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# Contentious politics in protracted transition and the dynamics of actors: an analysis of South Korean movement history and party politics

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Thesis

**CONTENTIOUS POLITICS IN PROTRACTED TRANSITION AND THE  
DYNAMICS OF ACTORS: AN ANALYSIS OF SOUTH KOREAN  
MOVEMENT HISTORY AND PARTY POLITICS**

by

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B.A., Boston University, 2018

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
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## **DEDICATION**

In completing this thesis, I am deeply indebted to the unconditional love and support from my parents. Their prayers have been irreplaceable. I thank my mother for her willingness to share with me a painful time of the modern South Korean history, one that is not so far away from my generation. I cannot thank Professor Fewsmith enough for his sincere support throughout my four years in Boston University and even letting me wander off to other disciplines like sociology or historiography for a quest like a Masters Political Science thesis. Taking on the challenge of an interdisciplinary research would have been impossible without Professor Fewsmith's guidance. I thank each one of my professors from BU who taught me how to think for the first time and how to refuse brainwashes of our own institution. I wholeheartedly thank my friend Young Jun for putting up with my whims and panics over the past two years and always willing to talk through my confusions, fixing my computer and providing me with his own thoughts, perspectives and Korean history from the other end of social, regional spectrum. I thank my loving i:um community for love and prayer as well. Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to those dedicated their lives and youth to expand South Korean freedom and liberty to our fullest.

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**ABSTRACT**

Twentieth century has seen a significant number of social changes, taking in different forms of revolution, revolts and protests. Nevertheless, as the world stabilized with the termination of Cold War, contention also seemed to have died down. Dominating theories concluded with generalizations that contentions are inevitable process of social change; it comes and goes. South Korea, on the other hand, remains an anomaly due to contentious actors' persisting influence in the society. In reality, contention does not exist in isolation from the society, but arises from the very soil of it. South Korea actors, the institutions and parties reflecting contentious identity attests its protracted existence beyond the contentious episodes. I argue that contentious politics is not an isolated event that belongs in the transitional period, but is capable of creating a continuously interacting variable in the society. Thus, in the case of South Korea and its protracted democratization, contention needs to be understood as an organic product of South Korean history that continues to influence the contentious identity to fulfill their self-perceived historical duty of achieving a legitimate government.

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## **Introduction: South Korean Story**

After four decades of dictatorship, South Korea democratized in 1987 when the military dictator, Chun Doo Hwan surrendered by declaring a direct, popular presidential election. The historical decision was made as an aftermath of the nationwide popular protest that erupted in June 1987, triggered by the culmination of police brute force against protesters into death of a college student, Park Jong Chul from torture.<sup>1</sup> Amidst the irony of military dictatorship thirty years after the initial promise of democracy in 1948, the social movements against the dictatorship were symbolized the legitimate social force, that succeeded the patriotic fight against the foreign occupation and national humiliation that started in 1930. In a country charged with Confucian ideals, student social movements, in particular, protesting at the vanguard of the oppressed masses became the celebrated tradition in line with social respect towards scholarship (Lee 1993, 353). Student protests alone, the numbers increased from 7,819 in 1945 to 296,640 by 1975 across the country.<sup>2</sup>

While the unprecedented popular protest, mobilized across social sectors from students to workers' unions, religion groups led to Chun's giving into institutional democracy, yet implementing a de facto democracy in South Korea took another decade, when Kim Dae Jung was elected by the South Korean people amidst the authoritarian remnants still remaining powerful.<sup>3</sup> Despite freedom promised, a pro-Chun candidate, Roh

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<sup>1</sup> Dong-A Ilbo. 1987. "College Student Death After Police Investigation 大學生(대 학생) 경찰調查(조사)받다 死亡(사망) 民民鬪(민 민 투)관련." Accessed on February 21, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Mason, Edward S., et. al. 1980. *The Economic and Social Modernization of the Republic of Korea*, Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University. 378.

<sup>3</sup> Whether Kim Young Sam's 1990 three-party merger should be considered a compromise with the authoritarian faction remains a controversy (Lee, n.d.). This paper considers it an act of compromise as the paper primarily concerns the popular sentiments rather than the more ambivalent academic assessments.

Tae Woo was elected in 1988 and in the subsequent election, a previously pro-democracy candidate Kim Young Sam who colluded with the authoritarian faction party.<sup>4</sup> The moment remains as a point of irony in the South Korean democratic history. Nevertheless, the reality does not seem to have changed fundamentally. The year 2018 marks twenty-year anniversary since the election of the former president Kim Dae Jung. While the dramatic impeachment of the former president Park Geun Hye marks a political watershed, South Korean establishment still largely represent the authoritarian past and those in government and corporations remain invincible in the greater South Korean society.

In looking at the case of unfinished democracy in South Korea with continuous contention between social classes and political parties albeit amidst the stability on the surface, this paper aims to understand the South Korean version of contentious politics and understand its continuity and discontinuity in comparison with the existing contention literature and the application of existing theoretical variables like the political opportunity structure, the democratic institutionalization of contentious actors. In doing so, the empirical review focuses at the historical review of “Woon-dong-gwon,” the South Korean term for movement actors, in protracted transitional, democratization context with case study of South Korean parties that originated from the movement actors, their ruptures, interactions with the establishment parties amidst the continued reality of contention in South Korea in the broader light. The analysis will mainly use the comparative-historical analysis of archival data and public records.

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<sup>4</sup> Bank, David and Peter Leyden. 1990. “3 Leaders Unite To Form New S. Korean Party.” *ChicagoTribune*. Accessed February 17, 2018.

## 1. Empirical Question

With various political and ideological changes, the twentieth century has seen explosions of social movements, change of social and political dynamics, with varying scale as large from a complete upheaval of social fabric through Peasant Revolution in the People's Republic of China to moderate social contention within democracies like the '68 movement in Germany or anti-Vietnam protests in the United States in the 1970s. Nevertheless, most social movements within the context of democracy or democratic transition have been temporary and often episodic events of which demands have been quickly institutionalized by policymakers. Once the demands have been realized, the social actors may continue voicing their opinions in the public, but would soon lose their contentious identity on the particular issue of the past. On the other hand, South Korea presents a case of continued existence and persisting reality of movement politics and the identity of "Woon-dong-gwon" (to be translated as "movement actors" literally).

While movement politics have been much deemphasized since 1987, movement politics have consistently been observed in almost all the major junctures of South Korean politics regardless of party domination. These cases include some of the early social movements that took place right after the first popular election of the opposition party president, 1991 Second June Struggle against the three-party merger, as well as those into the democratic era, from Free Trade Agreement protest under Roh Moo Hyun administration to Mad Cow Protest under Lee Myung Bak and the most recent impeachment protest against Park Geun Hye. In terms of the established theories of social

movement and the proposed parabolic cycles, one would expect an immediate or even a gradual demobilization.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1. South Korean General/Illegal/Violent Protests (Korean National Police Agency White Paper)<sup>6</sup>

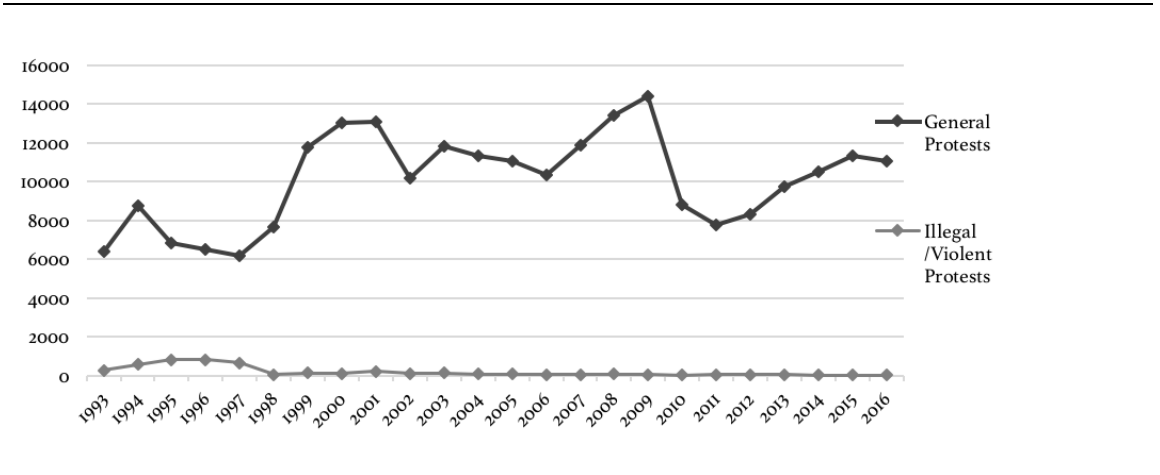
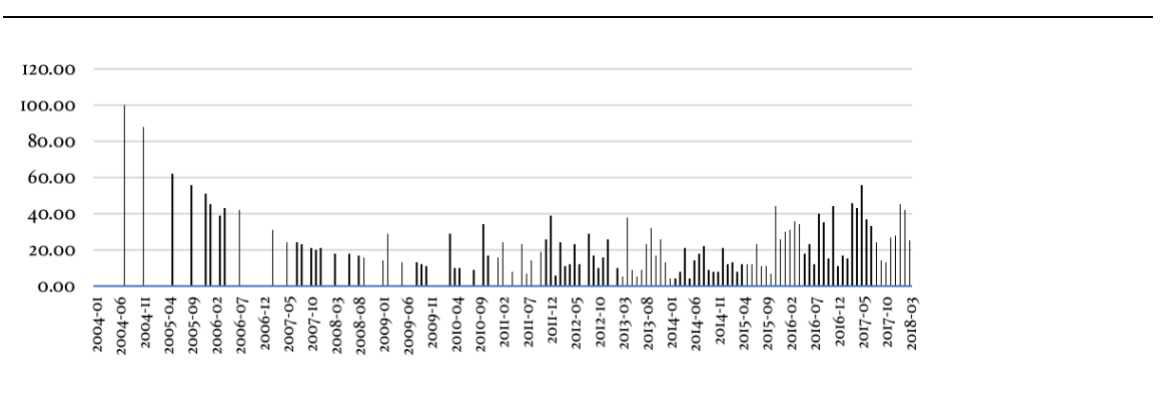


Figure 2. Relative Volume of “Woon-dong-gwon” Entered on South Korean Google Search (January 2004 - March 2018)<sup>7</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Tarrow, Sidney. 1995. *Power in Movement*. Cambridge University Press. 95.

<sup>6</sup> *Korean National Police White Paper*. n.d. Korean National Police Agency.

<sup>7</sup> GoogleTrends is a search data and visualization service provided by Google.Inc. The service shows how much the search term was entered on Google Search relative to total search made in different regions. In this case, the search term was entered exclusively in South Korea by 99%. I have chosen the particular period, because January 2004 was when the service began. As South Korea rapidly globalized in the early 2000s with increased internet supplies, interpretations based on a U.S.-based search portal would not significantly distort public interest on the search-term.

In addition to its surprising persistence, the movement actors' continued autonomy as well as political significance is another distinct feature of South Korean contentious politics. Even after the military regime compromised for a popular election and the Kims were democratically elected, much authoritarian supporters were left in the South Korean parliament, making it difficult for the democratically elected presidents to make any policy progress. Therefore, both Kim Yong Sam and Kim Dae Jung had to rely heavily on appeal to the public, through the movement actors of 1987 struggle to pressure the reluctant parliament. Such legislative strategy has declined overtime, as South Korean presidential election stabilized, such initial political climate allowed autonomy and political independence with ambiguous, but substantial political legitimacy apart from the elected and often corrupt parliament.

Therefore, though the self-identified movement actors have been much less contentious in their social expressions, their political significance and the consistently active role in contentious politics in an extended period of time makes it difficult to conclude contentious politics to be demobilizing in South Korea. How have contentious politics and movement become more than social decisions and actions, but a persisting, self-chosen identity even after an advanced democracy, albeit imperfect one, have clearly been achieved in South Korea?

The second question arises in the episode of United Progressive Party dissolution decision by the South Korean constitutional court in 2013 with disenfranchisement of the elected party representatives and the other "movement party", Justice Party's inaction, or lack of protest. This was the first time ever a political party was disintegrated in South

Korea under the legal auspices not to mention the lack of similar precedent in the Western liberal democratic history besides banning of neo-Nazi parties in the 1950s Germany. November 5, 2013, former president Park Geun Hye filed a claim to disintegrate the United Progressive Party to the South Korean constitutional court as decided at the presidential cabinet meeting. All the subsequent legal processes were delivered by the prime minister at the absence of the president as she went off for the presidential summits in Europe. Nevertheless, the fact that Park's trial request came at the time of the ruling Saenuri Party's election fraud scandal, simultaneously with the Prosecutor's Office's summoning Park's main competitor in the 2012 election, Moon Jae In on the day of Park's departure attracted much controversy that Park and the ruling party was trying to cover the election fraud with other issues.<sup>8</sup>

The constitutional codification of political parties is an uncommon provision in the American-based constitutions like that South Korea. Though some of the post-war European countries – particularly those with fascist or extremist party history – have codified parties as constitutional institutions like in Germany or Italy, much of the jurisprudence in the United States have freed the parties from the state intervention as private associations that are to be determined by the people.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in terms of codification, South Korean constitution follows suit of the U.S.; banning of a political party in South Korea was not much of a legal norm both in terms of codification as well as of precedents.

