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Church and Civil Society in Korea after Democratization:
The NGOs' Activism for Migrant Workers

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by

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Chair

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To my parents

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCEJ	Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice
CCMW	<i>Chun</i> Center for Migrant Workers
CPAJ	Catholic Priests Association for Justice
FKTU	Federation of Korean Trade Union
HMWHRC	<i>Hankuk</i> Migrant Workers' Human Rights Center
ITTP	The Industrial Technical Trainee Program
JCMK	Joint Commission for Migrant Workers
JOC	<i>Jeunesse Ounvere Chretienne</i> (Young Christian Workers)
KCTU	Korean Confederation of Trade Unions
KFSB	Korean Federation of Small Business
LPC	Labor Pastoral Counseling
NCRD	National Council for the Restoration of Democracy
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NMR	Network for Migrants Rights
SKIRETU	the <i>Seoul-Kyonggi-Inchon</i> Region Equality Trade Union
SME	Small- and medium-sized enterprise
SMO	Social Movement Organization
UIM	Urban Industrial Mission
UJ	<i>Uegoogin Jeungchek Khibon Banhyang mit Choojin Chekye</i> (the Basic Orientation of Foreigners Policy and the System for its Implementation)

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Church and Civil Society in Korea after Democratization:
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The churches in South Korea contributed to the emergence of civil society by their crucial role in the democratization movement under the authoritarian regime. How, then, can churches strengthen civil society after democratization? Using the NGOs' activism for migrant workers, the dissertation examines this question.

The NGOs' activism for migrant workers, in which churches have played a leading role, illustrates a vibrant civil society after democratization. It has accomplished a significant elevation of migrant workers' rights and their integration

into Korean society. However, it also has showed a lack of civility and undemocratic practices. Thus, there is incongruence between *ad extra* advocacy and *ad intra* practices in the NGOs.

I argue that the role of churches and the incongruence are the double-edged effects of the democratization movement. The churches and the NGOs in this field are heirs of the democratic movement. This heritage not only has enhanced the strength of the NGOs, but also has hindered the fostering of civility in the emergent civil society. In this activism, churches and the clergy have played a key role in dual senses: a role of a catalyzer to advance the accomplishments as well as an anticatalyzer in preventing the development of civility. The leadership of activist-ministers has reinforced the double-edged effects under the organizational culture of the churches in a broad Korean Confucian cultural environment.

My findings suggest, first, that the civil society in Korea has developed, based on the resistance model which conflates opposition to the state. Consequently, this new democratic context needs the cooperation model which conceives cooperation and democratic negotiation with not only the state but also other NGOs, as important as resistance against the state. Secondly, my findings suggest that churches as well as NGOs need to engage in a culture which fosters civility while discouraging authoritarian leadership and paternalism.

Accordingly, the activism for migrant workers demonstrates that the public role of churches has not shrunk after democratization. However, its potential will depend on how it changes its role from the resistance model to the cooperation model and how it promotes moral qualities of civil society.

I. Introduction

Pickets represented the silent voice of the sit-in strike of thirteen Nepalese “trainees”¹ on January 10, 1995 at *Myung-dong* Cathedral, the cathedral of the Seoul Archdiocese in South Korea (hereafter “Korea”): “Do not hit us”; “Pay us our wages”; “Return our passports”; “We are not animals.”² Their pickets were effective enough for Koreans to know about what took place at their workplace and what their Korean fellow employers did to these migrant workers³: human rights violation, physical violence included, and exploitation of labor. Obviously, these Nepalese workers, who were in Korea just for a couple of months, could not protest. Who were then the native Koreans who supported and organized their protest? In order to protest against the employers and the government, why did they choose the Catholic Cathedral as their site? Apparently, this protest was organized by the members of the Citizen’s Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ), the most influential nongovernmental organization (NGOs) in those days, founded by a well-known Protestant minister Rev. Kyung-seok Suh. These activists strategically chose the cathedral as the protest site. However, during the days of the Nepalese protest, there was no cooperation between the CCEJ team and the nearby Foreign Workers Labor Counseling Office (FWLCO) of the Seoul Archdiocese of the Catholic Church, one of

¹ Since 1991, foreign workers were brought in as a “trainee” under The Industrial Technical Trainee Program (hereinafter “ITTP”). The ITTP will be discussed *infra*.

² *Chosun Ilbo* (Chosun Newspaper) January 10, 1995.

³ I refer to “migrant workers” as transnational migrant workers. As the Korean government does not allow the immigration of unskilled laborers, migrant workers cannot become legal immigrants yet. I avoid the term “foreign workers” because of the blurred boundary between Koreans and foreigners through interracial marriage and the formation of migrant workers families in Korea.

the first Korean organizations which work for migrant workers. In short, this incident was: the Nepalese workers protested, coordinated by Protestant ministers, at the Catholic Cathedral, but with no cooperation from any Catholic organization.⁴

This story illustrates the dynamism of church and emerging civil society in Korea.

While the relationship between church⁵ and civil society is popularly viewed as inimical in Western Europe, the church has played a significant role in democratization and the emergence (or restoration) of civil society under the authoritarian and communitarian regimes in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia in the late 1960s to the early 1990s. Samuel Huntington calls the global spread of democratization in 1974 to 1990 as “the third wave” (1991). In particular, paying attention to the fact that the 3/4 of democratized countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia are Catholic countries, Huntington states that the third wave is mainly “a Catholic wave,”⁶ impacted by the changes of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council (hereafter, Vatican II) (Huntington 1991:76).

Then, once democratization is achieved and, as a consequence, the conflict between church and the authoritarian state has disappeared and social plurality is increased⁷, what is the relationship between church and civil society? That is the

⁴ The cathedral has been the symbolic site of labor and democracy movement demonstrations. Since the early 1970s when the Catholic Church began to play a vital role in the democracy movement at the cathedral, it has become the site for the social movements up to now, wherein various protests have been held regardless of religious background.

⁵ In this study, unless otherwise qualified or indicated by the context, I refer to the terms “church” and “churches” (with a small c) as both Catholic and Protestant churches. I also refer to “Church” (with a capital C) to the Catholic and Protestant Church as a whole, unless otherwise qualified or indicated by the context.

⁶ He precisely states that the choice for either democracy or authoritarianism is personified in the conflict between the Cardinal and the dictator (1991: 85).

⁷ As the authoritarian regime as the common target disappeared, in the post-authoritarian society, a grand vision which mediated diverse social groups loses its bonding effects. Instead, as the public

question this dissertation tries to answer. Put differently, when the authoritarian regime was the target, churches could exercise their moral and even political authority by promoting democracy and human rights and by providing an organizational network for resistance. How, then, are churches influenced by the free public sphere which engenders social plurality? How do churches accommodate to and redefine their roles in the emerged (or restored) civil society? In this accommodation and reconstruction, what are the potentials and limits?

A. Bringing Religion Back In

In spite of the fact that the notion of civil society in the West has its origin in religion (Walzer 1991; Seligman 2002), furthermore, despite the importance of the role of religion in world politics, religion is not seriously included in the discussion of civil society.⁸ This negligence can be partly explained by the Enlightenment legacy in social science in which religion has been conceived as anti-modern, or at most, pre-modern, whereas the notion of civil society is not only a modern idea but also an ideal of modern democratic society. Partly due to the reductionistic roadmap laid by the founders of sociology (Marx, Weber, Durkheim), sociology tends to see religion and modernity as antithetical on the basis of two reasons. First, on the institutional level, the two most important modern institutions, the modern state and the market economy, not only do not need religious legitimation, but they also marginalize religion from the

sphere becomes free from the harness of the authoritarian state, various interests flourish and social plurality increases.

⁸ A few exceptions include Madsen (1998) in regard to Catholics in China; Wuthnow (1998) on religion's role in moral deliberation; Watt (1999) on the role of an Islamic sector in Nigeria, and the edited book by Chambers and Kymlicka (2002) on diverse religions' conception of civil society.

public sphere as Casanova (1994) well examines. Second, on the conceptual level, modernity's rationality makes a break not only with preceding eras but with other cultures, and discursive argumentation involves criteria that override cultural differentiations (Habermas 1985; Giddens 1990). In this view, religions are not a pervasive force upon day-to-day life any more and, furthermore, are manifested as incompatible with most modern social life. Religious belief is linked to superstition or at least is considered inferior to scientific knowledge, and thus is supplanted by reflexively organized knowledge, which is governed by empirical observation and logical thought. In short, modernity means secularization, and sacralization is anti-modern.

From this perspective, even the rise of fundamentalism or a new sectarian movement is explained as compensation for or protest against the failures, privation, or exclusions their members suffer in modernization; thus it is a response to a historical collision that produces 'cultural distortion' (Huntington 1996; Beyer 1994). Casanova already criticizes this Enlightenment paradigm that conventional religion ought to be superseded by post-conventional secular morality, arguing that there is no theoretical ground to neglect religion (1994).

In addition to the theoretical consideration, the historical experience after the Cold War urges social scientists to bring religion back into their studies of civil society, democracy, and globalization. First, serious conflicts, though not totally but significantly rooted in religion, call for examination. The conflicts and wars in Iraq, the former Yugoslavia region, or Southern Asia cannot be understood without a proper consideration of religions. Huntington (1996) interprets these experiences as a sign

of a “clash of civilization” but approaches religion in an essentialistic fashion while simplifying the different layers and sub-traditions of religion. His approach, however, cannot grasp the conflict between Shiite and Sunni in Iraq, the complicated layers the Western colonialism marked in the non-Western culture and religion, or the politics of representation by “Asian value.”

Second, the growing awareness of religious pluralism even in a religiously homogenous society, such as the increase of Muslims in the traditional “Christian” West, also charges scholars to bring religion back in. Growing religious pluralism, together with the marginal situation of people of certain religions, reveals that the institutional arrangement of “thin” democratic procedure is not enough to secure living together with difference in this globalizing society. The recent French case in regard to prohibiting the veiling of an Islam girl at school illustrates the complexity of religion, culture and citizenship. Accordingly, religion deserves serious examination in regard to civil society.

B. Religious Landscape: Confucian Korea?

Korea is a privileged site in order to examine religion and civil society. Above all, Korea is a religiously plural society. Religions in Korea have been composed of Shamanism, Buddhism (introduced in the 4th Century), and Confucianism, the official religion during the *Chosun* dynasty from 1392 to 1910. Adding to these religions, Catholicism was brought into Korea in the late 18th century, and about one hundred years later, Protestantism was brought in the late 19th century. The government’s census categorizes religion into Buddhism, Protestantism,

Catholicism, Confucianism, and *Won*-Buddhism (a new religious group derived from Buddhism). Since the modern Constitution was created in 1948, the separation between religion and the state has been maintained, and no religion has been officially privileged over the others. In addition, no religion enjoys a majority. According to the 2003 census data, 46.1% of Korean people say that they are non-believers in any religion whereas 53.9% identify themselves as believers.⁹ Among the believers, Buddhists occupy 47%; Protestants 36.8%; Catholics 13.7%, Confucianism 0.7%, and the others 1.8%. This means that 25.3% of the Korean population is Buddhist; 19.8%, Protestant; 7.4%, Catholic. In short, Korea is a religiously pluralistic society historically and statistically. As pluralism and religious tolerance are considered as pre-conditions for civil society, the Korean case provides a privileged site for the study of religion and civil society.

It is striking that Christianity has emerged as a major religion in Korea in spite of its relatively short history. Those who visit Korea are surprised at seeing Protestant churches with their lighted red crosses almost everywhere in cities. About 27.2%, that is larger than any other religion, of the Korean population are either Protestant or Catholic.¹⁰ This is quite different from the countries which have a similar religio-cultural background, for example, Japan and China.¹¹ In addition, in

⁹ http://kosis.nso.go.kr/cgi-bin/sws_999.cgi?ID=DT_1WDA011&IDTYPE=3&FPUB=3. Accessed on April 4, 2006.

¹⁰ This figure may not be surprising when we compare the Philippines or East Timor whose population is overwhelmingly Catholic. However, both countries were respectively a colony of Spain or Portugal for centuries, and Christianization was partially a by-product of this colonial history.

¹¹ In China and Japan, Christianity was introduced in the 16th century, earlier than in Korea. However, in Japan, the Christian population is less than 1% of the total population. In China, although, reportedly, they are rapidly growing, Christians are a minority. All three East Asian countries suppressed Christianity until the 19th century. Some scholars explain the rapid growth of Christianity in Korea by structural-functionalist paradigm. For instance, Huntington explains it in the

terms of the social background of the believers, whereas Buddhists include much more people who have less education and live in the countryside, both Protestants and Catholics have more population who have a higher education and live in cities.¹² Furthermore, in terms of religious practice, for instance, participation in religious services, Protestant and Catholic draw stronger participation than Buddhism. These observations reveal that Christianity has become a major religion in Korea and has more potential for social influence than other religions.

Not surprisingly, Christianity has played an active role in emerging civil society. As I shall illustrate in Chapter III, the JOC (Catholic Young Workers' Organization) and the Urban Industrial Mission of the Protestant Church, contributed to the rise of the labor movement in the 1970's. Churches also played a crucial role in the democratization of Korea by providing "critical sanctuaries for dissidents," "often being the only institution relatively immune from regime intrusion" (Cummings 1989:7-8), and functioning as a linkage to draw international pressure against the

lens of the lagged cultural response. According to him, the rapid modernization produces a space of "cultural vacuum" because the traditional culture lagged behind in adapting to the rapid changes in Korea (1994: Ch. 4). If so, the expansion of the Christianity is due to the filling-out of this vacuum. However, this cannot explain why only in Korea, Christianity flourishes when comparing China, Japan, Taiwan, and Korea, all of which have experienced the rapid modernization under similar religio-cultural traditions. His analysis neglects the internal and historical factors for Korea to accept Christianity more easily than the other East Asian countries. As Chapter III shall imply, I attribute the growth of Christianity in Korea to Church's contribution to the independence movement under the Japanese colonialism and the democratization movement under the authoritarian regime. In this contribution, Church has become a part of national history and identity. The growth of the Catholic Church in East Timor also confirms this hypothesis. Under the Indonesian colonialism, the Catholic population has grown from 25% in 1975 to 90% in 2002. It was due partly to the Indonesian policy which required its population to choose a world religion among the five (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Protestant, and Catholicism) in registration. East Timorese chose the Catholic Church as a sign of resistance against the Indonesian regime.

¹² Among believers, 59.1% of people who have only a primary education or below belong to Buddhism; 44.5% of those who have a college education or higher belongs to Protestant, and 19% to Catholics (*Beopbo Shinmoon*, July 28, 2004).

http://www.beopbo.com/content_nam.asp?news_no=35589. Accessed on April 4, 2006.

authoritarian regime (Kang 2000; Kim 1993). Surely, it is not only in Korea that churches resisted authoritarian regimes and played a role as a civil society. The contribution of the Church in democratization took place under the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the authoritarian regimes in Latin America and the Philippines, and most recently the colonial regime in East Timor. Nevertheless, in comparison to those areas, what is unique in the Korean case is that Christianity is a foreign religion with a short history and that it has never enjoyed strong socio-political power.¹³ Hence, Korea can shed light on the discussion of church and civil society which other societies in Europe or Latin America where Christianity is the major religion and has a long history, cannot do.

In addition, what draws our attention, is that the public influence of Christianity has not decreased as it has in the other countries. It was the CCEJ who made the “civil society movement” widespread, differentiated from the *minjung* movement in the mid-1980’s.¹⁴ CCEJ was founded by Rev. Suh and its staff members have mainly Protestant backgrounds. It became a harbinger, because it announced the era of NGOs in the emerging civil society, for instance, inspiring the organization of the *Buddhist Coalition for Economic Justice* in 1991. Very recently, since 2005, it is also a number of Protestant ministers who initiated and organized the so-called “New Right Movement” which stresses the importance of an alliance with

¹³ Kang (1996) argues that the Korean Protestant church, in particular, from 1945 to 1960, enjoyed social privileges owing to its connection with the United State. However, compared to the churches in the other “Christian” countries, it can be said that social privileges were not significant.

¹⁴ *Minjung* literally means “common people” but is used to refer to marginalized people, mainly workers, farmers, and the urban poor. Its usage became widespread by *minjung* theology, a Korean liberation theology. The *minjung* movement refers to a social movement which advocates the rights of *minjung* and works to make them a subject of history. In contrast to the class-embedded notion of *minjung*, the “civil society movement” tends to emphasize of the role of citizens, rather than *minjung*, as an agent to make a better society.

the United States and puts pressure on North Korea in terms of human rights.

The religious landscape I describe challenges a stereotypical view of Korea as a Confucian society and calls for the analysis of religion, in particular, Christianity and civil society in a post-authoritarian context. Despite the significance of the Korean case, it has not been much discussed.

C. Civil Society and NGOs in Korea

Before the discussion of civil society in Korea, I have to provide some preliminary notes. As I shall discuss in Chapter II, I understand that civil society has associational and normative aspects. In regard to the associational aspect, civil society is a space between the family and the state where people voluntarily associate. This space is distinguished from the market and the state. Moving beyond the state and the market, this nascent “third sector” was expected to “mediate and balance the power of state and market, to provide a moral check on the market and, likewise to maintain the democratic integrity of the state” (Howell and Pearce, 2000). This description emphasizes the voluntary aspect of association and thus excludes the family, which is not based on volunteer membership, and the state, which wields coercive power over its members even though its legitimacy is rooted in their consent (Walzer 2002:35). As Madsen correctly points out, this sort of voluntary association is made possible “by the opportunities for mobility that come with a modern market economy and by the occasions presented for many different forms of social affiliations

in the modern city” (2002:4)¹⁵ Fundamentally, this definition includes all kinds of associations, such as businesses, trade unions, churches, political interest groups, or NGOs. Because authoritarian regimes tend to tightly control society, the role of NGOs is crucial in comprehending the emerging or restored civil society in the context of a post-authoritarian society. NGOs, as a third sector institution, are characterized by networks of citizens in voluntary association pursuing social changes of the status quo in the interest of the public good (Chatfield, 1997). Therefore, NGOs are a significant indicator of civil society.

With regard to this associational aspect of civil society, Korea shows its vibrancy in many aspects. Korea has undergone a compressed modernization process, characterized by rapid industrialization, urbanization, and the formation of a middle class for less than a half century (Chang 1999). More importantly, Korea is considered to have made a successful democratic transition in 1987 after a long struggle against an authoritarian regime. In fact, since then, civil society, freed from the government’s control, has emerged and has been remarkably developed.¹⁶ The organization and the activation of labor unions, suppressed during the authoritarian regime which traded them off for economic development, are a clear indicator of the

¹⁵ Civil society in Korean translation is *Shimin Sahwe*, literally meaning “citizens’ society.”

¹⁶ Some scholars argue that the emergence of civil society in Korea dates back to the Korean nation-state building process begun in 1945 (Sunhyuk Kim 2000) or even to the *Chosun* dynasty under Confucianism (Cho 1997). However, the opportunities for mobility and the different forms of affiliation, not based on traditional particularism, constitute a social condition for civil society. This condition comes along with the development of a market economy, urbanization, and the formation of middle class. Accordingly, I agree with Koo (2002b) who argues for the emergence, rather than restoration, of civil society only after the democratic transition since 1987. For the advocate of the Confucian origin of civil society or democracy in Korea, see Cho 1997 and Hahm 2005. For the critique of the Confucian origin, see Steinberg 1997, Duncan 2002, SangJun Kim 2002, and Koo 2002b.

vibrancy of the nascent civil society.¹⁷

However, the formation and the activities of NGOs illustrate the dynamic character of the emerging civil society in Korea. First, the number of NGOs has rapidly increased. The *Directory of Korean NGOs*, published by the Civic Movement Information Center (1999) in Seoul, listed 7,600 NGOs which include 20,000 local branches.¹⁸ The majority of these NGOs were formed in the 1990s after the 1987 democratization, and the number doubled during the three years from 1996 to 1999.

Second, in terms of the content of their activity, many NGOs identify themselves as actors in the civil society movement and try to address public issues, for example, from responding to the social problems created by the process of rapid economic development and the authoritarian regime, such as environmental degradation, unethical corporate practices, or the corruption of politicians, to newly appearing concerns, such as the issues of gender, environment, or migrant workers. These issues did not get much attention from the student, labor, or *minjung* movements which played a role as the public sphere which opposed the authoritarian regime until 1987. Thus, unlike other civil society organizations, such as employee organizations, sports clubs, or trade unions, which are concerned primarily with their own members, these NGOs are motivated by an explicitly public mission. They aim to “serve underserved or neglected populations, to expand the freedom of or to empower people, to engage in advocacy for social change, and to provide services” (Berger 2003:19).

