotiations for constitutional revision. President Chun made a crucial concession to accept the opposition's demand on 30 April 1986. In the meeting of three leaders of the ruling and

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stressed national unification, struggle for democracy, *Minjung* liberation and *Minjung* revolution. *Joongang Daily*, 18 April 1985.

<sup>618</sup> Especially, after the incident of the occupation of the United States Information Service building by the radical students, the police were sent to the campuses directly without prior request from college authorities. The massive police hunting of radical student movement activists signified the end of the decompression policy. *Washington Post*, Friday, 24 May 1985, A1.

<sup>619</sup> For instance, on 19 April 1985, about 20,000 of 56 universities gathered in each university and celebrated the "4.19 student revolution." After this, students marched outside campus and demanded an end of suppression on student organizations. Students and the riot police violently confronted with each other. Students threw stones toward the police and destroyed police stations and cars. In this process, the riot police violently crashed demonstrators and arrested dozens of students. *Joongang Daily*, 20 April 1985.

opposition parties, Chun said that he would not oppose the constitutional revision before his term expired in 1988, if all parties reached an agreement on the time table of the constitutional revision. In addition, he asked the NKDP to stop the petition campaign and mass rallies, and confine the debate on constitutional revision within the institutional political arena. The Chun regime intended to break the united front between the NKDP and democratic civil society. In this sense, the authoritarian regime adopted a classical divide-and-rule strategy.<sup>620</sup>

It was first time that both the regime and the opposition force had “threat power” which enabled each actor to threaten the other in order to deter certain moves in future playing of the game.<sup>621</sup> Starting in May 1986, the NKDP distanced itself from democratic civil society, and acquiesced in the suppression of militant students and workers. It agreed to limit its role as a player of political dialogue at the elite level. The politics for the constitutional revision between the DJP and NKDP officially started from the establishment of the “Special Committee for Constitutional Revision” in the National Assembly.<sup>622</sup>

When constitutional talks opened, the DJP proposed a parliamentary cabinet system with a strong prime minister and a relatively weak president. The DJP proposed a parliamentary system not because this kind of Westminster model was more democratic than the presidential system but because it was the only possible formula to remain in

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<sup>620</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *1980smyundae Hankookui Minjuhwaehaenggwajung* (The Process of Democratic Transition in the 1980s), 136-7.

<sup>621</sup> Steven J. Brams and Marek P. Hessel, “Threat Power in Sequential Game,” *International Studies Quarterly* 28, (March 1984): 23-44.

<sup>622</sup> In fact, the proposal of the NKDP for establishing the “Special Committee for Constitutional Revision” in the National Assembly was initially rejected by the government and the ruling DJP. The major reason was that the softliners within the regime did not have much autonomy from the hardline of the regime. Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development (CISJD), *Gaehungwa*

power. On the other hand, the NKDP proposed a presidential system with a direct popular election.<sup>623</sup> Two parties engaged in a typical conflict about institutions, assuming that the institutional arrangement can determine the prior probabilities in which particular interests will be realized to a definite degree and in a specific manner.<sup>624</sup>

The constitutional talks between the DJP and NKDP faced difficulties in the beginning of the process. For instance, the “Special Committee for Constitutional Revision” had never held a single session to debate on the constitutional reform. The position of the DJP was to force the NKDP either to accept a parliamentary system, or to face the continuation of the existing system. However, the fundamental problem of both DJP and NKDP was that neither party had an autonomous political base. For the DJP, support of the hardline was the biggest obstruction in order to remain in an advantageous position in the relationship with the NKDP. The NKDP also needed the support of democratic civil society for organizing popular masses to press the regime to accept its proposal of the presidential system by a direct presidential election.<sup>625</sup> Thus, as long as the coalition between the NKDP and democratic civil society broke down, the DJP did not have to be afraid of the pressure of the NKDP.

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*Minjoohwawoondong* (Constitutional Revision and the Democratization Movement), (Seoul, Minjungsa, 1986), 79; James Cotton, “From Authoritarianism to Democracy in South Korea,” 251.

<sup>623</sup> Pak Se-Jin, “Two Forces of Democratization in Korea,” 51.

<sup>624</sup> Adam Przeworski, “Democracy as Contingent Outcome of Conflicts,” in *Constitutionalism and Democracy*, eds. Jon Elster and Rune Slagstad (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1988), 68.

<sup>625</sup> According to the position of democratic civil society, most democratic groups and organizations were distrustful about the regime’s intention for democratization. The democratic groups and organizations in civil society believed that the real intention of the opposition party was to take power rather than democratization. Because of this distrust toward the opposition party, democratic civil society was reluctant to establish a coalition with the opposition party.



## 2) Suppression of the Democratic Movement of Civil Society

Since negotiations for constitutional revision stalled as soon as they were started, the hardline of the regime and radical civil society organizations each gained strength. As a result, the leadership of the democratic transition politics moved from moderates opposition<sup>626</sup> and the softline within regime to radical civil society organizations and hardliners within the regime. These two militant adversaries went on a determined course of confrontation on the streets without any intermediation. As a response to this confrontation, the authoritarian regime continued to pursue the double-edged policy toward the opposition party and democratic civil society. The Chun regime was tolerant of political activities of the opposition party, but intensified suppression on radical groups and organizations of civil society.<sup>627</sup> For instance, the regime was politically generous to the NKDP and pro-NKDP organizations, such as the Council for the Promotion of Democratization, while arresting organizers and followers of radical democratic organizations, such as the Self-Reliant Democratization Struggle Committee Against the United States and Fascism (*Jamintuwi*),<sup>628</sup> the National Democratic Struggle Committee

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<sup>626</sup> The moderate opposition was composed of most NKDP politicians and some civil society organizations, such as the Council for the Promotion of Democracy, the Alliance for Democratic Constitutional Politics and *Minjoo* (democracy) University. For the NKDP and supporting groups outside the National Assembly, democratic transition meant to return to the people the right to choose the form of government and the right to choose their representative. For example, Kim Dae-Jung suggested adopting the Greek pattern of democratic transition, such as the constitutional system of the Third Republic (1963-1972) which had been abrogated by Park Chung-Hee through the Yushin coup. Ryu Chung-Hyun, Interview with Kim Dae-Jung, *Wolgan Chosun*, (April 1985): 126-7.

<sup>627</sup> For example, on 7 October 1985, the police sought two organizations of civil society and confiscated anti-government handbills that criticized the government and demanded democratization. On October 22, 1985, the police arrested leaders of democratic organizations, such as *Mintongryun*, Hankook Kidokkyo Chungryun Yonhaphwoi, and Minjuunron Undong Yonhaphwoi. In addition, on November 23, 1985, the government blockaded headquarters of the *Minjutongrun*, and prohibited political activities of the chairman and vice chairman of this organization. On 7 May 1986, the government passed a special law that could heavily punish demonstrators who used firebomb, pipes, and stones. *Dong-A Daily*, 8 and 23 October 1985; *Dong-A Daily*, 23 November 1985; *Dong-A Daily*, 7 May 1986.

<sup>628</sup> The Self-Reliant Democratization Struggle Committee against the United States and Fascism (*Jamintuwi*) was established by radical student movement activists, such as Lee Myung-Jea, on 10 April 1986. The *Jamintuwi* understood the importance of the constitutional struggles to achieve the minjung's

Against Imperialism and Fascism (*Minmintuwi*),<sup>629</sup> the *Minbulryun*, the Federation of Labor Movements in Incheon Area, the Federation of Labor Movements in Seoul Area, the Coalition of Social Movements in the Incheon area, the Youth League for Democratic Movement, the UMMDU and its umbrella organizations.

In addition to the double-edged policy, the regime launched an ideological campaign against radical organizations by mobilizing the state-controlled mass media to label the radical organizations as pro-Communist, subversive forces.<sup>630</sup> Against this suppression, democratic civil society responded with more violent anti-government mass protests. However, the mass mobilization was not enough to intimidate the authoritarian regime which monopolized physical forces and the government controlled mass media. More importantly, civil society did not have the capacity to overthrow the regime because the coalition with the opposition party was broken by the double-edged policy.<sup>631</sup>

However, in spite of harsh suppression, democratic organizations continued to be established, and their democratic struggle became more radical and violent. For example, two thousand Korean students, some hurling stones and gasoline bombs, clashed with

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democratic rights as a cornerstone of anti-American struggles for national liberation. The *Jamintuwi* conceived of constitutional battles between military fascism and conservative oppositions as a process by which the U.S. would rearrange the structure of fascist power to deceive the transformative will of the *minjung*. In addition, it emphasized the role of labor and student's organizations that should support workers' revolution. It also tried to turn the mass enthusiasm for the constitutional change into anti-U.S. and anti-government struggles. In order to succeed the struggle for democratization, this organization emphasized on alliance between workers and peasants with students. This organization considered workers and peasants as support groups, and considered student organizations as leading forces of democratization. The *Jamintuwi* was closely related to the *Minmintuwi*, *Ehaktu*, and *Chunhakryun*, and published a newsletter, "Habangsunen." *Jonaang Daily*, 12 April 1986.

<sup>629</sup> The National Democratic Struggle Committee Against Imperialism and Fascism (*Minmintuwi*) was established by radical student movement activists on 29 March 1986. The *Minmintuwi* criticized democratic struggles of the Jaeya force and the opposition party, and asserted restoration of a national democratic constitution. Its ideology was an anti-American and anti-nuclear line. This organization used boycotting of students' military training and violent struggling against the authoritarian regime as strategies. *Dong-A Daily*, 29 March 1986.

<sup>630</sup> Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>631</sup> *Korea/Update*, 80, (August 1986): 1-2.

police on three Seoul campuses in demonstrations against the Chun regime.<sup>632</sup> The fundamental reason that democratic civil society could resist and be more aggressive under suppression was the active support from the middle class. Additionally, it was difficult for the regime to destroy democratic organizations completely because most democratic organizations of this period were established as a form of the coalition organization.<sup>633</sup> The regime was also difficult to control democratic struggles because of the large size of the movement, the participation of many organizations, and the radical and violent character of the movement.<sup>634</sup> Because of these changes and the ineffectiveness of the repressive policy, the Chun regime seriously considered using the military to suppress the democratic movement at the end of this period.

### 3) Politics of the Street and the Cessation of Talks

Because of the regime's harsh suppression of democratic civil society, Kim Dae-Jung and Kim Young-Sam of the NKDP threatened to withdraw from the "Special Committee" if the DJP unilaterally pushed through its proposal of the parliamentary system.<sup>635</sup> In spite of the threat of the NKDP, however, the DJP continued to press for a parliamentary system. Thus, the NKDP decided to return to the street politics in alliance

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<sup>632</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 13 March 1986.

<sup>633</sup> For example, the National Federation of Student Association (*Chunhaknyun*), established on April 17, 1985, consisted of nationwide Student organization members of 23 universities. In addition, the Federation of Labor Movements in Incheon Area (*Innoryun*), established on 7 February 1986, consisted of labor movement activists in the Incheon area.

<sup>634</sup> For instance, on September 5 1985, about 1,000 students of six universities gathered at Korea University in Seoul, and demanded the regime not suppress students and the minjung minju democratic movement. In addition, on October 8, about 2,800 students of 12 universities demonstrated and criticized the economic policies of the government. After a campus meeting, students got out of campus and distributed anti-government handbills to citizens. On November 4, a group of student dissidents occupied the U.S. business organization's third-story office suite in the Chosun Hotel, and protested against the South Korean government and U.S. trade policies. *Dong-A Daily*, 6 September 1985; *Dong-A Daily*, 9 October 1985; *Asahi Shinbun*, 4 November 1985.

<sup>635</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 21 October 1986.

with democratic civil society to put pressure on the regime to accept their demand for a directly elected presidential system after early October 1986. For example, on 29 November 1986, the NKDP with radical organizations held a mass rally in downtown Seoul even though it was blocked by the largest police mobilization in history.<sup>636</sup> The rally failed, although not only because of the blockade. The divisions between the NKDP and democratic civil society was still too deep. Democratic civil society did not enthusiastically cooperate with the NKDP because they were distrustful of the party's commitment to democracy.

This failure of the mass rally provided a lesson to leaders of the NKDP that the party's strategy based on street power would never succeed without reconciliation with democratic civil society. The first sign of the healing process appeared when two Kims and dissident church leaders discussed the necessity of reconstructing a united front between the NKDP and civil society on December 12, 1986.<sup>637</sup> After the meeting, these two leaders decided to shift the moderate strategy of the NKDP to a maximalist strategy, and this shift made the voice of the moderates within the regime weak.<sup>638</sup>

There were several reasons why the NKDP gave up compromising with the DJP on the constitutional revision. First, there was so much distrust between the regime and the NKDP. Second, the opposition party realized that the compromise solution was considered as breaking a coalition by civil society. Third, in Korean culture, compromise is seen not as a sign of rationality and good will, but as a signal of weakness and lack of

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<sup>636</sup> *Korea Weekly Report*, 18 December 1986.

<sup>637</sup> *Korea Weekly Report*, 18 December 1986.

<sup>638</sup> For example, the NKDP came out from the National Assembly Hall, and opened a street parliament. On February 12, 1986, the first anniversary of the National Assembly election, the NKDP launched the 10 million-signature campaign to petition for a Constitutional revision to allow direct presidential elections. *Dong-A Daily*, 12 February 1986; James W. Morley, *Driven by Growth: Political Change in the Asia-Pacific Region* (New York: An East Gate Book, 1993), 177.

resolve, not only by one's adversaries but by one's allies as well. Any gesture toward compromise was likely to be met by further demands of the adversary who tries to take advantage of the opponent's perceived weakness.

On the other hand, the regime's hardliners, encouraged by the successful blockade of the Seoul rally, became more confident of the police power and stepped up the suppression. Along with suppression of democratic civil society, the Chun regime also tried to divide the NKDP. The first fruit of the regime's effort to split the NKDP was the "Lee Min-Woo Plan."<sup>639</sup> Lee Min-Woo proposed the so called "Lee Min-Woo plan" or "Democratization First Plan" without consultation with the *de facto* leaders of the NKDP. According to the proposal, the NKDP would agree to reopen the "Special Committee for Constitutional Revision" if the regime accepted a new compromise plan. The NKDP could accept the parliamentary system if the regime accepted several conditions: 1) freedom of press and freedom of speech, the abrogation of the "Basic Press Law," 2) guarantee of people's full basic rights, 3) political neutrality of government officials, 4) release of prisoners of conscience and restoration of civil rights, 5) establishment of a two party system, 6) implementation of local autonomy, and 7) fair election laws.<sup>640</sup> The two Kims dismissed Lee's plan and reaffirmed the direct presidential system as an unnegotiable party position, arguing that Lee's seven democratization measures were prerequisites for constitutional reform, not subject to bargaining.

On the contrary, the DJP initially greeted Lee's proposal warmly because the DJP interpreted it as a sign of Lee's independence from the real leaders of the NKDP. However, after the meeting between Lee Min-Woo and Kim Young Sam, Lee retracted

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<sup>639</sup> Han Sung-Joo, "South Korea in 1987," *Asian Survey* 28, no. 1 (January 1988): 53; *Dong-A Daily*, 24 December 1986.

his original proposal and confirmed the direct presidential system as the unchanged party plan. However, Lee Min-Woo, encouraged by the government-controlled press, began to push his seven-point proposal after two months of dormancy.<sup>641</sup> When Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung pressured Lee Min-Woo to withdraw his plan, Lee refused to back down and even tried to become independent from the *de facto* leadership. The two Kims eventually decided to establish a new opposition party to purge Lee Min-Woo's faction. Of the 92 assembly members, 73 supported the two Kims' leadership, abandoned the NKDP, and formed a new party, the Reunification Democratic Party (RDP), on 8 April 1987.<sup>642</sup>

Due to the establishment of the RDP, the NKDP became virtually defunct. The RDP was more intransigent toward the regime, not through compromise with softliners within regime but through mobilizing masses from below. However, the regime did not accept the RDP as a legitimate counterpart in the institutional political arena. The collapse of the NKDP provided hardliners of the regime an excuse to shut down constitutional talks. On April 13, President Chun officially announced the indefinite suspension of all debates on constitutional reform, and that his successor would be selected by the existing electoral college system.<sup>643</sup> He said that the emergence of the

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<sup>640</sup> *Korea Weekly Report* 6, no. 1 (January 1987).

<sup>641</sup> On February 9, Lee Min-Woo met Ambassador James Lilley and discussed his 7-point plan. After the meeting, Lee said "our party's stand is a revision of the Constitution for a direct election. However, the cabinet system has enough value to warrant consideration." CISJD, *Last Victory: An Overview of the Korean People's Struggle for Democracy in 1987* (Seoul: Minjungs, 1988), 63. William Clark, Assistant undersecretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific visited Seoul in early March and made it clear that the United States supported the Lee Plan. After the meeting with Clark, Lee emphasized that his position must not be modified or canceled. Lilley praised Lee for resurrecting the plan in a highly publicized meeting with Lee on March 13 after Secretary of the State, George Shultz, had stopped in Seoul on his way from China. Tim Shorrock, "South Korea: Chun, the Kims and the Constitutional Struggle," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1988): 95-110.

<sup>642</sup> *Joongang Daily*, 8 April 1987.