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<sup>8</sup> Han-kook Ilbo. 2013. “United Progressive Party Disintegration Trial Request: A move to political turnaround... Is it an election fraud cover? [통진당 해산심판 청구] 국면전환용 정치적 카드... 대선개입 의혹 불끄기인가.” Accessed on February 24, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Van Beizen, Ingrid. 2011. “Constitutionalizing Party Democracy: The Constitutive Codification of Political Parties in Post-war Europe.” *British Journal of Political Science* 42(1): 207;  
Conradt, David P. 1992. *The German Polity*. New York: Longman Publishing Group. 84.

As the decision was made by the constitutional court, rather hurriedly in 2014, controversy over the legitimacy of the decision and potential bias of the primarily conservative judges of Constitutional Court at the time.<sup>10</sup> According to Gallup Korea, 63% of South Koreans supported the decision, while 23% opposed, and according to Focus Company Korea, 33% of South Korean constitutional law scholars supported the decision, while 46% opposed.<sup>11</sup>

Before and after the decision was made, academic and popular debates on the decision's legitimacy exploded, and the United Progressive Party members protested against the decision, claiming it to be an undemocratic, revert to the 1980s dictatorship. Nevertheless, another branch of the movement politics, Justice Party never showed significant sympathy towards the United Progressive Party or showed opposition towards the allegation. The inaction from the Justice Party begs the question of the internal dynamics of the South Korean movement politics in the twenty-first century. For a party with virtually the same origins with the United Progressive Party, one would expect some form of opposition, if not solidary from Justice Party.

## 2. Theoretical Question

The persisting movement politics in South Korea has theoretical implications in the broader field of contentious politics. South Korean version of movement politics puts forth

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<sup>10</sup> Lee, Duk Yeon. 2015. "The Decision of the Dissolution of the United Progressive Party – Not from the Perspective of Right or Wrong but of Rhetoric." *Journal of Constitutional Court Decisions* 16:43. ;

Kim, Jongcheol. 2015. "Is the Constitutional Court the Sovereign Institution? – Dissolution of the Unified Progressive Party and Constitutional Identity of the Republic of Korea," *The Justice* 151: 31

<sup>11</sup> Cho, Geun-ho. 2013. "46% of Constitution Scholars support preserving United Progressive Party, while 33% supported dissolution 헌법 학자 46% "통합진보당 유지", 33% "해산해야." CBS Nocut News. Accessed on February 24, 2018. ;

Gallup Korea. 2013. "Opinion Index" *Gallup Korea Daily Opinion* 145. <http://www.gallup.co.kr/gallupdb/reportDownload.asp?seqNo=619>

the case of a “protracted transition” along with sporadic, but continued episodes of contention. Unlike most conventional theories that focus on the high moments of contention and the individual episodes, the case of “protracted transition” brought about various processual features created along with the extended struggle. One of the distinct features of the South Korean transition is the creation of a new social, political identity “movement actors” or “Woon-dong-gwon” in Korean.

In South Korea, however, “movement actors” goes beyond the functional definition, but defines a persisting identity. Within the episodic conception of contentious politics literature, a byproduct of persistent nature is an unexplored dimension. The protracted period of contention due to the decades of military dictatorship gave birth to a generation that grew up with constant social mobilization that grew to form an informal social movement faction. Called the “movement faction,” this informal, private group was mostly composed of the college students and young workers and swore their loyalty to the 1970s and 1980s protest virtues as well as to the sacrifices made in the past by laborers as well as the patriotic figures of the historic independence movement in the 1930s.

In terms of the existing contentious politics literature that focuses on the temporary episodic transitions, how can the case of South Korean contentious actors be explained in their protracted transformations and shaping of their political identity? Also, if contentious is to naturally dissolve overtime as the existing contentious politics literature predicts, how do we explain South Korean self-identifying “movement actors” and the continued reality of contention?

The empirical and theoretical questions pose reasons why we must care about contentious politics and its actors in the now seemingly functioning democracy of South Korea. First, we cannot disregard the movement parties and associations for its relative decrease in size as regular political actors in comparison to 1980s, because of the actors' continued self-identification to belong to the "movement" as well as the consistent observation of their influence in South Korean politics in terms of collective action as well as party politics. Second, as the systematic analysis of modern political interaction in South Korea is quite young and has been borrowing the mainstream theoretical frameworks that have largely originated from the Western literature, an analysis of a distinct phenomenon native to South Korea may offer a nuanced perspective to the field.<sup>12</sup> In order to address these empirical and theoretical questions, this paper will look at the indigenous features that developed in the South Korean contentious behavior, particularly in the context of a protracted transition, rather than as an episodic event. This paper will also trace the causes of the persisting reality of "movement identity" in the actors' ideological psychology, its path dependency and history of movement and opposition party development.

### 3. Definitions

The usage of word "movement" (called "Woon-dong" in Korean) has been used in South Korea in a much broader context than in the Western academia, and particularly when describing the actors. The field's most prominent contemporary scholars, Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow defined contentious politics as:

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<sup>12</sup> Shin, Gi-wook, Paul Chang, Jung-eun Lee, Sookyung Kim. 2007. "South Korea's Democracy Movement (1970-1993)." *Stanford Korea Democracy Project Report*.  
Hou, Zhengye and Yunxia Zhu. 2012. "An institutional perspective of public relations practices in Chinese cultural contexts." *Public Relations Review*, 38. 916

*Contentious politics* involves interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interests, leading to coordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties... *Contention* involves making claims that bear on someone else's interests.<sup>13</sup>

Episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants.<sup>14</sup>

The term has been coined with a broad concept overarching collective action, the political struggle and physical, active protest. However, the scholarship has been limited precisely to the action of contentious politics, the causes, mechanisms and individual histories that it lacks systematic analysis of the actors involved or what happens to the actors after contentious politics. However, the political junctures, in reality, has much more ambiguous boundaries with the same actors that enters the new rule of the game. Therefore, this paper will look in depth on the identity crisis and roles of the contentious actors both before the democratization in South Korea and after.

*Conception of Movement Politics in the South Korean Context and the “Woon-dong-gwon” Identity*

“[I]n politics, unlike in the marketplace, losers do not necessarily disappear and their ‘adaptation’ to prevailing institutions can mean something very different from ‘embracing and reproducing’ those institutions, as in the worlds of technologies and

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<sup>13</sup> Tilly, Charles and Sidney Tarrow. 2007. *Contentious Politics*. London: Paradigm Publisher. 5.

<sup>14</sup> McAdam, Douglas, Sidney Tarrow and Chales Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge University Press. 5.

markets.”<sup>15</sup> This is clearly the case in South Korea. Though the “losers” and “winners” of the game actually are not as clear as “democratization” implies, the losers on both authoritarian regime and contentious actors alike have not died with democracy in 1990. In essence, the authoritarian regime was preserved in the South Korean parliament, albeit with the concession of the presidential dictatorship. In the case of contentious actors, the movement circles have become solidified in retaliation to the incomplete removal of the authoritarian elements.

First of all, the popular election was the only first step to democracy, but it was by no means a perfect, full step. The authoritarian heir, Roh Tae Woo in the presidency, the establishment succeeded in pressuring the progressives to concede to a three-party merger that increased the authoritarian party to expand its power in the parliament. As the result, Roh administration gained greater power to oppress low-income workers by unfair wage reforms, comprehensive workers investigation and physical oppression of protestors. By wage reform, Roh administration implemented total wage system that legally prevented wage increase by more than 5% – a rate much lower than that of inflation.<sup>16</sup> Continued efforts to repress democratic transition was clear. In response, “Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (NCTU)” was established in 1990, the same year as the three-party merger. NCTU consisted of 14 provincial association, 2 occupational association, 456 unit union

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<sup>15</sup> Thelen, Kathleen. 2003. “How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative-Historical Analysis,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge University Press. 231.

<sup>16</sup> “National Labor Union Association Establishment.” n.d. *Korea Democracy Foundation Open Archives.*; Hankuk Kyungjae News, 1992. “President Roh Requested Promotion of Total Wage System at the State Council Meeting 노대통령, 총액임금제 적극 홍보 당부...국무회의서.” Accessed on March 2, 2018. <http://news.hankyung.com/article/1992052100521>

and 166,000 association delegates.<sup>17</sup> According to Paul Chang's recent book that came out along with comprehensive research effort from Stanford Korea Democracy Project, workers union had started developing since the 1970s despite military oppression. The final creation of NCTU and their proactive involvement in contentious performances demonstrate that movement actors did not demobilize after institutional democratization, but consolidated.<sup>18</sup> During the Roh administration, 1,973 union board members and workers were imprisoned from national union investigation, union-led protests and even from conglomerate union strategy meetings.<sup>19</sup> The case of NCTU establishment, in particular, demonstrates the porous border before and after a political juncture like democratization, where the excitement of new freedom and resilient past coexist. The establishment of NCTU is one example of contentious actors' consistent solidarity.

Besides the NCTU, democratic South Korea has seen many substantive movement politics that resist even the newly established rule of the game, and these movements increasingly formed a persisting identity. An interesting phenomenon accompanied with this movement identity is how new watershed contentious performances brings with them similar nationalist and fatalist theme as the 1980s and 1990s movements. In this context, the term, "Woon-dong-gwon" was coined to refer to not just the actors involved in the contentious collective action but it also absorbed the identity of contentious generation that grew up under the military oppression and protracted transition from underdeveloped to

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<sup>17</sup> "National Labor Union Association Establishment." n.d. *Korea Democracy Foundation Open Archives*.

<sup>18</sup> Shin, Chang, Lee and Kim. 2007. "South Korea's Democracy Movement." 32. ;

Chang, Paul. 2015. *Protest Dialectics: State Repression and South Korea's Democracy Movement, 1970-1979*. Stanford University Press. 176.

<sup>19</sup> "National Labor Union Association Establishment." n.d.

developed, from authoritarian regime to a democracy and also the transition from the socialist-dominated ideology to widespread liberal democracy. Therefore, South Korean “Woon-dong-gwon” connotes much more ideology than how a contentious actor is described in the Western literature. With the particularistic formation of South Korean movement, its identity and continuation, an intimate understanding must be accompanied in reviewing the existing literature on contentious politics in depth.

## **Literature Review**

### 1. Development of the Contentious Politics Literature

Contention, in its most intuitive forms of disputes, protest, revolts and revolutions, has existed throughout human history, but a systematic study of it only started very recently for its age after the medieval West first saw the dawn of modernity and as the world started to see some of the greatest ideological dichotomy, continued social turbulence throughout the post-World War era across countries. Then, the world has seen a certain drop of attention the topic in the past twenty years except for efforts to consummate previously compartmentalized works in the field.

Word frequency graph below extracted from Google Scholar database shows a rough history of the field. Data points are extracted from the word “contentious politics” 1) total appearance, 2) number of pages that “contentious politics” appeared and 3) number of books that contentious politics appeared. Each small peak prior to the 2000s roughly corresponds to the classical work of Karl Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* (1848), Vladimir Lenin’s *State and Revolution* (1917) and Theda Skocpol’s *States and Social Revolutions* (1979). Through 2000, as some of the contemporary scholars’ officially consolidating the

field of “contentious politics” in Political Science discipline, we see a cascade of books on contentious politics, case studies and comprehension efforts, leading to a sudden rise in the frequency. The following literature review investigates the history of the rather broad and scattered interdisciplinary field of contentious politics. The review will conclude with the efforts to comprehend the sudden drop of interest, and the discontinuity of reality – particularly that of South Korea – with such academic disinterest towards the end of 2000.

Figure 3. Frequency of the word “Contentious Politics” used between 1800 and 2008 (from Google Scholar DataBase)<sup>20</sup>



## 2. History of the Field

### *Two Trends: Macro-historical to Political Processes*

Two biggest decisions made in understanding contentious politics have been whether to view contentious politics as a macro-historical event that takes place in the realm of meta-individual social structure, or as consequences of the decisions made by

<sup>20</sup> Google NGram Viewer

political actors in a sequence of political process.<sup>21</sup> This is also reflected in the practice of the Social Science discipline as shown in the separate association of the RC47, the Research Committee on Social Classes and Social Movements and the RC48, the Research Committee on Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change under the International Sociological Association. While the two research networks are in no means in competition with one another, but the two committees' objectives show the different variables that the members use in viewing contentious politics:

RC47 Objectives: i. to promote the development of theory and research in the sociology of collective action and structural determinants of social movements and social classes...<sup>22</sup>

RC48 Objectives: i. to foster intellectual, academic and scholarly exchanges between researchers of broadly defined social movements, social change and collective action.<sup>23</sup>

RC47 is streamlined on the class interaction and structural or exogenous determinants of social movements, while RC48 focuses on the processual interpretation of collective action, the decision making and endogenous factors of social movement – also with much broader adoption of disciplines.