¹⁷ For the labor movement in Korea, see Koo (2001) and Choi (2005)

¹⁸ Cite in Koo (2002b:42)

Finally, in comparison to the NGOs in Eastern Europe, the NGOs in Korea are mostly indigenous, not mainly relying on the support from international NGOs. The NGOs' activism in Korea is indebted to the democratic movement in the previous decades in terms of organizational capacity and is located in the context of a "contentious society," as Koo (1993) calls it, vis-à-vis the strong state since the end of the 19th century. This indigenous character differs from the reported Eastern European cases in which the recent international propagation of civil society, especially aid funds through the international NGOs channel, has led to the following consequences: rendering both the weak state weaker and the NGOs accountable to the international donors rather than to the needs of the local (Hann 2004). Therefore, these three factors indicate the dynamic development of emerging civil society. The new establishment of the Department of NGOs in some universities reflects this awareness of the significance of NGOs.¹⁹

However, civil society is more than voluntary associations. Not all associations, for instance, mafia, gang organizations, or belligerent fundamentalists, can be said to be conducive to civil society (Madsen 1998; Whitehead 2003). Civil society requires a normative aspect, that is, civility. Civility implies everything from a thin ethic of not using violence in order to impose one's own view, to abiding by the law,²⁰ to tolerance in living with others with different political, ethnic, religious, cultural positions, and to a thicker ethic of civic engagement of being alive to the interests of others. This quality—civility—is the aspect of civil society scholars of

¹⁹ The universities include *Hanyang* University, *Kyunghee* University, *Sogang* University, and *Seonggonghoe* University.

²⁰ Even civic disobedience does not call for lawlessness, but a revision of a certain law which is not civil.

democratic consolidation call a requirement for democracy (Linz and Stephan 1996; Stephan 2005).

Korean scholars tend to concentrate on two aspects of democratization, namely, procedural and substantial democracy. Choi Jang-jin, a leading progressive political scientist, conceives the former as the institutional establishment of political procedures through election, political parties, and parliament. He defines it as “political democratization.” In regard to the latter, he conceives it as “social democratization” which aims to achieve equality and social justice through “the reformation of the production and distribution system which reproduces unequal social relationships and inequality of wealth” (Choi 1993:184, my translation). Although the distinction between procedural and substantial democracy implies the need for Korean society to move beyond what the democratization in 1987 achieved, it does not properly address the moral and cultural dimension of democracy. In other words, institutionalization of political procedure and socio-economic reform is necessary for deepening democratization. Yet, with the lack of moral and cultural quality, institutionalization alone cannot achieve the democratic ideal. The notion of civility can contribute to capture this moral, cultural dimension of democracy.

Whereas scholars of Korean democracy have paid attention to the origin and the institutional aspect of civil society in the context of democratization (Armstrong 2002), in regard to civility, they have rarely paid attention to it. Koo observes that Korean civic organizations “often engage in an exclusive, uncompromising, and maximalist pursuit of their goals” (Koo 2002b:45). He suggests potential reasons for this, such as the Confucian cultural tradition, their germination under harsh

authoritarian rule, or being at a formative stage. However, his observation needs empirical research.

In particular, church can be either conducive or harmful to civil society in two analytically distinguishable ways. First, when church and the state act in conjunction, they can be a threat to the autonomy of associations. However, as I shall detail in the next chapter, under the separation of church and the state, due to its transcendental normative dimension as well as its transnational institutional characteristics, it can provide a site of resistance against the abusive power of the state, or construct alternative values and meanings different from logics of market or the state (Casanova 1994). Second, church can hinder the development of civil society when it demands totalizing claims or lacks tolerance of others (Beteille 2003); however, it can also foster civil society by becoming a Tocquevillean “school of virtue” (Tocqueville 1990). Given this background, it is timely to examine church and civil society in Korea.

D. Research Strategy and Organization of the Dissertation

In order to examine church and civil society in post-authoritarian society, I chose to conduct field research on an area of civil society, namely, the NGOs’ activity for migrant workers, and analyze how church strengthens or hinders the development of civil society. The rationale for this choice lies in the following considerations. First, I anticipated that field research could give a more vivid description of what is happening in the intersection between church and civil society and could aid in the evaluation of the contribution and the limits of the church to civil society. Second, as I mentioned earlier, the burgeoning of NGOs is a most vivid outcome of the emerging

civil society. An examination of NGOs can illustrate how the NGOs contribute to civil society not only in regard to the state or market, but also to civility. Finally, the NGOs' activism for migrant workers is a field that shows the dynamism of civil society, together with the fields of environment and labor.

Both the influx of migrant workers and the burgeoning of NGOs which work on their behalf are recent phenomena, occurring post-1987, with the vitalization of civil society. In Korea, a nationalistic and ethnically and culturally homogeneous country, the presence of migrant workers has been an increasingly heated issue in the public sphere. Discussions surrounding migrant workers have become enmeshed with issues of nationalism and universal human rights, racism and class, as well as with labor movements and new social movements. As we shall see, for the past fifteen years, NGOs have made significant contributions to the promotion of migrant workers rights and the amendment of the program of importing foreign labor. This demonstrates the liveliness of civil society against the state and market's abuse of migrant workers. Moreover, most NGOs are overwhelmingly run by Christians, and some Christian ministers have become nationally recognized civic leaders. Thus, this case suggests the potential vitality of the churches' role in a nascent civil society.

However, when looking closely into the NGOs, in spite of their noble ideals and commitment for defending the dignity and rights of migrant workers, one easily perceives: a lack of cooperation among NGOs—as was already foreshadowed in the Nepalese protest, a vertical relationship between leaders and activist members, a paternalistic relationship between national activists and migrant workers, and narrow nationalistic practice over universalistic vision. A series of fractures of the Joint

Committee for Migrant Workers in Korea (JCMK), a coalition among NGOs, organized after the shock of the Nepalese protest, epitomizes the “shadow” side of the history of the NGOs.²¹ These NGOs, then, are sites which capture not only the vitality of the church in the emerging civil society, but also a lack of civility—lack of moral relationships in it.

Given this background, I will explore the following questions. How does Church contribute to the promotion of the status and rights of migrant workers? How does Church hinder the cultivation of civility? What accounts for the incongruence between the *ad extra* advocacy for migrant workers and the *ad intra* practice of lack of civility?

In this examination, I will argue that Church and the clergy have played a leading role in dual senses: a role of a catalyzer to advance the accomplishments as well as an anticatalyzer in preventing the development of civility. I will argue that the double role of the churches and the incongruence are the double-edged effects of the democratization movement of the previous decades. This heritage not only has enhanced the strength of the NGOs, but also has hindered the fostering of civility in the emergent civil society. The leadership of “activist-ministers” has reinforced the double-edged effects of the democratization movement under the organizational culture of churches and NGOs in a broad Confucian cultural environment.

I conducted preliminary research from June to August 2003 and field research from January to August 2005 in Korea. The research included 35 in-depth interviews

²¹ The major split happened in 2001 and in 2003. At first glance, both divisions are due to the difference of goals and strategies; however, as we shall see in Chapter V, the competition among leaders and the undemocratic internal practices were also responsible for these divisions.

with the Korean activists in this area, many of whom were leaders of the NGOs, and participant observation in four workshops of the coalitions of the NGOs. The interviews took from two hours to four hours, and the workshops lasted from one day to four days. I did not include migrant workers as my interviewees for two reasons: first, the communities of migrant workers are weak at an emerging stage; second, their role is not yet significant to the area of my research, that is, the role of the church in civil society.²²

This dissertation will be composed of the following chapters. Chapter II will provide a theoretical background of civil society and will discuss the potential of the Church for the development of civil society. Based upon the understanding of civil society as a realm of associations between family and the state, I will argue that the Church can contribute to the development of civil society in the ways of cultivating civic virtues and civic skills, public deliberation, and counterbalancing the abusive state power by resistance. The change of the political context charges the revision of the relationship between the state and civil society; and this in turn affects the ways in which the Church contributes to democracy. Under the authoritarian regime, resistance is more desirable; under the democratic regime, a balance among the three ways of civic virtues, public deliberation, and checking power is in greater need. In addition, the Church also has to pay attention to the Confucian cultural environment which strengthens and constrains the development of civil society by impacting the political and organizational culture.

Chapter III will provide a historical background of the Church's involvement

²² However, I will quote several voices of migrant workers, which other researchers collected, to support my argument.

in the NGOs' activities for migrant workers. I will illustrate how the Church contributed to the formation of civil society against the backdrop of the democratization movement which struggled against the developmental dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s. The Church provided a counter-ideology which intellectuals, students, and the socially-excluded could make use of as an interpretative framework. Furthermore, its institution became a strong resource for resistant movement groups to rely upon in terms of social space, material support, and the diffusion of information. It also contributed to the self-organization of the excluded groups, such as farmers, laborers, and the urban poor.

Chapter IV will explain how the NGOs have contributed to promoting the rights of migrant workers. I will point out that moral authority, sacrificial struggle, and human rights framing advanced this accomplishment and that activist-ministers played a role of a catalyzer in this accomplishment.

Chapter V will examine the internal practices of the NGOs. Despite the contribution to the rights of migrant workers, the NGOs' internal practices are characterized by a lack of civility, indicated by authoritarian management, lack of cooperation, and paternalistic relationships. I will demonstrate that a lack of moral quality is also mediated and enhanced by activist-ministers.

Chapter VI will explore what accounts for the incongruence between the *ad extra* advocacy for migrant workers and the *ad intra* practice of lack of civility. I will first argue that the incongruence is the double-edged effects of the democratization movement of the previous decades. The skills and practices, inherited from the democratization movement, not only have enhanced the strength of

the NGOs, but also have hindered the fostering of civility in the emergent civil society. Second, I will argue that the organizational culture of the churches and the NGOs in a broad Confucian cultural environment, in which the leadership of “activist-ministers” is exercised, has reinforced the double-edged effects of the democratization movement.

In conclusion, after summarizing my argument, I will consider the implications of my argument for the future of NGOs’ activism for migrant workers and the role of church.

II. Rethinking Church and Civil Society in the Korean Context

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an analytical tool for the examination of church and civil society in the context of Korea. Civil society is an idea which manifests not only the ideal for democracy but also the Western history (Seligman 2002). As an ideal, it means counterbalancing the power of the state and constructing the public good of a society. As an idea, it is a modern concept which reflects the formation of the modern state, separated from the Church, and the modern individualism, free from religion, in the modern Western history.

Because of this modern origin, modernists conceive religion as antithetical or, at least, residual to civil society. The antithetical perspective presumes that religion is pre-modern or anti-modern; and the residual standpoint assumes the secularization of religion in the modern world. Until recently, these assumptions did not meet much criticism despite the fact not only of the persistence of the influence of religion upon public life in most of the world, but also of the constitution of the Catholic Church in “the third wave” of democratization (Huntington 1991; Casanova 2001). Thus, the negligence of religion was a consequence of teleological or prescriptive projection rather than empirical observation.¹

Influenced by this modernists’ projection, religions in the non-western world, such as Islam or Confucianism, used to be popularly described as incompatible with

¹ Stark (1999) states: “From the beginning, social scientists have celebrated the secularization thesis despite the fact that it never was consistent with empirical reality. More than 150 years ago Tocqueville pointed out that “the facts by no means accord with [the secularization] theory,” and this lack of accord has grown far worse since then.”

democratic civil society (Gellner 1995; Kim 2002). Only recently, partly owing to the rise of East Asia, Confucianism came to receive a more positive evaluation. Thus, a study on the role of the Church in civil society in Korea needs a careful examination of the cultural and the political context.

For this study, I understand civil society as a realm of associations between family and the state (Walzer 1991; Cohen and Arato 1992). With this definition, I will first try to build a theoretical framework, by revisiting the civil society theories, of how associations have potential to contribute to the ideals of civil society. I will argue that associations contribute to the development of civil society in the ways of cultivating civic virtues and civic skills, promoting public deliberation, and counterbalancing the abusive state power in resistance. However, the ways in which associations contribute to democracy need to be revised in the political and cultural contexts. Second, based on this associative contribution, I will move to the examination of the political and context and its effects upon civil society. Particularly, I will inquire into how the democratic transition asks for a different model of civil society in accordance to the change from an authoritarian to a democratic state. Third, as civil society cannot be located outside the cultural context, I will examine how the Korean cultural context affects civil society. In particular, I will focus on how the Confucian cultural environment both constrains and strengthens the associations' contribution to civil society. Finally, built upon the previous three sections, I will explore why and how the Church can contribute to civil society in Korea.

A. Civil Society Revisited

The idea of civil society is loaded with political vision for democracy. It has, thus, magically appealed to every political side (Alagappa 2004; Alexander 1998; Chambers and Kymlica 2002; Cohen and Arato 1992; Elliott 2003; Gellner 1994; Hann 2004; Heffner 1998; Kean 1998; Rosenblum and Post 2002; Schwartz 2003). For the politically left in the West, it means an alternative to a discredited socialism and an increasingly unviable welfare state. For the right, it addresses a warning against the intervention of the state. Communitarians find echoes of the decline of the traditional forms of associational life in it, whereas new social movements emphasize the mobilization of previously passive citizens. For theorists of a global civil society, it means an alternative to global governance to check the uncurbed market or the human rights violations. In a post-authoritarian society in Eastern Europe and Latin America, the concern of civil society is linked to the deepening of democracy. So is the Korean case. All these concerns evoke a social imagination for a good society that protects individual freedom, empowers citizens, counterbalances the state, and trains citizens and promotes their participation. In short, it means “making democracy work” in Putnam’s phrase (Putnam et al 1993). Therefore, in order to study civil society, it is necessary to examine both the political vision and the political and historical context in which the theory of civil society was formulated.

1. Brief History of Idea of Civil Society

The modern conceptualization of civil society emerges from the context of the

modern state and the capitalist development in the 18th and 19th century Europe. Adam Ferguson, a Scottish Enlightenment thinker, sees the development of a “commercial state” as a way to end the corrupt feudal order and strengthen the liberty of the individual. He conceives civil society, essentially but not exclusively, in terms of a sphere of market relations. Hegel also conceptualizes civil society as a sphere of market relations, regulated by civil law, and on the dialectical relationship between the macro-community of the state and the micro-community of the family. While Ferguson does not draw a line between the state and civil society, Hegel makes a firm distinction between them. Both conceive civil society as a positive development. Nevertheless, both are concerned with a problem of social order caused by uncurbed self-interest. To solve this problem, whereas Ferguson appeals to the moral sentiments of society, Hegel views state guidance as legitimate (Alagappa 2004:27-28).

Later in the mid-19th century, Marx, although influenced by Hegel, conceives the state and civil society as an arena of alienation and exploitation, a superstructure for the service of the dominant class. Therefore, civil society is a problem that has to be overcome by the Proletariat revolution which would bring true public good (Marx 1978). In contrast, in line with Montesquieu, Tocqueville views civil society as positive to sustain democracy. Drawing from his observation of French history and American democracy, he sees that vibrant voluntary associations function to mediate between individual or local interest and the national common good, guard against domination by a single interest or by the tyranny of the majority, and check state power (1990).

The civil society theories in the 20th century have evolved into the following

traditions.

a. Liberal tradition

Ferguson's view, which emphasizes individual liberty, becomes a root of liberal perspective on civil society. This liberal tradition does not explicitly speak of civil society. Conceptualizing society as a sum of individuals, it is primarily concerned with the autonomy of the individual (Lomaski 2002; Seligman 2002). According to this tradition, individuals are not to be dominated by a single comprehensive moral or religious vision, but be free, self-originating, and responsible in exercising rights and fulfilling duties. Stemming from the early modern European historical experience of religious wars, this liberal tradition proposes that religions are to be removed from the political agenda and that religions are to be respected and tolerated so long as they remain within the private sphere (cf. Rawls 1998). Liberal tradition adheres to this view not because the religious vision is wrong, but because it is not possible to reach agreement on disputed moral and religious questions in a pluralistic modern society. As this approach does little to speak of groups larger than the individual, there is little theoretical space to discuss the public good or the good life. Rather, it tries to minimize the scope of these discussions. Furthermore, in this tradition, the state is also defined, in a negative way, to secure the market and to protect the inviolability of the individual. This can be called a minimalist approach.

b. New Left

If the liberal tradition does not explicitly develop civil society theory, then the New Left and Neo-Tocquevillean traditions contribute to the contemporary formulations of civil society. Among New Left, Gramsci and Habermas deserve our

examination.

(1) Gramsci revises the orthodox Marxist conception of civil society and conceives it not merely as a superstructure determined by class relation, but as an arena of struggle among social forces. Based on his comparative observation between Russia and Italy in the early 20th century, he argues that class domination is not made by coercion alone but also requires cultural, ideological and moral leadership over the subordinate class. The state rules by coercion and direct domination; civil society is the arena where the ruling class produces consent and hegemony. He conceives of civil society as “the ensemble of organisms commonly called ‘private’”(1971: 12), that is, the sum of social activities and institutions which are not directly part of the state or repressive bodies such as police or armed forces. For instance, it includes trade unions, voluntary associations, church organizations, etc. Civil society, however, can function as an arena where the oppressed class may come to reach a “critical understanding” of the dominated situation, organize resistance, and thus emerge with a counter-hegemonic power. With the assistance of “organic intellectuals” from within their own class and by other intellectual allies, the mass can construct oppositional conceptions of life that could become popular and hegemonic. Hence, civil society is the arena of struggle among social forces.

In this view, Gramsci sees religion as fundamentally a mere residue of the pre-capitalist world and an element of common sense which is imposed or absorbed passively from outside, or from the past. Thus, although common sense *per se* is not purely false consciousness, many elements of common sense contribute to the ruling class’ hegemony by making the *status quo* seem natural (1971:325). Nevertheless,

because religion and common sense also include elements of truth, they can contribute to counter-hegemonic opposition against domination. Billings enumerates the condition for religion's counter-hegemonic opposition: free spaces and autonomous organizations, organic intellectuals, and social interaction to ensure the plausibility and substance of new worldviews (1990).

The Gramscian conceptualization of civil society is useful in analyzing struggle or a social movement where the legitimacy of the state is weak or questioned and where the institutional mechanism to handle social contention is not well functioning. Despite its value, however, I find two weaknesses in the study of religion and civil society. First, due to its Marxist teleological vision and to its view on the state as a mere instrument of domination, it is difficult to capture the engendered pluralism and complexity in late-capitalistic society or the newly democratized society after authoritarianism. Stated differently, when the domination is widely conceived and the target to resist is commonly accepted, the Gramscian approach to civil society is useful to comprehend how hegemonic power can be identified and therefore how counter-hegemonic power can be constructed. However, where the state and the law are legitimately accepted, and where society is too complicated for diverse social groups to define *the* common target, the Gramscian analysis seems to lose its explanatory power. In short, Gramsci does not advocate building civil society but a proletarian hegemony. For this reason, I argue that Gramscian outlook is weak to explain a society of pluralism and complexity in which diverse social groups compete with different views of the good life and the good society.

Second, the Gramscian analysis, again owing to the Marxist tradition of substructure-superstructure, does not leave room for religion in itself beyond its function as a political instrument. Although Gramsci allows more autonomy of religion than the orthodox Marxism does, it is still a part of the superstructure. Whereas the liberal tradition allows religion to participate in civil society only with an *areligious* stance, the Gramscian perspective does but only with a political stance. Both the Gramscian and the liberal perspectives, although coming from different directions, do not recognize the autonomy of religion in civil society.

(2) Habermas (1984; 1996) views civil society as necessary to defend democracy against the “colonialization of the lifeworld” by the state and market. However, under the background of the late capitalist society in the late 20th century, he does not hold the Marxist claim on class struggle as Gramsci does. Nor does he advocate revolutionary struggle. Instead, he upholds the power of critical reason, stating that communicative action “excludes all force—whether it arises from within the process of reaching understanding itself or influences it from the outside—except the force of the better argument” (1984:25). Based on this communicative action, civil society is a site where public opinion is formed and public deliberation is made, so that normative power is exercised to check the state and market. He defines:

Civil society is composed of those more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organizations, and movements that, attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private life sphere, distill and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere. The core of civil society comprises a network of associations that institutionalize problem solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres. (1996:367)

In this formulation, Habermasian civil society can be an innovative source for articulating new public concerns and influencing upon the state by normative contest.