<sup>643</sup> Nicholas Eberstadt, "Taiwan and South Korea: The Democratization of Outlier States," *World Affairs* 155, no. 2 (fall 1992): 86. According to Kim Ik-Sung, President Chun assigned the announcement

RDP made it impossible to reach a constitutional compromise. In the statement, Chun said that “it had become impossible to revise the Constitution during his tenure due to the shortage of remaining time.”<sup>644</sup>

The RDP and democratic civil society protested Chun’s announcement with street demonstrations, issuing public statements, sits-in, and hunger strikes.<sup>645</sup> Thereafter, the democratic struggle followed a different pattern. After Chun’s announcement, the democratic movement was initiated and led by broad sectors of the middle classes, such as religious leaders, including previously dormant Buddhists, college professors, and high school teachers, artists, poets, novelists, drama people, movie actors, directors, lawyers, and medical doctors.<sup>646</sup> In addition, since then, the middle class actively joined democratic organizations and participated in the democratic movement in spite of suppression. Because of this, the confrontation between the regime and democratic civil society slowly escalated into a level of civil war.

### 3. The Democratic Movement of Civil Society

After the general election in 1985, democratic civil society struggled more actively with the Chun regime by building solidarity. At the same time, democratic civil

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in early March, and he finally decided to announce the statement on the day when the new opposition party (RDP) was established on April 8. Kim Sung-ik, *Chun Doo-Hwan yuksungjeungun* (Chun Doo-Hwan’s Testimony), (Seoul: Chosun Ilbosa, 1993), 286.

<sup>644</sup> *Hankook Daily*, 13 April 1987.

<sup>645</sup> For example, on 22 April 1987, 1,475 professors from 48 universities in Seoul and other major cities criticized the Chun’s decision of suspending the negotiation for a constitutional revision. *Dong-A Daily*, 22 April 1987.

<sup>646</sup> On May 9 1986, 152 Buddhist and priests maintained that anti-American, anti-war, anti-nuclear slogans were not necessarily meant to deny the liberal democratic system. They also called for constitutional revision. In addition, after Chun’s announcement, even lower classes expressed their aspiration of democratization. For example, on June 18, 50-100 taxis stopped on the street of Busan City, sounding horns. In the process, students joined with taxi drivers’ demonstration, and demanded democratization. *Chosun Daily*, 10 May 1986; *Hankook Kidokkyo Sahoe Munje Yonguwon*, *Kaehon kwa*

society faced a severe ideological conflict, so called the “CNP” debate. Through this ideological conflict, democratic groups and organizations came to unite, and to have the capacity to challenge hegemony of the state. In addition, democratic nationwide umbrella organizations were established, and democratic civil society could struggle more effectively with the Chun regime.

### 1) The “CNP” Debate within Civil Society

The year 1985 witnessed the “CNP” debate in the movement sector and the social formation debate in academic circles that contributed to the theoretical elaboration of the *minjung* ideology.<sup>647</sup> The “CNP” represented the initial letters of three strategic lines among democratic groups: Civil Democratic Revolution (CDR), National Democratic Revolution (NDR), and People’s Democratic Revolution (PDR). The CNP debate, initiated by the Youth League for Democratic Movement in late 1984, was an effort to articulate the problem of social formation, its contradiction, and the strategy and tactics of the transformative movement from a more practical angle than ever, as the government had carried out the decompression policy.<sup>648</sup>

First, the CDR group considered South Korea as a peripheral capitalist society where the main contradiction was between the military dictatorship and the *minjung*, who

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*Minjuhwa* (Constitutional Revision and Democratization), (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1986), 152; *Dong-A Ilbo*, 18 June 1987.

<sup>647</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, a former police officer, the “CNP debate” began within the *Minchungryun* from late 1984. Later, this debate spread to the whole democratic civil society. The regime claimed that the “CNP” debate was strongly influenced by the North Korean government. Thus, the hardliners of the regime thought it was dangerous to leave the debate unchallenged so it suppressed those democratic organizations that were involved in this debate. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>648</sup> Ilsongjung, *Haksaengundongnonjaengsa* (The History of Dispute about the Student Movement), (Seoul: Ilsongjung, 1990), 57-70; Kwon Hyung-Chul, *Hankook Byunhyuk Undong Nonjaeng* (The History of Korean Transformative Movement), (Seoul: Ilsongjung, 1990); Cho Kwang, *Minju*



consisted not only of workers, farmers and the urban poor, but also of the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie because they all suffered from economic dependency. The major goal of this group was to overthrow the authoritarian regime and to establish a civilian government. Since the Korean proletariat was still weak, this group asserted that the democratic movement should be led by the middle class, including intellectuals, students, and conscientious politicians.<sup>649</sup> Those democratic groups mainly used radical and violent demonstrations, such as occupations of governmental and U.S. offices as a strategy of its struggle.

On the other hand, the NDR group, led by Moon Yong-Sik and Park Moon-Sik, viewed South Korea in terms of a neo-colonial monopoly capitalist country, in which the primary contradiction was between imperial forces and military fascism based on monopoly capital, on the one hand, and the Korean *minjung*, on the other. The NDR contended that since the national contradiction was intertwined with the fascist contradiction, the *minjung*'s struggle should be anti-imperial and anti-fascist at the same time.<sup>650</sup> With regard to the subject of a transformative movement, the NDR identified workers as a main force, farmers and the urban poor as an auxiliary force, and progressive youth and students as advanced groups. The national capitalists and the middle class were considered necessary partners to replace the military fascist force with a national democratic government.

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Byunhyuk Nonjaenge Daehayo (The Debate on Korean Social Formation), vol. 1, eds. Pak Hyon-Chae and Cho Hi-Yon (Seoul: Chuksan, 1989).

<sup>649</sup> Moon Byung-Joo, "Democratic Transition and Consolidation in Korea: with Special Reference to the Relationships and Internal Dynamics of the State-Political Society-Civil Society," (Ph.D. diss., Kunkook University, 1995), 104.

<sup>650</sup> Moon Byung-Joo, "Democratic Transition and Consolidation in Korea: with Special Reference to the Relationships and Internal Dynamics of the State-Political Society-Civil Society," 104.

The PDR, the most radical wing, defined South Korea as a state monopoly capitalist society with the main conflict between imperialism, military fascism, and bourgeois democratic force, on the one hand, and workers, farmers, the urban poor and revolutionary intellectuals, on the other. The latter was, of course, the agent of revolution.<sup>651</sup> Unlike the NDR, the PDR dismissed the importance of alliances with the national capitalists and the middle class. The CDR, which echoed the ideological orientation of earlier *minjung* discourse, was criticized as petty-bourgeois romanticism and opportunism, the PDR as radical leftism. On the other hand, the NDR earned wide support among the movement intellectuals.<sup>652</sup>

Table 6-1  
Differences of "CNP" Lines

	Status of the State	Contradiction	Leading Force	Struggle Phase
CDR (Civil Democratic Revolution)	dependent capitalism	the regime --- Minjung	the middle class	anti-fascists struggle---anti-imperialist struggle
NDR (National Democratic Revolution)	new colonial monopolized capitalism	Imperialist regime and monopolized capitalist---minjung	- Leading force—workers, peasants, and the poor - Guiding force—students - Cooperative force—the middle class	anti-imperialists and anti-fascists struggle
PDR (People's Democratic Revolution)	State monopolized capitalism	Imperialist regime and capitalists group	workers, peasants, the poor and revolutionary intellectuals	anti-imperialists and anti-fascists struggle

<sup>651</sup> Kim Jang-Sil, "Democratic Transition in South Korea, 1985-1988: The Eclectic Approach," 171-75.

<sup>652</sup> Yun Sung-Yi, "Sahoeundongronui kwanjumesu bon Hankook kwonwijuicheje Byundong" (The Change of the Authoritarian System in the Perspective of the Social Movement Theory), 120-21.

Toward the end of 1985, the NLPDR (National Liberation People's Democratic Revolution) thesis was advanced to bring the issue of imperial domination to the center of attention.<sup>653</sup> This thesis defined South Korea as colonial semi-feudalist, whose fundamental feature of social formation was colonial dominance. In the political perspective, the Korean state was seen as a neo-colonial agent of the U.S. under her military occupation and at the same time as a "comprador military dictatorship" which served the interests of pro-American classes, such as comprador capitalists, landlords, and reactionary bureaucrats. In the economic perspective, the NLPDR thesis characterized Korean economy as colonial in the sense that the foreign monopoly capitalists and comprador capitalists possessed the basic means of production, and as semi-feudal because of the coexistence of pre-modern and capitalist modes of production. The proponents of the NLPDR distinguished two contradictions between the U.S. imperial force and the Korean *minjung* and between the pro-American classes and the *minjung*. Accordingly, an anti-imperial and national liberation was set as the main goal of a transformative movement. The subject of revolution was a nationalist force, including the working class, peasants, students, intellectuals, national capitalists, and patriot soldiers.

In the critical response to the NLPDR, the NDR group criticized the NLPDR for failing to differentiate colonial from neo-colonial rule and to appreciate the relative autonomy of the neo-colonial state, based on democratic monopoly capital, from the imperial state. Defining the South Korean system as neo-colonial state monopoly

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<sup>653</sup> Kwon Hyung-Chul, *Hankook Byunhyuk Undong Nonjaeng* (The History of Korean Transformative Movement), (Seoul: Ilsonjung, 1990); Cho Kwang, *Minju Byunhyuk Nonjaeng daehayo* (The Debate on Korean Social Formation), eds., Pak Hyon-Chae and Cho Hi-Yon, vol. 1, (Seoul: Chuksan, 1989).

capitalism, this position emphasized two stages of revolution: first, a bourgeois democratic revolution, and second, a socialist revolution. The first revolution intended to eliminate political and economic obstacles, such as military dictatorship and imperial forces, to the development of working class interest and power, without changing the capitalist relation of production. Political freedom of the minjung and national liberation from economic and political domination by the imperial force were believed to be the preconditions for a socialist revolution. Categorizing political forces into reactionary bourgeois, liberal bourgeois, and proletariat, the advocates of NDR assigned the latter to the mission of revolution by armed uprising.

## 2) Student Movements

Students were the most active and leading group among various civil society groups in struggling for democratization in this period.<sup>654</sup> After intense internal debates and power struggle, radical student organizations took control over moderate student organizations and led the democratic struggle of not only the student movement but also of other democratic groups and organizations. In the first half of 1985, an internal conflict, the so called “MT-MC” dispute took place.<sup>655</sup> The MC group believed that the first priority of the student movement was an autonomization of the campus that should gradually develop into a political struggle. The MT group criticized that strategy was ineffective, and argued that the student movement needed a direct political struggle with

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<sup>654</sup> Bret L. Billet, “The History and Role of Student Activism in the Republic of Korea: the politics of contestation and conflict resolution in fledgling democracy.”

<sup>655</sup> MT is an abbreviation of the Committee of Struggle for Democratization (Minjuhwa Tujaeng Uiwonhoi), and MC is an abbreviation of “Main Current.”

the regime in order to achieve democratization.<sup>656</sup> Eventually, those two groups compromised and together led the student movement. For example, unlike the strategic difference, they agreed the necessity of a coalition with workers in the democratic movement, and tried to represent workers' interests.<sup>657</sup>

Student movement activists in this period especially emphasized radical and violent strategies, and their ideological origins came from leftist ideologies, such as the Marxist dependency theory and new imperialism.<sup>658</sup> Besides these radical ideologies, strong anti-Americanism was a feature of their platform, and it was often expressed by radical movements. For instance, on 24 May 1985, about 100 students forcefully occupied the U.S. Information Service Library in Seoul, and barricaded themselves inside the building to protest American support for the Chun regime.<sup>659</sup> Furthermore, many radical movement organizations, such as the *Sammintuwi*, were established, and directly challenged the state authority through radical and violent protests. Students' radical protests were based on a critical perception of political parties. That is, those radical student movement activists were skeptical of the intent of the ruling and opposition parties regarding democratization, and therefore did not believe negotiations could bring

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<sup>656</sup> *Sin Dong-A*, (April 1989): 446-47.

<sup>657</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, the "MT" group was destroyed by the arrest of leaders of this group. The MC group was divided internally by an ideological difference, and self-destructed in 1985. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>658</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, in this period, the regime thought that the main channel of these leftist ideologies was through the North Korean government and radical students closely contacted to North Korean spies and organizations. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>659</sup> *Washington Post*, Friday, 24 May 1985, A1. Besides this protest, on 4 November 1985, a group of student dissidents occupied the U.S. business organization's third-story office, and protested against the South Korean government and U.S. trade policies. In addition, on 12 November 1985, three students rushed into the office of the Bank of America in the southeastern port of Busan and briefly occupied a room to protest the U.S. economic policies toward South Korea. On 18 November 1985, students occupied the ruling DJP's political training institute outside of Seoul, and called for the repeal of the fascist Constitution.

real democracy.<sup>660</sup> Additionally, most student movement activists did not strongly support the position of the NKDP until it gave up negotiations with the ruling party.

In this period, the student movement for constitutional revision was mostly organized by newly established radical student organizations, such as the National Federation of Student Association (*Chunhaknyun*) and the *Sammintuwi*.<sup>661</sup> Leaders of these student movement organizations defined the constitutional movement as a part of the movement toward the *minjung* democracy,<sup>662</sup> along with national unification and emancipation of the *minjung*, rather than as a mere change of the presidential election law. Because of this radical ideology, suppression by the regime was harsher, and it was best revealed in the attempt to enact “Campus Stabilization Law”(*Hakwon Anjung Bup*) in August 1985. The main purpose of this law was to send students who were deeply involved in social movements to labor concentration camps for re-education without due process of law.<sup>663</sup> Namely, the regime tried to isolate student movement activists from

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<sup>660</sup> Major demands of the student movement between 1986 and 1987 were:

- 1986: 1) to deny system of graduation fixed number  
2) to overthrow American imperialism and withdrawal of U.S. Army  
3) to overthrow military dictatorial regime  
4) revision of the Constitution toward direct presidential election  
1987: 1) abolishment of assertion for sustaining previous constitution  
2) to establishment of neutral cabinet  
3) to denounce torture of the regime  
4) to return the right of military operation to the Korean government

<sup>661</sup> Hankook Kidokyo Sahoe Yonguwon (*Kisayon*), *Kaehunkwa Minjuhwa* (Constitutional Revision and Democratization), (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1986), 27-31.

<sup>662</sup> After the general election in 1985, democratic civil society was ideologically divided into two groups: liberal democrats and *minjung* democrats. The liberal democrats, most the middle class and moderate civil society organizations, aspired for liberal democracy, supporting the NKDP. *Minjung* democrats were movement intellectuals and politicized workers, farmers and urban poor, who advocated *minjung* ideology, represented the *minjung* as the center of the nation and identified the authoritarian state, monopoly capital, and the U.S. as anti-*minjung*, anti-national, and anti-democratic evils. In their view, liberal democracy was a political form of bourgeois domination, which contradicted the interests of the *minjung*. Thus, they had a critical and suspicious stance on the NKDP, understanding it as a conservative partner vis-a-vis the authoritarian regime. Instead of liberal democracy, they argued for *minjung* democracy, which would realize the economic interest and political domination of the *minjung*.

<sup>663</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 6 August 1985.

other democratic groups of civil society. In spite of this repressive policy, the student movement for constitutional revision continued and became even more radicalized.

However, the draft of the “Campus Stabilization Law” became not only the main issue of the political confrontation between the regime and the opposition force but also a source of internal dissension between the moderates and hardliners within the regime.<sup>664</sup> When the regime introduced the law, the opposition party and democratic civil society declared that they would struggle for its withdrawal. For example, the *Minchuhuyup* established the Committee of Struggle for Anti-Campus Stabilization Law, composed of 31 Jaeya organizations, and struggled for the withdrawal of the law. In addition, other social classes, such as professors and lawyers, participated in the struggle, and expressed opposition to the law by issuing public statements. After this episode, the politics of dialogue disappeared, and confrontations between the regime and democratic civil society became more severe.

From the fall semester of 1985, the student movement had been led by the re-organized radical organization, the *Sammintuwi*, and was becoming more radical. For example, on 18 November 1985, 191 students from 14 universities occupied the political training institute of the ruling DJP, calling for end of the fascist Constitution.<sup>665</sup> In 1986, more radical student movement organizations, such as the *Jamintuwi* and *Minmintuwi*, were established and led the students’ political struggle. Particularly, the National Coalition of Anti-imperial Anti-dictatorial Patriotic Students (*Ehakryn*)<sup>666</sup> was the most

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<sup>664</sup> For instance, Lee Jong-Chan, a leader of the moderate faction and the floor leader of the ruling DJP, opposed the “Campus Stabilization Law.” As a result of his oppose, Lee had to step down from the post of floor leader, and the tension between the hardliners and moderates within the regime became more severe.

<sup>665</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 18 November 1985.

<sup>666</sup> The National Coalition of Anti-imperial Anti-dictatorial Patriotic Students (*Ehakryn*) was established by radical students under the *Chunhakryun* on November 3, 1986. The ideological root of this

radical and violent student organization. Its ideologies were exactly same as the NLPDR line of North Korea. The members of this organization considered South Korea as a colony of the United States, and believed that the U.S. government wanted a dictatorial regime in South Korea for its own national interest. Thus, this student organization struggled to evict the U.S. military from the South Korea, as a first priority for democratization, by using every non-violent and violent means. In addition, those radical student organizations denied the possibility of gradual democratization by any compromise with the ruling coalition. They believed that real democratization should start from the overthrow of the authoritarian regime by a student revolution.