#### *Marxist Class Struggle and Classic Structuralist View*

RC47-type trend of contentious politics interpretation comes from the classic structuralist approach, primarily focusing on the variables of class relations, the interactions among actors in an institutional context and theory leading the social analysis.

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<sup>21</sup> Tarrow. 2012. *Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics*. 7.

<sup>22</sup> "Research Committee on Social Classes and Social Movements." 2012. *International Sociological Association*.

<sup>23</sup> "RC48 Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change." 1994. *International Sociological Association*. Accessed on March 1, 2018. <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/research-networks/research-committees/rc48-social-movements-collective-action-and-social-change/>

The structuralist view has gone through variations of theoretical projections and some scholars made diversions from the classic Marxist or Weberian approach by using different institutional variables or in their dialectics, significant substance of classical contentious politics literature was influenced by Marx and Weber (Lichbach and Zuckerman 1997, 6).

The architects of modern structuralist thinking, Marx and Engels conceived of social movement as an inevitable course of human history. This Marxist and Engelian conception of history, however, is exclusively that of class struggle.

“Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes....

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.”<sup>24</sup>

While Marx or Engel do not explain the causal mechanisms in which the classes come into conflict – or how they even gain collective consciousness in the first place –, the watershed work of *Communist Manifesto* laid out the social progression model with socialism as the end goal based on the conflictual social class system as a functioning assumption. In essence, all historical phases have various social classes, and once their interests are fully developed, the social classes naturally form an antagonistic dichotomy. This either leads to a collective struggle that moves onto the next phase of struggle or a failure to achieve collective action leaves the society underdeveloped. According to Marx, the nineteenth

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<sup>24</sup> Marx and Engel 1848, 40.

century was under the conflict of bourgeoisie and proletariat, awaiting the collective, contentious performance of the proletariat to overcome the capitalist bourgeoisie.<sup>25</sup>

Structuralist conception of the world based on Marxist conception is largely inductionist, unidirectional and materialist, in a way, resembling the Newtonian science philosophy, where sufficient social force is met, society will progress into the next phase.<sup>26</sup> The constituents are not organic actors involved in determining the directions. With the undefined, exogenous impetus of history to determine the societal destiny, Marxism left many questions behind to be filled.

*Edition to Marxism: Lenin and Gramsci*

Some of the biggest questions that Marxism left behind was how the Proletariats were to be mobilized and why they would mobilize, under what momentum. This was a particularly important question to Vladimir Lenin, the founder of Bolshevik Party, as a backward, agrarian Imperial Russia clearly did not have the social force ripen or the collective consciousness of Proletariats at all, and thus would have to wait for the natural social advancement. Seeing from the case of Western Europe, where the presence of Proletariats did not necessarily lead to an overarching revolutionary social consciousness as Marx and Engels predicted, Lenin tried to reconfigure the leadership variable as the revolutionizing factor. Thus, Lenin conceptualized the “Vanguard Party” as another preliminary factor of social revolution that would enable the mobilization of workers, seek

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<sup>25</sup> Tarrow. 2012. *Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics*. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Also see George, Jim. 1994. *Discourses in Global Politics: A Critical (Re)Introduction to International Relations*. Lynne Rienner Publisher. for a detailed account on the impact of modern materialism and positivism on the philosophical discourse in general, which also influenced international relations theories and other sociological discourses.

right interests for them and shape collective consciousness under the vanguard leadership. This edition of theory by Lenin is made largely applicable to the social reality of Imperial Russia in the 1910s. The Russian working class was too thin, underdeveloped and more importantly, lacked the transcending collective consciousness. The Russian bourgeoisie were also very weak and tied to the state and landowners, which extracted their ability to form a democratic movement. Thus, Lenin concluded that the ordinary people were unable to make the decisions truly beneficial, thus, are in need of a guiding leadership.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, Lenin also does not explain what a mature working class looks like to qualify as the Vanguard Party.<sup>28</sup>

Leninism and the Vanguard Party indeed brought about a huge change in the revolutionary rhetoric though in different forms in different regions. Leninism took root in revolutionary Soviet Union, developed into the Stalinist brand of socialism, and it also was implanted into Communist China, by Mao Zedong. On the other hand, however, contention that is sufficient in the eyes of the structuralists remained largely as a tradition of the East. The Vanguard Party was not able to realize a Western Communist revolution. Italian-American historian Paul Piccone in 1976 records that the West has started to seriously reconsider Marxism at the face of the Communist Party's failing to mobilize the workers like predicted by Leninism.<sup>29</sup>

*Western Communism and Cultural Hegemony by Gramsci*

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<sup>27</sup> Harding, Neil. 2009. *Lenin's Political Thought: Theory and Practice in the Democratic and Socialist Movement*. Haymarket Books.

<sup>28</sup> Tarrow. 2012. *Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics*. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Piccone, Paul. 1976. "Gramsci's Marxism: Beyond Lenin and Togliatti." *Theory and Society* 3(4). 485.

The problem of limited Western Communism was the primary concern of Antonio Gramsci. Initially convinced by the Leninist explanation of why a universal and comprehensive mobilization failed in the Western Hemisphere – that is the lack of leadership, Gramsci himself joined the Communist Party of Italy, which in his sense the Italian Vanguard Party. Nevertheless, Gramsci witnessed the Volshevik Party’s failure to spread into an international revolution, particularly in the West, and his own country’s fall under fascism, Gramsci concluded that the Vanguard Party leadership strategy was insufficient to penetrate the Western society.<sup>30</sup>

In his time in prison, Gramsci came up with “Cultural Hegemony” as what was needed in universal, contentious mobilization: “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is ‘historically’ caused by the prestige (and consequence confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.”<sup>31</sup> While Gramsci’s explanation also remains largely parasitic to the assumption of preordained future, modernity and unidirectionalism, the conception of cultural hegemony within the ruling groups attests to the tendency of convergence to the political process explanation, where individual decisions play meaningful role in social movement. Gramsci’s mobilizational force also largely rests upon

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<sup>30</sup> Tarrow. 2012. *Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics*. 12.;  
Tarrow 1994. 14.;

Lears, T. J. Jackson. 1985. “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities.” *The American Historical Review* 90 (3). 569.

<sup>31</sup> Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. ed. and trans. New York: Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith Press.;

Lears, T. J. Jackson. 1985. “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities.” 568.

the elites or the “dominant group,” but contemporary contentious politics scholars like Sidney Tarrow later assess Gramsci’s mature works, nevertheless, brings attention to “collective” aspects of social movements, mobilization with a working class “consciousness” counting in the process in the form of “consent.”<sup>32</sup>

The classic structuralist explanation of contentious politics is largely tied to the framework of class struggle and is framed as a fatalistic social sequence. Nevertheless, within the consistent theme of class struggle, the history of structuralist development has had to reconfigure new variables to explain newly found phenomena. e.g. the Vanguard Party, Cultural Hegemony, etc. Scholars from the political process and cultural explanations tend to see such tendency to have come from limiting the with locating causal variables from the theoretical induction. Thus, the culturalists and contemporary scholars made a breaking point from the Marxist structuralism into greater focus on political progress, the endogenous dynamics with historiographical methodology.

#### *Classic Culturalist Approach*

#### *Ambiguous Discipline and Tocqueville’s Combined Approach*

In comparative politics, culturalist explanation is generally defined as “understanding the varied ways of life, systems of meaning and values, analysis of cases to understand particular phenomena.”<sup>33</sup> Culturalists tend to attribute contentious causes to norms, values, beliefs and symbols. The methodology may include include In contrast to structuralist explanation of contentious politics and its belief in mobilization of the

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<sup>32</sup> Tarrow. 2012. *Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics*. 12.; Tarrow 1994, 15; Lears, T. J. Jackson. 1985. “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities.” 570.

<sup>33</sup> Lichbach, Mark and Alan S. Zuckerman. 1997. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. Cambridge University Press. 5.

people based on unidirectional assumption of preordained socialist future of mankind, the culturalists have been much more attracted to the cultural and processual explanations.

The classic culturalist discipline is not as clearly delineated as the Marxist theorists, due to various reasons – most important reason in this case would be the fact that contentious politics field was not a distinct academic discipline nor was there a clear consciousness about contention as a generalizable social phenomenon. Furthermore, culturalist focus of the explanation does not mean a complete disregard of structuralism. Early culturalist accounts of bourgeois or socialist revolution are more of a mixture of interpretation. Thus, culturalist interpretations have significantly enriched the field already saturated with Marxist structuralism. Amidst the disciplinary ambiguity, however, the contemporary contentious politics scholar Sidney Tarrow and Charles Kurzman locate the first classic culturalist as Alexis de Tocqueville and his observation of French Revolution in his latest overview of the field.<sup>34</sup>

Tocqueville's observations of the French Revolution in the 1955 provided a noble view of social movement by his primary focus on the 1) individualistic structure of France and 2) the individual's decision to take advantage of the opportunity.<sup>35</sup> Tocqueville argued that there was a structural cause and a cultural cause. The first structural cause was the French government's alienating the people from their rule by over-centralization of the Old Regime, discarding the intermediary aristocracy. Second cause points to the French

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<sup>34</sup> Tarrow, 2012. *Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics*. 14.; Kurzman, Charles. 1996. "Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social-Movement Theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979." *American Sociological Review* 61. 153.

<sup>35</sup> Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1955. *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*. Translated by S. Gilbert. Garden city, NY: Doubleday Anchor. 176.

populace's view of loosened pressure from above – the aristocracy – which led to the French people's perception of “political opportunity.”<sup>36</sup>

By this “combined approach,” Tocqueville was able to offer a noble conception of structure and empowerment of individuality in social movements. First, Tocquevillian structural cause is essentially different from that of Marxist's. In contrast to Marxist focus on the macro-individual or even macro-social structure that transcends one single structure of a society, Tocqueville's explanation regards a particularistic aspect of structure that is indigenous to French society and French history. Moreover, the sequence of his explanation is also substantially different from mainstream structuralist view. Instead of assuming a preordained future of the French society and predicting a social movement via a certain class, Tocqueville tries to explain the causality of a past event. Tarrow assesses such contribution of Tocqueville as a “statist” structuralism in contrast to Marx's classicist structuralism.<sup>37</sup> Thus, Tocquevillian approach, to be picked up by contemporary scholars in the 1980s and 1990s, offers a qualitatively different approach and purpose: from prediction with theorizing as methodology to greater focus on explanation with historiography as a main methodology.

A well-known example of a prominent contentious politics work developed from the Tocquevillian combined approach would be Theda Skocpol's *France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions*. Succeeding the structuralist traditions from her mentor and dissertation – the book's prototype – advisor Barrington Moore, Theda

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<sup>36</sup> Kurzman, Charles. 1996. “Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social-Movement Theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979.” 153.

<sup>37</sup> Tarrow. 2012. *Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics*. 15.

Skocpol provided criticisms of Moore's Marxist approach, but at the same time, incorporated in her book the statist structural explanation in her own work with comparative sociological interpretation. In particular, Skocpol focused on the inherent vulnerabilities of social structure that the three countries had at the time of revolution, which Skocpol points out as the "agrarian bureaucracy." Then Skocpol focuses on the different interactions of French, Russian and Chinese agrarian bureaucracy with the external pressures imposed or the incapacitation of administrative and military as the differentiating factors of revolution from the bottom.<sup>38</sup> While Skocpol's approaches remained largely structuralism-based – with her self-evident title of the book –, Skocpol's approach demonstrates a transition from the classical structuralist theories by considering individual social factors as important variables while leaving the Marxist, or Barrington Moore-type predictions of unidirectional routes of modernizations.<sup>39</sup>

*Transition to the Contemporary Perspectives, the Gap and Interdisciplinary Influences*

Tarrow assesses that the literature of contentious politics has made a substantial stride since the end of Cold War from "combined approach" largely based on structuralism to contemporary literature that drastically shifts its theoretical basis to collective action, resources, social organization and transition theories.<sup>40</sup> Structuralism did begin to incorporate elements of collective action – for example, Gramsci's idea of cultural

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<sup>38</sup> Skocpol, Theda. 1976. "France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18(2). 181.

<sup>39</sup> Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston MA: Beacon Press.; Skocpol, Theda. 1973. "A Critical Review of Barrington Moore's Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy." *Politics and Society*. 1-34

<sup>40</sup> Tarrow. 2012. *Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics*. 17.

hegemony added the need for consensus and collective initiative beyond the level of political elites. The added factor of collective action does not, however, explain the contemporary break from the persisting theme of class struggle in structuralism. While the evolution in the contentious politics literature itself needs greater appreciation for increased consideration of collective action, this paper aims to identify the shift in literature and locates it in the influences of the interdisciplinary study of contentious politics, particularly from comparative politics and sociology where a lot of political process approaches originated from theories of modernization, democratization and transitions.