However, as Cummings appropriately observes, the Habermasian ideal-type of civil society has a similar logic to the economists' marketplace, "where all enter equally to truck and barter according to self-interest and supply and demand, free from coercion or regulation" (2002:16). Furthermore, Cummings, under the historical background of the bloody democratization history in Korea, questions the practicality of augmentation as a means to solve social, political problems. Habermas relies on argumentation and was negative to the use of violence in solving political problems. It is idealistic without efficacy, reminding Cummings of "the Quaker pacifist tradition in America, where all problems must be debated and talked through until that point where consensus is achieved" (2002:16).

c. Neo-Tocquevillean perspective

Putnam elaborates Tocqueville's insight upon the role of association in a democracy. Based on his study of Italy and the US, Putnam argues that participation in associations produces social capital that is vital to healthy democracy (1993; 1995). He refers social capital to "features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (1995:67). He explains how the engagement of associations can increase social capital in the following ways (1995). First, it fosters norms of generalized reciprocity and promotes the emergence of social trust. Second, it makes coordination and communication easy and amplifies reputations. Thus, it reduces the free-rider problems because incentives for opportunism are reduced. Finally, it

contributes to transform the “I” into the “we” by experiencing collective benefits. Thus, participation in association inculcates habits and attitudes which fit into and promote a healthy democracy.

Putnam explicates the contribution of association to democracy by reshuffling the significance of civic virtues and civic skills through the concept of social capital. This explanation opens a further study on what kinds of associations in particular advance a sturdy democracy. However, Putnam is criticized in two ways. First, he neglects the significance of political settings in his civil society theory. As Walzer (1991; 2002) points out, a strong civil society requires a strong and democratic state. A robust democracy may depend upon the dense civic networks of associations, as Putnam argues, reinforcing both the democratic functioning and the strength of the state. However, such effects depend on “the prior achievement of both democracy and a strong state” (Foley and Edwards 1996:48). Second, critics argue that Putnam’s civil society is reduced to voluntary associations and its socio-cultural dimension (for example, civic and moral decline), thus leaving little space for social movements which constitute a significant part of civil society (Foley and Edwards 1996; Cohen 1999). Social movements constitute civil society as a dynamic, innovative source for articulating new concerns, developing projects, forming new identities, and generating and contesting new norms (Cohen 1999:266).

A brief review of civil society literature illustrates that the ideas of civil society have been developed and deployed in the context of specific political and historical realities. Furthermore, it also demonstrates that they have related to different democratic ideals “to produce, justify, legitimize, or resist a certain distribution of

power, to appropriate certain privileges and roles, or as a strategy for action”

(Alagappa 2004:32). Thus, both different political, historical settings and democratic visions have produced various models of civil society.

2. Associations and their Democratic Effects

Diverse models of civil society illustrate the strength of what Walzer calls “civil society argument,” whose virtue is inclusiveness and openness to revision (Walzer 1991; 2002). Civil society, defined as a realm of association between family and the state, can depict not only the agency of individuals to express their interests and to amplify their voices, but also associations which provide forums in which citizens can engage in discussion over public issues, present their opinions, and pressure government by mobilization if necessary as social movement organizations do. In this public interaction, they strengthen democratic institutions and government by pressing accountability and checking power.

Therefore, civil society is inclusive and open to revision. First, inclusiveness comes from pluralism. In the sphere of civil society, diverse associations and their differing views of the good life can be presented and can compete. Any group, religious organizations included, should not impose a single grand ideology upon all. Thus, any ideology or social vision can be partly denied and partly incorporated into civil society. This inclusiveness leaves civil society flexible, contingent on changing circumstances and inherently responsive to local needs (Walzer 2002; Elliott 2003:14). Secondly, as a consequence, civil society is to be open to revision. As there is no perfect market, there is no perfect civil society. Neither a fixed rule for a balance

between state and civil society, nor a perfect balance between them is applicable anywhere at anytime. Walzer states this point this way: “The politics of civil society is necessarily experimental... in the sense that everything about it is tentative and subject to revision. But no one is in charge of the experiments” (2002:44). Thus, the inclusiveness and the openness to revision do not acknowledge the teleological explanation found in the Marxist notion of civil society or the claim of epistemological superiority in civil society.

Based upon this understanding, associations as civil society components can entail the New Left and Neo-Tocquevillean insights. Despite the difference in their ideological and political orientations, because of the fact that they came out of different historical settings and political visions, the New Left and Neo-Tocquevillean insights are not intrinsically exclusive. Obviously, they are potentially conflicting and one may be more relevant over another to a certain political and historical context. However, this position of inclusiveness and openness to revision allows us to synthesize the New Left and Neo-Tocquevillean insights, in regard to the potential of associations for the ideal of civil society in the following ways (cf. Fung 2003; Warren 2001).

a. Civic virtues and civic skills

Associations can strength the democratic ideal by cultivating civic virtues and civic skills, which Neo-Tocquevillean insights provide. On the one hand, civic skills entail decision making in meetings, making presentations and speeches, managing organizations, and writing letters (Verba et al. 1995). The participation and the activities in associations help the members acquire and practice these skills. On the

other, civic virtues include attention to the public good, habits of cooperation rather than unnecessary competition, toleration, respect for others, and solidarity (Putnam et al. 1993). These virtues strive for altruism or a partial sacrifice of one's particular interest in short terms.

b. Public deliberation

Associations can provide the social infrastructure of democracy by distilling and transmitting social issues, resonated in the private sphere, to the public sphere in Habermas' sense. They help provide venues for participating in public deliberations, raise public issues, and set public agenda. In this way, they can exercise influence over the colonialization of lifeworld by the state and market (Habermas, 1984; 1996; Cohen and Arato 1992). This deliberative democracy is different from conventional voting-centric democracy, because the former appeals to reasons whereas the latter appeals to sheer numbers. The latter assumes fair mechanisms of aggregation of fixed interests and preferences; however, in fact, politics of self-interest are influenced by money and power (Chamber, 2002:98-99). In contrast, associations, by constituting civil society, provide a more open and inclusive spaces in which public issues and agenda of the less advantaged in money and power can be articulated, transmitted, and deliberated—"talk-centric democracy" in Chamber's phrase (2002:98).

c. Checking Power and Resistance

As the Gramscian insight suggests, associations can contribute to democracy by resistance to domination and authoritarian power. Associations can potentially become organizers of collective action and act as a resource for counterbalancing

power against state authority or other concentrated interests. Counterbalancing power includes a range, from simple protest to struggle, depending on the political setting and visions. The harsher the state, the more likely resistance becomes radical.

The contribution to resistance asks for an ethical examination of violence. Some civil society literature points to the lack of violence as an ethic of civil society (Keane 1998). However, the exclusion of violence as an ethic pre-requires a “civil” state which does not systematically oppress the rights of its people. In a situation where a systematic suppression threatens the very rights of existence, a last resort to violence is justifiable. The just war theory or the recent humanitarian intervention ethics is in this line of thought. Both affirm the use of violence as a last resort by legitimate authority. Obviously, this ethical principle leaves unanswered issues: Who decides what constitutes the “emergency situation” and by what criteria it is to be judged an emergency. There is always a danger of political misuse of violence as the recent history of “just wars” illustrates. Nevertheless, the political usage is different from the validity of ethical principles. Therefore, associations’ contribution to democracy through resistance can become violent where the state systematically represses society and violates basic human rights.

B. Civil society and Political Context: Resistance Model and Cooperation Model

An association may not be good at all three ways associations can contribute to democracy, that is, civic virtues, public deliberation, and resistance. These ways potentially conflict with one another. Associations that are successfully involved in the resistance can be antithetical to cultivating the civic virtues and civic skills that

support democratic governments. Associations that form the core of resistance and confront tyranny and oppression in one context can continue their practices of criticism and suspicion which do not foster tolerance and trust in others. Fung offers two explanations for why associations that succeed at political resistance may be unlikely to foster civic virtues (2003). First, activists and their associations in resistant social movements tend to articulate particular frames that portray dominant actors and institutions as perpetrators of oppression and injustice. The virtues that “such frames encourage are more likely to be dispositions toward criticism, suspicion, and disobedience” (Fung 2003:523). These can be democratic virtues in the political context of serious injustice and oppression; nevertheless, they are different from more popularly mentioned civic virtues I earlier discussed. Second, social movement organizations (SMOs), especially those SMOs of high risk under severely repressive states, tend to manage secret and hierarchical operation for the sake of their survival and effectiveness. These characteristics are not a democratic way of operating organizations, far from transparent, horizontal, and accountable. Therefore, these associations are not ideal for fostering civic virtues of their participants.

The civil societies in post-communist countries offer an example of this pattern (Kopecky 2003; Mudd 2003). Kopecky observes that civil society in Eastern Europe is seen as the antithesis of totalitarianism and thus is conflated with opposition *per se*. According to him, the struggle against communist regimes has led civil society organizations to strengthen the hostility and suspicion towards those claiming legitimacy via attachment to institutions, in particular, the state. Civil society also reinforces a sense of moral superiority over the political realm and thus makes

dialogue and negotiation difficult. This observation affirms that civil society needs a revision in accordance to the change in political context.

The fact that particular forms of contribution in some political contexts may not be productive to the ideal of democracy in other contexts asks for an exploration of the relationship between forms of the state and civil society. Under the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, the prime contributions of associations to democracy would be resistance and public deliberation. In the circumstance in which an authoritarian regime suppresses the autonomy of civil society, civic participations are easily misused and manipulated for the regime's sake. In such political contexts, resistance is more desirable to advance a democratic change. Under the more democratic political context, the prime contributions include all three ways, yet are likely to involve less conflict and more cooperation with the state. These two political contexts stand for the polar cases of a spectrum and most actual cases may remain in the grey area between the two. However, the contrast between the two suggests two different models of relationship between the state and civil society: a resistance and cooperation model.

The resistance model conceives civil society as antithetical to the state. It comes out of the political context in which the state tries to suppress and control civil society; the space for civil society is limited and not autonomous. The state is conceived as a monolithic entity of orchestrating the abusive power. It restricts the civil freedom and supervises citizens' life and violates their rights. It is usually suspected and distrusted. The major counterpart of associations in civil society, thus, is the state, because this model emphasizes the autonomy from the state's intervention;

and then the ideal of civil society is the advocacy and the counterbalance of the abusive state power. This model finds echoes in Marxist theories, and, to a certain extent, liberal political theories whose ideological directions differ from the Marxist.

The cooperation model presupposes a democratic setting, that is, a democratic state and multiple, heterogeneous associations in civil society. This model has a more positive view of the state: it can provide its citizens with the moral education and with the security necessary for participation; it can moderate particular interests for a more public interest (Walzer 2002:47). Furthermore, the state is not recognized as monolithic; it plays multiple, sometimes contradictory, roles. The fact that the state is not monolithic but plays multiple roles can be an advantage. It means, as Evans (2002) points out, that associations, whether NGOs or SMOs, “do not necessarily have to ‘capture the state’ in order to elicit favorable responses from public institutions. Creating alliances with the specifically relevant parts of the state may be sufficient” (Evans, 2002:23-24). Although it is still significant to check the power of the state, the ideal of civil society focuses more on producing the public good than counterbalancing the state. For this ideal, this cooperation model does not preclude a tension with or a struggle against the state, because tension can be an important stimulus to synergy. However, for the public good, associations acknowledge the significance of cooperation, the cooperation with the state and with the other associations in civil society, as much as they do in regard to struggle and resistance. This cooperation is easier when both the actors in the state and civil society recognize that each has resources and capacities that the other does not have and that these resources and capacities can be complementary (Evans, 2002:25). In this model, the

counterpart of associations is both the state and other associations. The roles of civil society, expected in this model, are not only those of advocacy and checking power, but also those of social service provider and moral educator. This model has theoretical resonance in the Tocquevillean tradition.

The following table summarized the two models:

Table 2-1 Two models of the relationship between the state and civil society

	Resistance model	Cooperation model
Regime	Authoritarian regime	Democratic regime
Ideal of civil society	Counterbalancing of the state power	Producing public good
The state	- A monolithic entity - negatively conceived	- Playing multiple and contradicting roles - not necessarily suspected
Associations	Less autonomous	Multiple, heterogeneous
Prime ways of contribution	- Resistance - less emphasis on civil virtues and civic skills	- Civic virtues and skills; public deliberation; checking power - less emphasis on struggle
Counterpart of associations	the state	The state and other associations
Emphasized role of civil society	Checking power	- Checking power - Social service provider - Moral educator
Theoretical family	Marxist, liberal theory	Tocquevillean tradition

The two models of relationship between the state and civil society underline

the significance of the openness to revision. As I stated earlier, there is no magic formula for a balance between the state and civil society. Thus, the transition from an authoritarian to a new democratic regime requires a revision of the relationship between the two. The desirable revision is likely to move from a resistance to a cooperation model. In particular, this move is more necessary where the post-authoritarian state is weak in its resources and capabilities. The democratic transition usually accompanies the burgeoning and revitalization of associations in civil society. When these burgeoned associations act, based on a resistance model, it could mean a vibrant civic-political participation. However, it would make a weak state weaker and thus would result in participation without a well-functioning governance. The basic premise is that civil society is a precondition for the consolidation of democracy but should not negatively function to impede the development of the democratic state in a democratic transition (Linz and Stepan 1996).

C. Civil Society and Cultural Context: Confucianism and Civil Society

Associations in civil society cannot be located outside the cultural environment. Similar to Swidler's notion of culture as "toolkits" (2002), I understand that this cultural environment both constrains and enables social actors. Yet, I emphasize that the empowering and constraining aspects of cultural environment are of *yin-and-yang* relation rather than two distinct and contradicting objects.

In Korea, and broadly in East Asia, cultural environment is constituted in a

combination of the Confucian-Buddhist-Taoist-modern elements (cf. Woo 2005).² Christianity can be considered to constitute an element of cultural environment; however, its relatively short history in this region restricts its significance. Rather, the Church is located in the East Asian cultural environment as I shall demonstrate later. Among the elements, I limit my examination within the Confucian influence, because it has functioned as the main toolkit in relating individuals with family, society and the state.

Confucianism was an overarching framework for governance and social relationship among the individual, family and the state in East Asia. It put priority on community over the individual; duty toward community over individual rights. It approached the public issue from the perspective of the head of the household or the ruling elites and intellectuals. An ideal Confucian society, thus, encourages hierarchical integration. Confucianism was closely tied to ruling elites as the governing ideology in the *Chosun* dynasty for five centuries, and it is no longer attached to a ruling ideology in modern East Asia. Nevertheless, some characteristics of the development of East Asia, such as the role of the state and the emphasis on education and discipline, have been attributed to the Confucian legacy.

For these reasons, the relationship between Confucianism and democracy has caused heated debates, polarizing the scholars between pro- and anti-Confucianism (Duncan 2002). Anti-Confucian intellectuals see Confucianism as a representative of

² One might add Shamanistic element. My notion of the East Asian cultural environment disagrees with Huntington's classification of civilization in which Japan is distinctive from China (Huntington 1994).

an *ancient regime*, an old system unable to lead to the path to modernization.³ They blame Confucianism as the ideological backbone of the old system which is partially responsible for colonization, justification of the oppression of ruling elite upon the masses and of men over women, or hosting social ills, such as the lack of an independent and enterprising spirit or sectarian strife in political parties and associations (Steinberg 1997; Duncan 2002). In contrast, pro-Confucian intellectuals, while acknowledging some elements that work against civil society, emphasizes the Confucian contribution to democracy. Pro-Confucian intellectuals, for instance, place an emphasis on civility, and a tradition of civilian, rather than military, rule, a concept of limited government, and the tradition of intellectuals' role to check the monarch's power (Cho 1997; Bell and Hahm 2003; Hahm 2005; De Bary and Tu 1998; De Bary 2004). The so-called "Asian value" advocates are in this line (Lee 1994).

However, both Pro- and Anti-Confucian sides tend to have a danger of essentializing Confucianism by conceiving it as a system essential, timeless, or changeless. Both tend to neglect "the plasticity of Confucianism," as Duncan correctly points (2002:36). Confucianism itself has had many sub-traditions through its renovation from within and through the challenge of foreign cultures and political upheavals. Furthermore, both positions tend to focus on the elites' appropriation of Confucianism, selectively highlighting certain aspects of its legacy upon democracy.

³ Anti-Confucian intellectuals, although coming from different background and political vision, include from anti-Confucian reformers in late 19th century and early 20th century, such as Fukuzawa and the Bunmei kaika movement in Meiji Japan, the May 4th movement in early Republic China, and the Independence Club in Korea, to Marxists, and to *minjung* scholars—*minjung* theologians included—in the recent Korea (Duncan 2002).

This tendency partly seems to be related to their political visions. The recent pro-Confucian group aspires to reconstruct Confucianism as an alternative to and a cure for liberal individualistic Western modernity (Tu 2000; Bell and Hahm 2003; Hahm 2005; De Bary and Tu 1998). The anti-Confucian side, as modernists, prescribes “discontinuist” notion of civil society in Giddens’ term, which draws a sharp line between traditional and post-traditional society (SJ Kim 2002; cf. Giddens 1990).

In contrast, my approach to Confucianism as cultural environment provides a new perspective on Confucianism and democracy, moving beyond the polarized division between pro-Confucian and anti-Confucian positions. The influence of Confucianism still remains powerful not only upon political ethics, but, more importantly, upon political and organizational culture in the form of cultural practices, such as hierarchical relationship, respect for the authoritative figure, and an emphasis on morality, social networking (popularly known as *guanxi* in Chinese), and patriarchal practices. Therefore, this approach helps to see its *yin* and *yang* effects upon civil society.

On the one hand, Confucian cultural practices can limit the development of civil society. The networking reinforces sectarian bond, based on kinship or hometown affiliation, thus producing bonding social capital rather than bridging social capital in Putnam’s term (cf. Putnam 1995). Hierarchical relationships foster the authoritarian practices and top-down decision making process in associations and governments. In addition, the performance of the Korean authoritarian state was easily received under this Confucian cultural environment.

On the other, Confucianism as cultural environment can reinforce civic virtues

and public deliberation by drawing its emphasis on public morality and its notion of human persons in community, different from individualistic conception of society in the liberal tradition. It also evokes moral imperatives for love, justice, social harmony, and cooperation, etc. and demand self-discipline, sacrifice, and altruism. Moreover, communitarian cultural environment and its emphasis on network can be advantageous to mobilize citizens and to form strong bonds. These help the participants in a resistant movement to endure hardship against the oppressive state. Hierarchical relationships can also be efficient in mobilization and in the formation of a strong resistant leadership in the context of struggle against tyranny. In addition, the significant role of students and intellectuals in the Korean democratization movement was possible under the Confucian tradition of intellectual-officials. Therefore, Confucianism *per se*, as cultural environment, is not good or bad for the development of civil society. What matters is how it is appropriated in what political context.

To summarize, I have argued that associations contribute to the development of civil society in the ways of cultivating civic virtues and civic skills, promoting public deliberation, and counterbalancing the abusive state power in resistance. However, the ways in which associations contribute to democracy need to be revised in consideration of political and cultural contexts. Given this theoretical background, I will move to the exploration of how the Church can strengthen and contribute to the ideal of civil society.

D. Church and Civil Society

In order to study the Church's potential upon civil society, I approach the Church as an institution. In Korea, and in East Asia in general, the fact that Christianity is a foreign religion provides favorable institutional contexts for the development of civil society. The first favorable context is in the separation between religion and the state. Christianity was brought into Japan and China in the sixteenth century and into Korea in the eighteenth century but was banned for several centuries in this region. Freedom of the Church was allowed only in the nineteenth century in this region but is still under serious restriction in Mainland China. Christianity, with its short history, has no historical burden of the conjunction between the Church and political power as in Europe. In addition, Christianity was not overlapped with colonialism in this region. Rather, the Protestant churches in the colonial Korea actively engaged in the independence movement. Therefore, the Church could not totalize and impose its claims upon others. Casanova thinks of the renouncement of the Church's totalizing claims as the first institutional condition for civil society (Casanova 1994; 2001).

The second favorable context is in that the Church in East Asia functions as an associational institution rather than an ascribed one. Against the backdrop of the long history of religious persecution, becoming a Christian is an act of voluntary decision. Until recently, the consequence of this decision sometimes included opposition from family under the Confucian cultural tradition or the risk of persecution. Thus, to become a Christian means an action out of conscience and deliberation, which are the basis of civil society.