In spite of suppression on the radical student movement, the student movement for the constitutional revision and democratization was not eliminated but grew even more radicalized. From 1986, student movement activists defined the current constitution as a fascist constitution and struggled to establish a new constitution, “*Sammin Hunbup*.”<sup>667</sup> For example, on February 4, about 1,000 students of nine universities gathered in Seoul National University, demanding revision of the fascist constitution.<sup>668</sup> Thus, in most student demonstrations, “abolition of the fascist constitution” and “establishment of people’s parliament” were common slogans. Along with physical suppression of the student movement, the regime also ideologically attacked the radical student movement. The regime defined those student organizations

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organizatio came from Kim Il-Sung’s “Juche Sasang.” This line of radical organizations was called the “NL.” This organization struggled for democratization by radical ways and realization of social justice through overthrowing the dictatorial regime. This organization often used an occupation of governmental offices or facilities of universities to express its demands. *Joongang Daily*, 4 November 1986.

<sup>667</sup> Kang Shin-Chul, *80myundae Haksaengundongsa* (The History of the Student Movement in the 1980s), 85.

<sup>668</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 5 February 1986.



and leaders as communists controlled by North Korea and thus began to destroy and arrest their organizations and leaders.<sup>669</sup>

In addition to the struggle for the *Sammin* constitution, student movement activists continuously tried to build a coalition with other democratic groups, such as labor and religious organizations. As a result, student organizations and other civil society organizations could show the strength of their opposition coalition through large demonstrations. On 5 May 1986, a thousand workers, students, religious movement activists, and dissident intellectuals poured onto a main street of Inchon, and shouted slogans against the U.S., the Chun regime and NKDP—"Oust Yankees, U.S. Imperialism!" and "Down with Military Dictatorship!"<sup>670</sup> After this rally of the opposition coalition, the student movement concentrated its efforts on criticizing the regime's holding the Asian and Olympic Games as well as the struggle for constitutional revision. Most student movement activists believed that the Asian and Olympic Game were being used to divert public attention from discontent with the Chun government.<sup>671</sup>

In January 1987, a significant incident that influenced not only the ruling coalition but also the whole democratic civil society took place. Park Chong-Chul, a university student, was tortured and killed by the police. When the incident was revealed on January 16, the head of the National Police, denying any torture, announced that Park had suddenly collapsed, choking when the interrogators banged on the desk, and died while

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<sup>669</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, the regime believed that radical students of this period were educated and directed by the North Korean government. In addition, their ultimate goal was to overthrow the regime and to establish a socialist government. Because of the demands and ideologies of radical student organizations that the regime could not accept, radical students had to be harshly suppressed in the name of national security. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>670</sup> *Chosun Daily*, 4 May 1986; *Joongang Daily*, 31 May 1986.

<sup>671</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 11 September 1986.

he was being hurried to a hospital.<sup>672</sup> After a doctor examined his body, the police admitted that Park died from strangulation when his throat was pressed against the edge of a bathtub while two officers repeatedly stuck his head into the water in an effort to extract a statement.<sup>673</sup> In spite of regime's effort for justification, Park's death aroused tremendous moral indignation from the public against the regime.<sup>674</sup>

Religious organizations, such as the NCPCRJ, and the NKDP demanded a thorough investigation of Park's death. On January 19, the NKDP asked for a special National Assembly investigation and the resignation of senior officials following the disclosure that police tortured and killed a student during interrogation.<sup>675</sup> Not only student movement activists but also ordinary students began to protest the regime's cover-up. More importantly, this incident provided an opportunity for various moderate and radical groups and organizations to unify and thus struggle more aggressively against Chun's authoritarian rule. On March 3, the NKDP and 47 dissident and church groups called the "Grand Peace March for Anti-Torture and Democratization" to mark the 49<sup>th</sup> day after Park Chong-Chul's death.<sup>676</sup> Armed riot police stopped the peace march from beginning by indiscriminately firing teargas bombs into the crowd. The peaceful march quickly turned into a violent demonstration and confrontation with the riot police. The police force was not big enough to control the well-organized protests. This people's protests eventually caused the regime to decide to comply with demands for a democratic

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<sup>672</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 16 January 1987, 11.

<sup>673</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 19 January 1987, 1.

<sup>674</sup> Many middle class citizens came to know through the mass media that Park was a sociable, upright and hard-working man from a very poor yet happy family. He was the single hope of his family. Although he had participated in student movements and had been arrested two times, he was released quickly because he had never been a core activist, and was recently much less involved in the movements. His personal history stirred up the hearts of citizens, particularly the middle class who had children in universities. *Dong-A Daily*, 20 January 1987, 6.

<sup>675</sup> *Washington Post*, Tuesday, 20 January 1987, A15.

transition in June 1987. In this regard, a university student's death was a significant incident that galvanized not only the student movement but also other democratic civil society groups.

Furthermore, there was also a significant change in the institutional political arena on 13 April 1987. President Chun announced that the debate on the constitutional revision had to be suspended until after the 1988 Olympic Games in order to carry out a peaceful transfer of power and to insure the success of the Games. Thus, the next new government would be established on February 1988 through an indirect election that would be held under the present Constitution toward the end of 1987.<sup>677</sup> After Chun's announcement, not only student organizations but also ordinary students strongly criticized his decision.<sup>678</sup> Student movement activists, especially radical students, protested against Chun's decision to suspend the negotiations for constitutional revision. For example, students of 18 universities in Seoul area established the Council of Student Representatives in Seoul Area (*Seoul Jiyok Hakseangdaepyoja Hyupuihwoi*) on 8 May 1986. The main goal of this radical organization was to reverse Chun's decision and to overthrow the dictatorship.<sup>679</sup> The biggest demonstration that was led by radical student organizations and other opposition force participated in took place in Seoul on June 10. In the process of confronting the riot police, a student, Yi Han-Yol, was killed by fragments from a tear gas canister.<sup>680</sup> This incident further provoked radical and

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<sup>676</sup> *Washington Post*, Wednesday, 4 March 1987, A25; *The Toronto Star*, 4 March 1987.

<sup>677</sup> *Washington Post*, Monday, 13 April 1987, A17.

<sup>678</sup> For example, on 17 April 1987, students of 70 universities and college around nation boycotted classes, and demanded withdrawal of authoritarian regime. The riot police violently suppressed students who involved in demonstration with tear gas and arrested leaders of demonstration. *Dong-A Daily*, 18 April 1987.

<sup>679</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 9 May 1987.

<sup>680</sup> He remained in a deep coma for 24 days and finally died on July 5.

moderate student movement activists to be united and made the student movement escalate to a militant protest against harsh suppression.

After Chun's announcement and Yi's death, student demonstrations with other democratic groups and organizations, including middle class citizens, were carried out everyday, pressuring the regime to accept popular demands for democratization.<sup>681</sup> In this respect, two students' deaths made various lines of student organizations united and stimulate the middle class to actively support the democratic movement.<sup>682</sup> At the same time, the regime completely lost the capability to control the student movement. There was no choice but to comply with a democratic transition. Especially, one great change in the student movement in this period, radical student organizations that had anti-democratic elements were marginalized and neutralized by the politically motivated middle class. In this respect, the eruption of the middle class greatly contributed to unifying radical and moderate student organizations, and this united student movement played a significant role in the regime's concession in 1987.

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<sup>681</sup> For example, on 11 June 1987, about 300 students took over the Myongdong Cathedral compound in the center of Seoul when anti-government protests flared across country. After the police withdrawal, astonished students rushed around asking what happened. The government earlier demanded they surrender and face charges. Priests appealed to the students to end their protest, saying the clergy had asked the police not to arrest them if they agreed to disperse voluntarily. Nevertheless, many students said they did not want to leave the compound, which they declared a "liberated zone." *The Toronto Star*, 15 June 1987. In addition, June 18, students, workers and citizens more than 100,000 gathered, and demonstrated in the night. They occupied streets, and demanded democratization and non-violence to the regime. *Dong-A Daily*, 19 June 1987.

<sup>682</sup> Since June 10, the middle class citizens participated more often in the democratic movement of civil society. For example, on June 11, thousands of angry antigovernment protesters gathered in Seoul downtown, and protested against the regime. In the process of confrontation with the riot police, the riot police retreated in panic, and the protest continued to June 13. *Washington Post*, Thursday, 11 June 1987; A25 and 13 June 1987, A20.

### 3) Labor Movements

Since 1985, the labor movement became more radicalized after government-controlled labor union leaders were excluded.<sup>683</sup> The main reason was that student movement activists, expelled by the regime in the early 1980s, went to workplaces, educated workers, and helped to establish labor unions and organizations. Along with students' helps, religious organizations actively helped to establish labor organizations. For instance, Protestant workers formed the Coalition of Korean Protestant Labor (*Kinoryun*) on 3 February 1985, with following goals; 1) to improve working conditions and lift working wages and 2) to support the democratic movement by mobilizing workers. In addition, supports of the Catholic church for the labor movement was led by the Korea Catholic Labor Youth Association which focused on establishing labor unions in work places.<sup>684</sup> Furthermore, the character of the labor movement had dramatically changed by the mid-1980s. The labor strike that most clearly demonstrated this changed character was the solidarity strike that occurred in the *Kuro* Industrial Park in June 1985. Although the strike was harshly suppressed by riot police, the labor movement became more politicized and radicalized.<sup>685</sup>

More radical labor organizations, such as the Federation of Labor Movements in Seoul Area, were established to focus on political issues. The *Seonoryun* called for constitutional revision to go beyond the issue of direct presidential election to the guaranteeing of basic rights to workers, farmers, and the urban poor. In addition, these coalition organizations strongly criticized the NKDP for having a too narrow definition of

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<sup>683</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *1980snyundae Hankookui Minjuhwaehaenggwajung* (The Process of Democratic Transition in the 1980s), 125-6.

<sup>684</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 5 February 1985.

<sup>685</sup> Hagen Goo, *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*, 151.

democracy by equating it with a direct presidential election. They also emphasized that a new constitution should provide a political form of *minjung* domination. Like radical student movement organizations, these labor organizations, influenced by radical ideologies, struggled for establishment of the *Sammin*<sup>686</sup> constitution. The response of the regime to the radicalization of the labor movement was very severe. The regime defined the radical labor organizations and their leaders as anti-government forces and treated them as communists who were a threat to national security.<sup>687</sup>

Table 6-2

Trade Unions and Labor Disputes (1983-1987)

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Unions	3,083	2,868	2,884	3,004	4,086
Strikes	98	113	265	276	3,749

Sources: EPB, *Hankook Tonggyewolbo* (Monthly Newsletter of Korean Statistics) and KLI, *Bungibyul Nodong Donghyang Bunsuk* (Quarterly Labor Movement Analysis).

Because of the radical character, it was isolated from the middle class and other moderate groups and organizations of civil society. The main reason for the radicalization of the labor organizations and their movement was that most leaders of the labor movement came from radical student organizations, or were educated by radical students. Thus, the regime focused on disconnecting the relationship between student movement activists and workers who had been student movement activists. Nevertheless, labor and student movement activists maintained a close relationship. For instance, on 11 November 1986, about 500 students and workers who were affiliated in the *Minmintuwi*

<sup>686</sup> Korean *Sam* means three in English, and three *mins* indicates *minjung* (people), *minju* (democracy), and *minjok* (nation).

<sup>687</sup> According to Hong Seung-Sang, a former police officer, the regime recognized that the radicalization of the labor movement was strongly influenced by radical student movement activists who were tinged with communist ideology. Thus, the regime defined radical labor movement activists as

demonstrated, demanding withdrawal of the authoritarian regime and revision of the Constitution.<sup>688</sup> The regime believed that labor unions would collapse if those workers who came from campuses disappeared; thus the regime concentrated on finding and arresting those particular leaders of the labor movement. As a result, organizational structures of labor unions became weak, and their influence on the democratic movement gradually decreased. However, a more serious problem for the labor movement was its isolation from other democratic groups and organizations, including the middle class. Moderate civil society groups and organizations, such as the Jaeya force, were reluctant to build a coalition with radicalized labor unions and organizations because of different social and ideological backgrounds and violent characters of the labor movement.

Because of suppression by the regime and isolation from other democratic groups, labor movement activists had to participate as individuals in the democratic movement. After the disclosure of the Park Chong-Chul incident, workers individually participated in the establishment of the preparatory committee for Park's memorial and the National Coalition for a Democratic Constitution.<sup>689</sup> For example, only 210 people among the 2,191 establishment proposers of the National Coalition for Democratic Constitution were workers and peasants.<sup>690</sup> Because of workers' weak position in the democratic movement, their political and economic interests were not well reflected in the negotiation for democratic transition between the opposition party and the regime.

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communists and suppressed them under the name of national security. Hong Seung-Sang, interviewed by author, Seoul, 19 August 1999.

<sup>688</sup> *Hankook Daily*, 14 November 1986.

<sup>689</sup> NCDC (National Coalition for a Democratic Constitution), "Minju Hunbup Jaengchui Kookmin Undong Bonbu Sangbanki Hwaldong Bogosu" (The Report on the Activity of the NCDC in the First Half of the Year 1987), (Seoul: NCDC, 1987).

<sup>690</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 28 May 1987.

#### 4) The Jaeya Force

After the general election of 1985, the Jaeya force first began to reestablish existing organizations and then tried to build coalitions with other democratic groups and organizations. Jaeya leaders also struggled more aggressively for constitutional revision. For example, Kim Dae-Jung publicly announced that the regime should release political prisoners, cancel the program of integration and abolition of press companies, and guarantee basic labor rights.<sup>691</sup> The first outcome of these efforts for establishing organizations was the birth of the Association of Minjung Movement for Democracy and Unification (*Mintongnyun*) on 29 March 1985.<sup>692</sup> Leaders of the *Mintongryun* believed that democratization could not be accomplished by political force within the institutional political arena and that the main subjects of the democratization and national unification should be workers and peasants.<sup>693</sup> However, the dual-edge policy of the regime caused

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<sup>691</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 6. In addition, on May 17, an opposition leader said that President Chun could face a "serious uprising" and possibly the disruption of the Summer Seoul Olympic Games in 1988 unless he is willing to accept changes of the Constitution. Kim Sang-Hyun who said he represented the views of other opposition leaders, including Kim-Dae Jung and Kim Young-Sam, has met with State Department officials and members of Congress during a two-week visit to the United States. In his interview, he said Chun must accept a constitutional amendment allowing direct elections for President. President Chun, who came to power in a military coup in 1980, was confirmed in office a year later by an Electoral College controlled by the ruling DJP. Mr. Kim said "President Chun will not survive his term, and the 1988 Olympic Games may not be possible unless something concrete is shown to the Korean people this year and steps are being taken toward democracy." Kim Sang Hyun said "in order to avoid bloodshed, to advance democracy peacefully, we have to start the process now." He also said the committee would consist of about 20 people representing the ruling party, opposition parties, labor leaders and "others whose civil rights are restricted and who cannot participate in the political process." "If President Chun accepts the changes, Mr. Kim said, he will get the credit and be remembered for democratization. If he refuses, Mr. Kim said, unrest is likely to grow. In addition, he criticized President Reagan for having said during a visit by President Chun that the South Korean leader had made "considerable progress" in handling his country's problems. "There is a communication problem between the Reagan administration and the Korean public." "Mr. Reagan sees small changes as a political development, while the Koreans do not. There has not been any fundamental change in the political system." *The New York Times*, 19 May 1985.

<sup>692</sup> Selig S. Harrison, "Dateline from South Korea: A Divided Seoul," 154-75; *Dong-A Daily*, 29 March 1985.

<sup>693</sup> Minjok Minju Undongyonguso, *Mintongryun- Minjutongil minjungundonguonhappyunggasu (I)* (Mintongryun- Evaluation of the Association of Minjung Movement for Democracy and Unification), (Seoul: Minjok minju undongyonguso, 1989), 6.



democratic civil society to confront the opposition party in the democratic struggle. Consequently, the Chun regime took advantage of the conflict between the opposition party and democratic civil society in its dealings with the democratic movement.

At the same time, the Jaeya force realized the importance of having a formal political institution, such as the political party although they were skeptical of the intent of the NKDP regarding democratization. Thus, on 17 March 1986, Jaeya leaders and opposition politicians established the National Liaison Organization for Democracy. This organization especially focused on coordinating and mediating various factions of democratic forces for an influential political struggle.<sup>694</sup> Moreover, after the dialogue for constitutional revision opened in April 1986, the Jaeya force needed a formal institutional channel to influence negotiations for constitutional revision. Thus, the Jaeya organizations publicly emphasized the importance of a coalition with the NKDP for the constitutional struggle.<sup>695</sup> The Jaeya force felt that it should take the upper hand in a coalition with the NKDP. The Jaeya force demanded that negotiations for constitutional revision should deal with more fundamental things than just the revision of the Constitution. For example, the *Mintongnyun* and *Minchungnyun* contended that the constitutional revision should not be limited to the matter of direct presidential elections but be extended to win the minjung's right to life.

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<sup>694</sup> The National Liaison Organization for Democracy (*Minjuhwanul wihan Kookmin Undong Yollakgigu*), established by opposition politicians and Jaeya leaders, such as Kim Young-Sam, Lee in-Woo, and Moon Ik-Hwan, struggled with the regime for the restoration of democracy. In order to do so, this organization tried to coordinate and mediate various factions of democratic forces for the effective democratic struggle. In addition, this organization cooperated with the NKDP, the Council for Promotion of Democracy, UMMDU, KNCC, and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. *Dong-A Daily*, 19 March 1986.