*Social Transition Literature: O'Donnell and Schmitter*

While the study of modernization, democratization and transitions flourished in both comparative politics and sociology, Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter's work has been foundational in offering alternatives in viewing transition with new variables like political process, emphasizing the historiography and individual decision making, digressing from the mainstream structuralist arguments in the 1970s and 1980s. In *Transition from Authoritarian Rule*, O'Donnell and Schmitter view democratization or some form of transition from authoritarian regime as inevitable due to most post-1945 authoritarian regimes' initial promise of freedom and popular sovereignty.<sup>41</sup> In explaining the transition, O'Donnell and Schmitter focuses on the internal variables rather than external factors, which authors argue to be arbitrary variables that cannot be systemized in theory. In particular, O'Donnell and Schmitter identifies the fluctuating cleavage between

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<sup>41</sup> O'Donnell, Guillermo, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

the softliners and hardliners as the determinants of authoritarian transitions. Rather than structuralist categorization of the two groups by economic, social classes, O'Donnell and Schmitter focused on the political interaction dynamics of groups with different perceived realities. O'Donnell and Schmitter's softliners are "those aware of the necessity of some sort of electoral legitimization in order to avoid a destructive fallout" and hardliners are "those that believe that continued perpetuation of authoritarian regime is possible."<sup>42</sup> In further elaboration of transition process as determined as the product of the group interactions, O'Donnell and Schmitter discusses the political pact formation and significance of political timing.

Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter's work, *Transition from Authoritarian Rule* is not essentially a work on contentious politics, yet their particular focus on the process of political transition and contentious ramifications offer a new light in understanding contentious politics through contextualization. First, O'Donnell and Schmitter's assumption that individual decisions are central in determining social transition and its direction substantially digresses from the Marxist view of social transition as a necessarily revolutionary one and a preordained human destiny, by leaving transition to the whims of individual political tendencies and their own perceived realities. Second, the fact that the social transition directions are determined by not one, but a collective of hardliners and softliners leads to the contemporary contentious politics scholars' focal point of collective action. In combination with the increasingly inclusive structural discourse on the

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<sup>42</sup> O'Donnell, Guillermo, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

actors of contention, Guillermo and O'Donnell offer a new mechanism where political negotiations and processes replace dichotomous class struggle in the backdrop.

*Dominant Contemporary Interpretation and Contentious Sixties*

The decade of 1960s was a particularly important period in determining the direction of contemporary contentious politics studies. 1960s have seen a rise of comprehensive social movements across the liberal world, and protests became a social norm in the United States, of which institutions were most influential in shaping academic fields. 1960s for the U.S. in particular was a series of transformative moments, a paradoxical period charged with domestic confusions with the fall of the long-ruling liberal and international tensions coming from the U.S. incapability in the time of Cold War. The period of prosperity from the U.S. victory in the World War, the end of Korean War in the previous decade in the backdrop of the omnipresent tension from the Cold War brought about alternative America – civil rights movement for blacks and women, advocates of pacifism than continued Cold War rivalry, the creation of a powerful youth culture to further the New Left and increased support for expanded participatory democracy over interest group politics. The rise of civil rights movements was not just a series of protest but were considered the second Civil War.<sup>43</sup>

Similar contentions were found in Europe as well. For example, 1968 Generation across the world has revolted against the existing order. The United States went through historical moments like the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., and

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<sup>43</sup> Isserman, Maurice and Michael Kazin, 2015. *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*. Oxford University Press, 4.

witnessed a systematic creation of student groups, such as the Students for Democratic Society, representing the “New Left” and the Young Americans for Freedom, representing the “New Right.” Student-based riots took place in France with Charles de Gaulle’s failure and China was under a massive overhaul of Cultural Revolution, students leading the Red Guards. In Germany, generational transition brought about an enormous political juncture in the Christian Democratic Union-dominated system. Germany’s first subsequent generation since World War II reached adulthood in the late 1960s and grew to be the radical young leaders that started questioning their national history and responsibility for the crimes of Nazi era. The collective radical young leaders, later to be coined as the “68ers” turned up against the system that they perceived to be permeated by the older generations that have compromised with the remaining Nazis or previously Nazis themselves. Collective and simultaneous rise of the young radicals made a particularly critical impact on the CDU, of which party’s substantial proportion of political constituents include those who previously supported the Nazi Party during World War II. Political contention in the late 1960s marked a political juncture in Germany with the transition of political power to the opposition Social Democratic Party and Willi Brandt.<sup>44</sup>

Social movements that thrived in the 1960s across Western liberal states thrust protest in social sciences and the study of modern history. The nature of collectivity shared across the 1960s social movement and the intense involvement of individuals led to greater attention on collective action within contention and the actors. In contrast to the Marxist

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<sup>44</sup> Berger, Thomas. 2012. “Germany: The Model Penitent” from *War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II*. Cambridge University Press. 60.

arguments that had been shaped in the social disappointment of capitalism that coexisted with modern excitement, the contemporary contentious politics field was shaped with observations of grassroots protests and a more calculated, *economic* and *rational* approach and treated social movements as a part of individual behavior and decision-making.<sup>45</sup>

*Rational Approach: The Logic of Collective Action*

Contemporary political scientists observed the explosion of contention and protests in the 1960s and questioned what made it possible, in the first place, to mobilize the mass of individuals to protest for collective good. Such inquiry holds the political rationalist assumption that men are rational and behave to maximize their individual self-interest. Thus, to political economists, individual sacrifice incorporated in collective contention itself is anomalous. For the marginal utility that individual would gain from the movement's success is much smaller – this is because the benefits of civil rights protest would usually be a universal one than what would specifically increase only the participants' marginal utility – than the effort that he or she would have to put in.<sup>46</sup>

In answering this collective action dilemma in 1960s-type contention patterns, political economist scholars diverged between individual explanation and material explanation with resource mobilization. One of the prominent rationalist and economic explanation was provided by Mancur Olson to answer this question. In *The Logic of Contentious Action*, Olson lays out the assumptions of the economic view of social organizations and collective movements. In Olson's parsimony, all men strive to further

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<sup>45</sup> Tarrow, Sidney. 1994. *Power in Movement*. Cambridge University Press. 15.

<sup>46</sup> Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press. 43-55.

their self-interest and this nature consistently influences the organizational dynamics. Therefore, there will be tension between the group objective and individual objectives, and especially when economic profits are concerned. Olson argues that with the self-interested nature of men, it is illogical to assume any systematic altruism where individuals would pursue the group objectives at the expense of their own individual goals.<sup>47</sup> Based on these assumptions, Olson attempts to find how close the individual interest and collective interests need to be, and how to involve as great proportion of the individuals to the collective objective. Thus, Olson finds the answer in the organizational context:

Only a separate and “selective” incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a latent group to act in a group-oriented way. In such circumstances, group action can be obtained only through an incentive that operates, not indiscriminately, like the collective good, upon the group as a whole, but rather *selectively* toward the individuals in the group...

A latent group that has been led to act in its group interest, either because of coercion of the individuals in the group or because of positive rewards to those individuals, will here be called a “mobilized” latent group.<sup>48</sup>

Olson argues that there must be individual and private rewards that tie the individuals with the collective objective. Therefore, Olson claimed that purely political organizations that has limited lobbying function without any involvement to the competition in the form of a market could not offer much positive inducements to create a selective mobilized group.<sup>49</sup>

Olson’s argument attracted much attention, though social organization theories have been more or less compartmentalized into its own field from mainstream political science literature. On the other hand, Individual and non-material-oriented organization

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<sup>47</sup> Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard University Press. 43-55

<sup>48</sup> Olson. 1965. 51.

<sup>49</sup> Olson. 1965. 134.

theory did receive much criticisms as an aftermath of the 1960s surge of social movements. Unlike the sterile economic explanation of collective behavior that Olson assumes, 1960s was the manifestation of ideology-charged debate, and demonstrated that the individual altruism in collective actions nonetheless took a significant part of the social force.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the subsequent theories of social organization and collective action tried to incorporate the ideology and moral prestige by introducing political opportunity structure and cultural framing, while succeeding the base work of collective social actions.

*Resource Explanation and Grievances, Collective Behavior*

Though Olson's explanation omits the ideology-based behaviors, his introduction of material incentives or the "positive rewards" provided a break point for the resource mobilization approaches that developed further details of the utilization of rewards in social movements while shifting from the purely economic interpretations of social movement back to theoretical basis on the individual grievances and collectivized ideologies as the important variables.<sup>51</sup> In contrast to theories based on rational choice that sterilized individual choices of any emotions or ideologies, resource mobilization theorists that emerged after the emotionally charged debates of the 1960s deliberately assumed the significance of emotions and ideologies. Moreover, the character of resource mobilization approach made another break from the conventionally activist approaches in the social movement field. Many activism-based theories focus on problems of mobilization, aim to justify certain tactical choices and find the path of success; thus, resulted in much more

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<sup>50</sup> Tarrow, Sidney. 1994. *Power in Movement*. Cambridge University Press. 16.

<sup>51</sup> McCarthy, John. D. and Mayer N. Zald. 1977. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *The American Journal of Sociology*. 82 (6), 1213-1214.

strategy-based theories. On the other hand, though limited, research approach theorists began to look at more analytical and theoretical problems-anomalies of social movement.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, more recent resource mobilization theorists like McCarthy and Zald take a step further from the pure concern with discontent or from the collective action dilemma that Olson raises in terms of conflict between individual and collective interest. Instead, McCarthy and Zald look at how discontent that is common across diverse groups can be developed, defined and manipulated by entrepreneurs and organizations with access to resources both material, social and political.<sup>53</sup> McCarthy and Zald identify, in particular, three entities that shape social movement, its processes and mobilizations: social movement organization (SMO), social movement industry (SMI) and social movement (SM) itself. McCarthy and Zald define SMO as “a complex, or formal, organization which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals,” SMI as “[organizations] that have as their goal the attainment of the broadest preferences of a social movement” and SM for social movement itself. These are the much less technical or economic categorization than groupings used by Olson that focused greatly interest groups.<sup>54</sup> The distinct categorization by McCarthy and Zald adds greater emphasis on the relational aspect of social movement organizations and also show the scholars’ concerns of distinction between the mobilization itself, the organizational components and the multiplicity of the different social groups involved in

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<sup>52</sup> McCarthy and Zald. 1977. “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory.” 1212-1213.

<sup>53</sup> McCarthy and Zald. 1977. “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory.” 1215-1217.

<sup>54</sup> Tarrow, Sidney. 1994. *Power in Movement*. Cambridge University Press. 16.

social movements. Nevertheless, for the broader SMOs to turn into SMI that more closely align with the goals of social movement, the SMOs control their resources to translate them most efficiently into mobilization and action. Therefore, resource mobilization approach seeks to identify the relationship between the social movement entities and variables that proves how such formal social networks lead to turning a non-adherent into an adherent of the collective.<sup>55</sup>

Resource mobilization theories takes on the Olsonian dilemma and gives a hybrid-type answer between materialist answer and organizational explanation – perhaps, theoretically speaking, in the midpoint between rational choice theorists and the organizationalists. One could also find the interdisciplinary influence of the resource mobilization trend in not only social movement, but also rebellion mobilization study like that of *Inside Rebellion* by Jeremy Weinstein that closely investigates the material incentives and the loyalty and effectiveness of mobilization and recruitment published in 2006.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the resource mobilization approach sheds light onto the various possible approaches in social movement apart from the rationalist approaches. While the SMOs and SMIs in the American context in the 1960s is quite different from that shaped the social networks of South Korea or the dimensions of rewards or individual incentives, they give a good reference point in discussing the South Korean case and the social network later in the paper.

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<sup>55</sup> McCarthy, John. D. and Mayer N. Zald. 1977. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *The American Journal of Sociology*. 82 (6), 1222-1226.

<sup>56</sup> Weinstein, Jeremy. 2006. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge University Press.

*The “Holy Trinity”: Political Opportunity Structure (POS), Cultural Framing and Social Network*

One of the most well-known contemporary contribution with repeated collective scholarly efforts to establish in the literature in the intersection of political science and sociology is the introduction of “political opportunity structure” into contentious politics as early as by Charles Tilly in 1978 in his book *From Mobilization to Revolution*, where Tilly for the first time conceptualized political opportunity in the context of contentious politics, protests and revolution along with the five key components of mobilization: interests, organization, mobilization, collective action and opportunity. In Tilly’s conception, these elements do not necessarily act in separation, but in collectivity to create political options for collective action to take place.<sup>57</sup> While Sidney Tarrow in 1994 develops the concept further in the 2000s with Tilly and McAdam, scholars evaluate Tilly to have made a fundamental contribution to conceptualization of political opportunity structure in the context of political contention.<sup>58</sup> The introduction of political opportunity structure essentially opened the field to the political processes explanations. Thus, the earlier political economist explanation of contentious behaviors sought to offer explanations and causes of contentious politics with clear cut formulas and conditions composed with concrete convention of interest groups or political organizations. In response, Tarrow, Tilly and McAdam’s literature flourished in the 2000s, consolidated the

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<sup>57</sup> Tilly, Charles. 1978. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Reading: Addison-Wesley. 55.