1. Church as Institution

Given this preliminary background, civil society theories and social movement theories shed light upon the Church's potential to contribute to civil society (Herbert 2003; Smith 1996; Clark 2002; Kim 1993). The Church is full of resources: symbolic, material and organizational. First, the Church has rich symbolic resources. The Church can easily provide a shared identity with powerfully motivating icons, rituals, songs, testimonies, and chants. Sometimes its identity can work transnationally transcending local or national identity. Second, the Church is privileged in its material resources. It can access financial resources and provide physical spaces and infrastructure primarily for a religious purpose. However, these resources can be used for other social and political purposes. Third, the Church has organizational resources, which can be thought of into the following subcategories. (1) In terms of leadership, the Church usually has trained and experienced leadership resources. Not surprisingly, many leaders in resistant movements, such as the Sandinistas in Nicaragua or the Civil Rights movement in the US, have emerged out of the ranks of religious leaders or people trained in religious activities. (2) The Church has established communication channels which comprise newsletters, magazine, bulletins, weekly announcement, radios, TV, etc. They primarily aim to convey information related to religious mission. In times of necessity, they can become employed to spread information related to social and political activism. In particular, when the Church covers diverse geographical location and social groups, its impact on channeling for communication can become greater. Lastly, the Church as an old global institution is rich in its transnational networks. In particular, the Catholic

Church is known for its strong transnational networks though hierarchy.

It should be noted that the Church's resources can strongly impact upon a non-Western society even though Christianity is a minor religion. It results from the asymmetric relationship between the West and the non-West. In non-Western countries—most of them are developing countries, the church organizations, due to their transnational network with their partners in the West, can sometimes utilize more resources than other organizations can. It explains in part why the Protestant Church enjoyed a privileged social and political influence in 1950s in Korea (Kang 1996). The network with the US was a powerful resource in Korea, a poor, newly independent country incorporated into the Cold War. Under this circumstance, American Protestant missionaries allowed the Protestant Church to enjoy strong socio-political influence, much bigger than the proportion of Protestant believers in Korea at the time.

The Church's transnational network and its capability to utilize resources do not intrinsically mean that the Church was a tool for Western control or cultural imperialism (Dunch 2002). The resources can be used not only for reinforcing imperialism or paternalism but also resisting colonialism or mediating modernity into the local context by religious elite and global network. In the case of the Protestant Church in Korea, as I shall demonstrate in the next chapter, it became a site to resist colonialism during the Japanese colonial period (1910 – 1945). In addition, under the authoritarian regime in Korea, the transnational network of the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, and their capabilities to utilize resources allowed the Church to enjoy greater autonomy from the control of the state and led the democratization

movement with the utilization of the human and labor rights' discourse and the organizing of farmers and laborers. This fact leads to a question of in what condition the Church becomes involved in civil society.

2. Conditions for the Church to Impact on Civil Society

The participation in the Church and the activities in the church-related organizations do not automatically generate civic, political participation. Their purpose is usually centered on the religious activities and not directly aiming at civic or political influence. However, certain conditions can blur the boundary between religious and civic-political activities and transform the church into a more actively civic and political actor. Social movement theories illuminate what conditions can provoke this blurring and shifting (Smith 1999; McAdam and Snow 1997).

First, political conditions matter. When an unjust situation is widely perceived, the Church's activities can be easily tuned to civic-political actions. The cases which constitute the Catholic wave Huntington refers to involve countries under communism or authoritarian regimes (Huntington 1991).

Second, the institutional transformation of the Church matters. Catholicism was once described as a hindrance to democracy in the European context; however, its institutional transformation, represented by *aggiornamento* in the Second Vatican Council,⁴ enabled the Catholic Church to become constitutive of civil society (Casanova 1994; Madsen 1998). It took place when the Council reformulated the Church's mission in the modern world. The reformulation included the giving-up of

⁴ "*Aggiornamento*," literally meaning "bringing up to date," was used to mean reformation or renewal for the Church to accommodate to the modern world.

its monopolistic claims and the recognition of religious freedom and freedom of conscience as universal and inviolable human rights (Casanova 2001:1046).⁵ The democratic transition Huntington (1991) calls a Catholic wave, Casanova states, was “a Catholic wave not just because the countries where democratic transition occurred to happen to be Catholic, but because the transformation of Catholicism was itself an important independent factor in producing the wave” (Casanova 2001:1043). He argues that his analysis of Catholicism can be generalized into exploring the potential role of other religions, such as Islam, in civil society formation.

Third, religious leadership matters. It is the role of leadership to connect the political situation with religious narratives and to channel the resources of the Church with civic and political action. In this case, the church leadership can be called organic intellectuals in the Gramscian term. Such cases include the African-American ministers in the civil rights movement in the US in 1960s or Korean Catholic priests or Protestant ministers in the democratization movement in 1970s’ Korea as I shall demonstrate in the next chapter.

3. Ways of the Church’s Contribution to Civil Society

How, then, can the Church contribute to the development of civil society? The associational aspect of the Church allows us to apply the potential of associations upon the ideal of civil society: civic virtues and civic skills, public deliberation, and resistance.

⁵ The formulation is explicitly expressed in *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world), December 7, 1965; *Dignitatis Humanae* (Declaration on religious freedom), December 7, 1965. For these documents, see Abbott (1966).

a. Civic virtues and civic skills

The Church can cultivate civic virtues and civic skills. In regard to civic skills, researchers say that the participation in the Church and in church-related activities are likely to help believers acquire and practice these skills. Although based on the survey in the US, Verba et al. (1995) find that churches and synagogues have a leveling effect for the poor to acquire these skills to extent of the rich. It can also be confirmed in the case of the roles of the Catholic and Protestant Church in the 1970s in the organization of laborers and farmers in Korea as I shall illustrate in the next chapter. These farmers and laborers became leading activists in their fields.

With respect to civic virtues, the Church is especially meaningful in the East Asian context. In terms of its principle, it can transcend kinship and blood ties which are closely connected to Confucianism. In terms of its organizational characteristics, the Church has relatively dense interaction between members, due to Sunday worship, Bible study groups, or other small group meetings while other East Asian religions rarely promote such things as Sunday worship or other church-related meetings. The Church, thus, is an organization which provides opportunities for face-to-face interaction. It is more likely to generate developmental effects on individuals in regard to civic virtue than the groups that Skocpol calls the “advocates without members,” most of whose members mainly contribute to a financial aspect rather than to actual participation (Skocpol 1999).

b. Public deliberation

The Church can facilitate public deliberation and, thus, the public sphere. One might point that Habermas perceives religion as a residual in the modern world.

However, as Casanova (1994) argues, there is no theoretical and empirical ground to ignore the potential of the Church, or any other religion, to transmit social concerns in amplified form to the public sphere. On the one hand, empirically, in a society where religious influence is predominant, it is not surprising that public concerns are raised and amplified by religious channels and religious mobilization, such as an Islamic movement in Nigeria in Watt's case (Watts 1999) and the Catholic Church in Poland or Latin America (Casanova 1994) and in the Philippines (Youngblood 1990). When religious leadership efficaciously engages in a certain political context where social cleavage needs to be met, a minor religion can also play a significant role for building and vitalizing civil society. The Church in Korea is such a case.

On the other, theoretically, Habermas (1984) neglects religion in the public sphere because he conceives that religion is no more relevant to the modern world, that is, the world differentiation into cognitive, the moral-practical, and the aesthetic-expressive sphere took place. However, as Casanova correctly points out within the Habermas' paradigm, one should distinguish "between cognitive, intellectual contribution to moral-practical discourse and the historical institutionalization of moral-practical principles and norms." Thus, it would be a rationalist bias to predispose oneself to neglect "the importance of political ethics of the world religions for processes of moral-practical rationalization" (Casanova 1994:232).

The Church, and religion in general, is privileged to provide normative constraint upon the claims of the two most significant institutions—the state and the market. As religion concerns the ultimate or the transcendental, it resists any attempt to absolutize the claim of the state and the market. When this theological and

religious orientation is put into political context, it questions and contests the claims of the state and the market, “to function according to their own intrinsic functionalist norms without regard to extrinsic traditional moral norms” (Casanova 1994:229).

A common case entails the challenge toward the state’s national security doctrine. In the US, *The Challenge of Peace* (1983), a pastoral letter by the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference, questioned and challenged the inhuman premises of nuclear defense policy in the name of national security. Both liberation theology in Latin America and the democratization movement of the Catholic and the Protestant Church in 1970 - 80s in Korea, although coming out of different contexts, challenged the norms of national security (Cleary 1985; Seo et al 1993). The Church disclosed the misuse of the national security doctrine which functioned to justify human rights violations in suppressing the political dissents. In doing this, the Church relativized the state’s claim by reminding both the state and the members of society of “the human need to subordinate the logic of state formation to ‘the common good’” (Casanova 1994:229).

Likewise, the Church, concerned with the ultimate, tends to relativize the utopian claims of the market. The Church, partly challenged by Marxism, has been sensitive to the inequality the capitalist markets have caused and has called for the principle of the primacy of human labor over capital.⁶ In particular, the Church has paid attention to impersonal and amoral self-regulating mechanisms and provides the ethical guidelines of the need to check and regulate the damage caused by impersonal

⁶ From *Rerum Novarum* (The Condition of Labor) in 1891 to *Justice in the World* in 1971, to *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work) in 1981, to *Centesimus Annus* (On the Hundredth Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*) in 1991, the Catholic Church has systematically developed the Catholic social teaching in this regard. For these documents, see O’Brien and Shannon 1992.

mechanisms so that they may become more responsible to human needs. This normative discourse of the Church became the backdrop of the advocacy and the organization of Korean workers in 1970s and migrant workers in 1990s in Korea. The Church can facilitate public deliberation and thus the public sphere.

c. Resistance and Checking Power

The Church's potential for resistance can simply be understood in its rich symbolic, material and organizational resources, which can be utilized for resistance in the conditions I earlier addressed. In fact, the Church and church-related organizations engaged in radical forms of resistance where human rights were systematically violated. The Basic Christian Communities in Latin America in the 1980s, the role of the Church in the democratic transition in Korea, the Philippines, and in the Eastern Europe, and the independent movement in East Timor are such examples the Church contributed to resistance. For resistance, the role of religious leadership is crucial. It is more significant in comparison to civic virtues and skills as well as public deliberation. The more the resistance involves a higher risk, the more crucial the role of the leadership is which is able to competently engage in interpretation of the unjust situation and provide a counter-ideology against the abusive state.⁷ Vitalization of a civil society through resistance would be the most dramatic contribution the Church has made.

The Church's potential in resistance needs the examination of violence. It is noteworthy that the Catholic Church does not exclude violence as a last resort in its

⁷ Cardinal Sin in the Philippines, Cardinal Kim in Korea, Archbishop Romero in El Salvador, or Bishop Belo in East Timor became internationally renowned for this leadership. Huntington aptly states that the choice between democracy and authoritarianism is personified in the conflict between Cardinals and dictators (1991:85).

official position. As anticipated, it strongly advocates a way of non-violence over violence on the ground of a morality of means in the resistant struggle against injustice. The controversial document on liberation theology, issued by the Vatican, a work led by Cardinal Ratzinger, then head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and the current Pope Benedict XVI, warns of the danger of violence as a means to liberation. Systematic recourse to violence, even for liberation, it admonishes, is a destructive illusion that would lead to new forms of servitude (1986:[76]). However, the same document, with caution, acknowledges the use of violence as a last resort (1986:[79]).⁸

4. Church and the Political and Cultural Contexts

Similar to other civil society actors, the desirable ways of the Church's contribution to civil society depends on the political context. Where the unjust situation and human rights violations are prevalent, the resistance model is likely to fit the Church's contribution. In contrast, under a more democratic political context, the Church is likely to be asked to act upon the cooperation model.

The Church and its members, and even anti-Confucian intellectuals, cannot be situated outside this Confucian cultural environment in Korea. Similar to the usage of language which provides social actors with tools for communication, as well as worldview, meaning, and value for interpretation, cultural environment is employed in practice before cognitive awareness, in body before head. As I shall illustrate, Confucian elements are practiced among Christians and even activists who are

⁸ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Libertatis Conscientia* (Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation) 1986 paragraph number [79].

influenced by the Enlightenment or Marxist ideas. In this Confucian environment, Catholic priests and Protestant ministers were privileged in moral authority to teach public issues, mobilize the resources of the Church, and to call for sympathizers' commitment. At the same time, however, the same environment reinforces the hierarchical and authoritarian practices of Church-related organizations, and thus constrains the democratic civil society. Therefore, the investigation on how the Church contributes to the development of civil society in Korea requires an examination of how the Church is strengthened and constrained by the Confucian cultural environment.

Conclusion

Based upon the understanding of civil society as a realm of associations between family and the state, I have argued that associations contribute to the development of civil society in the ways of cultivating civic virtues and civic skills, public deliberation, and counterbalancing the abusive state power in resistance. The change of the political context charges the revision of relationship between the state and civil society which affects the ways in which associations contribute to democracy. Under the authoritarian regime, resistance is more desirable; under the democratic regime, a balance the three ways of civic virtues, public deliberation, and checking power is in greater need. In particular, where the state is weak in resources and capabilities in a post-authoritarian context, democratic transition asks for a revision of the state and civil society relationship from a resistance to a cooperation model.

The Church as an institution has the potential to contribute in this context.

The symbolic, material, and organizational resources of the Church are advantageous for this contribution. Recent history illustrates its contribution to the democratization in the world, in particular, through the participation in resistance. Post-authoritarian context requests a new contribution, that is, the contribution to a cooperation model of civil society. For this, the Church also has to pay attention to the Confucian cultural environment which strengthens and constrains the development of civil society by impacting the political and organizational culture.

Given this theoretical background, I will move to the examination of how the Church in Korea contributes to the emergence of civil society under the authoritarian state. In particular, I will examine how the political context and the internal change of the Church shaped its involvement in the democratization movement and how the Confucian cultural environment played in this Church's contribution. The chapter will provide a historical background for the following chapters which examine the NGOs' role in the human rights movement for migrant workers.

III. Church as “Midwife” in the Birth of Civil Society (1963-87)

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide the historical context in which Christianity has come to be the main actor in the NGOs’ movement for migrant workers. The main argument of this chapter is that Christianity in Korea has played a role of “midwife” in assisting the birth of a civil society. It has done so against the backdrop of modernization led by the authoritarian state in 1963 – 1987 by providing a counter-hegemonic ideology, by utilizing its organizational resources, and by helping to form leaders in civil society. As a consequence, Christianity has functioned as a cradle for resistant social movement during oppressive regimes; and it has influenced, both directly and indirectly, upon the landscape of current civil society after the democratization of 1987. The overwhelming presence of Christianity in the current NGOs’ movement for migrant workers lies in this historical background, as I shall illustrate in the next chapter. In the present chapter, I will first briefly describe the history of Christianity in Korea. I will then explain how the authoritarian state led to modernization on the one hand and how social movements emerged against the authoritarian state on the other. This will be followed by a section examining how Christianity sustained the social movement in terms of counter-hegemonic ideology, organizational resources, and leadership. Finally, I will revisit Confucianism as the underlying cultural environment in order to examine not only how the authoritarian state exercised its power and authority, but also how Christianity has acquired its moral authority. I shall argue that Confucianism has laid a foundation on which

authoritarian practices are uncritically accepted even in progressive social movement organizations.

A. Christianity in Korea from the Beginning until the Second Republic (1784 – 1961)

1. Late *Chosun* Dynasty and the Japanese Colonial Period (1784 – 1945)

Christianity was introduced into Korea in the late *Chosun* Dynasty (1394-1910): Catholicism in 1784 and Protestantism in 1884. Catholicism was initially brought from China by young reformed neo-Confucian scholars who searched for an alternative vision against the hegemonic Confucian political order. It was exposed to severe persecution for a century, which left approximately 10,000 – 30,000 martyrs. The religious persecution lasted for the first 100 years, until religious freedom was achieved in 1886, as a by-product of French imperialism.¹ The experience of persecution set the main direction of the Catholic Church: the maintenance and security of the Church and the concomitant separation between the church and state, or between the church and politics. The leadership of the Catholic Church in the late *Chosun* Dynasty and the Japanese colonial period (1910 – 1945)—that is the French missionary bishops and later bishop Rho, the first Korean bishop—was primarily concerned with the secure growth of the church itself. They tried to avoid any conflict with the state or to intervene in political issues.

¹ After the indigenous lay Catholic community was established without missionaries, the Vatican assigned the Korean Catholic Church to the *Societe des Missions Etrangeres de Paris*. The French missionaries who entered Korea were killed during the persecution period. When France and the *Chosun* Dynasty made treaties in 1886, it included “religious freedom” for the purpose of protection of French missionaries. The treaties were a result of French participation in the colonial competition in the Korean peninsular.

Ahn Joong-keun's case sharply illustrates this orientation. Ahn was a sincere Catholic with a concern for national defense against the Japanese threat. Out of this concern, he suggested to the French Bishop Mutel, the archbishop of the Diocese of *Chosun*, to establish a college to educate Korean youth in 1899. However, the bishop rejected this suggestion on the grounds that the development of reason does not help that of faith.² Ahn, disappointed, moved to Manchuria and became a freedom fighter. Later when he shot the first Japanese ruler in Korea, Ito Hirobumi, in 1909, the bishop declared that the Catholic Church had nothing to do with Ahn and even prohibited priests from giving him communion in prison.³ In short, owing to the encouragement of the leadership and organizational unity, the Catholic faith remained in the private sphere; and the Church tried to avoid tension with the state on the grounds of separation between church and state (Kim 1993). This orientation of the Church, which once forbade rituals for honoring ancestors in China, ironically, led to its approval of the Japanese' imposition of *Shinto* worship on the Koreans as part of Japan *Naisen ittai* policy of integrating Korea fully into the Japanese empire (Mun 1994). In sharp contrast, some Protestant believers resisted against this policy and in doing so were persecuted.⁴

The Protestant churches arrived in Korea 100 years later than the Catholic. The Catholic Church experienced persecution as a result of its direct religious mission.

² The attitude of the bishop Mutel manifests the 18 – 19th century French Catholic hierarchy which struggled with the Enlightenment critique of Christianity in Europe.

³ Ahn argued that his killing was an action of a soldier in war, not of a terrorist, and thus was not in conflict with the Catholic faith. In 2004, Cardinal Kim apologized for the Catholic Church's mistreating Ahn.

⁴ In regard to Shinto worship and Protestantism in Korea during the colonial period, see Clark 2002:191.

By contrast, the Protestant churches, despite denominational differences, chose not only direct evangelization, but also the work of education and health as their mission strategy from the beginning. Just as the experience of religious persecution in the earlier period shaped the withdrawal of the Catholic Church into 'religious matters' until the late 1960s, the early experience of the Protestant Church also has strongly impacted its future directions. In addition, the lack of organizational unity in comparison to the Catholic Church made it possible for individual churches and church leaders to pursue different paths with regard to social issues and nationalism.

There have been two streams of Protestant churches. One came out of the historical context of the increasing threat of Japanese colonialism in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. Many Koreans converted to Protestantism with a nationalistic goal: saving Korea from Japanese colonialism. In fact, many churches and mission schools became a seedbed for nationalistic movements. In the other stream is the spiritual revival movement which began in 1907 in *Pyongyang* and spread nation-wide. It was accompanied by a strong sense of emotional catharsis; and it affected the morality and worship style of the Korean Protestant churches.

The former stream was oriented toward participation in social issues and imbued with a sense of resistant nationalism. Out of this stream, many Protestants actively participated in the March 1 Independent Movement in 1919. The Japanese government indicted 19,523 on account of this Independent movement; and 3,426 were Protestant believers. In the 1920s, YMCA and YWCA organized the rural enlightenment movement and established 29 education centers.

In contrast, the latter stream was more geared toward evangelistic and fundamentalistic practices, with an emphasis not only on individual evangelization, but also on the transcendental dimension of faith over the immanent one. This stream has positively contributed to make Christianity experiential and alive to its believers; and it led to a rapid growth from 321 churches with 9,761 believers in 1905 to 642 churches with 18,964 believers in 1907. However, this spiritual revival movement has led this stream of Protestants to a concern mainly for personal salvation. It made the churches apolitical and less concerned with social issues outside themselves and their family.⁵

There have been some denominational differences among the Protestant churches in Korea. However, these two streams have shaped the Protestant churches.