<sup>695</sup> Although the relationship between the opposition party and democratic groups was not cooperative in this period, the relationship between the opposition NKDP and the Jaeya force was special in some degree. That is, because many leaders of the Jaeya force participated in the opposition NKDP before the election, the Jaeya force had an especially close relationship with the NKDP. Thus, in spite of a

In addition, the Jaeya force supported other democratic groups and organizations directly and indirectly. For example, on 4 November 1985, 60 leaders of the Jaeya force and religious organizations, such as Ge Hun-Je, Kim Syeng Hun, Park Hyung-Kyu, Su Kyung-Won, and Lee Woo-Jung, held a press conference and claimed that the current regime considered democratization as a communist activity. They also accused the regime of trying to isolate the democratic movement from ordinary people, especially from the middle class, and urged people to join democratic movements.<sup>696</sup>

However, the Jaeya force was not as active as it had been during the decompression period for a couple of reasons. The first was the weakness of leadership within the Jaeya force. Many Jaeya leaders participated in the establishment process of the KNDP in 1985, and key leaders were arrested by the regime right after the regime returned to a repressive policy. The second reason was an internal conflict of the Jaeya force. Although most Jaeya organizations agreed on the general direction of the political struggle for democratization, they were deeply divided into radical and moderate organizations in terms of strategies and ideologies.<sup>697</sup> This division made the Jaeya force difficult to unite for the influential democratic struggle. For example, on 1 May 1986, the *Mintongnyun* announced that it would withdraw from the National Conference for Democracy and Unification because latter organization was established based on radical ideologies, such as anti-American, anti-nuclear, and liberation theory.<sup>698</sup>

After negotiations between the NKDP and DJP opened on 30 April 1986, the initial response of the Jaeya force was to disagree with the decision of the NKDP to

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conflictive relationship between the opposition party and other democratic groups, it was possible for the Jaeya force to maintain a close relationship with the NKDP.

<sup>696</sup> Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 6, 650.

negotiate for constitutional revision with the Chun regime.<sup>699</sup> For them, especially for radical groups of the Jaeya force, the Chun regime was an enemy to be overthrown, not to be negotiated with. They insisted that constitutional revision would presuppose the ouster of an authoritarian regime and guarantee all democratic rights of the minjung. For example, both the *Mintongnyun* and *Minchungnyun* asserted that the schedule for democratization must proceed with an end to authoritarianism, constitutional revision, and the establishment of a democratic government.<sup>700</sup> They intended to turn the issue of constitutional revision into a political struggle to topple the Chun regime. In addition, they warned the NKDP that it would be misleading to expect democratic reform through compromise with the ruling party. In spite of the dissatisfaction of the Jaeya force with the negotiations of the NKDP, negotiations continued.

Negotiations between the DJP and NKDP weakened the position of the Jaeya force, especially the position of radical groups within the Jaeya force, in the democratic movement. This weak position continued until the regime closed the dialogue for constitutional revision. During the negotiation, the general relationship between the Jaeya force, especially radical organizations, and the NKDP was conflictual although it had a closer relationship with the NKDP than with other democratic groups. The Jaeya force believed that the NKDP was more interested in taking power than struggling for democratization. On the other hand, the NKDP thought that the revolutionary demands of the radical Jaeya groups were obstructing negotiations with the regime. Nevertheless, the role of the Jaeya force was limited to criticizing the strategy of the regime and

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<sup>697</sup> Kim Sun-Hyuk, *The Politics and Democratization in Korea: The Role of Civil Society*, 89-90.

<sup>698</sup> *Seoul Daily*, 3 May 1986.

<sup>699</sup> Hankook Kidokyo Sahoe Yonguwon (*Kisayon*), *Kaehunkwa Minjuhwa* (Constitutional Revision and Democratization), 15.

supporting the position of the NKDP because the opposition party had the initiative in conducting negotiations. Thus, the Jaeya force had no alternative to supporting the position of the NKDP. At the same time, the Jaeya force checked and criticized not only the ruling DJP but also the NKDP. Particularly, after Lee Min-Woo met Chun and agreed on the constitutional revision on December 1986, the Jaeya force strongly criticized the NKDP and Lee.<sup>701</sup> When the NKDP was divided by Lee's proposal, the Jaeya force tried to take the initiative in the democratic movement. As they anticipated, negotiations were suspended, and the NKDP and the Jaeya force came to face a new political situation.

In particular, Park Chong-Chul's death also strongly affected the character of the Jaeya force and its democratic movement. The biggest change was radical and moderate organizations of the Jaeya force built a united front for the democratic movement struggles with the Chun regime. Another important change was the participation of the middle class in Jaeya organizations. Furthermore, after the Chun regime suspended negotiations for the constitutional revision, the Jaeya force protested more aggressively against Chun's decision by building coalitions with other democratic groups, including the opposition party.<sup>702</sup> Since then, the leadership of the democratic movement in civil society went to the Jaeya force through the participation of the NKDP in nationwide Jaeya organizations. The establishment of the National Movement Headquarter of Democratic Constitution (NMHDC, *Kookmin Undong Bonbu*)<sup>703</sup> was a result of efforts

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<sup>700</sup> *Kisayon, Kaehunkwa Minjuhwa* (Constitutional Revision and Democratization), 31-3.

<sup>701</sup> Park Bo-Gyun, *Chunhwadae Bisusil 3* (The Secretary Office of the Blue House 3), 80-3.

<sup>702</sup> Yun Sang-Chul, *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*, 150-151.

<sup>703</sup> The National Movement Headquarter of Democratic Constitution (NMHDC, *Kookmin Undong Bonbu*) was established on 27 May 1987. The NMHDC criticized the Chun's decision to keep the current constitution, and demanded a direct election for president. In addition, the NMHDC united civil society and institutional political arena under a united leadership, resolving differences among people's movement

for building a coalition with the opposition party, and this organization played a very important role after negotiations were suspended.

The mass rally in Seoul and other major cities, led by the NMHDC on June 10, was the biggest protest against the authoritarianism of the Chun regime. The NMHDC, a nationwide umbrella organization, organized the “People’s Rally to Denounce the Cover-Up of the Torture-murder of Park Chong-Chul and the Scheme to Maintain the Current Constitution” in 22 major cities.<sup>704</sup> The regime considered using every measure that could suppress the democratic movement of civil society, including proclaiming martial law.<sup>705</sup> Nevertheless, demonstrations in which not only the Jaeya force but also other civil society organizations and the RDP participated continued. The regime tried to relax this tension between the opposition force and the regime through a meeting between President Chun and the opposition leader, Kim Young-Sam. However, the meeting was not productive, and Kim announced that the RDP decided to participate in the “Peaceful March” on June 26.<sup>706</sup>

On June 26, the NMHDC organized a huge demonstration which students, workers, religious organizations, opposition politicians, and middle class citizens participated in. Not only civil society organizations but also ordinary people strongly

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groups and also between civil society groups and the opposition party. 1) sectoral representatives-253 Catholic Priests, 270 Protestant pastors, 160 Buddhist monks, 35 from the PMCDR, 213 opposition politicians, 162 women’s movement leaders, 308 from the Council for the Promotion of Democracy Movement, 171 peasant activists, 39 labor activists, 18 urban poor activists, 43 publishers and journalists, 43 authors and writers, 66 artists, 55 educators, 12 youth movement leaders, and 74 lawyers; 2) geographical representatives-11 from Kyunggi province, 73 from Kangwon province, 29 from Kyungnam province, 54 from Chunnbuk province, 40 from Chunnam province, 56 from Busan, and 89 from Kyungbuk province. *Dong-A Daily*, 28 May 1987.

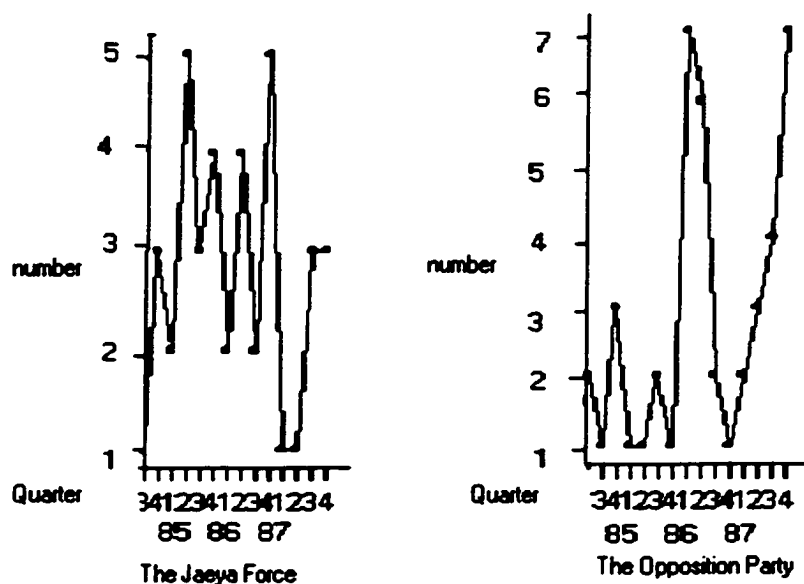
<sup>704</sup> In the confrontation with riot police, 13 leaders of the NMHDC were arrested. Lee Su-Hoon, “Transitional Politics of Korea, 1987-1992: Activation of Civil Society,” *Pacific Affairs* 66, no. 3 (fall 1933): 355.

<sup>705</sup> For example, on 19 June 1987, Prime Minister Lee Han Key warned South Koreans that the government would make an extraordinary decision if peace was not soon restored. *The Washington Post*, 20 June 1987.

demanded Chun's stepping down and democratization in the demonstration.<sup>707</sup> It was too late for the regime to control the people's passion for democratization and assertive struggle of civil society. The opposition force had already attained counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime. Three days later, on 29 June 1987, Roh Tae-Woo, a presidential candidate of the ruling DJP, eventually announced eight measures of democratization.<sup>708</sup>

Figure 6-1

Tendency of the Democratic Movement by Opposition Party and the Jaeya Force



During this period, the change in character of the Jaeya force was closely related to the fate of the opposition party in the institutional political arena. For example, as Figure 6-1 illustrates, when the opposition party actively interacted with the ruling party, the role of the Jaeya force in the democratic movement shrank. On the other hand, when the opposition party was excluded from the regime or did not struggle actively against the

<sup>706</sup> *Washington Post*, Saturday, 27 June 1987, A1.

<sup>707</sup> *Washington Post*, Friday, 26 June 1987, A28.

<sup>708</sup> *Washington Post*, Tuesday, 30 June 1987, A1.

regime, the role of the Jaeya force was emphasized. The role of the Jaeya force had been very important in attaining counter-hegemony against the regime and in forcing the Chun regime to comply with people's demands for democratization through coordinating and organizing large-scale demonstrations.

### 5) Religious Communities

In this democratization period, religious communities were also actively involved in the democratic movement. After the election, the religious communities focused their efforts on struggling for constitutional revision and induced public participation in the democratic movement. For example, the Catholic primate of Korea, Cardinal Stephen, issued a public statement calling for constitutional revision on 9 April 1986. In addition, on April 3, the Catholic Justice and Peace Committee of Korea suggested that the government should revise laws related to workers, and demanded the release of political prisoners.<sup>709</sup> In particular, the religious communities of this period were involved in the democratic movement by building coalitions with other democratic groups and organizations. For example, starting with the NCPCRJ, the NCKK and the Council of Catholic Social Movements<sup>710</sup> participated in the petition campaign by collecting signatures from clergy and believers.<sup>711</sup> In addition, on 3 March 1986, a standing

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<sup>709</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 3 April 1985; James W. Morley, *Driven by Growth: Political Change in the Asia-Pacific Region* (New York: An East Gate Book, 1993), 177.

<sup>710</sup> The Council of Catholic Social Movements, led by Je Chung-Gu, affiliated several Catholic associations of laymen, including the Korean Catholic Farmers' Association, JOC, the National Council of Labor Ministry, the Ministerial Council of the Urban Poor, the Federation of Catholic Students, and the Youth Alliance of Myung-Dong Cathedral.

<sup>711</sup> Hankook Kidokyo Sahoe Yongsuwon (*Kisayon*), *Kaehunkwa Minjuhwa* (Constitutional Revision and Democratization), 31-3. In addition, on 29 November 1985, about 100 Jaeya politicians and religious leaders in the office of the Council for the Promotion of Democratization (*Minchuhuyup*) protested the regime, and demanded release of arrested politicians and students, abolishment of authoritative constitution, and stop repression toward democratic forces. Institute of Gladness and Hope, *Amheksokui hwoibul* (A Torch of Darkness: Testimony of Democratic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s), vol. 6.

committee of the Catholic Church, the Commission on Justice and Peace, announced that “the present signature-collecting campaign as an expression of people for constitutional change is a fundamental right of people” and that “to change the constitution in its process and contents is the beginning of democratization in our society.”<sup>712</sup> On March 9, Cardinal Stephen delivered his support to the constitutional amendment in a sermon entitled, “Democracy is the Road to Reconciliation with God.” Cardinal Kim also said:

We are now witnessing confrontation...between those who emphasize “national security” at all costs and those who suffer to restore the sovereignty of the people...How then is reconciliation possible? Reconciliation between human is possible only after we have reconciled with God.... Those who have tried to destroy the human spirit through torture and violence must be awakened to the presence of God on this earth.... The present government ust sincerely workto establish democracy, for which the people have long waited, and secure justice, peace and human rights This is the demand of the era....the voice of the people and the will of God... There is no reason to treat people who advocate constittional revision as enemies when they are working within the law and following procedures outlined in the present constitution. The fundamental way to solve the present crisis and to achieve national reconciliation lies in constitutional revision. We have to bring democracy to Korea urgently.<sup>713</sup>

On March 14, Rev. Kim Jae-Ghil, a chairperson of the NCKK, issued a public statement calling the constitutional revision and the signature campaign essential to the task of democratization.<sup>714</sup> The NCKK also organized the Pan-Christian Committee to Promote Democratic Constitution and released the names of 1,050 people who had signed the petition on March 17. Eight days later, the EYC established a committee to achieve a minjung democratic constitution to participate in the signature-collecting campaign. Particularly, after the regime began to negotiate with the NKDP for constitutional revision, the religious communities tried to build a bridge between radical

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<sup>712</sup> *Korea/Update*, (April 1986): 20.



and moderate democratic organizations of civil society. For instance, on 9 May 1986, Cardinal Kim announced that “what was truly needed in our society was not a revolution but a true and peaceful democratization based upon human dignity and respect and realization of social justice rather than the government would have to listen to the opinion of radical students rather than simply suppressing them as pro-Communist.”<sup>715</sup>

Unlike previous periods, the religious movement of this period was not limited to Catholic and Protestant church; it spread to Buddhists. In May 1986, 152 Buddhist priests, calling democratization a materialization of *Chongto* (Buddhist version of ideal society), maintained that anti-American, anti-war, and anti-nuclear slogans were not necessarily meant to deny the liberal democratic system, and called for constitutional revision.<sup>716</sup> During negotiations for the constitutional revision, the religious communities observed the process and supported the NKDP through issuing public statements and mobilizing mass. Along with the support to the NKDP, the religious communities emphasized the improvement of human rights conditions, and struggled on behalf of other social issues.<sup>717</sup>

After President Chun suspended the dialogue on the constitutional revision, the religious communities strongly criticized his decision, demanding reopen the dialogue for the constitutional revision. On April 14, Cardinal Kim in his Easter message said that

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<sup>713</sup> *Korea/Update*, (April 1986): 24-5.

<sup>714</sup> *Joongang Daily*, 15 March 1986.

<sup>715</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 9 May 1986. Cardinal Kim mentioned that he understood why the students became radicalized but did not support what they claimed. He pointed as a main cause of radical leftism to the political structure that excluded political participation and the widening gap between rich and poor. From this viewpoint, he called radical students not pro-Communists but nationalists who were concerned with and loved the country. He ended his sermon by saying “we must implement a task of harmony and unity, standing in the middle, even if the government, opposition party and student throw a stone to us.”

<sup>716</sup> *Chosun Daily*, 10 May 1986; Hanguk Kidokkyo Sahoe Munje Yonguwon, *Kaehon kwa Minjuhwa* (Constitutional Revision and Democratization), 152.

“Chun’s decision had brought deep grief to the Korean people by shattering their hope that the constitutional revision would open a new era.” He also said “the more dissolute society seems, the more sacrifice we should make to humanize this society, this land, our country, and our nation for truthful and valuable life.” The NCPCRJ also refuted Chun’s two excuses for the suspension of constitutional discussions:

Peaceful transfer of government through presidential election under the current Constitution can never be more than a change in position within the present regime. The people have never recognized this as democratization. The Olympic game is accepted by no one as a national event worthy of a national festival and celebration because it serves only as regime propaganda and imposes the sufferings of eviction on many ordinary citizens in the name of urban beautification.<sup>718</sup>

In Protestant churches, the NCKK called upon the President to revoke his decision and to respond to people’s aspirations for constitutional revision. Later, they protested more actively by participating in the NMHDC.<sup>719</sup> In addition to the Protestant churches, the Buddhist organizations also issued a public statement of denunciation. On April 21, three Buddhist organizations, including the National Association of Buddhist Preists for the Realization of Justice, the United Minjung Buddhist Movement, and the Federation of Buddhist University Students issued a public statement that criticized Chun’s decision.<sup>720</sup>

Along with issuing public statements, the religious communities struggled for the reopening of negotiations through other means of peaceful resistance, such as hunger strikes, sit-in struggles, signature campaigns, and prayer meetings. On 21 April 1987, the

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<sup>717</sup> For example, the KNCC demanded guarantee of freedom of the press, meeting, and association to the regime, and declared that the Protestant church would struggle against the authoritarian regime until they obtained democratization. *Dong-A Daily*, 7 March 1987.