<sup>58</sup> Giugni, Marco. 2009. “Political Opportunities: From Tilly to Tilly.” *Swiss Political Science Review*. 15 (2), 361-362.

McAdam, Douglas. 1999. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

subfield of “contentious politics” and offered explanation that consistently stayed with the spontaneity of mobilization unlike the formulaic predictions from the earlier rationalist explanations that dominated between 1970s and 1990s.<sup>59</sup> Despite their increasing interactions between theoretical basis, the fact that the contemporary scholars increasingly consider the importance of social interactions, ties and contextual framings and from the recent collective work by Tarrow, Tilly and McAdam, these scholars are also distinctively reliant upon the *relational* explanations.<sup>60</sup>

### *Political Opportunity Structure*

The essential argument of the political opportunity explanations and other relational explanations of contentious politics is that political opportunity structure allows all the potential social variables that may encourage political mobilization to translate into an “opportunity” where the people can react to.<sup>61</sup> Scholars define political opportunity structure as: “*consistent but not necessarily formal, permanent or national signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements.*”<sup>62</sup> The argument of political opportunity structure enables a much looser explanation of contentious outbreaks, unlike traditional systematic theories that requires a complete generalizability and parsimony. This does not mean a less

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<sup>59</sup> Tilly, Charles and Sidney Tarrow. 2007. *Contentious Politics*. London: Paradigm Publisher.; McAdam, Douglas, Sidney Tarrow and Chales Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge University Press. 19.

<sup>60</sup> McAdam, Douglas, Sidney Tarrow and Chales Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge University Press. 22.

<sup>61</sup> Tarrow. Sidney. 1994. *Power in Movement*. Cambridge University Press. 19.

<sup>62</sup> Tarrow, Sidney. 1996. “States and Opportunities: The political structuring of social movements.” In McAdam, Douglas, McCarthy, J and M. Zald Eds. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*. Cambridge University Press. 41-61.

substantiated explanation, but an explanation that accommodates various political processes as an explanation.

### *Collective Action*

Based on the frameworks of political opportunity structure, Sidney Tarrow in 1994 first attempts to give a comprehensive review of the field in his book, *Power in Movement*, in which Tarrow locate the field roughly under the study of collective action.<sup>63</sup> Tarrow defines contentious politics as a type of collective action, which “occurs within institutions on the part of constituted groups who act in the name of goals that are usually not contentious,” yet this becomes contentious, “when it is used by the people who lack regular access to institutions, act in the name of unaccepted claims that fundamentally challenge others.”<sup>64</sup> However, Tarrow points out that not everyone with grievances come to act against the existing institutions, leading to a collective action dilemma within those people with grievances: often the risk of such actions are greater than the individual gains, unless there is a guarantee of success. Thus, the study of contentious politics looks at the threshold of when people decide to risk individual loss and what causes the group of people come together for contention, overcoming the collective action dilemma. Tarrow argues that the origin of such incentives for people to use contentious collective action comes from the “political opportunity structure –Political opportunity structures are composed of “specific configuration of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization”<sup>65</sup> ability and availability to mobilize people through “social networks” with

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<sup>63</sup> Tarrow. Sidney. 1994. *Power in Movement*. Cambridge University Press. 13-14.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Kitschelt, Herbert. 1986. “Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies.” *British Journal of Political Studies*, 16. No. 1 (January), 57-85.

the identifiable symbols that “culturally frames” the significance of the contentious collective actions, as the combination of these factors “lower the cost of bringing people together in collective action”<sup>66</sup>

*Dynamics of Contention and Mechanisms*

By 2001, the contemporary political opportunity theorists – Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow and Douglas McAdam made a collective effort to combine the research and also renovate the theory and published, *Dynamics of Contention*. While built upon the shared trinity of political opportunity, cultural framing and social network, *Dynamics of Contention* rearranges the theoretical framework by adding the dimensions of “mechanisms.” Despite the fact that political opportunity structure catches a wide spectrum of cases where the theory is flexible in terms of explanation, the three co-authors were discontent that the model is still too rigid to explain fluid social phenomena like contention and mobilization.<sup>67</sup> In *Dynamics of Contention*, the three scholars call the existing model, the static polity model. They argue that the polity model is limited to explain the episodic events of contention that is “contained” within the ruling government’s framework, but it is not very useful in explaining the larger scale, “transgressive contention” that goes beyond the given society’s rules of the game, but employs “innovative collective action” that adopt means or goals unprecedented or forbidden in the existing regime.<sup>68</sup>

The theory’s new addition of *mechanisms* is supposed to move the analysis from static to dynamics by identifying the various social processes involved in the series of

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 19-27.

<sup>67</sup> McAdam, Douglas, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge University Press. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 6-8.

contentious episodes. This assumes that contentious politics have *recurrent* causal mechanisms commonly found from history in shared sequences and the authors argue that the individual mechanisms found from the past may also combine in other contentious processes. As the result, the mechanisms approach aims to explain the full cycle of contentious politics from the creation and transformation of actors, their political rise, repression or success of contention and eventual diffusion.<sup>69</sup> The scholars streamline three mechanisms from a comprehensive, yet in-depth case studies across the world – environmental, cognitive and relational. Each mechanism respectively concerns the external conditions – resource, labor, etc. – that affects social life, the perceptual mechanism that operate within the contentious collective and the relational mechanisms that operate and interact with the social connections within contentious movement.<sup>70</sup>

*The Limits of Existing Literature in Answering the Empirical and Theoretical Questions*

The proliferation of research on contentious politics and social movements in the past two hundred years provides significant explanations to refer to in terms of the cause, development and its decline back to institutionalization. However, the youth of the literature limits the unity of the scholarship in terms of different conceptions of contention. One of the biggest fragmentation of the literature comes from the ambiguous boundary between ‘contentious politics’ and ‘social movement.’ The spectrum of definitions varies in terms of spheres of activity, from specifically political struggles to a more open-ended collective movement formed under socio-cultural, political or even religious and

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 10-13.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 24-26.

educational realm. David Snow, Sarah Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi's effort to a collaborative, contemporary-focused introduction to social movement studies define social movement as the more open-ended social struggle against the socio-cultural authority as "social movement" and the movement organized with clear emphasis on collective political struggle as "contentious politics," based on the contexts that the words are widely used in the literature.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to the ambiguity of the field, another limit in the young scholarship comes from the inevitable focus on the temporally episodic cases and those bound within the political institutions rather than dealing with political transitions. Moreover, due to the dominant theory of "cycles of protest," while there may be temporal variability they are often understood in terms of the cycles instead of the possibility of protraction within the macro-social transition. Thus, separate development of the literature and distinct approaches employed in the two scholarship makes it difficult to produce research that combines both elements of contention and cases that differs from the sectoral contention within one unified political institutions.<sup>72</sup>

The South Korean case, the empirical and theoretical questions posed earlier in the paper is a two-pronged question. The persisting identity of "Woon-dong-gwon" that is substantiated by the assertion of the language in the everyday news, consistent and easy observations of contention in the public spaces in South Korea begs the question of why

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<sup>71</sup> Snow, David, Sarah Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi. 2004. "Mapping the Terrain." In Snow, et. al eds. *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. Blackwell Publishing. 26.

<sup>72</sup> Snow, David, Sarah Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi. 2004. "Mapping the Terrain." In Snow, et. al eds. *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. Blackwell Publishing. 11;  
Also see Kim, Sun-chul. 2016. *Democratization and Social Movements in South Korea: Defiant Institutionalization*. Routledge Press. 4

contentious identity based on the 1980s democratization practices persist beyond the active protesting time frame of the 1980s. In answering this theoretical question, this paper will look at the prominence of ideological legitimacy of “Woon-dong-gwon” and its historical construction. This answer subsequently leads to the second issue for the sake of empirical validity, that an adequate answer must also be able to explain, on what basis such identity, nevertheless ceded to the rather controversial and perhaps, undemocratic ruling of 2014 disintegration of the Unified Progressive Party. On the base of “Woon-dong-gwon’s” ideological construction of its persisting identity, the empirical question bears a greater puzzle, since we would expect a greater solidarity from an ideology-centered group. Therefore, as the scope of its influence and the prolonged duration goes beyond the existing political institutions or individual participation within the political arena, in order to explain the persisting existence of “Woon-dong-gwon” and the members’ continued psychological attachment to the contentious identity in the society necessitates an explanation that goes beyond the simple equation of collective action or struggle between the collective and individual interest. Empirically, the dissension within “Woon-dong-gwon” demonstrated in the 2014 Unification Party disintegration case necessitates an explanation that can incorporate identity, legitimacy and ideology.

### *Historical Methodology*

The main methods of analysis on the empirical case of South Korea is descriptive inference through historical analysis. In the social movement’s historical analysis evaluation by Lorezo Bosi, Bosi points out archival data and oral history as the two most

important methods in historical methodology.<sup>73</sup> This paper primarily uses archival data, composed of mostly the remaining manifestos of contentious groups or accounts of individual protests rather than statistics compiled by the Korea Democracy Foundation and the public statistical data released by the South Korean government. Historical account of contemporary South Korean contentious politics between 1980s to present as well as the older account of contentious identities from the Japanese occupation and the Korean War will directly discuss the issue and origin of contentious legitimacy and how the two main factions interacted with historical legacy and legitimacy issues. Thus, historical analysis will not only discuss the episodic sequence, but also contextualize the buildup to contentious politics and the formation of South Korean “Woon-dong-gwon.” The construction of the unique South Korean contentious identity from the historical legacies will show how the secondary product of contentious politics could persist through the cycles of contention through turbulences.

Historical methodology is one of the most intuitive and oldest tradition yet was officially developed as the scientific methods in the 20th century as social sciences increasingly emphasized scientism. In response to the mainstream focus on the statistical analysis historical analysis developed largely in the context of comparative politics by scholars like James Mahoney and in the context of social movement by Donatella della Porta.<sup>74</sup> One of the biggest reason why I chose historical analysis is because of the critical

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<sup>73</sup> Bosi, Lorenzo. 2014. “Historical Methodologies: Archival Research and Oral History in Social Movement Research.” In Donatella della Porta eds. *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. 117-118.

<sup>74</sup> della Porta, Donatella. 2014. *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. Oxford Scholarship Online. Accessed on March 24, 2018.

lack of statistical data preserved, especially as the paper deals greatly with the South Korean political history under multiple dictatorships and colonial oppression. In order for scientific substantiation of evidences and claims, the following section of the paper will rely on the primary sources and open archival collections from the Korea Democracy Foundation as well as newspapers of the time preserved by Naver Newspaper Library and the BIG Kinds, South Korean big data platform that provides news archives as well as statistical analysis from qualitative news datasets.

### **Case of South Korea: Persistence of Contentious Identity**

#### *Self-identification of “Woon-dong-gwon” and Generation 386*

Socio-political psychology is a complex field of scholarship and even more so when resources are limited due to exogenous factors, such as government repressions. The lack of historical resource is one of the biggest problems of studying identity in South Korea, because of the astonishingly short record or systematic survey under democratic auspices that could provide reference points for identity formation. Fortunately, the origin and history of contentious actors’ self-identification can be found from the more specific generational title, the “generation 386” as a part of *Woon-dong-gwon*, coined by the contentious politics participants themselves in the early 2000s. While *Woon-dong-gwon* itself is also a widely used identification, the analysis of its core membership *generation 386* narrows the contentious identity down to its initial form, intention and development. In addition, generationally speaking, *generation 386* deserves a distinct attention as the particular group of people does not belong to the typical generational divisions such as the generation X, Y, Z or the millennials. The widely used demographic division demarcates

the people groups by age, an objective factor and in the case of South Korea, by the nation's economic stage, which is still more or less an element that inevitably affects the entire age generation socially and culturally, yet the generational divisions do not necessarily connote distinct political affiliations or identities. On the other hand, *generation 386* is an inherently different categorization as it is a self-proclaimed title that only applies to partial cohort of the age-divided generations, which led to the development of their socio-political identity.<sup>75</sup>

“*Generation 386*” was first used in the 1990s to literally mean the generation in their 30s – in 1990s –, *participated in student protest movements in the 1980s* and are born in the 1980s. While *generation 386* is also called *generation 486, 586* as the cohort gets older, the particular cohort is most prominently known as *generation 386*.<sup>76</sup> Though where the literal label originated is unclear and controversial between scholars and those self-identify as part of the *generation 386*, a general consensus is that those self-identify as *generation 386* have a unique and persisting attachment to the collective consciousness that frequently developed into political mobilization with distinct ideological emphasis.<sup>77</sup> In 1999, Sang Jin Han, a South Korean professor of sociology in Seoul National University who was part of the “Independence Generation” – born in the 1940s – that experienced the earlier stages of student protests conducted surveys on 1,200 of his *generation 386* former

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<sup>75</sup> Lee, Heeyoung. 1999. “Portrait of 1980s South Korea: Comparison with the 68ers of Germany.” in *Period of Revolution, 1980s*. Lee, Haeyoung eds. New World Publishing. 382.