2. From Independence to the Second Republic (1945 – 1961)

Independence took place in 1945 through the end of the World War II; and the aftermath put Christianity into a new historical context. Post-independence Korean history was a process of the dependence of South Korea upon the US and its incorporation into the cold war system. Dependency took place as Korea experienced the division into two military administrations—one in the South by the US (1945 – 48) and one in the North by the USSR (1945 – 46). Then the subsequent

⁵ Researchers have debated on the evaluation of the spiritual revival movement. The mainstream views that the spiritual revival movement led to apolitical and ahistorical practices. However, Rho (1993) argues that it is correct for the movement to lead to apolitical but it does not mean asocial or ahistorical faith, avoiding into other-world. Rather, the national sentiment and energy in the Christian faith, he continues, became diffused into moral, cultural, and social areas. Thus, the spiritual revival movement impacted on the reorientation of self, equipped with social responsibility, although it was not expressed in political action.

Korean War (1950 – 53) fortified the division. The emergence of the communist regime in North Korea caused many Christians, both Catholics and Protestants, to migrate to the south. In addition, the Korean War made the Church in the South more anti-communistic.⁶

The growing dependence on the US allowed the Protestant churches to enjoy privileges because major Protestant missionaries were from the US and networks with them meant having “power.” The missionaries occupied the leadership of the churches, trained the seminarians, and brought from the US enormous resources which Koreans could not raise within their poor country. They enjoyed spiritual, moral, and material power. As Kang (1996) correctly points out, the center and the periphery relationship between the US and Korea shaped the socio-political characteristics of the Protestant Church in this period. They are manifested in anti-communism and strong pro-American attitudes. Furthermore, in this period, the US – Korea relationship helped the Protestant Church to have a close relationship with the state, which was dependent upon the US. According to Kang (1996), even though church and state were separated according to the constitution, Korea in this period was a Protestant country in practice.

Due to the Catholic Church’s organizational tie with the Vatican and the French missionaries’ influence from the earlier period, the relationship of the Catholics with the US was not as immediate as the Protestant’s. As its dealings with the Japanese government during colonial period, the concern of the leadership of the

⁶ In North Korea, the communist regime severely suppressed religion. For Protestants in North Korea in 1945-1950, see Clark 2002. Only after mid-1980s, did the North Korean government allow to open a church in Pyung-yang. Reportedly, there is no priest or minister; but there are some Buddhist monks. Yet all religious activities and organizations are under the party control.

Catholic Church continued to remain focused on the maintenance of the Church itself. The leadership thus tried to build a “friendly” relationship with the US military government and subsequent Korean regimes until the 1960s. The activities of the Church focused mainly on the spiritual life in individuals and the family. They extended into charity work and education, moreover, in response to social need and the growth of the Protestant Church. Charity work, owing to foreign aid through the church network after the Korean War, contributed to the rapid growth of the Church in the 1950s. In fact, the growth rate of the Catholic Church was 16.5% this period. By contrast, however, the 6.2% growth rate of the 1960s reflects a decrease in foreign aid and the passivity of the Church leadership. The growth rates decreased to a mere 1.7% and 0.29% in 1970 and 1971 respectively (cited in Chu 2005:72).

In general, although there were some exceptions, the leadership of the Catholic Church remained silent in social or political affairs outside the Church. It was oriented towards preserving the pro-status quo up until the conflicts of the late 1960s. The concern of the leadership lay primarily in the security and the growth of the Church as an institution. This direction was the result not only of the historical experience of persecution, but of pre-Vatican II theology. Pre-Vatican II theology not only conceived the church as being “above” the world; it viewed the modern world as hostile to the Church due to its experience of the Reformation and the Enlightenment critique of the church in Europe. This theology led to a “ghetto” mentality and a lack of social concern (Sanks 1992).

In sum, the Catholic Church mainly focused on the security of the church, trying to avoid any conflict with the state. The historical experience of persecution,

together with pre-Vatican II theology gave rise to this direction. In sharp contrast, the Protestant Church, bolstered by its US connections and close ties with the Korean government, was well poised to influence society.

Then, how has Christianity played a role of a midwife in bringing to birth a new civil society? To answer this question, I turn to the dynamic period of modernization, led by the authoritarian state, and to the subsequent democratization movement.

B. Authoritarian state, Modernization, and the Democratization Movement

1. Developmental Dictatorship and Modernization

A military coup by General Park Jung Hee in 1961 overthrew the Second Republic. Park opened a new chapter in recent Korean history in two aspects: authoritarianism and modernization. In the first aspect, military dictatorship governed Korea until the democratization movement in 1987, first led by Park (1961 - 79) and then by General Chun Doo Hwan (1980 - 87) after Park was assassinated by his close aide. In the second aspect, Park's military dictatorship mobilized the whole society under the motto of "Motherland Modernization." Except for political democratization, Korean society was modernized in every sense during this period: urbanization⁷, economic development⁸ through industrialization, the formation of a middle-class (Chang 1999). Modernization was thus intertwined with dictatorship. Korean development in this period cannot be separated from the authoritarian state.

⁷ Seoul came to occupy from 9.8% (1960) to 19.9% (1975) of the national population.

⁸ Korea made 8.1% economic growth in average from 1971 to 1980 and the GNP per person grew from \$ 285 (1971) to \$ 1,753 (1980). (Cited in Chu 2005:43)

The Korean state, which designed and controlled the process of industrialization, has been considered, together with the other East Asian states, as a developmental state (Johnson 1995; Castells 2000:195-205). In this period of the modernization project, Korea was transformed from one of the poorest countries into a newly industrialized country.

Under Park and Chun, the authoritarian state pursued economic development as its top priority; and it organized the whole society for this purpose. The developmental strategy was based on the export-led development; and this resulted in the uneven development of the economic sections, the securing of cheap and docile labor which induced foreign investment, and an alliance among the state, local and foreign capitals. Accordingly, authoritarian and efficiency-driven policies for economic development was accompanied by the exclusion of three major classes⁹: farmers, laborers, and the urban poor. Farmers were marginalized as agriculture gave way to industry. Laborers rapidly emerged in accordance with the industrialization, but were significant only in terms of cheap labor. The urban poor, who mainly worked in the informal sector, were the outcome of rapid urbanization.

Development also came at the cost of severe violations of human rights, the cruel oppression of political dissent, and the repression of labor rights and labor organizations by the authoritarian state. During Park's regime, martial law was declared four times; garrison decrees, three times; and emergency decrees, nine times; and national emergency, once (cited Kim 1993:239-240). This illuminates how cruel

⁹ These classes were considered as *minjung* although the concept of *minjung* is not based on class.

the oppression was. The developmental state was created under a development dictatorship (Lee 2003).

The authoritarian state intruded in and guided not only economic development but also the habits and morality of everyday life in the name of modernization. The state made itself a “moral educator” to teach citizenship not merely through schools and the army¹⁰, but also through rituals such as elevating and descending the national flag with an anthem ceremony every day and by forcing students to memorize the National Charter of the Educational Constitution (*Kukmin kyoyuk hunjang*)—techniques learnt from Japanese colonialism. The national anthem was played at movie theaters every time prior to showing a movie, and everybody was required to stand in order to show respect. Even cars and people on the street were obliged to stop during the time of the daily national flag ceremony. These rituals made its citizens perceive the state as sacred and thus be loyal to it.

The authoritarian state also tried to form the “righteous” life of citizens (Kang 2002). As moral educator, it even tried to govern what to eat, what to wear, even what to believe. It declared that men’s long hair and women’s short skirts hurt “good” traditional Korean costumes, and it thus punished people wearing such.¹¹ For health benefits and for self-subsistence in rice, the government forced students and government officers¹² to eat rice mixed with other grains, rather than rice alone,

¹⁰ The army is a powerful socialization mechanism. Because Korean “men” are required to serve with military for 2-3 years, it has significantly affected the character formation of manhood and produced a gendered practice of citizenship. For the analysis of gendered citizenship, see Moon (2005) and Kwon (2005).

¹¹ The criterion for men’s long hair was whether they fully covered the ears or not. For women’s short skirt, the criterion was 5 centimeters above the knee.

¹² These two groups are the ones the state could easily supervise through the state bureaucratic apparatus.

which most Koreans preferred. It also intervened in ritual celebrations. It commanded Koreans not to celebrate luxurious marriages or funerals, but to be frugal. People were punished for violation of these rules. Furthermore, it defined popular religious practices, such as shamanistic ritual or fortunetelling, as “unscientific and false” religion and suppressed them (Choi 1997:70-72). The state set itself up as judge to decide what is right and false in religion. When General Chun took power in 1980, his regime initiated a “social purification” campaign to “purify” not only gangsters and political dissents, but also the “corrupted” religions. His regime intervened in the internal dispute of *Chokyejong*, the biggest denomination of Buddhism; and it closed down unauthorized Protestant seminaries. Therefore, the Korean state in this period of authoritarian regime was not merely a developmental state but also a moral educator—a judge of good morality, good habits, and good religions. It tried to govern not only society and economy, but also the individual mind.

Why did the mass accept the developmental dictatorship? Clearly, as Cummings states, Korean authoritarian regimes were built upon the strong state apparatus of ubiquitous agencies, represented by the KCIA (Korea Central Intelligence Agency), which operated at “every conceivable site of potential resistance” and forced the “ideological blanketing of every alternative idea in the name of forced-paced industrialization” (Cummings 2002:26). However, indoctrination and coercion are not sufficient. This explanation misses the broader context of history, culture, and geopolitics. I would argue that the authoritarian regime was possible not only due to the strong state, but also to the following broader context. First, in terms of ideology,

Korean authoritarian regimes built their legitimacy adeptly on a combination of national security and modernization. This drew wide appeal among the people as an historical agenda. The legacy of the Korean War and geopolitics made Korea sensitive to national security; and modernization, translated into economic development, was the undisputable task for Korea after the ashes of the Korean War.¹³ The authoritarian regime, using this ideology, justified the suppression of the labor movement and the repression of political dissents by labeling them as communists.¹⁴ Second, the sense of historical task was enhanced by a nationalistic sense. Not surprisingly, both national security and economic development found strong echoes in the process of post-colonial nation-state building. These were not only accepted as historical needs of society, but also as a national project, as Castells points out (2000:198). Third, the authoritarian regime had its root in Korean history and culture: on the one hand, the history of a long tradition of a centralized government structure and the legacy of the Japanese colonial state apparatus; and on the other, the hierarchical Confucian culture, in which government officials and scholars overlapped and taught morality. This was the context in which could emerge a strong state that was not only the “over-developed state” that Choi (1985) speaks of, but also a state as moral educator. Fourth, geopolitics mattered. The competition between North and South Korea provided a favorable environment for authoritarian regimes. The military government pushed for economic development as a form of competition with North Korea. North and South Korea had pursued different developmental paths,

¹³ Right before the military coup, Chang Myun’s government already made economic development as their top priority (Park 2000).

¹⁴ The violation or reservation of human rights on behalf of economic development has been justified as trade-off thesis in the past and the Asian value thesis recently.

communism and capitalism. However, both dealt with the same historical and national projects in a similar historical and cultural context. Thus, needless to say, both experienced authoritarian or dictatorial regimes. Given these backgrounds, developmental dictatorship was possible; and it was endured by the masses.

2. Discontent and the Democratization Movement

In spite of its achievement in modernization and its tight control of society, the authoritarian regime faced strong discontent and resistance. This broke out in the democratization movement. It is no surprise that the history of the democratization movement was bloody.¹⁵ Numerous cases of torture and death include the incident of the People's Revolutionary Party in 1964,¹⁶ that of the National League for Democratic Youth and Students (*Chonguk Minju Chongnyon Haksaeng Chongnyonmaeng* or for short, *Minchong Hangnyon*) in 1974,¹⁷ the death of Jong-Chul Park by torture in 1987,¹⁸ and, most notoriously, the *Kwangju* massacre in 1980.¹⁹

¹⁵ For the history of democratization movement, see CISJD (1988), Eckert (1990), and Hahm (1996 – 2003).

¹⁶ The Park regime indicted 26 dissents, based on a fabricated account of establishing the People's Revolutionary Party to overthrow the government in 1964.

¹⁷ In the incident of *Minchong Hangnyon*, Park's regime falsely accused 23 activists, who opposed his regime, of reestablishing the People's Revolutionary Party and sentenced 8 defendants to death. For this incident, see Kim 1993:254-255. Recently on January 23, 2007, the court reversed the sentence and declared that the eight were not guilty, acknowledging that the case was made on the base of torture (Hankyoreh Newspaper, January 24, 2007).

¹⁸ Park was tortured to death during investigation in January, 1987. The regime tried to cover up the cause of his death, but the Catholic Priests Association for Justice (CPAJ) disclosed it in May. Because it took place in the time of serious struggle between the regime and the democratization movement in 1987, the divulgence made the regime to crucially lose its credibility and ignited the massive protest. Finally, the regime accepted the change of constitution in June, 1987, which paved the road to procedural democratization.

¹⁹ The massacre happened through the military operation. The army was sent to Kwangju in order to suppress the democratization movement which was opposed to the emergence of the illegitimate Chun Doo Hwan's military regime.

While the authoritarian state controlled almost every aspect of society, the Church became the site and the channel for the resistant movement to emerge. The Church, together with universities²⁰, was the most autonomous space from the intrusion of the authoritarian state. In particular, the Church was more autonomous than the students, due to its belief system and institutional resources as discussed in the previous chapter. Its belief system includes the interpretative framework of the meaning of suffering, together with the tradition of the prophets in the Bible and that of martyrdom under persecution. Religious believers could thus fearlessly take the initiative in the resistance and endure imprisonment and even torture. In addition, the church's transnational ties restricted the authoritarian state's ability to trample on the church, as I shall explain.²¹ Mediated by the Church, people's discontent and resistance were expressed and organized into social movements. These movements came not only out of college students, intellectuals, and political dissenters but also out of *minjung*, which included laborers, farmers, and urban poor—the people who were most excluded from the fruits of development.

3. The Engagement of the Church in the Democratization Movement

How did the Church come to be the main channel in the democratization movement? In terms of social movement, the democratization movement was a

²⁰ University was a relatively free space due to several reasons: first, higher education was not extended to the majority of people; second, both university as the highest educational institution and university students enjoyed respect and privilege in the Confucian culture environment; third, the student movement had the history of overthrowing the first president Rhee in 1960 who governed for twelve years.

²¹ Among religions in Korea, while Christianity played the role of midwife for civil society, the direct role of Confucianism or Buddhism for civil society was not significant. It is because Confucianism has lost its social influence with the end of *Chosun* dynasty in which it was the state-religion; Buddhism in general has focused on individual enlightenment rather than social concerns.

highly dangerous movement, exposing the participants to severe punishment, such as imprisonment and torture. Despite the organizational and theological differences between Catholics and Protestants, the following factors explain their engagement and initiative in the resistance movement.

First, a series of incidents reshaped the worldview of progressive circles, motivated their commitment, and re-oriented the leadership of the Church. The oppressive situation itself inspired the Church to take seriously the role of the prophet in the tradition of the Hebrew Bible and the Church's social teaching and asked the Church to become a channel for the voice of the oppressed. There were a series of events that led Christians to active social activism. However, two incidents stand out most: the self-immolation of Chun Tae-II, a young worker, who burned himself to death on November 13, 1970 to demand compliance with the Labor Standard Law²², and the imprisonment of Catholic Bishop Chi Hak-soon on July 6, 1974 on account of his opposition against the regime. The first shocked society, in particular, ministers, students and intellectuals. It opened their eyes to the miserable situation of the emerging working class. It also inspired some leading Protestant theologians to develop *minjung* theology (Seo et al. 1993)²³, owing to which the term *minjung* became the key word and a radicalized ideology in the democratization movement. The second incident, the imprisonment of Bishop Chi, ignited the serious conflict

²² Chun shouted in flames: "We are not machines!"; "Let us rest on Sunday!"; "Abide by the Labor Standard Law!"; "Don't exploit workers!" Koo evaluates that the incident of Chun marked the beginning of Korean working class formation. For the incident of Chun's self-immolation, see Koo (2001:69-72).

²³ Such include Rev. *Young-Hak Hyun*, Rev. *Nam-Dong Seo*, and Rev. *Byung-Moo Ahn*. For an introduction to *minjung* theology, written in English, see Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (1981); Roh (1990).

between the Catholic Church and the state in 1970s.²⁴ The imprisonment resulted in a series of prayer meetings which functioned as a social forum which the KCIA and the authoritarian state tried to control, in protests for the restoration of human rights, and most importantly in the organization of the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) on September 23, 1974, one of the strongest anti-dictatorship organizations during this period.²⁵ Such incidents awakened and transformed Christians so that they could not remain within the "religious sphere," but had to engage in socio-political issues.

Secondly, there was the influence of the world church as it became contextualized in the Korean context: This can be understood in terms of a Weberian analysis, that is, the role of ideas in social change. For Catholics, the Second Vatican Council made a Kuhnian "paradigm shift" in regard to the Church's position in and relationship with the modern world. The pre-Vatican II Catholic Church perceived the church as being *above* the world theologically, and it regarded the modern world as being hostile to the Church historically. The Church's experience in the formation of modern Europe, such as in the Enlightenment critique of religion and the French Revolution, shaped this view negative to the modern world.

²⁴ Even before the arrest of Bishop Chi, since the late 1960s, the Catholic Church came to speak out about human rights and social justice. It was originated from the state's suppression of the *Simdo* textile labor union whose core organizers were JOC (*Jeunesse Ouvnere Chretienne*: Young Christian Workers) members in 1967. In response, the Korean bishops' conference spoke out on just wage and labor rights on February 9, 1968. It was the first Korean bishops' public letter on social justice and labor issues, giving a signal to announce the subsequent social, public role of the Church.

²⁵ After the arrest until December, 1974, the Catholic Church organized 66 times of prayer meeting and 8 times of protests and had 120,000 participants national wide (See *Ambuksogui Hwetbul*, Vol I: 201). The CPAJ began with around 300 priests and declared to work for democracy and the restoration of human rights. It revealed the police' manipulation to conceal the death of Park, a student activist, who was tortured to death in 1987. The divulgence of the death of Park by torture ignited the massive protest which drew the democratization in 1987. For this event, see Kim 1993:

Quite the contrary, Vatican II re-positing the Church *in* the modern world and let it embrace and collaborate with modern values (Sanks 1989; Casanova 1994). Thus, Vatican II not only encouraged participation in the world, but also affirmed that this participation constituted a crucial dimension of Christian faith. Vatican II became the backbone for the Korean Catholic Church's socio-political involvement, just as it did for liberation theology and the church's liberation movement in Latin America.²⁶ For Protestants, progressive groups were influenced by the World Council of Churches and the liberal theology of the 1960s. Protestant leaders in the democratization movement, such as the *minjung* theologians and the Urban Industrial Mission (UIM), came out of this theological background which conceives social involvement as an essential part of Christian faith.

Obviously, the influence of the world church did not directly cause the socio-political involvement of the churches in Korea in the democratization movement. Indigenous incidents and the oppressive situation led Korean Christians to the democratization movement. However, Christian leaders in the movement were already strongly influenced by the changes of the world church;²⁷ and they, impacted by the incidents, contextualized these changes in the Korean context. It was then that

²⁶ Rho (1988) slightly downplayed the influence of the world church, arguing that the conflict between the Catholic Church and the government emerged not due to the influence of the Vatican II or the world church, but due to the threat to the church by the government. In terms of immediate time-sequence, it may be correct. However, the change of the Vatican II impacted not only individual leaders such as Rev. Stepano Kim who later became the Cardinal and the priests in CPAJ, but also the institutional orientation of the Catholic Church, represented in *Gaudium et Spes*, one of the most significant documents in the Vatican II. Thus, the Vatican II inspired the Church's involvement in social justice and energized the church-led organizations among laborers and farmers which came to conflict with the authoritarian regime. Even though there was no imprisonment of Bishop Chi in 1974, the most serious threat by the government, it is hard to imagine that the church would not involve the inhumane situation of the laborers or the human rights violation by the authoritarian regime.

²⁷ For instance, among Catholics leaders, Rev. Haam, a representative leader in CPAJ, was trained in Rome and Cardinal Kim, in Germany; among Protestant ones, Rev. Byung-moo Ahn studied in Germany, Rev. Nam-dong Suh and Rev. Young-hak Hyun in North America.

their socio-political involvement became backed up by the world church, in particular when they were oppressed by the authoritarian regime, as I shall illustrate later.