<sup>718</sup> CISJD (Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development), *Last Victory: An Overview of the Korean People’s Struggle for Democracy in 1987* (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1988), 86-7.

<sup>719</sup> In the case of the Protestant church, 270 pastors participated in the establishment of the National Movement Headquarter of Democratic Constitution (NMHDC, Kookmin Undong Bonbu). *Dong-A Daily*, 28 May 1987.

<sup>720</sup> *Chosun Daily*, 30 April 1987.

NCKK Human Rights Committee and the representatives of 23 regional committees for human rights declared the first week of May to be a week of national prayer for the resignation of the military dictatorship and for constitutional revision, including direct presidential elections. On the same day, 12 Catholic priests of Kwangju Diocese began an indefinite hunger strike, calling for the restoration of citizens' rights to choose their government, the unconditional release of political prisoners, the guarantee of freedom of the press, and the honorable withdrawal of the present regime from politics.

The wave of hunger strikes spread to the Protestant church. Twenty-three clergy from the Chunnam Council of Clergy for the Realization of Peace and Justice and 35 clergy from the National Council of Clergy for the Realization of Peace and Justice (*Mokhyup*, NCCR PJ) began hunger strikes on April 27 and May 4, respectively. In addition, the NCKK held an all-night prayer meeting to demand a constitutional revision. Over 1,500 ministers and laity from six denominations participated in this prayer meeting for constitutional revision.<sup>721</sup> The Protestant church not only denounced the authoritarian regime, but also defended the democratic movement of other forces in civil society. For example, on May 6, the NCCR PJ issued a public statement of support for labor groups and for the Association of Minjung Movement for Democracy and Unification. Both had been depicted by the regime as “pro-Communist radical leftists.”<sup>722</sup> On 7 May 1986, the NCCR PJ declared that “anti-Americanism is not necessarily pro-Communism,” defending the radicalism displayed in some of the anti-government demonstrations.<sup>723</sup>

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<sup>721</sup> Mun Myong-Ho, “Kaehun Nonui Chongaerul Cjujanganhan Saramdul” (Those who demand the Rediscussion of Constitutional Revision), *Sindong-A*, (June 1987): 329-33.

<sup>722</sup> Mun Myong-Ho, “Kaehun Nonui Chongaerul Cjujanganhan Saramdul” (Those who Demand the Rediscussion of Constitutional Revision), 329-33.

<sup>723</sup> JISJD, *Gaehungwa Minjuhwa Undong* (Constitutional Revision and Democratic Movement), (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1986), 40-1.

The most significant role of the religious communities, especially the Catholic church, in this period was to induce the middle class to participate in the democratic struggle by revealing the truth of Park Chong-Chul's death by torture. On 18 May 1987, the NCPCRJ disclosed this fact and added that the police and the regime had attempted to conceal the fact.<sup>724</sup> This disclosure of the NCPCRJ motivated the middle class politically and stimulated them to support and participate in the democratic movement of civil society. As a result, democratic civil society became more united and aggressive, and its struggles were more influential. More importantly, this event decisively influenced the change of the public discourse and played a significant role in attaining counter-hegemony against the regime. In this regard, the religious community played a decisive role in attaining counter-hegemony of civil society.

Since June of 1987, the religious communities had more actively struggled for constitutional revision through participating in nationwide civil society organizations, such as the NMHDC. For instance, 253 Catholic priests, 270 Protestant pastors, and 160 Buddhist monks participated in the organization as the establishment proposers.<sup>725</sup> Since then, religious leaders and organizations concentrated on supporting democratic struggles of other civil society organizations. On 23 June 1987, 1,300 Catholic priests, nuns, and Christians peacefully marched on the streets in favor of revising the Constitution. They

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<sup>724</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 19 May 1987.

<sup>725</sup> In addition, geographical representatives-11 from Kyunggi province, 73 from Kangwon province, 29 from Kyungnam province, 54 from Chunbuk province, 40 from Chunnam province, 56 from Busan, and 89 from Kyungbuk province established National Movement Headquarter of Democratic Constitution (NMHDC, Kookmin Undong Bonbu). The NMHDC asserted to change a policy that President Chun decided to preserve pre-existing authoritarian constitution, and asserted a direct presidential election. The NMHDC united democratic civil society and institutional political arena, resolving differences among people's movement groups and between civil society groups and the opposition party. *Dong-A Daily*, 28 May 1987.

asserted that democratization should be accomplished by democratic means.<sup>726</sup> And, the next day, Catholic priests in Busan demonstrated for human rights and democratization and held a mass for getting rid of structural violence.<sup>727</sup>

In this respect, the religious communities played an important role in bridging the gap among various democratic groups and organizations and inducing ordinary people to participate in the democratic movement. The religious communities also played an important role in neutralizing radical organizations that had anti-democratic elements. In addition, the church greatly contributed to providing a place of refuge for democratic leaders and organizations. Thus, many meetings and demonstrations were held and waged in churches, especially the Myungdong Cathedral, where provided shelters to democratic movement activists.<sup>728</sup> Therefore, the religious communities directly and indirectly contributed to the democratic movement and attaining counter-hegemony.

#### 6) The Middle Class

The active participation of the middle class in the democratic movement was one of the most distinctive phenomena which indicated the change of civil society.<sup>729</sup>

Scholars, such as Michael Hsiao and Hagen Koo, have argued that the active participation of the middle class was the most important factor that forced the Chun

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<sup>726</sup> At the same time, Catholic priests demonstrated for human rights and democratization, and held a mass for getting rid of structural violence of the Chun regime. *Dong-A Daily*, 24 June 1987.

<sup>727</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 24 June 1987.

<sup>728</sup> For example, on 14 June 1987, about 300 students took over the Myungdong Cathedral in downtown Seoul when anti-government protests flared across the country. After the police withdrawal, astonished students rushed around asking what happened. The government earlier demanded they surrender and face charges. Priests appealed to the students to end their protest, saying the clergy had asked police not to arrest them if they agreed to disperse voluntarily. Nevertheless, many students said they did not want to leave the church, which they declared a "liberated zone." *The Toronto Star*, 15 June 1987.

<sup>729</sup> In 1987, 65% of South Korean considered themselves members of the middle class. Juergen Kleiner, *Korea: A Century of Change*, 217.

regime to accept the democratic transition process.<sup>730</sup> Before the general election of 1985, the middle class did not explicitly express its political dissatisfaction because people were afraid of the consequences of expression. However, after the general election, the middle class became more actively involved in the democratic movement and openly expressed their discontent with the regime. On April 26, 1986, for example, enthusiastic mass rallies drew tens of thousands of supporters, including members of the middle class, for the petition drive in major cities.<sup>731</sup>

Particularly, when negotiations for constitutional revision started, the middle class was enthusiastic and actively supported the opposition party.<sup>732</sup> Since the presidential election was scheduled toward the end of 1987, the middle class worried about the coming of social confusion and unrest caused by ideological and political struggles among democratic forces. As the ideological confrontation between the regime and the democratic movement threatened the prospect of constitutional revision and democratization in 1986, leaders of civil society urged the middle class to take a central role in democratization. On January 7, a columnist of the *Dong-A Daily* wrote that the middle class would have to cast off social indifference and self-satisfaction and prepare, with patience and courage, for concrete ways to deal with revolutionary demands in a non-revolutionary way.<sup>733</sup> In addition, Park Chong-Chul's death strongly stimulated the middle class to break its silence and provided a strong incentive for participation in the democratic movement of civil society. As a sign of the breaking of silence, many middle

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<sup>730</sup> Michael Hsiao and Hagen Koo, "The Middle Classes and Democratization in East Asian NICs: Taiwan and South Korea Compared," *An International Conference on Consolidation the Third Wave Democracies: Trends and Challenge*, 1995.

<sup>731</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 26 April 1986.

<sup>732</sup> *Hankook Daily*, 1 January 1987, 9-11.

<sup>733</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 7 January 1987, 3.

class citizens participated in the preparatory committee for the nationwide public funeral for Park Chong-Chul on January 26.<sup>734</sup>

The middle class's orientation sharply changed right after President Chun suspended negotiations for the constitutional revision. For most of the middle class, constitutional revision was a symbolic representation of freedom, fairness, humanity, autonomy and participation. When the opposition party demanded constitutional change, the middle class supported it because it promised a framework for fair competition that they believed would enable them to take power.

The active participation of the middle class included various social classes and occupations. For example, on 28 March, 28 professors from Korea University proclaimed that:

It is part of the duties of professors and intellectuals to be constantly concerned with national and social issues and to express fair opinions about them....It is right to say that the most fundamental problem today lies in democratization and that this depends upon the amendment of the Constitution. Free presentation and discussion of ideas about and petitioning for constitutional revision re natural rights of the people....Today we regard constitutional revision as the demand of all the nation's people. The authorities and politicians...must not delay therealization of the people's desire for any reason whatsoever.<sup>735</sup>

In addition, on 2 June 1986, 265 professors from 23 colleges publicly said that "since the origin of the crisis facing our country lies in the existence of the present regime, which lacks legitimacy, the emergence of a legitimate civilian government is far more pressing than anything else." In addition, they strongly demanded an end of suppression on students and a guarantee of autonomous student organizations.<sup>736</sup> When a group of

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<sup>734</sup> *Chosun Daily*, 28 January 1987, 11.

<sup>735</sup> *Wolgan Chosun*, "Daehak gyosudului Sikooksunmun" (Statements of Professors on Current Issues), (June 1986): 476.

<sup>736</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 2 June 1986.

reporters expressed their opinion against the Chun regime, they also urged freedom of the press. As a whole, the suspension of the constitutional revision talks was perceived as an obstruction of political freedom. This recognition of the political situation strongly influenced the middle class to participate in the democratic movement.

Through this process, the character of the middle class changed dramatically. The middle class was no longer a conservative force concerned mainly with economic prosperity and political order, but took a very critical view of the political regime. For example, a large portion of the middle class disapproved of developmentalism. They wanted to improve human rights even if it caused a slowing of economic development. In addition, most middle class people did not agree with the regime's political agenda. According to the result of survey, as many as 85.7 percent of 1,043 respondents agreed that to improve human rights was desirable even if it slowed economic development.<sup>737</sup> In this respect, the active participation of the middle class in the "June struggle" was by no means contingent. The middle class supported the democratic movement not because of economic discontent, as the students of political economy argued, but because of political dissatisfaction toward the authoritarian regime. In the mid-1980s, the middle class was satisfied with economic prosperity, and this economic satisfaction became a foundation of its active support on democratic civil society. Particularly, the middle class, along with religious communities, greatly contributed to marginalization and neutralization of radical organizations, especially radical student organizations, that had anti-democratic elements. Thus, this active support of the middle class became a foundation for changing the character of democratic civil society.

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<sup>737</sup> *Hankook Daily*, 9 June 1987. *Hankook Daily* conducted in May and released the outcome of the survey on the "entity of the middle class" in June 9.



#### **4. Democratic Transition of South Korea in 1987**

After Chun announced the suspension of negotiations for constitutional revision, the confrontation between democratic civil society and the regime grew more severe, reaching a peak in June 1987. On June 10, two important events changed the future of Korean politics. One was that the ruling DJP held its party convention to nominate Roh Tae-Woo as its next presidential candidate. The other event was that the NMHDC organized the “People’s Rally to Denounce the Cover-Up of the Torture-Murder of Park Chong-Chul and the Scheme to Maintain the Current Constitution” in 22 major cities.<sup>738</sup> About 400,000 people from around the country took part in the nation-wide demonstrations. The protests gradually escalated to the extent that even the powerful police force could not control them. The central districts of Seoul were turning into what *New York Times* Reporter Clyde Haberman depicted as a “war zone.”<sup>739</sup> In order to suppress the rally, the government issued a “Class A” emergency alert order and mobilized 60,000 police, equivalent to half of all the police forces throughout the country.<sup>740</sup>

The democratic struggle by civil society and the RDP under the leadership of the NMHDC was much stronger. Through the establishment of the NMHDC, the RDP and democratic civil society finally healed their differences and united under a single leadership of the democratic movement.<sup>741</sup> It was a grand pro-democracy coalition that directly brought about Roh’s democratization declaration in June 1987. Several factors influenced the restoration of the coalition between the RDP and democratic civil society.

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<sup>738</sup> Lee Su-Hoon, “Transitional Politics of Korea, 1987-1992: Activation of Civil Society,” 355.

<sup>739</sup> *New York Times*, 22 June 1987, 1.

<sup>740</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 9 June 1987.

The first was the establishment of the new hardline RDP in April 1987. Democratic civil society was critical of the political stance of the NKDP in the relationship with the ruling party and the regime. Thus, democratic civil society welcomed the establishment of the new hardline RDP, and the coalition between the RDP and democratic civil society was restored.

The second factor was the President's announcement of the suspension of negotiations for constitutional revision. The RDP recognized that the Chun regime did not intend to revise the Constitution, so it gave up political struggle in the institutional political arena. In this situation, the only strategy for the RDP was to join democratic civil society and struggle with the regime by restoring its coalition with democratic civil society. The third factor was Park Chong-Chul's death by police torture. His death strongly affected not only democratic civil society but also the opposition party, leading them to unite and restore the grand coalition. In addition, restoration of the coalition between the RDP and democratic civil society was made possible because the suppression of radical democratic groups and organizations induced the creation of a moderate opposition coalition between the opposition party and democratic civil society.<sup>742</sup> Because the NMHDC used moderate and simple slogans, such as

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<sup>741</sup> In the ideological perspective, the founding statements of the NMHDC, a moderate democratic organization, emphasized human rights and the restoration of formal procedural democracy, such as a direct presidential election. *Korea Report*, 1, no. 3 (July-August 1987): 2.

<sup>742</sup> The radical organizations of civil society were shattered by severe suppression in late 1986, and most leaders of radical movement organizations were arrested by the authority. Under the circumstance, the active democratic movement of radical groups and organizations could not be expected, and many radical groups and organizations of civil society had to cooperate with the NMHDC as an alternative strategy. For instance, radical student movement organizations, such as the Council of Students in Seoul (*Seodaehyup*), *Jamintu* and *Minmintu*, cooperated with the NMHDC by suspending temporarily the radical slogans which prevailed in demonstration in 1986 although they did not join the NMHDC. *Korea/Update*, 84, (summer 1987): 5.

“constitutional revision for direct presidential election” and “down with dictatorship,” it could be supported by broad sectors of civil society, in particular the middle class.

In June, the Chun regime first began to concentrate its efforts on disconnecting a relationship between students and other civil society organizations. Along with this suppression, the regime urged colleges across the nation to close early for summer recess. In spite of the closed campuses, massive student demonstrations persisted. The protests reached a fever pitch on June 18, when 73,600 people in 14 cities, including 58,730 students in 78 universities, staged demonstrations and violently confronted with the riot police.<sup>743</sup> The regime’s threat of military intervention could not stop the democratic struggle of civil society that already began to attain counter-hegemony against the regime. After the negotiation between Chun and Kim Young-Sam to end violent demonstrations failed on June 24, the NMHDC staged another huge rally on June 26.<sup>744</sup> This was the last blow to the Chun regime, which finally conceded to the people’s demands for democratization.<sup>745</sup>

There were not many options for the Chun regime. The softliners within the regime criticized Chun’s decision to suspend negotiations and demanded a compromise with the opposition force.<sup>746</sup> This softliners’ position was publicly supported by the U.S.

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<sup>743</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 19 June 1987.

<sup>744</sup> On June 24, opposition politicians, led by Kim Young-Sam, denounced a sham political concession offered by President Chun, and suggested they would encourage an escalation of the two-week-old campaign on the streets against his government. *Washington Post*, Thursday, 25 June 1987, A1.

<sup>745</sup> *The Washington Post*, 27 June 1987.

<sup>746</sup> On May 26, Father Kim Seung-Hoon, a representative member of the National Catholic Priest’s Corps for the Realization of Justice, revealed the evidence which top ranking police officers were directly involved in the Park Chong-Chul’s death and in cover-up. This disclosure deeply impacted the hardliners within the regime. For instance, President Chun had to sepe down key members of the hardliners, Chang Se-Dong, the Chief of National Security Planning Agency and the Prime minister Lho Shin-Young, and six other cabinet members were fired and their posts were replaced by moderate members. This replacement of hardliners caused the status and power of Roh Tae-Woo who led the reformist faction to be stronger. After all, Roh’s faction won over the hardliners in the post-Chun power succession struggle, and the party and the government passed a resolution that Roh was the official

through statements issued by the State Department.<sup>747</sup> On the contrary, hardliners demanded harsh suppression of the democratic movement at any cost. They said that they could use military force to suppress demonstrators who challenged the authority of the state. However, if President Chun supported Roh, a leader of the softliners, then political struggle became meaningless to the ruling coalition. For the regime, the first priority was to relax the political tension, and to support Roh to be the next president. Thus, the DJP presidential nominee Roh Tae-Woo, after discussion with Chun, announced that he would accept all the opposition demands on June 29, 1987.<sup>748</sup>

Roh's "June 29 Declaration" constituted a fundamental agreement for the Korean democratic transition. The focal point of the "June 29 Declaration" was the restoration of the fair rule of competition. The eight points of the declaration were: 1) constitutional revision for directly elected president, 2) revision of presidential election law, including the end of restrictions on campaigning, 3) restoration of political rights for Kim Dae Jung and release of political prisoners, 4) full respect of basic human rights, 5) freedom of the press, 6) local government autonomy and self-regulation for educational institutions, 7) provisions for full political activities, and 8) elimination of crime and corruption.