<sup>76</sup> Oh, Saejae. 2015. “Empirical research on the generation effect of the 386-generation: conditional expression of the generation effect through political opportunity structures and mobilization.” PhD diss., Seogang University.

<sup>77</sup> Oh, Saejae. 2015. “Empirical research on the generation effect of the 386-generation: conditional expression of the generation effect through political opportunity structures and mobilization.” PhD diss., Seogang University. 6.

students. The issues that he was the most interested in were which events had the most significant influence in shaping the generation's identity and their level of attachment to ideologies. With over fifty-percent response rate, 37% of the respondents picked the 1987 June Uprising and 34% of the respondents chose Gwangju Struggle, both democratization movements adding up to over 70% of the entire responses. With other survey questions concerning the conflicts and even political contention that *generation 386* students were involved in ten years after graduating university as well as questions on their own self-identification, Han concludes that *generation 386* cohort agrees to be particularly critical in their macro-societal views, they are ideological in their social involvements and they agree to their tendency to over-analyze social phenomena, signifying ideological rationale. An interesting finding is that *generation 386* feels indebted to the people – *Minjung* – for their privilege to democracy and furthermore, national freedom.<sup>78</sup> Contention was a critical element in the *generation 386*'s identity formation, not only because of their participatory experience under the dictatorships, but also because contention came to be formulated as the primary means to their historical duty to completely liberate the nation from repression, whether it be foreign occupation or authoritarian rule.

This was not only the aggregate of personal development of identity which would be very difficult to measure other than only the recent surveys, but also the result of public politicization efforts observable through news and public media. For example, in the early 2000s, conservative and progressive newspapers in South Korea both tried to influence the

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<sup>78</sup> Han, Sangjin. 2003. *Generation 386, the Light and Darkness: the record of university students of the 1980s and their innocence, passion and wandering*. History of the Literary Philosophy. 15-16.

public perception of *generation 386* through special reporting series. In 1999, *Chosun Ilbo* opened the public discourse on the role of *generation 386* through their special investigation series, “Korea’s Main Force, *Generation 386*.” The conservative media’s strategy was to downplay the political role and popularity of the student protests and the politicians from the student leadership through establishing *generation 386* as a age-based generational category. Focusing on political irrelevant, but a variety of attractive themes of computer, camera, alcohol, cosmetics, etc., trying to equate the student participants of the democratization movements with the rest of the university students who were not politically active. Such conservative efforts did contribute in spreading out the meaning of *generation 386* from a politically conscious collective, particularly anchored upon their participation in contention to the generic, naïve university students in their twenties.<sup>79</sup> In response, *Hankyoreh News* also published special reports on “Political experimentation of *Generation 386*” and “Political institutionalization of *generation 386*” only four months after *Chosun Ilbo*’s special reporting. In turn, *Hankyoreh News* called for a heightened role of the *generation 386* in the political arena, so far as to a generational change in South Korean politics from the older, privileged politicians to the generation that conceive of democracy as people’s participation.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, such publicized discourse over the automatically expected or assumed role of *generation 386* in South Korean politics right

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<sup>79</sup> Oh, Saejae. 2015. “Empirical research on the generation effect of the 386-generation: conditional expression of the generation effect through political opportunity structures and mobilization.” PhD diss., Seogang University. 7;

Also see, *Chosun Ilbo*, 1999 March 1, 15, 29, April 12, 19, May 24, June 7, 14, 21.

<sup>80</sup> Oh, Saejae. 2015. “Empirical research on the generation effect of the 386-generation: conditional expression of the generation effect through political opportunity structures and mobilization.” PhD diss., Seogang University. 8;

Also see, *Hankyoreh News* April 14, September 28, 1999, February 15, March 22, 2000.

after democratization also further consolidated the generation's conception of their participation in politics both via the institutionalized venue or through contention as the generation's unique historical duty. The question, then comes back to how this identity centered around collective contentious memory first originated, developed and was reinforced overtime.

*Historical Background of South Korean Transition to Democracy and Brief History of Contentious Politics*

As the central argument of the thesis concerns the historical evidences to explain the persisting contentious identity of *Woon-dong-gwon*, it is crucial to understand the historical background of South Korean transition from dictatorship to democracy. Within the very short history of contemporary South Korean state, which started only after 1945, when Japan forfeited their colonial rule over the Korean peninsula, the history of democratization can be discussed in largely three big periods: the Syng Man Rhee Regime (1948-1960), Park Chung Hee Regime (1963-1979) and Chun Doo Hwan Regime (1980-1988). The reason for such historical division would be, the fact that these three rulers' undeniable impact on South Korean national formation, development and administration. While there were many short periods of governance before democratization other than the three dictators, they were often chaotic in terms of governance with lack of effective leadership. Moreover, in the forty years between the end of Korean War and institutional democratization in 1987, democratic rule lasted for a fleeting duration.

*Syng Man Rhee Regime (1948-1960), the Issue of Illegitimacy and the April 19 Movement*

Though he was the first president of South Korea, Syng Man Rhee's regime was an interesting one, because Rhee's regime was greatly concerned with its security, foreign policy and ideological battle rather than internal statecraft. Korean historians locate the reasons of such characteristics to the international Cold War as well as Rhee's late start in the statecraft scene in the Korean peninsula and a rather abnormal dependence on the United States for his political ascendance.<sup>81</sup> Kang records that there were two most important paths of independence movement during the Japanese colonial rule: one was a direct confrontation of Japanese Empire through militarization through temporary government establishments in Manchuria and Shanghai. The other was diplomatic approach to gain foreign attention to the Japanese atrocities in the Korean peninsula and gain Western support for the Wilsonian Self-Determination of Korean nation. Rhee was a pro-U.S. and pro-West intellectual that spent a substantial amount of his independence movement career in the U.S. Although Rhee was authorized with the U.S.-branch Korean Temporary Government by the central auspices in Shanghai and Siberia, Rhee's domestic prominence or influence was minimal.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, the combination of pro-military, pro-communists made the first, preemptive comprehensive effort to establish official Korean state after independence. Within a few months since liberation, the leftwingers-led People's Committees were established in almost every important city in the peninsula. Therefore, while the independent, socialist statecraft effort was already in place, the U.S. trusteeship with Syng Man Rhee as the U.S. puppet was suddenly put in place and "made

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<sup>81</sup> Choi Jang Jip. 1996. *Condition & Prospect of South Korean Democracy*. Seoul: Nanam Press. 54-63.

<sup>82</sup> Kang, Man Gil. 2013. *Rewritten Korean Contemporary History*. Changbi Publishers. 54-66.

a big reversal.” The reversal effort by the U.S. was not shy of coercive means, consequently leading to a separate presidential election in the South with the urges of the pro-U.S. factions. Despite some nationalists’ continued opposition to a separate election, the election was pushed through and Rhee became the first president of the Republic of Korea.<sup>83</sup>

Election of Rhee as the president was hastily organized and forced by the pro-U.S. factions, but it was also seen as an illegitimate process by many nationalists. Rhee himself seemed to most nationalists to have taken advantage of the chaos and the support from the U.S. that was only another colonial power. Moreover, for most nationalists, Rhee was an elite representative that did not physically commit himself to the hard work in the domestic anti-colonial movements. More importantly, the pro-U.S. politicians were the former pro-Japanese factions – who were also Korean nationals themselves – that took advantage of the U.S. intervention and tried to avoid the more aggressive, leftwing nationalists.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, the issue of illegitimacy presided over the beginning of Rhee administration and public suspicion only worsens with the mysterious assassination of the popular anti-U.S. nationalist, Kim Gu one year before the Korean War broke out and the execution of the opposition leader Cho Bong Ahm in 1959.<sup>85</sup>

Under the public scrutiny of the “grafted state” and the threats of the continuously influential leftwing leaders that remained in the South, Syng Man Rhee focused his political capital in eradicating the leftwing leaders and the anti-U.S. nationalists. The

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<sup>83</sup> Jung, Hae Gu and Ho Ki Kim. n.d. “Development of Democratization Movement in South Korea.” Stanford Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies Publications. 2.

<sup>84</sup> Kang Man Gil. 2013. *Rewritten Korean Contemporary History*. Changbi Publishers. 292-300.

<sup>85</sup> "Record of Conversation between Kim Gu and Liu Yuwan," July 11, 1948, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Syngman Rhee Institute. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119630>.

Korean War only radicalized such Korean-version Red Scare under the Rhee Regime and further institutionalized the scare in the public psyche as well. Therefore, the initially dominant leftwing politicians or movement leaders were soon quickly eliminated from the society after the Korean War. The execution of his political rival, Cho Bong Ahm in 1959 was also coerced with such anti-communist ideologies. As the result, Rhee Regime wielded a significant amount of political power when it came to anti-communist policies and ironically, the pro-liberal Rhee tried to institutionalize his dictatorship through the fabricated election consensus.<sup>86</sup> Besides election fraud, Rhee mobilized a group of radical anti-communists to create a political gang to disintegrate the National Congress in 1952 so that Rhee could coerce a popular election, rather than an indirect election by the Congress.<sup>87</sup> However, continued election fraud without much domestic policy efforts made by Rhee led to increased frustration on the grassroots level. Finally, in the third presidential election since Rhee took power, Rhee tried all kinds of voting fraud once again, by violating voting in secrecy, employing gangs and exchanging voting boxes. This comprehensive and explicit disregard of democratic election process led to a nation-wide protest against voting fraud, which finally led to Rhee's concession of power.<sup>88</sup>

Syng Man Rhee Regime was not the most brutal or the longest authoritarian rule in the South Korean history. However, the fact that Rhee's ascendance to political power was illegitimate to begin with – at least from the nationalist perspectives – leads to the inheritance and prolongation of the legitimacy problem of the political establishment and

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<sup>86</sup> Jung, Hae Gu and Ho Ki Kim. n.d. "Development of Democratization Movement in South Korea." Stanford Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies Publications. 4.

<sup>87</sup> Kang Man Gil. 2013. *Rewritten Korean Contemporary History*. Changbi Publishers. 291-293.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 295.

the state-level disregard of the nationalists under the Japanese Occupation. Moreover, Korean War complicated the grassroots discourse after the Korean War as the Rhee regime succeeds to institutionalize a radical anti-communism into the public's psyche. Therefore, the Rhee Regime created the foundation of not only the ruling illegitimacy, but also division within the public, and these issues were transferred over to the contentious politics of the grassroots. The contentious actors began to seek for greater legitimacy over the ruling government, and the South Korean state was easily seen as the convenient auspices of the national traitors with power bestowed by a foreign power. In terms of Rhee Regime's almost immediate transition into the Park Chung Hee Coup regime, historians attribute a certain degree of cause to Syng Man Rhee's obsession on the ideology, while ignoring the desperate economic situation.<sup>89</sup>

*Park Chung Hee Regime (1963-1979)*

With the April 19th Movement, Rhee conceded his political power to the Democratic Party only to be collapsed by the military Coup d'état led by South Korean Army Major General Park Chung Hee. The fall of the Democratic Party government came without a fight. Rather, the historians later record the event as an easy concession to the military coup, as the Democratic Party itself was not ready for a systematic rule of the entire country.<sup>90</sup> With the manifestation of the immature government and the weak people, despite the successive of April Revolution, Park Regime only exacerbated the problem of

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<sup>89</sup> Yoo, Si Min. 2014. *My South Korean Contemporary History*. Dolbaegae Publishing. 120.

<sup>90</sup> Jung, Hae Gu and Ho Ki Kim. n.d. "Development of Democratization Movement in South Korea." Stanford Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies Publications. 5.

illegitimate government and exposed the inability of the contentious movement's tangible transfer of political power from revolution to civilian government.

Park Chung Hee was a former officer in the Japanese military, and had personal admiration of the Japanese culture, the rapid development and Japanese achievement of modernity equivalent to that of the Western powers.<sup>91</sup> For a Japanese-style modernization and industrialization, Park pushed for an aggressive economic and industrial reform immediately after he took power with the 5-Year Economic Development Plan – an ironically socialist-sounding policy. As the result, with aggressive allocation of labor, resources and borrowing of capital with Park's unilateral decision to send cheap South Korean labor to foreign development projects, Park's economic plan consequently was successful albeit at the expense of democratic freedom. Park's aggressive economic plan enforcement was indeed revolutionary in his policy enactment, but also by the efforts of internalizing radical development as the national destiny for survival. Thus, Park's dictatorship and emphasis on national wealth reinforced totalitarianism, but also led to many people's voluntary submission to the national goal.<sup>92</sup>

Nevertheless, Park's economic success did not end democratization movement. The movement actors were well aware of the equally illegitimate authority wielded by Park, not only because he ascended through military coup, but also because he was ideologically anti-national with his pro-Japan affiliation. Thus, the temporarily dormant movement erupted with the Korea-Japan Conference, when Park tried to normalize the bilateral

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<sup>91</sup> Yoo, Si Min. 2014. *My South Korean Contemporary History*. Dolbaegae Publishing.