Therefore, the church's political action was a result of a dialectic process of historical experience and theology. To *minjung* theologians, the event of Chun Tae-II was a "baptismal event" (Seo et al. 1993) by which they came to re-read both the Bible and Korean history. To Rev. Haam, then one of the representatives of CPAJ, the socio-political involvement was an experiential embodiment of Vatican II:

Those days the Korean Catholic Church had a superficial understanding of Vatican II and the changes of the Church. However, the prayer meetings and seminars, caused by the imprisonment of Bishop Chi, challenged us to ask about our priestly and Christian identity and its implication on social mission. This reflection helped us to read the Bible with new eyes and to find the way. We came to grasp the spirit of Vatican II in the concrete place of our life. In particular, we realized that *Gaudium et Spes*²⁸ illuminated the answers which we sought. In other words, we learnt the spirit and the teaching of Vatican II not merely in class or the church but at the concrete sites of our life, anguished, beaten, chased by police, and imprisoned. It was so valuable. *Gaudium et Spes* became alive to us to the degree as if it were written in the context of the Korean situation. (Haam I:5, my translation)

Furthermore, this dialectical process led not only to political action, but also to a new theology, called *minjung* theology.

Thirdly, leadership matters. The church leadership was crucial to the church's socio-political involvement. Key leaders included Cardinal Stepano Kim, Bishop Chi Hak-soon, Rev. Won-young Kang (an influential Protestant minister and

²⁸ *Gaudium et Spes*, called the Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, is one of the main documents of the Vatican II, which deals with the Church's mission in the world. This document is significant to the modern Catholicism in the sense that the Catholic Church embraces modern values rather than antagonizes or looks down on them.

the founder of the Christian Academy which provided an important social forum for intellectuals), Rev. Kwan-suk Kim (a leader in the Korean National Christian Council, a Korean counter-part of World Council of Churches). Due to the characteristics of Catholic hierarchy, the role of Cardinal Kim was especially prominent. Not only was he deeply influenced by Vatican II. He studied sociology in Germany and thus had a sensitivity in reading social situations, in particular, those of the excluded farmers, the urban poor, and the emerging labor class. This background enabled him to defend not only Bishop Chi, but also other activists, Catholic or not, and to work for these marginalized class. As a well-trained intellectual pastor, he skillfully articulated his dispute against the government's McCarthyism of labeling the labor movement or the farmers' movement as pro-communist; and he defended the Church's participation in these issues as an integral part of the Church's mission. He argued that assistance to these movements does not mean a pro-communist stance, as the government accused. Rather, he argued, the suppression of these movements is pro-communist, because it provides the soil in which communism can appeal to the exploited classes. During his homily at the mass on August 6, 1979 to protest the government's direct assault on the Catholic Farmers' Organization, he passionately criticized the state's

McCarthyism, arguing:

The government continually points out our special situation of division into North and South while they continue to make the most of the ensuing restrictions on human liberties <...> Who, indeed, are communist suspects? <...> who are the real suspects and sympathizers? Are those working to protect the rights of the workers and farmers for the benefit of us all really communist suspects and sympathizers? No, they are not. These are the people who will truly create a strong country based on justice. The people who are calling them 'communists' or 'sympathizers' are the ones who are

truly oppressing the workers and farmers. These people, unaware of their own aiding of the communist cause, are more dangerous than those who consciously profess communism.

Then, turning to the Church's mission, he continued:

What is the Church to do? Is our Church in actuality close to the communist position? What powers have our Church ever tried to seize and what would it try to do with such power? <...> If the government truly exists for the sake of the people and not merely to preserve its hold on power, then I ask it to fundamentally reaffirm and recognize the Church's right to participate in society. Not only this, the government must help to preserve good social movements such as the Catholic Farmers' Movement. It is through such movement that we can achieve the true development of our agricultural society. (cited in Kim 1993:284-285: emphasis added)

Cardinal Kim's leadership, together with his politically middle-ground position and pastoral visits to the poor, made him one of the most respected leaders in Korea.²⁹

His words and actions played a crucial role in giving credibility and moral authority to the Catholic Church during this period (Chu 2005).

To summarize, the history of 1970s – 80s was not merely a history of compressed modernization, but also one of struggle between authoritarian regimes and the democratization movement. During this period, Korea was laboring seriously for democratization and ultimately for an autonomous civil society. Together, the Catholic and the Protestant Church became a channel to express social and political discontent against the modernization sponsored by the authoritarian state. They thus acted as mid-wife for the engendering of civil society.

²⁹ According to a series of annual surveys on the opinion of the professors in social science and humanities by *Sisa Journal* from 1989 to 1995, he was counted as one of the most influential Koreans. Most elected people were major politicians or big businessmen except him (cited in Chu 2005:5).

C. The Church's Contribution to the Birth of Civil Society

How did the Church contribute to the birth of civil society? Since society was controlled by the authoritarian state, the Church's contribution was mainly through struggle against the state. Although the Church is not a SMO, I shall examine its role in resistance through social movement perspective: how to frame a counter-ideology, how to utilize institutional resources, and how to forming leadership.

1. Framing a Counter-Ideology

The socio-political involvement of both Catholics and Protestants provided the articulation of a counter-ideology against the authoritarian state-led modernization. The state-led development was accompanied not only by political oppression but also by corruption due to the crooked relationship between the state and the *chaebul* (conglomerates), along with a widening gap between the rich and the poor and the exclusion of *minjung*. The diverse flow of several ideas contributed to the formation of the counter-ideology: from the Catholic side, the introduction of the Catholic social teachings around Vatican II and Latin American liberation theology; and from the Protestant side, the emergence of the native *minjung* theology.³⁰ In opposition to the state's ideology of economic development for modernization and national security

³⁰ Catholic social teaching includes *Rerum Novarum* (The Condition of Labor, 1891), *Quadragesimo Anno* (After Forty Years, 1931), *Mater et Magistra* (Christianity and Social Progress, 1961), *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth, 1963), *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965), *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples, 1967), *Octogesima Adventiens* (A Call to Action on the Eightieth Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, 1971), *Justice in the World* (1971), *Evangelization in the Modern World* (1975), *On Human Work* (1981), etc. These are documented in O'Brien and Shanon (1992). Liberation theology was widely introduced, including the major books of Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff, Jose Comblin, Jon Sobrino, Juan Segundo, etc., both through the Benedictian Press in the Catholic Church and the Institute of Korean Theology (*Hanguk Shinhak Yongooso*) in the Presbyterian Church.

against communist North Korea, both questioned the legitimacy of dictatorship, opposed to reduce the multi-facets of modernization into economic development, and made liberation a catch word for the counter-ideology. Also, both pressed for a change of worldview in which the poor/*minjung* are recovered as subject of history. That would lead to true social, political, and economic liberation. These theological thoughts countered the ideology of state-led modernization and functioned to desacratize the state.

In addition to theology, *minjung* pedagogy, partly influenced by Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970)³¹ played a significant role. It shed light on retrieving the education movement for farmers during the colonial period inspired students;³² and it inspired students and activists to commit themselves to the conscientization of not only students, but also of the masses. During summer vacations, university students organized rural activity campaigns and went to villages to get in touch with the rural situation. After graduation, numerous student activists became factory workers and worked for organizing labor unions.³³ Until the active appropriation of Marxism and the radicalization of the student movement in the 1980s, these Christian thoughts played a major role in the emergence of counter-ideology.

Under the authoritarian state, activities inspired by liberation and *minjung* theology led many Catholic priests, Protestant ministers, and lay people to trial and

³¹ Both *Liberation Theology* by Gustavo Gutierrez (1973) and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* were published in Korean translation in the late 1970s by the Benedictian Press and soon became forbidden books by the government, labeled them as pro-communist books. However, they were copied, reproduced, and wide read underground.

³² After the failure of the non-violent independent movement in March 1, 1919, intellectuals and the Protestant groups turned to educating the people, for building up national capacity, most of whom were illiterate those days.

³³ For an analysis of the inside of students movement this period, see Lee (2002) and Kwon (2005). For the students-turned-workers, see Koo (2001: Chap. 5)

imprisonment. However, it did not succeed in suppressing the Church's involvement in the social movement. The suffering of these priests and ministers was perceived as the persecution of those who fight for justice. Moreover, their suffering became a clear manifestation of the cruelty and immorality of the authoritarian state; and it enhanced a sense of historical obligation to resist. Thus, ironically, political suppression and persecution by the state de-legitimized itself (Chu 2005:76-79). It could not prevent potential participants from joining the movement in spite of the high risk.

Again, it should be recalled that the formation of the counter-ideology was a dialectical process between historical experience and idea. It was not merely an outcome of ideas *per se*, imported or indigenous. Ideas and religious belief provided the interpretative framework to read the incidents and historical experience of participants in the democratization movement and thus, despite the hardships, to sustain their commitment.

2. Institutional Resources

Institutional resources assisting the emergence of civil society during this period can be examined from three aspects: the Church as both the refuge and the site of protest; the organization of religious civil organizations as forerunners of civil society organizations; and the utilization of transnational religious networks.

a. The Church as refuge and the site of protest

The Church became both a refuge to escape from the state's coercive power and a protest site for the excluded to claim their rights. Activists chased by the police

approached the churches for assistance; and the socially marginalized, who had no channel to make their voice heard, found the church ground as a good protest site. Well-known cases included the church's support for student activists in their involvement in the National League for Democratic Youth and Students (*Minchong Hangnyon*) in 1974, the incident of the arson fire at the branch office of the US Information Service at Pusan in 1982³⁴, and the struggle by women laborers of the Dongil Textile Company in 1978.

In particular, the Catholic Cathedral of the Seoul Archdiocese at Myoung-dong, Seoul, became a symbol representing the Church as last refuge and protest site. It was at the Cathedral that the Declaration of March 1, 1976 by the National Council for the Restoration of Democracy (NCRD)³⁵ was made to demand the restoration of the democratic constitution and civic and political freedom. This declaration argued that only a democratic regime could win over communism. This incident constituted the beginning of subsequent protests for democratization at the Cathedral, just as the incident by the women workers of the Dongil Textile Company in 1978 marked the beginning of protests for human and labor rights. The Cathedral thus became the prime symbolic site for the democratization movement of this period, in tandem with

³⁴ The incident began from the arson fire by two students, Mun Pu-sik and Kim Un-suk, who studied theology at Korea Seminary, at the branch office of the US Information Service at Pusan in 1982. They made the arson fire at the US office in order to divulge the involvement of the US in the massacre at Kwangju in 1980. After the fire, both student arsonists escaped and came to a Catholic priest, Rev. Choi Ki-sik. Rev. Choi sheltered them and arranged voluntary surrender to the police, based on the government's promise of proper legal assistance and no torture. However, the government arrested not only them but also Rev. Choi on account of the concealment of offenders. For details, see Kim (1993:306-312)

³⁵ The Council was a representative *chaeya* group, that is, networks of dissident organizations and pro-democracy movement circles that existed outside a legal framework, in the late 1970s. It was organized in the efforts to collect individual resisters and was composed of politicians of the oppositional party, religious leaders, intellectuals, etc. Catholic priests played a main role in the Council: Rev. Yoon, a Catholic priest, was elected as the first representative and Rev. Haam, as the spokesman.

the National Cemetery for the victims at the Kwangju Massacre. Even after the democratization in 1987, the symbolic power of the Cathedral has drawn many protesters; and it still plays a role as a social space for protest as we can see in the migrant workers' case.

Why did the Church become a site for refuge and protest? In the 1970s, there was no channel for public voice against the state. The Church was the only space which was relatively autonomous from the state's intrusion. This is related to the Church's institutional resources. First, against the backdrop of the Korean religious cultural environment, religious sites, whether churches or Buddhist temples, are considered sacred and thus respected. Furthermore, in the case of forced intrusion, the state faced the opposition not merely from the temple or the church, but from the whole religious body to which it belonged, including even pressure from the transnational religious network, as I shall demonstrate later. In particular, through the incident of the imprisonment of Bishop Chi, the Korean state came to learn that it should be cautious not to cause any serious conflict with the Catholic Church. This imprisonment caused the Korean state to face international pressure, being branded a country of serious human rights violations. Such pressure came from the church's global network and reinforced the strong opposition by CPAJ. Later, from this "learning" experience, the state first tried to co-opt the Church, rather than merely collide with it directly.

After democratization in 1987, the Church, in particular, the Cathedral, has still played a role as a space for protest, as I have said. However, this is not merely due to the Church's autonomy from the state's power. Rather, it is related to the

symbolic power of the Cathedral as a historical site in the Korean democratization and labor movement. Even though the Cathedral has asked protesters to leave its compound in recent years, socially vulnerable protesters strategically have chosen it as their protest site.³⁶

b. The Organization of religious civil organizations

I have already mentioned both the CPAJ, the Catholic priests' organization that was set up after the imprisonment of Bishop Chi, and the NCRD, in which religious leaders played a key role. The Church's contribution did not limit itself to these anti-regime organizations. In terms of civil society organization, the Church helped organize farmers and laborers, who occupied a major part of the Korean population. There had been no intermediate organizations between the state on the one hand and farmers and laborers on the other. So organizing and educating them itself was a significant contribution to the nascent civil society. In fact, in the history of the labor movement, the farmers' movement, and the movement of the urban poor, the role of Church-affiliated organizations were critical. For the authoritarian state tried to domesticate any organization among these sectors of society and suppress any attempt on their part to pursue autonomy.

With respect to the labor movement, both the JOC (*Jeunesse Ouvnere Chretienne*, that is the Young Christian Workers), an organization of the Catholic Church, and the Urban Industrial Mission (UIM), its counter-part in the Protestant Church, played a significant role in organizing democratic (*minju*) labor unions. The JOC was organized in Korea in 1958 and became active under the leadership of an

³⁶ According to Chu (1999), there were 445 protests from 1991 to 1997, which means 64 protests per year.

American Maryknoll missionary, Rev. Michael Bransfield, MM in 1966. Beginning with the *Simdo* Textile labor union in 1967, JOC's members engaged in organizing labor unions. The UIM, whose origin dates back to 1957, also changed its focus from evangelism to the advocacy of workers' rights and became involved in unions, starting with the *Cheil* Corporation in 1969. In particular, the regime stigmatized UIM activities: "If *DoSan* (Korean abbreviation for the UIM) enters the labor relationship, the company will *dosan* (meaning go collapse).

Both the JOC and the UIM encouraged workers to organize to demand their basic rights, such as better wages, safer working conditions, and humane treatment³⁷. It was a threat not only to the employers, but also to the state; for the state endeavored to tightly control labor unions in accord with its low-wage developmental strategy. Because most co-opted unions did not actually represent the workers' voice and rights under the government's control, both the JOC's and UIM's activities found strong echoes among workers. In particular, the training programs that the JOC and UIM provided were important learning experiences for workers, most of whom were young and had little education. The *Dongil* Textile workers wrote, "The small group movement and the educational programs that these organizations (JOC and UIM) conducted helped develop a sense of solidarity among workers laboring at the same plant and a new awareness that workers can improve their social and economic status through labor unions" (*Dongil pangjik pokjik tujaeng wiwonhoe* 1985:13; cited in Koo 2001:75). Koo is correct when he argues that women workers' activism in 1970s and the early 1980s was grounded in progressive church organizations, that is the UIM and

³⁷ Humane treatment included anti-violence physical or sexual and anti-oppression based on patriarchal ideology.

JOC (Koo2001: Chap. 4). Almost all union struggles in the 1970s were linked to and assisted by the UIM and JOC, which concentrated on the women-dominated light manufacturing industries in the Seoul and Incheon areas.³⁸

Both the JOC and UIM began their activities in the 1950s with the vision of the Church's outreach to workers in response to individual religious needs. However, the miserable situation of workers, characterized by cheap wages, long working hours under physically harsh environments, and socially inhumane treatment by employers, awakened both of these organizations so that they changed their focus from religious needs to workers' rights and from individual assistance to structural changes. The incident of Chun Tae-Il amplified this transformation, and progressive theology confirmed it. Moreover, because the leadership of the JOC and UIM were mainly missionaries trained in labor issues, their respective international networks enhanced the effectiveness and strength of their activities. Both led the labor movement until it became radicalized under the leadership of student-turned-workers equipped with Marxist ideology in the mid-1980s.³⁹ How crucial the role of church organizations was at the early state of the labor struggle was beautifully described in the words of Kim Ji-sun, who staged the 1978 surprise protest at the National Protestant Thanksgiving service at Yeouido with five other workers: "When nobody in society looked at us as deserving human beings, they showed us genuine concern and treated us as respectable human being. That meant a tremendous thing to us. We had deep trust and appreciation toward the people who genuinely cared about us and

³⁸ Park (2004) collected the autobiography of several labor movement leaders, educated through both organizations.

³⁹ For the students-turned-workers and their contribution to labor movement, see Koo (2001: Chap. 5)

helped us with affection. We had a feeling that everything would be fine if we followed them” (cited in Koo 2001:95).

Hence, both church-related-organizations contributed to the education of *minjung*—workers, farmers and the urban poor. This conscientization in Paulo Freire’s term, transformed them from young, uneducated workers and passive, uneducated farmers to active agents with their identity as workers or farmers with a sense of class-for-itself in Marxist terms. Both church organizations directly or indirectly organized them to claim their own rights and struggle with employers and the state; and they assisted in the formation of leadership in the *minjung* movement by providing educational programs and training them in the skills needed to run small groups and organize themselves.

With respect to the farmers’ movement, the counter-partners of the JOC and UIM among farmers are Catholic Farmers’ Organization and Christian Farmers’ Organization. The former was organized as a part of the JOC in 1964, but became separated from it in 1966; and it turned its orientation to the promotion of farmers’ rights and social justice since 1972 (Kim 1993) as the social mission of the Catholic Church did. Its commitment to the promotion of farmers’ rights led to conflict with the government in the Hampyong Sweet Potato Incident in 1976 – 1978 and the Oh Won-chun Incident in 1979.⁴⁰

c. Transnational network

I have already mentioned that the Church’s socio-political involvement was partly due to the transnational characteristic of the Church, such as the impact of

⁴⁰ for both incidents, see Kim (1993:281-287)

Vatican II and the WCC and the contextualized introduction of liberation theology. In addition, the transnational network of the Church has played an important role in aiding the Church to empower the nascent civil society. In particular, I would focus on two areas to which that transnational network contributed: one is the organization of progressive church groups; the other, its advocacy for human rights and making known the Korean government's violations in the international community.

In regard to the first, progressive church organizations during this period were directly or indirectly related to the work of missionaries. The JOC became actively involved in the labor union movement in 1967 through the case of the *Simdo* Textile union.⁴¹ In addition to Rev. Michael Bransfield, M.M., missionaries from Les Missions Etrangères de Paris, Salesians, Colombar worked actively in the JOC. For its part, the Catholic social movement for the urban poor owed its growth to American Jesuits, John Daly, SJ and Francis Buchmeier, SJ. As for the UIM, it was founded and supported by American Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries.

With respect to the international advocacy against cruel human-rights violations, the transnational network via missionaries was especially effective in bringing the abuse of power and human rights violations to the attention of the international community, in pressuring the authoritarian state with regard to these abuses, and in acquiring an autonomous public sphere, out of the state's control. The most well-known case is the international pressure exerted for the release of the outspoken poet, Kim Chi-ha. His "Declaration of Conscience" written in prison in

⁴¹ To organize the labor union at Simdo Textile in 1967 caused the oppression by the government; however, the oppression brought the reaction from the Federation of Korean Bishops' Conference, a first signal to herald the change of the Church's leadership from the separation between church and the state to social mission.

1975 was secretly delivered to Rev. Yoon, the representative of the National Conference for the Restoration of Democracy, and then abroad to Rev. James Sinnott, M.M. because it could not get published in the Korean media, which was controlled by the state. Rev. Sinnott, an American Maryknoll priest who had been expelled in 1975, had it translated into several languages, including Japanese, English, French, etc.; and this provoked the international campaign to save Mr. Kim. About 200 theologians and clerics from 15 countries pledged their signatures for this campaign (Chu 2005:109). Rev. Ogle, an American Methodist minister who was deported in 1974 for his advocacy for *Minchong Hangnyon*, also exerted significant pressure against the regime (Clark 2002:198).