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candidate to succeed Chun and set the date of the party convention to nominate Roh as a next presidential candidate on June 10, 1987. *Joongang Daily*, 26 May 1987; Park Bo-Gyun, *Chunghwadae Bisusil* (The Blue House Secretary Office), vol. 3, 81.

<sup>747</sup> When Secretary of State, George P. Shultz, visited South Korea for the meeting with President Chun, he expressed that the U.S. government supported the compromise between the regime and the opposition party. *Washington Post*, Friday, 6 March 1987, A25.

<sup>748</sup> *The New York Times*, 30 June 1987.

## **5. Changes of Democratic Civil Society**

After the general election in 1985, the character of democratic civil society became more active and aggressive because democratic civil society witnessed that the middle class actively supported the opposition party in the election. In particular, the coalition between the NKDP (later RDP) and democratic civil society became a foundation of the active and influential democratic struggle with the Chun regime. In this circumstance, suppression could not stop the active and well-organized democratic struggle, and the struggle was even getting more aggressive and violent.<sup>749</sup> As one outcome of this active struggle, the opposition force succeeded in opening negotiations for constitutional revision in the middle of 1986. Ironically, this opening the negotiation between the DJP and NKDP caused the opposition force to divide into radical and moderate factions.<sup>750</sup> Thus, both democratic civil society and the NKDP could not struggle effectively against the repressive regime in early this period.

Although democratic civil society and the NKDP were in conflict after negotiations for constitutional revision began, democratic civil society did not have an alternative strategy and therefore had to support the position of the opposition party. At the same time, democratic groups and organizations, especially radical organizations, focused their efforts on forcing the regime to move toward a democratic transition through active and aggressive demonstrations. Along with aggressive demonstrations, the middle class increasingly showed signs of supporting the democratic movement, such

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<sup>749</sup> Wonmo Dong, "University Students in South Korean Politics: Patterns of Radicalization in the 1980s," *Journal of International Affairs* 40, no. 2 (winter/spring 1987): 233-55.

<sup>750</sup> To radical groups and organizations, the Chun regime and the ruling DJP were not subject of negotiation but a struggle. On the other hand, the opposition party was purely power-oriented and thought the easiest and fastest way to take power was to change the Constitution through a negotiation with the regime. Because of this different viewpoint, the opposition party and democratic civil society had difficulty in uniting and building a coalition.

as joining democratic organizations and their democratic struggles. For example, on 23 March 1986, several tens of thousands of opposition supporters, including the middle class, rallied in Busan, demanding constitutional revision.<sup>751</sup> In this sense, the public discourse was moving from the regime to the opposition force, and democratic civil society was attaining counter-hegemony against the regime after the election. The change of character in civil society and the active support of the middle class made the Chun regime realize that it could not control popular desires for democratization and active democratic struggles through negotiations with the opposition party.<sup>752</sup>

Eventually, the negotiation for constitutional revision was suspended, and the conflict between the NKDP and democratic civil society was removed by giving up the institutional politics of the opposition party. After that, democratic civil society and the NKDP struggled more actively, aggressively, and effectively with the regime under the united leadership of the UMMDU. Moreover, the active participation of the middle class in the democratic movement, after the disclosure of Park Chong-Chul's death and Chun's suspension of negotiations for constitutional revision, decisively influenced changing the character of civil society. Based on this changed character, after a series of violent confrontations between the regime and the opposition force, the Chun regime finally accepted the demand for democratization through Roh's "June 29 Declaration" in 1987.

Compared with previous periods, democratic civil society of this period was much more aggressive, active, and united, and thus its democratic struggles were more influential. This changed character in civil society significantly contributed to attaining

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<sup>751</sup> *Dong-A Daily*, 23 March 1986.

<sup>752</sup> In addition, the number of people who supported Roh Tae-Woo was gradually increased. They did not favor the parliamentary system because they believed that this system could allow Chun to

counter-hegemony against the regime. This significant change of civil society was affected by various internal and external elements. More importantly, those elements affected the character of democratic civil society simultaneously and favorably in this period. In previous periods, some elements had advantageously influenced whereas some other elements had unfavorably affected the character of democratic civil society. Thus, it had been difficult for democratic civil society to be aggressive, united, and influential in spite of active struggles. Moreover, civil society could not consistently maintain the changed character because of suppression and internal divisions. However, after the general election in 1985, internal and external factors began to influence the character of civil society simultaneously and favorably. This unprecedented phenomenon made democratic civil society strong enough to overwhelm the suppression and to attain counter-hegemony against the regime. Therefore, the simultaneous and favorable influence of internal and external factors was crucial in changing the character of civil society.

First of all, development of political culture significantly influenced the character of democratic civil society in this period. Although the political culture of this period did not completely change to democratic civic culture, the change was widely spread in the society.<sup>753</sup> This spread of democratic civic culture constructively affected the character of democratic civil society through direct and indirect ways. For example, the qualitative

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influence post-Chun era. Therefore, the internal situation within the ruling coalition also influenced Chun's decision. Oh Byung-Sang, *Chunghwadae Bisusil 4* (The Secretary's office of the Blue House 4), 72-3.

<sup>753</sup> In the eyes of Korean, who were no longer living in dire poverty, they saw the Chun regime as not only repressive but also illegitimate. This kind change in the public perception toward the regime was strongly influenced by democratic political culture and economic development. In addition, this critical attitude of the public was clearly expressed in the election. In the election, the opposition NKDP captured seats in 50 out of 92 electoral districts and won 29% of the total votes. Its popular support was only 6% lower than the ruling DJP received. Shin Doh-Chul, *Mass Politics and Culture in Democratizing Korea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-2.

growth of the middle class, strongly influenced by the spread of democratic civic culture, greatly contributed to changing the character of civil society. In addition, the middle class came to place more emphasis on democratic values and principles, such as human rights, and to actively express their political dissatisfaction. Thus, when the Park Chong-Chul incident took place, the middle class erupted and actively protested the violation of human rights. Before this period, when violation of human rights by the regime had taken place, the middle class had never participated in the protests of democratic civil society. Unlike previous periods, however, the active support and participation of the middle class in democratic civil society became a foundation of the active, united, and aggressive character of civil society in this period.<sup>754</sup>

The outcome of a survey, reported by *Hankook Daily* in early May 1987, foretold the participation of the middle class in the democratic movement.<sup>755</sup> According to the survey, the middle class in South Korea was not a conservative force concerned mainly with social order, but had a very critical opinion of the current political regime. A large part of the middle class responded negatively to developmentalism, the ideological bedrock of the bureaucratic-authoritarian state. As many as 85.7 percent of 1,043 respondents agreed that to improve human rights was desirable even if it slowed economic development. In addition, 64 percent wanted to amend the Constitution prior to the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, and 59 percent preferred the presidential system to the cabinet system.

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<sup>754</sup> On 1 January 1987, *Hankook Daily* reported the results of a survey on the national consciousness, conducted in early December 1986. According to the results of the survey, the middle class, who had more education, were more critical of the reality of political underdevelopment than any other class and strongly aspired to political change. Based on this result, *Hankook Daily* expected that the middle class would appear as a leading force for democratization. *Hankook Daily*, 1 January 1987, 9-13.

<sup>755</sup> *Hankook Daily*, 9 June 1987.



In addition, the middle class strongly disapproved of the ideological radicalization of democratic civil society and the impasse of negotiations over the constitution. That is, the middle class strongly pressured radical organizations to change their radical ideologies and strategies, and neutralized those anti-democratic radical organizations. The middle class spoke out and acted to realize its liberal-democratic values. For example, on the first day of 1987, *Chosun Daily*, one of four major daily newspapers sent a New Years message:

Where are we now and where should we go? And who are we that suffer historical throes? To answer it, *Chosun Ilbo* addressed “the middle stratum-led society” as the theme of the year. The direction we are taking and we should take is an advanced industrial structure and a plural democratic polity appropriate to it. The former had continued to be undertaken, but the latter is still undergoing confusion and throes... Who will iron out the difficulties and how? What is to be done first, we believe, is that the middle stratum, the majority of our society, must break its silence. We must overcome the time of polarization. Time has come when the condensed will of the middle stratum, who has kept silent in the middle of a sterile atmosphere polarized between extreme conservatives and extreme revolutionaries, is to be placed broadly in the center of political society.<sup>756</sup>

In an interview with two social scientists, A *Chosun Daily* columnist characterized the middle class as strongly demanding democratization and social and economic justice. In addition, they preferred a non-revolutionary, gradual approach to democratization. They stressed the significance of the middle class in rationally getting the potentially volatile frictions between two extremisms, authoritarianism and minjungism, both of which were not representative. The key point is that “democratization will come if the middle class leads society.”<sup>757</sup> As they anticipated, the middle class, strongly influenced by development of political culture, became a foundation for having a more united, active,

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<sup>756</sup> *Chosun Daily*, 1 January 1987.

<sup>757</sup> *Chosun Daily*, 1 January 1987, 3.

aggressive, and influential character, and played an important role in the democratization process of this period.

In addition, the development of political culture favorably affected the opposition party in the general election of 1985. Unlike previous periods, the election turnout was very high, even under the implicit pressure by the regime. That is, the changed political culture was also reflected by the voting behavior of the middle class who was motivated politically rather than economically. This active support of the middle class who wanted democratization made the NKDP successful in the election and contributed to attaining counter-hegemony against the regime. Moreover, the active support of the middle class spread to almost every social class, and they did not hesitate to express their aspirations for democratization.<sup>758</sup> For example, a free scribbling board in the front of the Myungdong Cathedral was filled with words of encouragement. This kind of behavior was unimaginable until the mid-1980s. Those words of encouragement were:

We fully support the democratic struggles of patriotic students and citizens. Thanks to your unyielding struggles, a hope for democratization has been growing in our heart...(democratic workers from Exchange Bank)

To dear students:

Please forgive a weak, foolish, mid-40 year old man who feels ashamed and guilty for turning away from the present situation and the students' patriotic struggles and sacrifices, wishing to be with you... I believe many citizens who are silently watching you support patriotic students. Please take care of yourself.<sup>759</sup>

On the other hand, the change of political culture also affected the reaction of the regime toward the opposition force and their democratic struggle. Within the ruling

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<sup>758</sup> Values as trust in others, equality, tolerance, and upholding of civil rights had become an important way of thinking for the young (those under 40 years of age), the urban population and the new middle class. Han Bae-Ho, *The Korean Political Culture: Four Cultural Cleavages and Polarizing Trends in Political Alignment* (Seoul: Korea University, 1985).

coalition, the number of the moderates who emphasized a dialogue with the opposition force as a solution for the political crisis increased, and they increasingly influenced the decision making process for dealing with the political crisis. The moderates within the ruling coalition recognized that the repressive policy could not solve the crisis and made the situation worse. The Chun regime that witnessed active support and participation of the middle class who was politically motivated and did not hesitate to express their dissatisfaction toward the authoritarian regime could not just use its repressive policy to solve the political crisis. This influence of democratic civic culture strongly affected the Chun regime's decision to make a concession to the opposition.<sup>760</sup>

In addition, the development of political culture advantageously affected the external environment. The development of political culture in South Korea influenced the U.S. government, which had witnessed spread of democratic civic culture, to support democratic civil society and pressure the Chun regime not to use the military to suppress the democratic movement. The U.S. learned that the military could not stop the democratic movement of civil society and the middle class who had strong desires for democratization in the case of the Philippines.<sup>761</sup> Thus, the U.S. concluded that the Korean government could not control the democratic movement, and thus pressured the Chun regime not to use the military to suppress. In this respect, the spread of democratic

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<sup>759</sup> Kwon Yong-Ki and et al, 6, 10 eso Myungdong kkagi (From June 10 to Myungdong), *Wolgan Chosun*, (July 1987): 142-43.

<sup>760</sup> Along with the warning of the U.S. government, the spread of democratic civic political culture in the society also significantly influenced the Chun's decision to make a concession to the opposition force. That is, the Chun regime realized that it was impossible to control the democratic civil society that was attaining counter-hegemony despite physical suppression. Thus, the Chun regime chose concession to the opposition force as a second best choice.

<sup>761</sup> Yun-Han Chu, Fu Hu, and Chung-In Moon, "South Korea and Taiwan: The International Context," in *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*, 277.

civic culture indirectly induced the U.S. support to the opposition force and pressure on the Chun regime.

Second, economic development of this period directly and indirectly influenced civil society by affecting other internal and external elements, such as political culture and the political opportunity structure. As Table 6-3 illustrates, the economy could not have been better during this period. Successful economic development, such as rapid industrialization and strong growth, facilitated accumulated effects of social and political mobilizations. The most significant influence of the economic development was that it raised a question about the legitimacy of the regime among those in the middle class who had political consciousness. Thus, successful economic development of this period made the Chun regime more vulnerable to the challenge from democratic civil society. In addition, the reaction of the regime toward the democratic movement was also limited by the consequence of the economic development, such as the politically motivated middle class.<sup>762</sup>

Table 6-3

Major Economic Indicators (1985-1987)

Year	GNP (current prices in billions of won)	Per capita GNP (US\$)	Export (in millions of \$)	Economic growth rate (%)
1985	78088.4	2194	30283.1	7.0
1986	90543.0	2503	34714.5	12.9
1987	105629.8	3098	47280.0	12.8

Source: John Kie-chiang Oh, *Korean Politics: The Quest for Democratization and Economic Development*, 62.

<sup>762</sup> For example, instead of using the military to suppress the democratic movement, President Chun, seeking to end the most serious crisis in his seven-year presidency, offered to reopen the suspended debate on constitutional revision and release from detention dissident leader Kim Dae Jung and others, said an opposition leader on June 24, 1987. *Washington Post*, Wednesday, 24 June 1987, A1.

Unlike in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Chun regime could not take advantage of successful economic development in this period. Instead, the middle class who had been more interested in economic prosperity than political development became more concerned with political development once they were satisfied economically during the mid-1980s.<sup>763</sup> Therefore, the successful economic development made the middle class more actively support the democratic movement, and this active support caused democratic groups and organizations to be more united and influential. Moreover, this active support of the middle class became a foundation for democratic civil society to overcome suppression and challenge the hegemony of the regime. In this respect, economic development advantageously affected development of political culture, and the spread of democratic civic culture positively influenced the character of democratic civil society in this period.

In addition, economic development also constructively affected the political opportunity structure by influencing development of political culture. Although the regime returned its policy to a repressive policy in late 1984, the expanded political opportunity structure was not reversed by suppression. One of important reasons for this was active support of the middle class, strengthened by economic development. This active support of the middle class who had political consciousness led the Chun regime to uncontrollable situation in spite of harsh suppression. Therefore, the economic development indirectly caused the regime difficult to control the already expanded political opportunity structure by harsh suppression.

Besides political culture and the political opportunity structure, the economic development of this period also advantageously affected the external environment. For

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<sup>763</sup> *Hankook Daily*, 1 January 1987, 9-13.

instance, according to successful economic development, developed countries, such as the United States, began to pressure the Korean government for sweeping trade liberalization and financial deregulation. This pressure weakened the political base of the regime and loosened the grip of business sector which had been a part of the ruling coalition. This external pressure caused the ruling coalition to be divided and made the hardliners' position within the regime weaken. Under this weakened and divided regime, democratic civil society could struggle more actively and effectively.

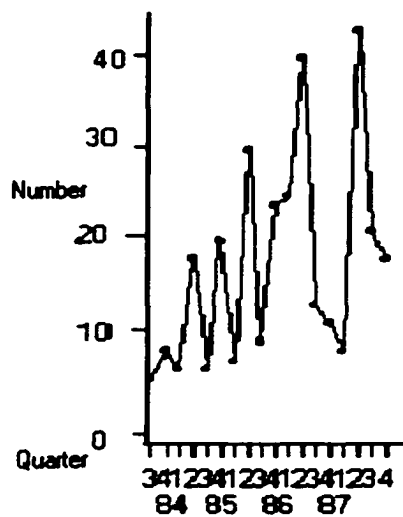
Third, in the perspective of the political opportunity structure, the regime pursued a harsh repressive policy toward democratic civil society and its struggles after the short decompression period. However, there was a great difference between this and previous periods in the reaction of democratic civil society to suppression. In previous periods, democratic civil society was easily and sharply shrunk by suppression and therefore rendered inconsequential. Thus, most democratic organizations and their leaders had to concentrate on their survival. In addition, the middle class did not or hesitated to participate in the democratic movement because of the threat of suppression.