<sup>92</sup> Yoo, Si Min. 2014. *My South Korean Contemporary History*. Dolbaegae Publishing.133-142.

relations for economic gains. According to the Kim Jong Pil-Ohira Memo, Park agreed to normalize relations with Japan with Japan paying South Korea 300 million USD non-repayable grant, 200 million USD government-issued loan through the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund and 100 million USD commercial loan.<sup>93</sup> As civilian protest continued to resist the agreement, U.S. intervened in the process to provide new momentum for the negotiation to pass by organizing the tripartite talk. The dimension of Park administration borrowing the hands of the U.S. at the time of national discontent resembles the Rhee Regime, leading to the question of legitimacy closely related to increase in the popular anti-U.S. sentiment.<sup>94</sup>

With the Korea-Japan Conference, public contention intensified towards the end of 1960s. Like Rhee Regime, President Park also tried to extend his rule by coordinated voting fraud in 1967. However, with the military behind the back of Park, the student protests were once again unable to overcome the Park Regime. After his election for the third time through voting fraud, Park further strengthened his authoritarian grip as the inter-peninsular relations aggravated with reciprocal efforts to terrorize the other. By the late 1960s, Park managed to militarize schools by incorporating mandatory military training and institutionalized antagonism towards the North. Naturally, militarization of the entire society led to a greater paranoia about the North. Park's oppression peaked with the 1971 Yushin Restoration.

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<sup>93</sup> Kim, Sung Chull. 2017. *Partnership within Hierarchy: The Evolving East Asian Security Triangle*. State University of New York. 72-73.

<sup>94</sup> Kim, Sung Chull. 2017. *Partnership within Hierarchy: The Evolving East Asian Security Triangle*. State University of New York. 74-75.

Yushin Restoration entailed a complete upheaval of even the nominally democratic system. While Park claimed the purpose of Yushin system as a national security strategy against the increasing threat from the North and potential for a national emergency as the result of changing international atmosphere in the 1970s. Simultaneously, South Korea under Park was also going through an economic recession with high inflation rate, which in combination with the continuously toxic labor environment since the early 1960s, led to an explosion of labor movement. This was the first time labor movement created a separate, collective protesting force ignited with a young student laborer, Chun Tae Il's public suicide by self-burning.<sup>95</sup> The contagion of contentious movement from mostly students – like seen in the April 19th Movement – to laborers in the public arena developed into the first ever large-scale contentious movement, protesting against the *system* rather than individual group's particular interests. Therefore, despite the relative decrease in the level of contention during the particularly oppressive Park military regime along with economic advancement, scholars evaluate the impactful uprisings in the traditionally pro-Park regions like Busan and Masan to have caused internal breakdown of the regime, leading to Park's assassination by the Korea Central Intelligence Agency Director, Kim Jae Gyu.<sup>96</sup>

Although almost two-decades long dictatorship under Park Chung Hee seemingly have fallen apart on its own, historians assess that the 1970s was when the democratization movement forces have consolidated as a unified collective. As part of the recent Stanford Korea Democracy Project, Paul Chang and Gi Wook Shin analyzed the alliance formation

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<sup>95</sup> Kang Man Gil. 2013. *Rewritten Korean Contemporary History*. Changbi Publishers. 305.

<sup>96</sup> Jung, Hae Gu and Ho Ki Kim. n.d. "Development of Democratization Movement in South Korea." Stanford Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies Publications. 7.;

Also see, Kang Man Gil. 2013. *Rewritten Korean Contemporary History*. Changbi Publishers. 300-320.

particularly during the Park Chung Hee regime. In his research, Chang concluded that the increased level of repression under the Park Regime, ultimately led to the unintended consequences of alliance formation across classes, occupations and age groups.<sup>97</sup> In addition to the novel statistical analysis of the Stanford Korea Democracy Project, the closer-up analysis of the declarations, statements, once again, demonstrate further consolidation of the public perception of government illegitimacy and the people's historical duty to "continue national liberation."<sup>98</sup>

*Chun Doo Hwan Regime (1980-1988), Gwangju and the June Uprising*

The death of Park Chung Hee was celebrated as the final "spring of Seoul" after all the protracted transitional hiccoughs. Nevertheless, in less than two months, the neo-military forces seized military and political power through another coup d'état and elected Chun Doo Hwan as their leader. Chun was known to have admired Park Chung Hee's military leadership. In the process, student organization and labor movements were to retaliate against yet another abortion of democratization. According to the record of the 12.12. Incident – 1979 Coup – by a public critique and former politician, Yoo Si Min, nation-wide university student leadership association met on May 17, 1980 and agreed upon a simultaneous, nation-wide protest in the case of school cancellation. However, when all school were cancelled under national emergency declaration late May, it was only

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<sup>97</sup> Chang, Paul. 2008. "Unintended Consequences of Repression: Alliance Formation in South Korea's Democracy Movement (1970-1979)." *Stanford Korea Democracy Project*. Social Force, The UNC Press. Also see, Shin, Gi-wook, Paul Chang, Jung-eun Lee, Sookyung Kim. 2007. "South Korea's Democracy Movement (1970-1993)." *Stanford Korea Democracy Project Report*. December, 2007.

<sup>98</sup> Photograph of "Out determination upon returning to school," March, 1980, Document No. 00880052, Korea Democracy Foundation Open Archive Collection, 1970s Archives, Seoul, South Korea. <http://db.kdemocracy.or.kr/isad/view/00880052>

Gwangju that kept the promise of demonstrations.<sup>99</sup> In combination with public resentment towards the military's unwarranted arrest of the popular movement leader, Kim Dea Jung, alliance across all types of Gwangju residents formed to retaliate against the military. The city-wide uprising against the military initially seemed to liberate the city from the military auspices. However, ultimately, the military regime committed over 20,000 soldiers into Gwangju alone to murder 166 at site, critically injure over 400 who all died after the injury.<sup>100</sup>

Besides the humanitarian problem of the Gwangju Massacre, this incident led the Democratic Constitution Securement Association People's Protest Center to conclude that the atrocity was caused because of the failure to a simultaneous national uprising. The June Uprising in 1987 that finally achieved the military dictatorship's concession to the popular democracy and was basically a national enlargement of the Gwangju Uprising. Nevertheless, up until the 1987 June Uprising succeeded to subdue the Chun military regime, the Chun's military rule managed to deliver all dictatorial brutality and strictly personal corruption and undemocratic proceedings.

#### *Unfinished Democracy and Continued Political Tension*

1987 marked the end of almost 30-year-long dictatorship in South Korea through a nation-wide, simultaneous uprising that even the military was unable to force down like Chun did in Gwangju, seven years ago. However, evaluations of 1987 reform vary. This is because the June Uprising may also have brought about only the institutional changes to

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<sup>99</sup> Yoo, Si Min. 2014. *My South Korean Contemporary History*. Dolbaegae Publishing. 230-235.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 236-240.

the system, instead of fundamental changes to power structure. The limits of 1987 reform is the most clearly shown from the election of Roh Tae Woo in the subsequent election after Chun conceded to the protests. Roh Tae Woo was Chun Doo Hwan's henchman. This was not another result of voting fraud or illegal intervention by Roh or Chun, but it was a pure indicator of the limited democratic maturity of the people as well as the multiple democratic candidates, who ended up splitting votes for the democratic sides. While there are many more incidents that manifest the immaturity of South Korean democracy, the level of details does not serve the scope of this paper. However, the fact that the South Korean democratization history is still a continuous story leaves the ideals and consciousness that pulled the people together in the 70s and 80s still alive in the minds of contention today as well. The degree of different generation's ability to sympathize with the causes, the ideals, continued frustration towards the government's illegitimacy that bleeds into today's politics demonstrate that the mobilizing identity of movement politics stay within the South Korean politics now. Therefore, based on the general historical review of history and the constant theme of legitimacy found in the democratization movement identity in the 70s and 80s, the following section will concretely locate the commonly shared and inherited identity in the movement actors' consciousness of historical duty to a legitimate government since the early 1900 independence movement.

*The Construction of the Contemporary Contentious Identity, Ideology and Historical Morality*

*1. National Liberation Legitimacy: Independence to Democratization Seen from the Woon-dong-gwon Scholars Perspectives*

From the literature of contentious movement and those written by the actors themselves, I find Korean modern history central to the construction of the contemporary contentious identity. This can be seen clearly from the historical narrative created by the *generation 386* and *Woon-dong-gwon* national history scholars. An important theme shared among South Korean national historians is the simultaneous consciousness and emphasis of national division and history of Japanese colonialization reflected in their work as central factors in the history of South Korean modernization and democratization process. Therefore, South Korean narrative of democratization history is not isolated as one distinct movement, but a deeply intertwined historical process of national liberation. Within South Korean perception of macro-national history of liberation, democratization bears its particular significance in its prolongation of the national independence from Japanese occupation as well as the ongoing efforts of liberation from the national division.<sup>101</sup> And the epitome of this early form of contentious movement against colonial occupation was the March 1st Movement.

*March 1st Movement as the Cornerstone of Contentious Identity Formation and Movement Legitimacy*

Prior to any specific references made to substantiate that the contentious democratization movement in the late 1980s as well as the continued presence of the identity among *Woon-dong-gwon* and *generation 386* who are the core and initial component of contentious movement, it would be necessary to review history of March 1st Movement, 1919.

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<sup>101</sup> Kang, Mangil. 2013. *Rewritten Korean Contemporary History*. Changbi Publishers. 251-260.

March 1st Movement in 1919 was a collective, nation-wide retaliation against the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula that started in 1910. The movement was first conceived among religious leaders as a request to the Japanese government of Korean independence. However, as Woodrow Wilson's principle of national self-determination was met by international resonance, Korean independence movement also saw an opportunity of Korea's international recognition through a peaceful declaration of Korean independence from the Japanese. While the movement was initially planned and centered around the thirty three National Representatives that officially signed on the Declaration of Independence, March 1st Movement, the protest itself was mostly delivered by the ordinary Korean people voluntarily.<sup>102</sup>

There are three important aspects of the March 1st Movement that distinguishes the movement from any other series of protest in determining the national consciousness. First, the March 1st movement marks the beginning of the Korean modernity and period of nationalism. According to the nationalism scholar, Liah Greenfeld, nationalism is a modern phenomenon that occurs when the constituent people gains the collective consciousness as the fundamentally equal member of the society while all members believe in the nation's popular self-sovereignty.<sup>103</sup> Likewise, within the March 1st Movement, majority of population actively called for a fundamentally equal society, a republican democracy, while only few called to revert back to the premodern kingdom.<sup>104</sup> Second, with the

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<sup>102</sup> Lee, Jun-sik. 2010. "The Legacy of the National Liberation Movement, and the Efforts for Democratization." *Yoksa Wa Hyonsil: Quarterly Review of Korean History*. 145-178.

<sup>103</sup> Greenfeld, Liah. 2016. *Advanced Introduction to Nationalism*. Elgar Publishing.

<sup>104</sup> Lee, Jun-sik. 2010. "The Legacy of the National Liberation Movement, and the Efforts for Democratization." *Yoksa Wa Hyonsil: Quarterly Review of Korean History*. 145-178.

majority of participants' seeking true "national liberation" from all sorts of restraints to liberty, from colonialism to inequality before colonialization, the March 1st Movement brought about political liberalism in a society that had long been a pre-modern and isolated kingdom. Lastly, the March 1st Movement is a crucial reference point where the organizational theme of "nation-wide, simultaneous uprisings."<sup>105</sup> The logistical arrangement of contention may not seem to be a very important variable. However, when the contention plans could not be propagated through social media or long-distance communications tool was not possible. Along with the ideological consistencies, the logistical similarity goes a further way than it seems. For example, the Gwangju Uprising in 1980, was also the result of the National University Student Association's promise to carry out a nation-wide, simultaneous protest, so that the government cannot invest on one single protest. Thus, learning from the previous experience, the contentious leaders in the 1987 finally succeeds with the peaceful national contentious movement, so that the government cannot concentrate on quelling one movement.<sup>106</sup>

*Continued Symbolism in the South Korean Contemporary Politics*

The 1987 South Korean National Constitution declares that the South Korean democratic nation-state stands based on the Independence Movement morale from the March 1st Movement:

We, the people of Korea, proud of a resplendent history and traditions dating from time immemorial, upholding the cause of the Provisional Republic of Korea Government born of the March First Independence Movement of 1919 and the democratic ideals of the April Nineteenth Uprising of 1960 against injustice, having assumed the mission of democratic reform and peaceful unification of our

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<sup>105</sup> Yoo, Si Min. 2014. *My South Korean Contemporary History*. Dolbaegae Publishing.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

homeland and having determined to consolidate national unity with justice, humanitarianism and brotherly love, and To destroy all social vices and injustice...<sup>107</sup>

There may be counterarguments regarding the particular narratives of Korean contemporary democratization history and its consistency with the earlier national liberation movements in the academic sphere. However, regardless of the room for controversy on the choices made in historiography among historians, the fact that those self-identify as *Woon-dong-gwon* scholars view democratization movements as historical succession of the national liberation duty does not disqualify the consistent themes and evidences of it as what *Woon-dong-gwon* based their legitimacy.