Kang, who has studied the church and society in Korea, states the process of how the transnational network of the Church effectively worked against the grip of the state. He pays attention to the fact that the US Protestant and Catholic churches had lobbying power in the US Congress and the executive branch and exert a strong influence on the Vatican and the World Council of Churches. He described how the Korean churches secured a considerable autonomy from the state as follows (2000: 230-31):

- 1) The state represses a certain religious organization associated with the social movement in order to strengthen its grasp over civil society;
- 2) this religious organization is usually associated with foreign missionaries;
- 3) the first local confrontations and repressive actions cause the highest-level church leaders to mount defiance against infringement on their religious autonomy and organizational interest, making it a national issue;
- 4) at the same time, the problem is spread internationally by missionaries <...>;
- 5) the US churches and international religious organizations make direct protests to the

Korean government and appeal to the US congress, the US government or the UN, exerting pressure to make an announcement criticizing the Korean government or to make direct sanctions against it; and 6) faced with international criticism and negative public opinion, the Korean government withdraws repression against the religious organization, which results in weakening its grasp over civil society and discrediting its political legitimacy. Since the initial repression which targets one or two people, the number of people, implicated in the incident multiplies exponentially (chain effect) and the scope of effect magnifies quickly on all fronts (snowball effect), and eventually, the incident concludes in a direction opposing the intention of the Korean government (boomerang effect).

The missionaries played a role as a linkage between Korea and the global community. On the one hand, their assistance for progressive organizations represented a movement from the global to the local. On the other, there was a movement from the local to the global as they amplified the voice of the Korean people suppressed by the authoritarian state and appealed to the international community regarding human rights violations. These twofold movements were possible for three reasons. First, the missionaries were trained with the new theological orientation of Vatican II, progressive theologies, and the workers-priests movement in Europe. Secondly, in terms of physical threat, they were relatively free from the direct threat by the authoritarian state. The authoritarian regime imprisoned and even tortured several Korean clergy men, but it did not do so with the missionaries. It expelled the two missionaries: Rev. Sinnott and Rev. Ogle. Thirdly, the missionaries were privileged to channel funds from abroad to run progressive organizations so that they were economically autonomous from the Korean mainstream conservative church organization.

However, it should be kept in mind that the transnational network worked effectively not only due to the strength of the Church's global network, but also due to the characteristics of the Korea state in its international power relationship. Internally, the authoritarian Korean state was overdeveloped and powerful enough to control almost all aspects of the Korean society and economy and to leave little public sphere outside the surveillance of the state. Externally, however, the Korean state was weak. It was particularly dependent upon the US in terms of military security, international policy, and economy. Thus, the Korean state was sensitive to international, in particular, American pressure. In this situation, the Church was the institution that was most autonomous from the regulatory power of the state; and until recently, it had the strongest network with the West, whether through the Catholic global network or the Protestant missionaries' connections with the US. Given this background, the Church's transnational network worked powerfully for the nurturing of the autonomy of civil society by its pressure on the state.

3. Leadership Formation

Finally, the Church contributed to the formation of civil society leaders. Most civil society leaders nowadays have been related to the church-related organizations during the authoritarian regime. Kang observes that only a few of them had no relationship with such organizations (Kang 2002; 2003). Among civil society leaders, above all, several clergymen themselves have become nationally known civic leaders. Some Protestant ministers, for instance, Rev. Jae-jung Lee, an Episcopal priest, became members of the national assembly in 2000; and some

Catholic priests, for example, Rev. Se-ung Haam and Rev. Ky-in Song, were appointed members of special committees established by the current regime. The “civil society movement” of the early 1990s, differentiated from the *minjung* movement, was initiated by Rev. Kyung-suk Suh when he founded the CCEJ (Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice).⁴² It is against this historical background that many leaders of NGOs for migrant workers, as we shall see in the next chapter, are Christian clergymen.

The formation of leaders was not limited to the religious elite. The space that the Church provided became a site for less educated farmers, laborers and the urban poor to cultivate leadership skills. In particular, this was the case for many women labor leaders. Most women factory workers in the 1970s and the early 1980s were young migrants from rural areas with less education. They were characterized by docility, passivity, and a transitory commitment to industrial work, as other Asian women factory workers in export-processing zones have been depicted (Koo 2001:92). They were not only under the control of the capitalist system, but also their traditional patriarchal culture. However, the JOC and UIM trained these workers; and many who were trained by the JOC and UIM became transformed from passive, docile workers into labor movement leaders (Koo 2001:92-96; Park 2004). The training programs that the JOC and UIM provided were based on small group activities, reaching from recreational activities to education in labor law and social justice and

⁴² Whereas the *minjung* movement focused on *minjung* as the subject of history and pursues a radical social change, the civil society movement argued that the new stage of social movement after democratization should engage in middle class and should pursue changes in the issues, such as real estate issues and environment, whose priority during the authoritarian regime gave way to the issues of democratization or political change. The “civil society movement” has ushered a new social movement.

training in skills to lead small groups. These small group activities helped less educated young women laborers to express themselves, and they cultivated their leadership skills.⁴³

In short, the Church contributed to the formation of leadership in civil society by providing a social space and training programs in which not merely clergymen, but also common people developed leadership skills while sharing their problems, discussing possible solutions, and mobilizing their followers.

D. Confucian Cultural Environment of the Church

I have argued that the Church has played the role of midwife in engendering civil society during the process of struggle against the authoritarian state. How did Confucian traditional culture both empower and constrain the church in this role? This section attempts to examine this question. I have earlier stated that the development-oriented dictatorship was accepted by the masses against the backdrop of the Confucian cultural environment. Similarly, I would argue that the same cultural environment empowered the Church in its struggles yet enhanced its authoritarian practices as it did for the dictatorial state in its developmental strategies.

The Confucian cultural environment worked in favor of the Church in two senses. First, in the cultural environment of the Confucian emphasis on morality, the Korean Church's normative power was enhanced and it enjoyed great moral authority (Kim 1993; Chu 2005). I have shown that the state as moral educator endeavored to shape citizenship not only through schools and conscription, but also through various

⁴³ Two of my interviewees among NGOs leaders for migrant workers were from JOC.

rituals and ceremonies. It even intervened in the religious sphere to judge between supposed authentic and superstitious religious practices. This was possible against the backdrop of the history of the Confucian *Chosun*, in which state servants were commonly scholars and were accepted as moral educators as well as public officers. The same historical and cultural environment constituted the backdrop against which the Church acquired moral authority superior to that of the authoritarian state. Despite the fact that Christianity was a foreign and, until recently a minor religion in Korea, the Church's role of moral educator and judge was accepted without difficulty. Although the authoritarian state criticized the Church's involvement in socio-political issues as a violation of the separation between church and state, the Church counter-argued that its activism was not based on politics, but on its religious mission, dating back to the prophets in the bible. The normative power of the Church functioned at its best in the Confucian cultural environment.

The second sense in which the Confucian cultural environment has worked in favor of the Church concerns the hierarchical and communal cultural environment that Confucianism has traditionally fostered. The Confucian worldview stresses hierarchical relationships based on status and sex as well as the integration of social members based on mutual moral responsibility (cf. Madsen 2002b). Confucian hierarchical integration does not mean discrimination or exploitation. It basically means concern for others based on moral responsibility; and it aims at the organic integration of social members.⁴⁴ This worldview was well compatible to the Church's view of organic society and hierarchical integration. Just as Confucian

⁴⁴ Paternalism and nationalism in East Asia are rooted in this hierarchical and communal integration.

scholars were accustomed to have a sense of moral obligation to serve society in public office,⁴⁵ Christian clergies have had a similar sense of moral responsibility as public figures. In particular, under the cruel authoritarian regime of Korean dictatorships, this sense of moral obligation was turned into a sense of historical obligation. Hence, interestingly enough, to the degree that authoritarian regimes pushed for modernization as their historical task, so did progressive church groups push for democratization. Although their respective goals were different from each other, the process to pursue their goals took similar form against the backdrop of the hierarchical Confucian cultural environment. In both cases, it took the form of authoritarian mobilization. Kang (2003) is right when he says that the traditional Korean authoritarian culture worked usefully for the progressive clergy, allowing them to mobilize church resources despite the opposition by conservative lay elites. This was thanks to Korea's Confucian hierarchical culture. These clergies were not only autonomous from the state intrusion, but also above the conservative laity. In this cultural environment, the clergy were privileged not only to have normative moral power, but also to effectively mobilize people and resources against the state.

However, it is not difficult to see the backside of this combination between the Confucian cultural environment and Christian hierarchical mobilization. That is, it reinforced authoritarian practices. Both Catholics and Protestants were led by missionary clergymen, in particular in the earlier stage; and this fact enforced hierarchical relationships in dual senses: Western missionaries over natives; and clergy over laity. Both the Confucian hierarchical culture and the Christian

⁴⁵ This could partially explain why the student movement has become a major force in social change in Korea.

hierarchical tradition reinforced hierarchical practices that in fact repressed those at the lower level of the hierarchical ladder. In the struggle against the cruel and oppressive authoritarian state, the clergy become authoritarian as well. It did so because the concern of both for efficiency in the struggle and for security of the organization against the KCIA and police infiltration forced the decision making process to be more hierarchical. Kang (2003) has reported a priest's self-criticism about the double standards of priests of CPAJ. The priest stated that he "deplored the phenomena in which these progressive priests speak about justice and conscience toward society at large but in their pastoral situation repeat the pattern of the dictator who they detested. They acted like a little dictator over their parish." As long as the state was authoritarian, progressive circles, clergy included, were authoritarian as well.⁴⁶ Though the Confucian cultural environment worked favorably for the Church's struggle for democratization, the shadow side of the same cultural environment reinforced authoritarian practices. The Church thus did not successfully cultivate horizontal cooperation, in particular between the sexes and between the clergy and laity.

Conclusion

Church contributed to the formation of civil society in Korea against the backdrop of the democratization movement against developmental dictatorship. The dictatorship pushed Korean society toward modernization on the basis of a combined ideology of economic development and national security against communism. Its

⁴⁶ It was the same in the resistant social groups. The internal practices of student movement or progressive movement groups were authoritarian as well. See Kwon (2005)

ideology led to the social exclusion of laborers and farmers and repressive authoritarianism. Against this authoritarian state, Church debunked the ideology of developmentalism and undue stress on national security from theological perspectives and with a universalistic and humanistic language. It thus delegitimized the authoritarian state. It provided a counter-ideology which intellectuals, students, and the socially-excluded could make use of as an interpretative framework.

Furthermore, its institution became a strong resource for resistant movement groups to rely upon in terms of social space, material support, and the diffusion of information. It also contributed to the self-organization of the excluded groups, such as farmers, laborers, and the urban poor. In this process, it became a school for civic leadership. Accordingly, Church has played a role in engendering modern civil society in Korea.

The historical experiences of the Church in Korea are thus characterized as a mediator in two senses. First, the Church played a role as “organic intellectual” in Gramscian terms. The Church, in particular the progressive clergy, was directly and indirectly connected with the activists and the masses; and it provided them with the emotional and intellectual support that they needed. As Kang has pointed out (2002:15), almost none of the social struggles of the 1970s took place without the supportive network of the progressive clergy. They channeled the struggle with the aid of the Church’s ideological and material resources; and they amplified the news about the struggle to the society at large where the state controlled the media. Thus, the Church mediated the voices and interests of groups that were excluded and repressed by the authoritarian state, to the broader Korean society.

Secondly, the Church played a role as mediator between the global and the local. Owing to its transnational network, the Church brought in global ideas which became the backbone of counter-ideology as it contextualized that ideology; and it provided an interpretative framework for resistant groups to define their situation and to equip these groups with meanings of their struggle. It also brought material support from the global church to maintain the activities of many progressive groups. However, the role of the Church was not merely a receiver from the global to local. It was also a channel from the local to global. Through its transnational network, it actively informed the international community about human rights situations in Korea. It passed on information that the authoritarian state fiercely endeavored not to be leaked abroad. It advocated abroad for the promotion of human rights in Korea, and it pressured the influential foreign governments as well as the Korean government itself.⁴⁷ In this regard, the transnational network of the Church allowed it to become a mediator between global and local in both ways.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ We can see the similar role of the Church in East Timor. In particular, the videotape of the massacre of Santa Cruz in 1991 was clandestinely brought outside East Timor by a priest. It awakened the international community in regard to the issue of East Timor. The crucial role of the Catholic Church in the human rights advocate in East Timor and its independence from Indonesia is represented the award of the Nobel peace prize to Bishop Carlos Belo in 1996.

⁴⁸ It charges us to rethink about the Christian mission in modern history. After World War Two, the Christian mission used to be viewed as a tool of colonialism. However, missionary work can and should be reviewed in the dynamic context of global-local interaction (Dunch 2002).

IV. NGOs' Activism for Migrant Workers and Church

Introduction

Since the late 1980s, Korea has experienced a rapid influx of migrant workers, the large majority of whom were in Korea “illegally,” working in low-skilled jobs in the so-called 3-D (dirty, difficult and dangerous) sector. After significant industrialization for several decades, the Korean economy, and in particular, the small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector, has had to deal with a labor shortage. The strategy of the government for solving the problem was to import foreign labor. Borrowing from the experience of Japan, the Korean government and the SMEs (led by Korean Federation of Small Business, hereafter KFSB) established the industrial training program, which was introduced in 1991 as The Industrial Technical Trainee Program (hereafter, ITTP) whose implicit goal was to secure cheap labor.

Since that time, migrant workers have come to Korea from China, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Nepal, Bangladesh, etc., under this legal basis (Table 4-1). The financial crisis of late-1997 led to a rapid and dramatic exodus of foreign workers from Korea for a while, but by early 2002, the number had climbed back to an estimated 329,555, including at least 255,206 illegal or undocumented workers (Table 4-2).

Table 4-1. Numbers of migrant workers according the nationality

<i>Total</i>	306,382
China	154,652
Thailand	21,373
Philippines	18,502
Bangladesh	17,751
Indonesia	16,982
Vietnam	15,094
Mongol	13,094
Uzbekistan	8,834
Others	39,400

Source: Park (2003:2)

Table 4-2. Numbers of migrant workers in Korea, 1987-2002

Year	Total	Registered Migrant Workers		Industrial Trainees	Undocumented
		Professionals	Post-training Workers		
1987	6,409	2,192	0	0	4,217
1988	7,410	2,403	0	0	5,007
1989	14,610	2,474	0	0	12,136
1990	21,235	2,833	0	0	18,402
1991	45,449	2,973	0	599	41,877
1992	73,868	3,395	0	4,945	65,528
1993	66,919	3,767	0	8,644	54,508
1994	81,824	5,265	0	28,328	48,231
1995	128,908	8,228	0	38,812	81,866
1996	210,494	13,420	0	68,020	129,054
1997	245,399	15,900	0	81,451	148,048
1998	157,689	11,143	0	47,009	99,537
1999	217,384	12,592	0	69,454	135,338
2000	285,506	17,000	2,063	77,448	188,995
2001	329,555	19,549	8,065	46,735	255,206
2002	339,960	21,057	10,929	39,716	268,258

Source: Seol and Skrentny (2004:484) and Seol (2003a:79)

Soon, as the inhuman situation of migrant workers was known, activists came to form NGOs in order to promote their rights. The Nepalese protest at the Cathedral in 1995 became an incident to widely publicize the problems of ITTP and brought NGOs' movement for reforming the trainee program. The reform of the importing program cannot be made until NGOs struggled against KFSB and the government for ten years. Employment permit program, a new program to import foreign workers, was established in 2004.¹ Together with the promotion of rights of migrant workers—I shall later describe this, the reform of the program is a successful outcome of NGOs' activities. It stands out when considering the fact that the history of migration is very short and that Korea is such a homogenous country culturally, ethnically, and linguistically.

This chapter will examine how the NGOs, most of which are related to churches, have contributed to promoting the rights of migrant workers. For this inquiry, I will first present an overview of the influx of migrant workers and the NGOs' activism for them and will examine how church has come to be a leading player in this field. I will then detail the NGOs' accomplishment and explore how they could achieve the accomplishment in the contentions with other major actors, namely, KFSB, the state, and labor unions. Finally, I will point out that moral authority, sacrificial struggle, and human rights framing advanced this accomplishment and that activist-ministers have played a role of a catalyzer in this accomplishment.

¹ However, it was promised to be maintained until 2006 alongside with Employment system and finally ended December 2006.

A. The Influx of Migrant Workers and the NGOs' Activities

1. The Influx of Migrant Workers

When ITTP was set up, it had implicit rationales. For the government, this made it easy to control migrant workers and to circumvent the prohibition in Korea's existing Immigration and Emigration law against the employment of unskilled or low-skilled foreign workers (Seol 1999:416). Because the law only permits "professional and technical workers," such as professors, researchers, or entertainers, to work legally in Korea, there is no legal base to import unskilled foreign workers. For the SMEs, the program enabled the SMEs to make use of the foreigners not as workers but as trainees. The difference between them is serious. While workers should be entitled to basic labor protections, to market-based wage rates, and to the freedom to change jobs, "trainees" are not. Instead, under the ITTP, trainees were restricted to an assigned "training facility" and provided a government-mandated "stipend," which was far below the prevailing wage rate, compared to both native Korean workers and even undocumented workers doing the same job (Seol 1999:436-37). Trainees, moreover, were not entitled to basic labor protections, and they were required to leave Korea immediately after completing their two years of "training." Furthermore, the trainee program implicitly justified the cultural prejudice that foreign workers take up the lowest rung in the Korean social ladder, because trainees by definition need discipline and supervision.

As a consequence, not surprisingly, the trainee program has resulted in three phenomena. First, labor exploitation and human rights violations. The situation of exploited migrant workers was dramatically expressed in the sit-in strike of 13

Nepalese trainees in January 1995 at the *Myung-dong* Cathedral as I earlier mentioned. Second, as trainees pay enormous fees to the brokers from their origin, they try to earn more than the cost they already pay in order to enter Korea. The “stipends” a trainee earns for two years usually cannot fill up their cost for entrance. The situation naturally leads them to seek a higher wage despite the risk of becoming undocumented. Thus, finally, it is to produce workers who flee from the assigned workplace and become illegal or undocumented workers and thus are able to earn market rate wages. For this reason the rate of the undocumented workers among the migrant workers has been notoriously high, even sometimes almost 80% before a new employment program was enacted in 2003 (Table 4-3).

Table 4-3. Number of undocumented migrant workers, 1996-2005 (thousands)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total number of migrant workers</i>	<i>Number and % of undocumented migrant workers</i>
1996	210	129 (61.3%)
1997	245	148 (60.3%)
1998	152	99 (63.1%)
1999	178	135 (62.3%)
2000	286	189 (66.2%)
2001	330	255 (77.4%)
2002	363	289 (79.8%)

Table 4-3. Number of undocumented migrant workers, Continued

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total number of migrant workers</i>	<i>Number and % of undocumented migrant workers</i>
2003	389	138 ² (35.3%)
2004.6	420	166 (39.5%)
2005.5	401	199 (49.7%)

Source: Quote from Lee 2005:43

2. NGOs' Movement for Migrant Workers

Since 1992, after the trainee program was introduced in 1991, the violation of the rights of the migrant workers has led to the formation of NGOs which have tried to protect the migrant workers' human dignity and rights. It started with the Catholic Church establishing the Chun Center for Migrant Workers (CCMW)³ for the Archdiocese of Seoul and a non-religion-related NGOs, the Migrant Workers' Human Rights Center in 1992, followed by other NGOs. The Nepalese protest in January 1995 provoked public concern from many other NGOs, and all have come to form a coalition, the Joint Committee for the Migrant Workers in Korea (JCMK).⁴ It sets as a goal the abolition of the trainee program and the establishment of an employment permit program. However, JCMK come to have division twice. First, some activists, who could not be satisfied with employment permit program, demanded for labor

² The sharp drop of undocumented workers from 289,000 in 2002 to 138,000 in 2003 resulted in the temporally legalization of those who stayed in Korea for less than 4 years. As the temporary term finished in 2004, the ratio of undocumented workers increased into almost 50%.

³ Hereafter, unless I quote them from the published material or they are described in the widely known context, I use pseudonyms for the individual NGOs and the activists who work in this field for migrant workers for their privacy.

⁴ CCMW, the most influential actor in the movement in 1992-95 before JCMK was formed, has chosen to concentrate on labor counseling rather than reforming activities by participating in JCMK.

permit program.⁵ They got separated from JCMK and pursued to organize migrant workers union in 2001.⁶ Second, major division took place around the time of the enactment of establishing the employment permit program in 2003. Several NGOs, including the ones led by the former president and the vice-president of JCMK, withdrew from JCMK and formed a new coalition, Network for Migrants Rights (NMR). Both divisions were not merely caused by the difference of goals NGOs seek or power struggles among NGOs within JCMK. These factors cannot be excluded; however, the main factor was the undemocratic procedures within JCMK. I shall turn to this point when I discuss the lack of civility of NGOs' practice.