However, during the mid-1980s, the expanded political opportunity structure brought about by the decompression policy and the general election of 1985 was not rapidly retracted by suppression. Despite the fact that many leaders of democratic civil society were arrested, some democratic organizations, such as radical student organizations and labor unions, even struggled more aggressively with the Chun regime, as Figure 6-2 shows. Moreover, other social classes and groups, such as professors, lawyers, doctors, and journalists who had been quiet began to actively participate in the democratic movement and to express their desires for democratization and political

dissatisfaction. For example, after 28 professors of Korea University issued a supporting statement for democratic reform on March 28, hundreds of university professors followed in spite of the threat from the Ministry of Education. In addition, after Chun announced his decision to suspend negotiations for the constitutional revision, 1,475 professors from 48 universities issued a public statement on 22 April 1987 that criticized Chun's decision.<sup>764</sup>

Figure 6-2

Tendency of Democratic Movement, 1984-1987



That is, the expanded political opportunity structure, not easily retracted by suppression, made the character of civil society more united, active, and aggressive under harsh suppression. Democratic organizations, established during the decompression period, were not easily destroyed by suppression because they were well organized in terms of structure, ideology, and strategy, compared with those of previous periods. Most democratic organizations were under the control of well-organized nationwide umbrella organizations, and their members who gained support from the middle class did

<sup>764</sup> *Wolgan Chosun*, no. 6, (1986): 476; *Dong-A Daily*, 22 April 1987.

not easily give up their organizations. Another example was that the number of democratic organizations established in this period was higher than that of the decompression period (see Table 6-4). As a result, those democratic organizations resisted more aggressively against the repressive authoritarian regime, and thus their democratic movement was getting more violent. For instance, on 29 April 1986, the riot police and about 1,500 students at Yonsei University battled with rocks, clubs and tear gas as an antigovernment demonstration turned violent.<sup>765</sup>

Table 6-4

Democratic Organizations, Established after Returning to Suppression

Name of Organizations	Members of Organizations	Date
Association of Minjung Movement for Democracy and Unification ( <i>Mintongryun</i> )	Jaeya force	March 29, 1985
Coalition of Korean Protestant Labor ( <i>Kinoryun</i> )	Protestant workers	February 3, 1985
Coalition of Social Movements in the Incheon area ( <i>Insayun</i> )	members of Jaeya group in Incheon area	November 19, 1984
Conference of Democratic Citizens in Busan ( <i>Buminhyup</i> )	social movement leaders in Busan area	May 3, 1985
Council of the Democratic Press Movement ( <i>Minju Ollon Undong Hyubuihoe</i> )	members of expelled teachers in 1980, and publishers	December 19, 1984
Council of Writers for Freedom ( <i>Chayu Silchun Munin Hyubuihoe</i> )	writers' organization	December 19, 1984
Federation of Labor Movements in Incheon Area ( <i>Innoryun</i> )	labor movement activists in Incheon area	Feb. 7, 1986
Federation of Labor Movements in Seoul Area ( <i>Seonoryun</i> )	labor movement activists and union members in Seoul area	August 25, 1985
Gukookhaksaengyonmaeng ( <i>Gukookryun</i> )	radical students	March 29, 1986
Korea Labor Christian Federation ( <i>Hankook Kidok Nodongja Chongyonmaeng</i> )	educator, professors, lawyers	February 3, 1985
National Coalition for Democratic Constitution (NCDC)	religious and intellectual dissenters	May 27, 1987

<sup>765</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 30 April 1986.



Table 6-4—continued

Name of Organization	Members of Organizations	Date
National Coalition of Anti-emperial Anti-dictatorial Patriotic Students ( <i>Ehakryn</i> )	radical students under Chunhakryun	November 3, 1986
National Council of University Students Representatives ( <i>Chunhook Daehaksaeng Daepyoja Hyupuihwui</i> )	about 3,500 students of 95 colleges and universities	August 19, 1987
National Democratic Struggle Committee Against Imperialism and Fascism ( <i>Minmintuwi</i> )	radical student movement activists	March 29, 1986
National Federation of Student Association ( <i>Chunhaknyun</i> )	nationwide student organization members of 23 universities	April 17, 1985
National Liaison Organization for Democracy ( <i>Minjuhanul wihan Kookmin Undong Yollakgigu</i> )	opposition politicians and Jaeya leaders	March 17, 1986
National Movement Headquarter of Democratic Constitution ( <i>Kookmin Undong Bonbu</i> )	most democratic organizations and middle class citizens*	May 27, 1987
Self-Reliant Democratization Struggle Committee Against the United States and Fascism ( <i>Jamintuwi</i> )	radical student movement activists	April 10, 1986
Struggle Committee for Three Mins: People, Nation, and Democracy ( <i>Sammintuwi</i> )	radical university students	April 17, 1985
Sudaehyup ( <i>Seoul Jiyuk Daehaksaeng Hyupuihwe</i> )	students of 18 universities in Seoul area	May 8, 1987
United Minjung (masses) Movement for Democracy and Unification ( <i>Mintongryun</i> )	23 organizations from among dissidents, labor, religious community, farmers, the poor and intellectuals	Mar.29, 1985

\* 1) sectoral representatives-253 Catholic Priests, 270 Protestant pastors, 160 Buddhist monks, 35 from the PMCDR, 213 opposition politicians, 162 women's movement leaders, 308 from the Council for the Promotion of Democracy Movement, 171 peasant activists, 39 labor activists, 18 urban poor activists, 43 publishers and journalists, 43 authors and writers, 66.

In particular, the expanded political opportunity structure was not easily retracted by the regime's suppression because of the qualitative and quantitative growth of the

middle class and their enthusiastic support to the democratic movement.<sup>766</sup> The spread of democratic civic culture also unfavorably affected the regime to control the democratic movement of civil society, and thus the regime failed to reverse the expanded political opportunity structure. Not only democratic civil society but also middle class citizens, influenced by democratic civic culture, were not afraid of suppression and resisted more actively against the repressive authoritarian regime. As Figure 6-2 illustrates, the number of democratic struggles sharply increased in this repressive period. More importantly, many middle class citizens began to participate actively in democratic organizations and their protests. The regime's harsh suppression of this period provided a strong motive for civil society to be united and to have a more assertive character in the democratic struggle. For instance, two students' death provided an opportunity for moderate and radical democratic organizations to unite and struggle more aggressively with the authoritarian regime.<sup>767</sup> Therefore, the expanded political opportunity structure favorably affected changing and maintaining the active, united, and influential character, both directly and indirectly.

Fourth, external factors also greatly contributed to changing the character of civil society in this period. One such event was the democratic transition in the Philippines, providing both courage and confidence to supporters of democracy in Korea. Due to the influence of the successful democratic transition in the Philippines, democratic civil society became more aggressive and united. For instance, after the democratization of

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<sup>766</sup> According to democratic movement activists, the support and participation of the middle class in the democratic movement were their strongest weapons in struggling with the regime. Because democratic groups and organizations received strong support from the public, especially from the middle class, they came to have confidence in winning in democratic struggle and thereby force the regime toward the democratic transition process.

the Philippines in 1986, the Catholic Church that played a very significant role in the democratization process of the Philippines supported and participated more actively in the democratic movement in Korea.<sup>768</sup> This external event made not only democratic civil society but also ordinary people have stronger desires for democratization.

The democratic transition in the Philippines also made the Chun regime realize that physical suppression of democratic civil society could not effectively control the democratic movement that the middle class supported and participated in. Consequently, the regime accepted the demand of the opposition force as a second best strategy and negotiated the democratic transition process with the opposition party. In this respect, the successful democratic transition in the Philippines not only contributed to changing the character of civil society, but also influenced the regime's policy in dealing with the democratic movement of civil society in this period.

U.S. pressure on the Chun regime and its indirect support to the democratic movement also influenced civil society in this period. After the collapse of the Marcos regime, the U.S. government pressured President Chun to tolerate peaceful opposition rallies and accommodate some opposition demands.<sup>769</sup> Secretary of the State, George P. Shultz, was sent to express that the U.S. government supported compromise between the

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<sup>767</sup> In the ideological perspective, radical and leftist ideologies of radical democratic organizations began to move to the center in order to legitimate themselves and win the support of the public after the Park Chong-Chul's death.

<sup>768</sup> For example, issuing public statements of church leaders, criticizing the authoritarianism of the Chun regime, and increasing their participation in the democratic movement were more active. On June 2, 1987, 1,300 Catholic priests and nurses demonstrated and demanded democratization by the democratic way. In addition, on June 20, Clashes between demonstrators and police continued, with Buddhist monks participating in the anti-government rally for the first time. The monks, using their fists and umbrellas, fought police who tried to drag them away. *Dong-A Daily*, 24 June 1987; *Washington Post*, Sunday, 21 June 1987, A26.

<sup>769</sup> Yun-Han Chu, Fu Hu, and Chung-In Moon, "South Korea and Taiwan: The International Context," 276-77.

regime and the NKDP.<sup>770</sup> In addition, the U.S. warned the Chun regime not to use the military to suppress the democratic movement. Knowing this, democratic civil society became more active and aggressive in the struggle with the Chun regime.<sup>771</sup> In this respect, external pressure and events advantageously affected the character of democratic civil society by influencing the political opportunity structure. That is, external environment contributed to maintaining the expanded political opportunity structure by pressuring the Chun regime, and it helped democratic civil society to attain counter-hegemony.

Along with the U.S. warning, the Chun regime could not use the military to suppress the democratic movement because of a concern with international opinion as a host country of the Olympic Games in 1988.<sup>772</sup> The movement, knowing of the regime's difficulty in using the military to suppress it, was able to act more aggressively to attain counter-hegemony against the regime. Therefore, democratic civil society was reinforced by external factors, such as democratization of the Philippines, the hosting the Olympic Games, and U.S. pressure.

Compared with the previous period, those four factors more advantageously and consistently affected the character of civil society in this period. That is, the authoritarian regime, unlike the 1970s and early 1980s, did not take advantage of the successful economic development, and the successful economic development provided economic and cultural resources that civil society and the middle class could utilize in attacking the

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<sup>770</sup> *Washington Post*, Friday, 6 March 1987, A25; 27 June and 5 July 1987.

<sup>771</sup> U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Gaston Sigur between 23 and 25 June 1987 made it clear that the U.S. security guarantee was valid only as long as the South Korean government did not use the military to put down the unrest. Juergen Kleiner, *Korea: A Century of Change*, 219.

<sup>772</sup> Many countries would have found the imposition of martial law appalling and might have cancelled their participation in the 1988 Olympic Games. Juergen Kleiner, *Korea: A Century of Change*, 218.

illegitimacy of the Chun regime. Moreover, the influences of successful economic development on the political opportunity structure and external factors were favorable to civil society as in the previous period. In addition, the successful economic development caused other developed countries to pressure on economic and political policies of the regime, and this pressure weakened the ruling coalition. Under this divided and weakened regime, democratic civil society that had an active, aggressive, and united character could struggle more effectively with the regime. Therefore, economic development was a very significant necessary condition for changing the character of democratic civil society in this democratization period.

Second, as in the previous period, political culture also favorably affected civil society. The active support and participation of the middle class, influenced by democratic civic culture, was crucial for democratic movement. In this period, this active support and participation of the middle class were more constructive than those of the previous period. In addition, the influence of political culture on the political opportunity structure was also favorable to civil society. Despite the fact that the regime tried to reverse the expanded political opportunity structure by suppression, as in the previous period, the expanded political opportunity structure was not easily retracted. As mentioned before, one important reason for this was the influence of democratic civic culture on civil society and the middle class. Particularly in this period, external pressure and events, such as democratization of the Philippines and the U.S. pressure and support accelerated the spread of democratic civic culture, and provided confidence to democratic groups and activists. Therefore, political culture constructively and significantly affected civil society as a necessary condition.

Third, the political opportunity structure, expanded in late 1983, also significantly and positively affected civil society. Although the Chun regime tried to control the democratic movement and the opposition party by retracting the expanded political opportunity structure and replacing with repression, it did not work well because of domestic and external restrictions. This expanded political opportunity structure had remained in this period and provided more space for democratic civil society to struggle actively and effectively.

Last, the external environment of this period more favorably affected civil society than ever before. Compared with the previous period, the external environment of this period directly and advantageously affected the character of civil society. Especially after the collapse of the Marcos regime of the Philippines in 1986, democratic civil society came to have confidence in the prospect for democratization and struggled more aggressively and effectively with Chun regime despite repression. In addition, the middle class who witnessed the democratic transition process of the Philippines became significantly more active.

The most important factor may be that these elements affected the character of civil society, both favorably and simultaneously. Because of this favorable and simultaneous influence, the democratic movement could reach a peak point in this period and successfully forced the regime toward the democratic transition process. Thus, this unprecedented phenomenon explains why the democratic transition of South Korea occurred when it did. Despite the fact that those internal and external elements had influenced civil society since the early 1970s, they had been neither consistent nor positive until the mid-1980s because of repression and lack of readiness of democratic

**civil society. Under these circumstances, there was a limitation in changing the divided, isolated, and inconsequential character of civil society to an active, united, assertive, and influential one.**

**However, after the general election of 1985, those internal and external elements affected democratic civil society simultaneously, and more importantly, each of those elements advantageously affected the changing character of democratic civil society. This change directly affected the capability of democratic civil society to struggle for democratization, and finally it played a crucial role in accomplishing the ultimate goal, democratic transition.**

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **CONCLUSION**

There is no doubt that the democratic transition of South Korea was a result of active struggles and sacrifices of many individuals and democratic groups and organizations of civil society for a long time. Along with the installation of the Yushin authoritarian regime in the early 1970s, several civil society groups, such as students, the Jaeya force, religious communities, and labor organizations, transformed to pro-democracy groups and began to work for restoration of a democratic constitution. In the early Yushin period, these groups of civil society focused to resist against suppression and struggled with the regime for their individual goals. In spite of their active struggles, however, authoritarian regimes had not been directly challenged by explicitly democratic civil society until the mid-1980s because of its inconsequential struggles.

Although democratic civil society indirectly contributed to the collapse of the Yushin regime by destabilizing political situation in the end of the 1970s, it did not have the capacity to push the process to the ultimate goals of a democratic transition. Rather, internal power struggles and conflicts within civil society and political parties induced direct military intervention and establishment of another authoritarian regime. After the establishment of the new authoritarian regime in 1980, democratic civil society had to face the harshest suppression, and a divided, isolated, and inconsequential character of civil society had remained until the mid-1980s. Because of this divided and isolated



character, the democratic movement of civil society could not be influential, and thus the regime was unresponsive (other than repression) until the mid-1980s. How the divided, isolated, and inconsequential civil society became active, united, assertive, and influential after the general election of 1985, and began to attain counter-hegemony against the regime, is part of the overall puzzle addressed by this dissertation. It was the active, united, and aggressive civil society of 1986-87 that made the authoritarian regime to accept demands for democratization.

On the other hand, the modernization thesis that has attempted to explain democratic transition with a relationship between economic development and democracy is partially helpful to explain the evolution process of Korean civil society. According to the modernization thesis, economic development generates the legitimacy problem of authoritarian regimes because public aspirations move from economic prosperity to political development. In addition, it facilitates creation of the middle class and fosters a democratic civic culture through education. These arguments may help to explain the growth of Korean civil society in the mid-1980s. That is, economic development was an important variable that explains several phenomena related to the evolutionary of Korean civil society. For instance, successful economic development decisively contributed to creation of the middle class who had political consciousness, and this middle class became a foundation for the active democratic movement of civil society in the mid-1980s.

Nevertheless, it is limited in explaining the long and complicated evolutionary process of the Korean civil society that had been affected by many internal and external factors. For instance, the successful economic development in the 1970s and early 1980s

did not play the above positive roles for democratic transition or the growth of civil society. Rather, it had been favorable to the authoritarian regime by providing legitimacy until the mid-1980s. In addition, the modernization thesis is limited in explaining the sudden vitalization of Korean civil society and the change of the public discourse in the mid-1980s. More importantly, it has a serious limitation in explaining how civil society attains counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime and why democratic transition occurs in a certain time. In this respect, the modernization thesis is inadequate to explain the long and complicated evolutionary process of Korean civil society and democratic transition process.

This study found that the fundamental reason for the inconsequential struggle of civil society during the 1970s and early 1980s was an inconsistent and unfavorable influence of internal and external elements, such as political culture, economic development, political opportunity structure, and external environment, on civil society. Some factors, such as traditional Confucian political culture, economic development, and external factors, had obstructively affected the character of democratic civil society during the 1970s and early 1980s. In addition, the unfavorable impact of those factors provided excuses for suppressing democratic groups and organizations and their democratic struggles. Furthermore, favorable influence of some factors, such as expansion of the political opportunity structure, was not consistent because of suppression by the regime and internal divisions within civil society.