Protest arrangements in the 1980s and 1990s also demonstrate the significance of national liberation theme in democratization. For example, the 1976 protest against the Chun military dictatorship and the announcement called, “Declaration of Democratic National Liberation” were deliberately planned on March 1 to commemorate the March 1st Movement in 1919 – March 1st movement was the earliest nation-wide contentious movement that took place in South Korea simultaneously in March 1, 1919 as peaceful resistance against the Japanese military colonial rule over the Korean peninsula.<sup>108</sup> The declaration in 1978 consequently led to imprisonment of some of the most important contentious democratization movement leaders like Kim Dae Jung, Yoon Bo Sun and sixteen others. Over the course of legal battle over the movement leadership’s sentence, many statements have been publicized including those released by the Korea Democracy

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<sup>107</sup> Statutes of the Republic of Korea, *Constitution of Republic of Korea, No. 10*, (Seoul, 1987), [https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor\\_service/lawView.do?lang=ENG&hseq=1](https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?lang=ENG&hseq=1)

<sup>108</sup> “March 1st Declaration of the Democratic National Liberation.” n.d. *Korea Democracy Open Archives: 1970s Archival Collection*. <http://db.kdemocracy.or.kr/collections/view/10000035>

Foundation. These documents reveal repeated and popular references to the earlier “Independence Movements spirit” as the basis of their action’s legitimacy.<sup>109</sup> Such legitimization of democratization movement is commonly seen in other scenes of protests than those involving politicians like the “March 1st Declaration of Democratic National Liberation.” As a matter of fact, greater solidarity and tight organizational structure within nation-wide student protestors and unions was the distinct feature of the 1980s university students or the *generation 386*. Immediately after the June Uprising, 1987, university students formed a national student organization as the students saw a period of chaos and uncertainty after Chun Doo Hwan’s concession to the uprising. Documents and statements that are left from the recruitment efforts appeal to the ideological duty of students by comparing the dictatorship with the Japanese colonial rule. Some radical statements also delegitimized the establishment politicians to have inherited their political powers from the Japanese, taking advantage of the chaos in the interim period of the 1950s.<sup>110</sup>

*The March 1st Movement and Its Ideological Significance in Creating the Collective Contentious Identity*

Therefore, the March 1st Movement’s ideological influence in the national liberation narrative is fundamental in the fact that the movement proved that the Korean people have gone through a new type of consciousness and that the reality has clearly changed from a premodern kingdom to a worthwhile individuals who are capable of seeking liberty and equality just the same as that of others who might have been the nobles

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<sup>109</sup> Photograph of “March 1st Declaration of the Democratic National Liberation Statement in response to the Court Decisions,” March, 1976, Document No.00419778, Korea Democracy Foundation Open Archive Collection, 1970s Archives, Seoul, South Korea. <http://db.kdemocracy.or.kr/isad/view/00419778>

under the old kingdom. However, as seen in the earlier historical review, the emergence of dictatorships after independence from the Japanese occupation led to historical reversal back to restrain national liberation. The authoritarian rulers had constant issues of legitimacy in terms of their role in national liberation – which is oppressor, indistinct from that of Japanese colonizers. This problem exacerbates with the repeated revival of dictatorship and the stubborn remnants in the political arena and became a chronic problem in the South Korean contemporary politics. Thus, on the other hand, the century old search for the national liberation was never fulfilled until now, because the current nominal democratization is not something fundamentally called for in the times of 1980s and 1970s, which are still a very tangible and live memories for core group of *Woon-dong-gwon*, the *generation 386*. For these complicated reasons and circumstances, *generation 386* and *Woon-dong-gwon* elites are unable to let go of the outdated, yet currently relevant mission of national liberation until after the nominal and institutional democratization.

*Institutionalization versus Ideology: the two factions, NL-PD*

Finally, discussions of ideology and national liberation gained from the revolutionary March 1st Movement leads to the empirical puzzle of the indifferent reaction of the Justice Party towards the United Progressive Party in 2014. Although both Justice Party and the United Progressive Party are “sister political parties” originating from the *Woon-dong-gwon* traditions, party politics is inherently distinct arena from contentious politics, the discussion of the puzzle must include the issue of contentious actors’ process of institutionalization, but a “defiant” one as coined by the sociologist, Sun Chul Kim. Kim defines such defiant or reluctant institutionalization of contentious politics as, “social

movements becoming a routine of everyday politics, but differs from this conventional understanding of institutionalization in that social movements are not entirely assimilated into the norms or practices of the political establishment.”<sup>111</sup> Therefore, as political parties, both Justice Party and the UPP inevitably are expected to assimilate to a certain degree of political norms – though the UPP’s defiance may have caused the disintegration decision by the court. On the other hand, in the particular case of South Korea the UPP, a national liberation-focused *Woon-dong-gwon* party had a greater appeal towards ideology, national liberation than Justice Party that comes from the People’s Democratic tradition of South Korean *Woon-dong-gwon*.

#### *National Liberation and People’s Democracy*

The two biggest factions of South Korean *Woon-dong-gwon* compose of National Liberation (NL) and People’s Democracy (PD). The two frameworks emerged in the 1980s, when the greater South Korean population began to receive higher education, with the *generation 386* being the first cohort to get such access. Scholars in South Korea have long discussed the emergence of such distinct public framework under the most brutal period of dictatorship, while South Korea has not seen another type of such public political framework to emerge ever since. Some scholars interpreted the phenomenon as an expression to extend the political framework, while political power is not accessible. Therefore, within the contentious movement framework, students and laborers created a pseudo-political arena, with their biggest concern being the *nation* and *people*, particularly

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<sup>111</sup> Kim, Sun Chul. 2016. “Introduction” in *Democratization and Social Movements in South Korea: Defiant Institutionalization*. Kim eds. Routledge Press.

the laborers. Moreover, as the atrocities of Gwangju Uprising began to reveal among the contentious actors, critical self-consciousness expanded across intelligentsia and contentious actors to take on some sort of action.<sup>112</sup> While the two factions had not born acute differences like today when they were first conceptualized, NL faction was more concerned with the nationalist liberation of the all people, to include both North and the South. Moreover, a distinct feature of the NL camp was their strict positions on foreign policy, anti-U.S. interventions in domestic policies. Particularly because the NL camp was much more ideologically-rooted for nationalism and absolute sovereignty of the people, NL camp tended to create an isolated political faction, unwilling to compromise on a lot of the issues. Such characteristics often came into conflicts when the NL camp needed to come into political alliance with other parties or movements.<sup>113</sup> Historically, NL faction had been stronger in their authority and popularity throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

On the other hand, PD faction had a particular concern of the laborers, wage, working conditions and employer-employee relations. Thus, PD faction was naturally a more close-knit, smaller group. Moreover, both factions initially had a certain degree of belief in the Marxist modernization theory. Though the factions did not have a deep faith in having to revolutionize the South Korean society, the anti-imperialist Marxism appealed to Koreans at the time.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Lee, Chang Eon. 2011. "Political Controversy about the Relationship between United Front and Political Party within National Association for Democracy and Reunification of Korea (NADRK): The restoration of tradition for Anti-imperialist United Front and faced delays on politica." *Memories and Prospect* 24. Korea Democracy Memorial Foundation.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

While under the series of dictatorships, NL faction had been more popular for their broader appeal to the grassroots as well as the elites. This changed as South Korea started to democratize after 1987 and particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union that held the shared ideological anchor of national liberation as well as the worker's rights and freedoms. However, when the Soviet Union collapsed, there was an anomie among the young Marxist elites. Since then, the two camps of NL and PD also became much narrower. Along with the collapse of the Soviet Union, South Korea was also rapidly incorporated into the international capitalist system. Naturally, the NL-type radical political and ideological fervor that dominated the 1980s and 1990s had to be converted into economic force.

At the face of social tension, however, both the NL and PD camps did not entirely conform to the new capitalistic order. It was the NL camp that had particularly difficult time with the process of even partial institutionalization, while the PD factions conveniently had the already small and tight group of people that were specifically passionate about the social welfare and labor safety in South Korea. On the other hand, NL camp experienced a significant setback in terms of institutionalization. Though the theme of National Liberation continues to get popular support, the political capital not comes at very different style among the new generations, not necessarily through committing to collectivized movement encompassing the entirety of their social life, but through more individualized ways.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Lee, Chang Eon. 2011. "Political Controversy about the Relationship between United Front and Political Party within National Association for Democracy and Reunification of Korea (NADRK): The restoration of tradition for Anti-imperialist United Front and faced delays on politica." *Memories and Prospect* 24. Korea Democracy Memorial Foundation.

Nevertheless, the NL camp's inflexibility came at much greater cost than expected. In comparison to the specific membership expectation of PD camp and their flexibility and tolerance towards their faction's incorporation to the political arena, NL faction revealed an allergic reaction to any of their member's official political participation, out of the public space. Particularly within political party membership, NL camp strongly insisted that the NL camp and its direct political party solely had political legitimacy. Thus, all the members who decided to join other political parties, including the existing opposition party – The Minjoo Party – were considered traitors. Particularly because of the NL camp's own inflexibility in terms of ideology as well as its membership, NL faction was increasingly isolated from the mainstream political discourses. Ultimately, the public and conservative scrutiny of National Liberation camp to be pro-North Korea ironically, delegitimized the NL-based United Progressive Party in 2014.<sup>116</sup>

Therefore, the disintegration of the United Progressive Party came at the acute isolation of the party and their radical adherence to the NL identity of the *Woon-dong-gwon*. Though the Justice Party's indifference may seem like an anomaly, yet when contextualized, the long isolation of the NL faction from all political parties, including the PD camp and the Democratic opposition party for history of compromises, Justice Party's indifference was an expected turn, and the radical NL camp may not have even wanted the Justice Party's intervention either. Moreover, with the incendiary allegation included in the

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<sup>116</sup> Lee, Chang Eon. 2012. "NL Unified Line Contributes to the popularize, yet fail to recruit committed members." *Redian*. Accessed on March 28, 2018.

court case of UPP, Justice Party's nonintervention in the political turmoil consequently preserved the moderate branch of the organized contentious camp.

### **Conclusion**

The discussion of national liberation and the greater historical duty in contentious identity is perhaps, not a new phenomenon. However, contemporary Korean political history scholars have concluded that such gap in the understanding of South Korean contentious identity from historical construction came from the long-time domination of the conservative authoritarian rule over not only the political power, but also into the areas of academia and cultural norm construction. Lee Jun-sik evaluates that despite the manifest ideological basis given by the March 1st Movement in many official and unofficial political evidences, such as the Korean constitution, a concentrated study of National Liberation and contentious identity has been tabooed under Korean academia that has not been fully liberated from the grips of establishment conservatives until recently. This is also shown in the development of the history textbook in South Korea: Under the Rhee, Park and Chung Regime, the word "national liberation" was banned in interpreting the South Korean independence. Under Syng Man Rhee, all independence movements have been narrated based on the Rhee leadership. Under the militaristic rule of Park and Chung, interpretation of the independence movement has been completely changed into militarized struggles against the Northern leftwingers.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, an understanding of the contentious identity as a continual phenomenon inherited from the March 1st Movement and the early forms of

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<sup>117</sup> Lee, Jun-sik. 2010. "The Legacy of the National Liberation Movement, and the Efforts for Democratization." *Yoksa Wa Hyonsil: Quarterly Review of Korean History*. 146.

contentious politics have been thoroughly eliminated until recently. Moreover, the international contentious politics literature that has been largely promoting the cyclical aspects of contention with structuralist academic basis not only devalued the issue of ideological contentious identities apart from rational interest, but also gave little weight to the possibility of South Korean contentious identity as a continuation from the national liberation since the 1900s.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, despite the apparent rumors of disintegration of contentious identity along with the NL-based United Progressive Party in 2014, continued public observations of contention with the shared theme of across South Korea even after the UPP disintegration substantiates that the South Korean contentious identity has only transferred to the next generation to re-interpret national liberation. Moreover, the continued public, accessible discourse among the new generation and the new social network through social media, the framing of “national liberation” is consistently seen from the recent Park impeachment rallies, continued demonstrations for the comfort women issues and public contentious response towards the Moon Jae In government’s amendment efforts. Perhaps it is only the mobilizational structure and forms of contention that have recreated as contention passed on to the next generation.

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<sup>118</sup> McAdam, Doug. Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 1996. To Map Contentious Politics. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*: March, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 17-34.

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