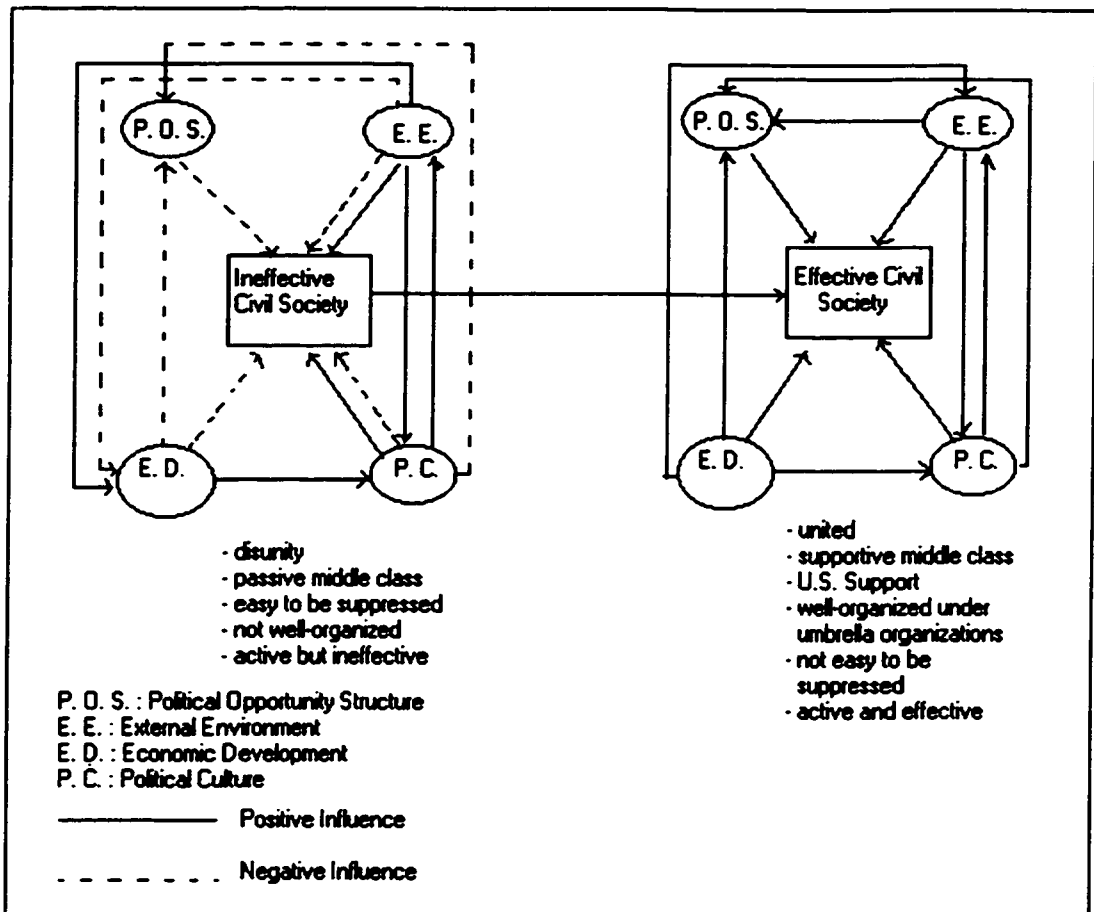
This unfavorable and inconsistent influence of internal and external factors caused democratic civil society to be divided and made its democratic movement inconsequential. Moreover, democratic civil society found no support from the middle

class for three reasons. First, the middle class had been reluctant to explicitly support civil society because of the regime's repression. Thus, despite the fact that they were critical of authoritarian regimes, they did not openly express their support to democratic civil society and its movement. Second, some radical organizations and their radical and violent ideologies made the middle class keep a distance from civil society. Third, the size of the middle class had been small, and thus its support to civil society could not be influential. Under such circumstances, the democratic movement of civil society could not be influential and was therefore easily suppressed and unable to compete with the regime.

However, a significant change took place in the influence of internal and external elements on the character of civil society. With the expansion of the political opportunity structure by the regime's decompression policy in late 1983, those internal and external factors began to affect the character of democratic civil society, both favorably and simultaneously. As Figure 7-1 shows, whereas most internal and external elements had unfavorably influenced the character of civil society during the 1970s and early 1980s, those elements of the mid-1980s constructively affected it. This significant change in influence of internal and external elements induced a more democratic civil society that was more united, active, aggressive, and influential. More importantly, the middle class, strongly influenced by evolution of political culture, successful economic development, and the expanded political opportunity structure, began to support the opposition force more actively from the mid-1980s. This could only enhance the influence of democratic civil society.

Figure 7-1

The Change of Character of Democratic Civil Society



In particular, the eruption of the middle class in the mid-1980s caused a hitherto divided democratic civil society to unite. The politically motivated middle class strongly criticized the division of civil society and demanded unification of civil society. In order for democratic civil society to draw active support of the middle class, radical and moderate organizations of civil society had to compromise and cooperate with each other. Thus, more united and aggressive democratic civil society, actively supported by the middle class, could play a decisive role in the Chun regime's concession to the opposition force in 1987. In this respect, the significant role of the middle class in the mid-1980s

was to pressure heterogeneous democratic civil society in terms of ideologies, goals, and strategies to unite and struggle for the ultimate goal, democratic transition.

Especially, the middle class played a decisive role not only in neutralizing radical organizations, which had anti-democratic characters and fought for “people’s democracy,” but also in uniting various democratic groups and organizations. Before the middle class actively supported and participated in civil society, radical organizations that had an anti-democratic character were active and played a leadership role in the democratic movement because there was no force that could check their radical ideologies and activities. However, after the mid-1980s, the middle class became openly critical of the ideologies and strategies of radical organizations, and clearly expressed its dissatisfaction toward radical organizations, especially their undemocratic nature. This strong criticism and demand forced radical organizations to reconsider their ideologies and strategies, and led them to cooperate with moderate groups and organizations. In order for those radical organizations to maximize the support of the middle class, there were not many options, except for cooperating with moderate groups and organizations. That is, those radical organizations realized that they could not be supported by the middle class who wanted liberal democracy, and had to temporarily give up their radical ideologies and strategies. Therefore, the strong pressure of the ideologically conservative middle class decisively contributed to marginalizing and neutralizing anti-democratic radical organizations.

Through examining the character of civil society during the 1970s and 1980s and its influence on the democratic movement, this study could confirm as follows. The character of civil society had been changed gradually by the confluence of several

factors, including political culture, economic development, the political opportunity structure, and external environment, in spite of divisions within civil society and harsh suppression of the regime. The first sign of the change in the character of civil society took place in the mid-1970s. Various groups that had concentrated on struggling for their individual goals began to realize that restoration of a democratic constitution was the only way to achieve them. Accordingly, the authoritarian regime became the common target of democratic groups and organizations, and thus they could theoretically cooperate against the common enemy. Although there were internal conflicts within democratic civil society, the level of cooperation that did take place contributed to the concentration of resources and efforts. Especially, in the late Yushin regime, democratic groups and organizations mobilized their members and mass to express their economic and political dissatisfaction and therefore greatly contributed to the political crisis that brought the collapse of the Yushin regime.

Other factors contributed to the gradual maturation of civil society in the mid-1970s. First, the evolution of political culture had both positive and negative impact. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the traditional Confucian political culture was favorable to the authoritarian regime and hindered a change from a hierarchical to a more balanced relationship between the state and civil society. In addition, this traditional political culture discouraged the middle class from participating in democratic organizations and the democratic movement. During the 1970s and early 1980s, this unfavorable influence of political culture was strongly affected by external environment, such as the Cold War, the U.S. defeat in the Vietnam War, and confrontation with North Korea. These international environment and events had hindered a change of political culture and

opening of the political opportunity structure and obstructively affected other internal factors.

However, this unfavorable influence of the traditional political culture in the early authoritarian period slowly faded out, and democratic civic culture slowly spread by socio-economic development. From the mid-1980s, the changed political culture significantly influenced not only the character of democratic civil society but also the perception and behavior of the middle class toward the authoritarian regime. In particular, the growing and strengthening of the middle class in the mid-1980s became a foundation of democratic civil society. In addition, the changed political culture also influenced the reaction of the regime to the democratic movement. Due to the spread of democratic civic culture, the authoritarian regime realized that harsh suppression could not be a ultimate solution for the political crisis and finally accepted a demand for democratic transition as a second best choice. That is, unlike the 1970s and early 1980s, the political culture had favorably affected other internal and external factors, such as political opportunity structure and external environment. In this respect, outcomes of evolution of political culture appeared as active support of the middle class and change of the regime's policy toward the opposition force in the mid-1980s. The development of political culture was an important necessary condition for changing the character of civil society.

Second, successful economic development during the 1970s and 1980s had enormous influence on civil society, both favorably and unfavorably. As an unfavorable influence, the authoritarian regime took advantage of successful economic development until the early 1980s, turning it into a source of legitimacy and using it (in part) as

leverage to maintain hegemony over civil society. Under this circumstance, it was very difficult for democratic civil society to draw popular support and to struggle effectively with the authoritarian regime. Furthermore, bad economic condition, caused by rapid economic development, provided an excuse for direct military intervention and maintenance of authoritarianism. As with political culture, economic development of the 1970s and early 1980s negatively reinforced other factors. For instance, successful economic development had negatively affected civil society by providing legitimacy to authoritarian regimes. Because of this favorable impact on the regime, authoritarian regimes did not have to open the political opportunity structure that restricted political activities of democratic civil society.

On the other hand, economic development began to help to change the character of democratic civil society from the mid-1980s. Successful economic development significantly influenced the growth and strength of the middle class and changed its perception of the regime throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The middle class that had supported the authoritarian regime grew to be critical of it and more actively supported democratic civil society and its movement after the mid-1980s. This active support and participation of the middle class became a very important motive for democratic civil society to be active, united, and aggressive. In addition, successful economic development significantly influenced the regime's policy toward democratic civil society and its movement, and consequentially advantageously influenced the character of democratic civil society. Especially, after the mid-1980s, the outcome of successful economic development began to appear clearly in the change of the public discourse, political culture, and political opportunity structure, and it contributed to the growth of



**democratic civil society. Therefore, successful economic development was a necessary condition for changing the character of civil society.**

**In this respect, the modernization thesis is still powerful in explaining the evolutionary process of civil society and its impact on democratic transition of the mid-1980s. In the Korean case, economic development strongly influenced not only civil society but also development of political culture and political opportunity structure, both implicitly and explicitly. This implicit and explicit influence of economic development became a foundation for the development of civil society and made its movement more influential. Therefore, the modernization thesis is still a powerful tool for explaining the development of Korean civil society and the democratic transition of the 1980s. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, the modernization theory can not be a sufficient tool for explaining the whole evolutionary process of Korean civil society. For instance, this study found that it is limited in explaining the unfavorable influence of economic development on civil society during the 1970s and early 1980s.**

**Third, the political opportunity structure had not been opened until President Park's death. Because of favorable influence of internal and external factors on the regime, the regime did not have to open the political opportunity structure, and the opposition force could not have the capacity to force it to open it. Under the closed political opportunity structure, democratic civil society could not be active, united, aggressive, and its democratic movement had been inconsequential. After the political opportunity structure was accidentally opened by Park's death, the temporary expansion of the political opportunity structure provided space for democratic groups to be active, united, and assertive. However, democratic civil society failed to take advantage of this**

great opportunity because of internal divisions and unfavorable influence of other elements. For example, many people, especially the middle class, still wanted political and economic stability rather than political development in the early 1980s. In addition, democratic groups and organizations had to face with internal power struggles and conflicts in strategies and ideologies for democratic struggles. Under these circumstances, the military directly intervened and emerged as a central actor in the transitional politics. Furthermore, the new military force established a new authoritarian regime and suppressed civil society harsher than that of the Yushin period. By the emergence of the new authoritarian regime and harsh suppression, the temporarily opened political opportunity structure was rapidly retracted, and democratic civil society lost a chance for changing its character.

This closed political opportunity structure was opened by the decompression policy in late 1983, and the emergence of the strong opposition party in 1985 significantly contributed to the growth of democratic civil society. The expanded political opportunity structure provided space for democratic groups to be active, united, and assertive. More importantly, the expanded political opportunity structure, affected by successful economic development and spread of democratic civic culture, was not easily retracted after the regime changed its policy to a repression policy. The main reason for this was that other factors, such as economic development and political culture affected the character of civil society, both favorably and simultaneously. The favorable and simultaneous influence made democratic civil society have the capability to overcome the suppression and to struggle more aggressively with the regime.

In addition, the expanded political opportunity structure greatly contributed to the appearance of a strong opposition party and establishment of a grand democratic coalition between the democratic movement and the opposition party. The strong opposition party not only struggled with the regime in the institutional political arena, but also supported the democratic movement of civil society through mobilizing mass. In this respect, it contributed to attaining counter-hegemony of civil society against the authoritarian regime. Therefore, the expansion of the political opportunity structure provided an important motive and space for a democratic civil society, suppressed until the early 1980s, to revitalize and build solidarity among various social groups and organizations in terms of ideologies, structure, and strategies. From that point forward, the democratic movement was more influential.

In this sense, the expansion of the political opportunity structure in late 1983 became a turning point in the evolution of democratic civil society and of the democratization effort. Furthermore, the success of the new opposition party in the general election of 1985 further expanded the political opportunity structure and provided an opportunity for democratic civil society to build a coalition with the opposition party. In addition, the expanded political opportunity structure strongly influenced the perception and behavior of the middle class, and this changed middle class favorably affected the character of civil society. Therefore, the expansion of the political opportunity structure was an important and necessary condition for the rise of a strong democratic civil society.

Last, external factors also affected civil society, again in both favorable and unfavorable ways. During the 1970s and early 1980s, international environments, such

as the Cold War and the U.S. foreign policy, acted to buttress the authoritarian regime. The international environment undermined democratic civil society which shrank and was inconsequential in its struggle against the repressive regime. In addition, the external environment was used by the regime to justify repression, especially of radical groups and organizations, and the democratic movement in general. In this respect, the external environment undermined the potential growth of democratic civil society.

From the mid-1980s on, external factors positively affected not only the character of civil society but also the regime's policy toward democratic civil society. Several external events, such as the democratization of the Philippines and U.S. pressure, constructively affected democratic civil society and influenced the regime's policy for dealing with the opposition force and democratic struggles. This change of the external environment was enhanced by other factors, such as economic development, spread of democratic civic culture, and expansion of the political opportunity structure. Especially, the external environment significantly contributed to reinforcing favorable influences of internal elements on the character of civil society. This favorable influence on other elements did not take place until the mid-1980s. Therefore, the external factor was also an important necessary condition for the evolution of civil society in the mid-1980s.

Despite the fact that each of those internal and external factors was an important and necessary condition for changing the character of civil society, those factors had not affected civil society favorably and simultaneously until the mid-1980s. Most factors unfavorably and inconsistently had affected the character of civil society until then. As a result, democratic civil society was not capable of struggling effectively with the authoritarian regime. Instead, the unfavorable and inconsistent influence helped regime

to maintain power, and it made suppression of civil society easier. However, the influence of those internal and external factors on civil society began to be favorable and simultaneous after the mid-1980s. This favorable and simultaneous influence decisively contributed to changing the character of civil society. Along with the change, democratic civil society became more active, united, and assertive, and its movement became influential. Furthermore, this change of civil society became a foundation for attaining counter-hegemony against the authoritarian regime. Therefore, the favorable and simultaneous influence of internal and external factors made democratic civil society influential, and led to the successful democratic transition. In this respect, the evolutionary process of civil society and democratic transition of South Korea is a very rare case. That is, it is difficult to find favorable and simultaneous influence of internal and external factors on civil society in other countries. This makes the Korean case unique and distinctive from other cases of democratic transition.

Additionally, this study could confirm that the character of civil society is more important than an existence of civil society. This finding can be applied to other cases of the Third World countries. Thus, studies on civil society and democratization in the developing world should focus on the character of civil society. As Simone Chambers points out, if those countries have a “bad civil society,” it is difficult for civil society to contribute to changing the political system from an authoritarian to a democratic system.<sup>773</sup> Instead of a supporting role, this “bad civil society” plays an unfavorable role for democratization. Therefore, the existence of civil society is not a sufficient condition

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<sup>773</sup> Simone Chambers, “A Critical Theory of Civil Society,” In *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society*, 100-105.

for democratic transition. Rather, an active, united, and assertive character of civil society is a more important and determinant element for bringing about democratization.

Last, this study could also find that by no means the civil society approach is sufficient to explain the long evolutionary process of civil society that had many internal and external intervention variables. Although the civil society approach is useful to analyze the role of civil society in the democratic transition process, for instance, it is limited in explaining how and why “strong” and “coercive” authoritarian regimes begin to tolerate democratic movements. In addition, the civil society approach doesn’t have a theoretical framework with which to analyze the structural mechanisms that would bring the crisis of authoritarian regime. For example, in the Korean case, the civil society approach has difficulty in explaining why the authoritarian regime forged the decompression policy in 1983, which was a turning point of the activation of civil society.

Another limitation of the civil society approach is the lack of capability to analyze the changing character of civil society. The civil society approach less emphasizes factors outside civil society and thus is limited in explaining the influence of domestic and international factors on the character of civil society. For instance, the civil society approach is limited in explaining the changing character of Korean civil society that had been affected by various internal and external factors. In order to analyze the evolutionary process of civil society, other factors, such as political opportunity structure, political culture, economic development, and external environment, should be utilized. Therefore, the civil society approach is not a sufficient tool for analyzing only the evolution process of civil society but also democratic transition.

Through confirming several hypotheses, this study contributes to findings on the Korean democratic transition and civil society. First, this study has tried to overcome one of the common weaknesses of previous studies that focused a relatively short period of democratization by dealing with the whole evolutionary process of civil society from the emergence of an authoritarian regime to democratic transition. Second, this study has tried to prove that particular theses, such as the modernization thesis, the political pact, and the civil society approach, are limited in explaining the complicated democratic transition process of South Korea. Previous studies that excessively focused on the modernization thesis and the political pact model are incomplete in the study of Korean democratization. That is, political elites's role and influence of successful economic development can not sufficiently explain the whole process of Korean democratization. Rather, this study suggests that the character of civil society and its interactions with the regime should be emphasized.

In addition, this study has tried to overcome another weakness of previous studies which dismissed the evolution of Korean civil society by analyzing how the divided, isolated, and inconsequential civil society of the 1970s and early 1980s changed to be active, united, and influential in the mid-1980s. In addition, by highlighting how internal and external elements affected the character of civil society and how the changed character eventually led to democratization in Korea, this study helps explain why Korean democratic transition took place in 1987.

Last, the future task for studying Korean civil society related to its character and democratization is to focus more on the changing character of civil society and its influence on democratic transition and consolidation. In the Korean case, the current

**delay of democratic consolidation is also closely related to the character of civil society. After the democratic transition, democratic civil society shrank rapidly and failed to institutionalize. Thus, the united and active civil society began to split and many groups that were instrumental in the transition disappeared once it was over. In addition, a large portion of the middle class showed conservative orientation once again, and sought political and social stability. Therefore, future studies of the delaying of the democratic consolidation should focus on the character of civil society, the middle class, and its role.**



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