The NGOs' activities for the migrant workers have gradually developed in three directions for the past years: first, defending their basic human rights against violation; second, promoting their status by changing the ITTP; finally, integrating them into Korean society. The first set of activities has included labor counseling, shelter, legal or medical services, and educational services for the children of migrant workers. These activities address the level of individual assistance. The second one is more oriented to the reform of the system. It has aimed to abolish the trainee program under which migrant workers cannot be recognized as laborers so that they can become full members whom Korean labor law would protect. The final one has included Koreans language course for migrants, education of migrants' human rights

⁵ Both programs define migrant workers as laborers, not as trainees, so as to enjoy labor rights. The main difference between them lies in their right to move to a workplace. While the labor permit program allows migrant workers to change their workplaces, the employment permit program does not allow it.

⁶ This group soon dissolved. Later in 2005, a group of migrant workers, assisted by KCTU, organized union of migrant workers. However, the government did not acknowledge its legal establishment on the ground that the members are undocumented, and the union brought this case into the court.

for Koreans, organizing communities for inter-racial marriage couples, and multicultural festivals. These activities are explicitly or implicitly geared toward the transformation of Korea into multicultural society. Of course, all NGOs do not work for these three directions. Many Catholic organizations, in particular, the ones directly supervised by the Catholic hierarchy, mainly pursue the first directions; JCMK primarily aims the second one; the third one is more salient in NMR which also support organizing union of migrant workers.

3. Overwhelming Presence of Christianity

It is remarkable to see the fact that most NGOs are explicitly related to Christianity. According to Rev. Cheon-ung Park, a Protestant minister and the director of the *Ansan Migrant Workers' Center*, there are 159 groups who work for migrant workers in 2003 (Park 2003). Among them, twelve groups are related to the Catholic Church; ninety-nine to the Protestant churches; four to the Buddhist; seven to Islam; eight work for medical care; three for legal service; and eleven from civic and labor NGOs.⁷ However, more important is the influence of the Protestant ministers who is the leader of the major NGOs. They have been the main partners with whom the government asks for collaboration or from whom the media try to contact in order to get information. They have been treated as representative figures of civil society in regard to migrant workers. Even, the newly built, government-funded migrant workers' centers, such as *Migrant Workers Center in Korea* and *Social Welfare Center*

⁷ This number includes all the groups whose activities anyhow include migrant workers even though migrant workers are not the main target of their activities. The number of the groups who actually and mainly work for them is much smaller.

for Migrant Workers, are assigned to some prominent ministers who led JCMK, fighting against government. Although several activists in this field concern the danger of cooption in this cooperation with the government, these ministers have become a nationally recognized civic leader, at least in regard to the issues concerning migrant workers.

What accounts for the overwhelming presence of the church-related NGOs in this field and the fact that church-related organizations were the first groups to assist migrant workers? First, in terms of ideology, Christian emphasis on charity for the needy led progressive Christians to organize to help migrant workers. In particular, the spirit of charity, regardless of nationality, race, or religion, fostered universalism which relativized a nationalistic attitude and a class-based bias of labor activists in the early 1990s.

Korean intellectuals those days conceived that the importation of migrant workers would be only an ephemeral phenomenon for a short time and that these imported workers would never become a significant part of the labor force in Korea.⁸ Progressive circles and labor activists primarily put their advocacy on domestic workers due to the development of the Korean Labor movement after democratization. To them, the issues of migrant workers were secondary. A recent retrospect of Jongkang Ha, a well-known labor activist, manifests this attitude. He confessed how narrow his perspective was in regard to migrant workers. In the early 1990s, he decided not to get involved in the issues of migrant workers even though he found that

⁸ Dong Hoon Seol, a leading sociologist in this field, told that his grant proposal in the early 1990s was rejected by the review committees on the ground that the topic of migrant workers was not significant due to their small size. This committee's view manifests the intellectual atmosphere in regard to migrant workers those days. Interview on August 4, 2003.

they needed labor counseling. He stated that his decision was based on the judgment that many migrant workers were not workers in their origin countries and had a college education.⁹ Ha's retrospect illustrates the atmosphere of progressive circles and labor activists in the 1990s: Korean workers first, not necessarily due to nationalistic reasons but due to the class-bias. The concern for race and ethnicity was rare among them.

In comparison, charity regardless of nationality and race can foster a universalism which relativizes nationalistic and class-based attitudes. Charity, interpreted in both the preferential option for the poor of the Catholic social teaching and the *minjung* theology of the Protestant Church, motivate the progressive church-related organizations and activists to work for migrant workers.

Second, in terms of organizational characteristics, the churches have broader transnational networks than ordinary NGOs. It helps them to recognize the issue of migrant workers from an earlier period and to utilize its networks for promoting their rights of migrant workers. In particular, the missionaries of the Catholic Church got involved early and made bridges between the Korean Church and migrant workers, partly owing to the advantage of language and their existential understanding of living in Korea as foreigners. Until the National Committee for Ministry for Migrants under the Catholic Bishops Conference in Korea in 2003, it was missionary priests, not Korean priests, who mainly worked for migrant workers. The churches' international networks also helped. Mi-young Park, an actual founder of CCMW, attributed the establishment of CCMW to her attendance at an international Catholic workers'

⁹ *Hankyoreh* March 6, 2007.

meeting in 1988.¹⁰ The main theme of the meeting, migrant workers, was new to her, because it was not a social issue then in Korea. Later when Korea began to import migrant worker through the trainee program in 1991, she took the initiative and asked the Seoul Archdiocese to establish CCMW.

Third, in terms of historical experience, as I discussed in the previous chapter, churches has played a vital role in the democratization and the labor movement in 1970s -1980s. The advocacy of the human rights for migrant workers is in line with this experience. Most Protestant and Catholic activists who work in this field of migrant workers have come from this background as I shall discuss in Chapter VI. They conceive migrant workers as “the new poor” who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, as the Korean workers were vulnerable before democratization. They, equipped both with skills of labor counseling and organization and with the ideology of the preferential option for the poor and/or the *minjung* theology, extended their commitment to these new poor.

In short, these three combined factors explain why the Church responded to the issues of migrant workers and why the church-related organizations are prevalent in this field. In contrast, most progressive circles were slow to respond to the issue of migrant workers, because they considered it as a minor issue, compared to the native Korean labor movement or the other domestic problems. Buddhists have universalism, based on compassion, but lack the historical experience and the advantage of transnational networks.

¹⁰ Interview on June 2, 2005.

B. NGO's Accomplishment

1. Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers

The NGOs' activities have significantly promoted the rights of migrant workers (Lim 2002; Seol 2005; Kim 2004). In particular, when considering the fact that the influx of foreign workers is a very recent phenomenon, the movement can be evaluated as quite successful. Among the accomplishment, the establishment of the employment permit program should be counted as the foremost achievement. Before its examination, I will first indicate several cases which show that the elevation of workers' rights has resulted from the struggle of the movement.

(1) Covering undocumented workers by the compensation for work-related injury (1994): This was acquired by the strategy of appealing to the court by CCMW and confirmed as a result of the first public protest. Undocumented workers were not covered by the compensation for work-related injury. CCMW appealed to the administrative court and won concerning this issue in November 1993. However, the Ministry of Labor did not surrender to the court decision and brought the case to the higher court. Meantime, the first public protest, a sit-in, in January 1994, organized by the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ), took place. Eleven migrant workers from Nepal and Bangladesh began a sit-in at the headquarter of CCEJ on January 9. They all suffered serious injuries but did not get any compensation because of their status as undocumented. The CCEJ and workers quite consciously raised the issue of human rights; one of the signs used by the workers simply stated, "We are human." The sit-in, through the assistance of the CCEJ, drew public attention and support from civic, labor, and religious organizations. As it became a public issue,

President Kim Young-Sam ordered humanitarian assistance for the Ministry of Labor on January 13, and the Ministry withdrew the case from the court and announced on February 7 that undocumented workers could be covered by the compensation for work-related injury (Seol 2005:84). On that day, the migrant workers finished their almost 30 days sit-in.

The case is significant. First, it was the first achievement beyond direct humanitarian assistance. It made a path for later court decisions and thus the rights of migrant workers have a legal base. Second, it is a result of diverse strategies, initiated by different NGOs in separation. As the strategies—both appeal to the court and public protest—produced a visible outcome in this case, both strategies become popular later in the NGOs' activities.

(2) Extending the protection of the Labor Standard Act to trainees (1995): As an outcome of the protest of the Nepalese trainees at the Cathedral in January 1995, the Ministry of the Labor agreed that the trainees be covered by compensation for work-related injury, medical insurance, and the protection by the Labor Standard Act (Seol 2005:91-92). This came about through the pressure of a joint committee of thirty-eight NGOs (which evolved into the JCMK), ignited by the protest. These NGOs defined the trainee program as a new slavery system and asked the government for its revision. The government, without changing the trainee program itself, responded with the promotion of the rights of the trainees. Although all the thirteen Nepalese trainees who participated in the protest were deported, the government practically acknowledged that the trainees were workers in practice.

(3) Extending severance pay to the undocumented workers (1997): Another important case was decided by the Supreme Court in 1997. This decision affirmed the right of undocumented workers to receive severance pay. It was a case of M. Kalek from Bangladesh who violated immigration law and became undocumented. He appealed to the court for his severance pay. The Supreme Court upheld a lower court's decision that ruled all foreign workers, including those working illegally, deserve severance benefits.¹¹

(4) Applying the Labor Standards Act to the undocumented workers (1998): on October 14, 1998, the Ministry of Labor announced that all undocumented migrant workers in Korea would be protected under the Labor Standards Act. According to a Ministry spokesperson, the Act was amended because “The relevant Supreme Court’s judicial precedents regard illegal foreign workers as workers to whom the Labor Standards Act applies ...Accordingly, when employers ...violate the Labor Standards Act against illegal foreign workers, the employers are subject to the same level of punishment as that against domestic workers” (Ministry of Labor Press Release, 14 October 1998). This decision, while undoubtedly significant, was still only a qualified victory since the Act applied to companies with five or more employees—yet, a large proportion of undocumented workers worked in small companies with fewer than five workers. In July 2000, however, this limitation was partly overcome when the occupational accident law extended to cover workers in all companies regardless of size (Park 2003:43).

¹¹ *Chosun Ilbo*, August 8, 1997.

(5) Education for the children of undocumented workers (2000): NGOs successfully publicized a case that children of undocumented workers remained in a room all day long with the door locked while their parents were at work. The undocumented status of their parents hindered these children from being admitted to the school. Upon the public concern, the Department of Education made the decision to admit the kids even though their parents are undocumented. For admission, the Department only requires the certification of entry, which foreigners can acquire regardless of their current status. It was a significant sign that this social service was extended to the children of undocumented workers.

2. Road to Employment Permit Program

This section will examine how the NGOs could successfully transform the importing program of foreign workers by introducing the employment permit program and how Christianity has played in this promotion. Introducing employment permit program is a major success as it gives foundation on which migrant workers to be treated as a worker, not a trainee. In the sense that NGOs did not succeed in abolishing the trainee program, the goal to abolish it is half-achieved and the new program is a product of contention, negotiation, and compromise among the NGOs, the government, and KFSB. However, it is a fruit of ten years' contentious struggle, and the NGOs acquire the government's promise of closing down the trainee program by 2006.

The Nepalese protest at the Cathedral in 1995 successfully drew the public attention and provoke public awareness of the need to amend the trainee program, at least, if not changing the program, a special law to prevent the human rights violation of migrant workers. Owing to the public pressure, four proposals of the special act for protecting foreign workers were made after series of debates. The Ministry of Labor and JCMK argued that the special act should include the employment permit, while both the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and KFSB opposed it on account of the financial cost for the SMEs. Facing strong opposition by the KFSB, the law making process was slow and delayed. However, the Asia economic crisis in 1997 blew away the enactment contention as well as the public concern for migrant workers. The concern for the growing number of laid-off domestic workers superseded concern over the foreign workers. Meanwhile, frustrating the efforts of the movement, the government made an amendment but it maintained the existing trainee program by adding 1 year employment permit after working for 2 years as a trainee.¹²

However, the JCMK began to successfully re-draw public attention again in 2000 as the state of economic crisis faded. Then, in March 2000, the JCMK published a white paper entitled *Weiguk-in sanop kisul yonsusaeng ingwon paekso* (*The Report on the Human Rights Situation of the Foreign Trainees*). Publishing this *Report*, the JCMK sent it directly to South Korea's president, Kim Dae Jung, who coveted the Nobel peace prize for years and actually was awarded it that year. President Kim's initial response to the report was positive. Shortly after receiving the report, he ordered both his own ruling party, the Millennium Democratic Party, and

¹² Later in 2002, it was changed into 1+2 system, which means to work 1 year as a trainee and 2 years as a worker.

the Ministry of Labor to study the foreign worker issue and develop recommendations. On August 24, 2000, the head of the ruling party and the Minister of Labor announced the proposal that the government would enact a new law to abolish the trainee program and legalize employment permits.¹³ The proposal was quite close to, although not exactly the same as, the proposal put forth by the JCMK. Again, however, the proposed law was resisted by the KFSB and its implementation postponed.¹⁴

The movement to resist the control of the government continued. On July 17, 2002, the government announced the plan to deport the current 255,000 “illegal” workers at the end of March 2003 and to import a new 145,000 trainees. The JCMK organized protests against this plan for months, including street campaigns and a hunger strike by church ministers and activists which lasted several days. On November 22, the government announced a change in the original plan: those who stayed in Korea less than three years among the illegal workers would be allowed to stay one year more. The change manifests not only the rationale of the government faced with the shortage of the labor, but also the power of the protests against human rights violations. President Kim Dae Jung reportedly said: “In spite of their illegal status, the human rights of the illegal foreign workers should not be violated. The government should make efforts to protect their rights according to the law and to properly deal with the employers who violate their human rights.”¹⁵

¹³ See “*Oegug-in geunloja go-yong mich gwanli daechaeg* (On the Policy of the Employment and the Administration of Foreign Workers)” by the joint meeting between Millennium Democratic Party and the Department of Labor at www.jcmk.org, accessed on November 25, 2002.

¹⁴ *Hankyoreh* newspaper, January 11, 2001.

¹⁵ *Hankyoreh* newspaper, November 22, 2002.

With the inauguration of the new President Rho in February in 2003, the NGOs, coordinated by JCMK, continued to pressure the government and the National Assembly to enact a new law that abolishes the trainee program and establishes the employment permit program. They developed a public campaign, which included a nine-day hunger strike from June 9 to 17 in front of the National Assembly. Finally, the National Assembly passed the Foreign Workers Employment Act on July 31, 2003. The new law will allow the work permit system and the existing industrial trainee program to coexist. In addition, owing to the new law, the Labor Law will be applied to foreign workers just as they are to Korean citizens, and migrant workers will be guaranteed the three primary labor rights of organization, collective bargaining and collective action, as well as insurance for accidents and injuries at worksites and the minimum wage.¹⁶

C. Contentious Actors: KFSC, the Government, and Labor Union

The KFSC has fiercely opposed the abolishment of the trainee program from the beginning of the NGOs' movement to abolish it. It is not only that the KFSC represents the interest of the employers in the SMEs, but also that it is the officially commissioned organization to bring the foreign trainees. The second aspect as the official organization to import the trainees has brought them a good deal of financial advantage because the KFSC has charged individual trainees various fees for connecting them to the workplace. The trainee program has been called a golden goose. Even some researchers point that it is due to its financial advantage that the

¹⁶ *Chosun Ilbo*, August 1, 2003

KFSC tenaciously tries to maintain the trainee program (Seol 1999:442). Against the movement for the employment permit program, the KFSB desperately argued that the current trainee program should be maintained. The KFSB presented their counter-argument, based on the three points.¹⁷ First, the employment permit program would cause the increase in wages, which threatens the SMEs. Second, as the employment system gives migrant workers the status of worker, the Labor Standard Law and the other labor laws could be applied to them. Then, it would lead to the emergence of collective actions by migrant workers, which will add social problems. Finally, it would eventually allow the foreigners' permanent residence, like the case of the Turkish in Germany, which could disrupt the Korean national identity. The counter-argument by KFSB succinctly captures the key issues: economic cost, preventing social unrest, and national integrity.

However, the KFSB could not win public support as the JCMK did. The decline of the KFSB in gaining public opinion is manifested in the change of the slogan against the employment system. In 1995, when the Ministry of Labor tried to amend the trainee program by introducing the employment system, the KFSB cried: "The Ministry of Labor aims to kill the KFSC." In 2000, when the head of the ruling party and the Minister of Labor announced the proposal for the employment system, the slogan employed by the KFSB was: "We dreadfully oppose employment permit to the point of our death." In 2003, the slogan becomes milder: "We oppose employment permit." While the JCMK pressured the government and the National Assembly with the tactics of public demonstration of sits-in and hunger strikes as well as various

¹⁷ *Yonhap News*, April 2, 2003.

campaigns through newsletters and the internet, the counter-arguments of the KFSB were not persuasive to the public. Instead, the KFSB relied upon the lobbying of National Assembly members.¹⁸

Then, what is the position of the government? While the KFSB and the NGOs have contended over the policy of importing migrant workers, the government seems to have been opportunistic with diverse, sometimes conflicting voices. Each Ministry in the cabinet shows its own concerns. Since the trainee program was established, the Ministry of Labor has raised a voice similar to the NGOs and has suggested the legal acknowledgment of migrant workers as a worker. Its concern has been the realistic reaction to the increasing of undocumented workers at the policy level. On the other hand, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce worries about the securing of cheap labor, and the Ministry of Justice the control of immigrated population. Not only have the positions of the Ministries not been harmonious and coherent, but also the policy announcement and the enforcement have not been consistent. For instance, the government has announced the mass deportation of the undocumented migrant workers and then has withdrawn its enforcement by extending the time-limit or giving temporary amnesty.¹⁹

What would these conflicting voices and inconsistent policies suggest? Do these support the “gap hypothesis”²⁰ or imply the fragmentation of the government

¹⁸ The employment system was anticipated to be enacted by the National Assembly in June 2003, but the bill was postponed to be proposed. It was a consequence of the lobby by the KFSB.

¹⁹ This announcement of mass deportation and its withdrawal of enforcement have become a pattern of government policy since 1992. The incident of 2002 represents this pattern. This pattern manifests the effectiveness of the social movement as well as the labor shortage of the 3D sectors.

²⁰ The gap hypothesis means that the gap between the goals of national immigration policy and the actual results of policies becomes wider, and thus it provokes greater public hostility toward immigrants and pressures for more restrictive policies. For gap hypothesis, see Cornelius, et al 1994.

and even loss of government's control? This question requires a broader investigation of the relationship between the state and society in the context of globalization, which I cannot pursue in this paper. Rather, I would limit the discussion within the examination of the main policy changes by locating it in the historical context of the Korean state which has played a crucial role in the economic development since 1960s by organizing and coordinating social groups. The role of the Korean state entailed the selective and strategic alliance with the capital and the exclusion of labor (Koo 2001). The current policy in regard to migrant workers should be understood as being in line with the state's strategy to pursue the nation-state project. In my assessment, the policy changes in the previous section, including the promotion of the rights of migrant workers, tells three main principles of the government in shaping policies. First, the need for labor has to be met; second, domestic workers should be protected; third, immigrant residence should not be allowed. The first is about the economic need; the second and the third are nationalistic concerns. These three principles set the boundary of policies. Within this basic boundary, both the slow introduction of the employment permit program through the system of "first training and then allowing employment" in the system level, and the several announcement of mass deportation and the delay of its enforcement in the policy level, are not seen as the significant failure or inconsistency of the policy. Those policies are orchestrated by the nation-state project.

Moreover, the will to control is implicitly revealed in the recent enactment of July 31, 2003. It not only maintains the current trainee program, but also defines who is qualified to apply for the employment system and who is not. When it was enacted,

it prescribed that only those who have been in Korea for less than four years can apply for the employment permit. Those who have been in Korea more than four years cannot apply and thus have to leave by November 15, 2003. The criterion of four years prevents the possibility of their applying for naturalization because after five years of residence a person can apply for naturalization.²¹ However, the will to control works in strategic differentiation. The deportation enforcement in November 2003, the first enforcement since it was brought up for the first time in 1993, divides the undocumented workers and applies the law enforcement differently. On the first day of enforcement, November 16, the Ministry of Justice announced that it would temporarily exclude those who work in manufacturing from the arrest and focus on those in the entertainment and restaurant sectors.²² This demonstrates the priority of providing labor to the manufacturing sector in 3D jobs. In addition, facing a strong protest by Korean-Chinese migrant workers, led by a Protestant minister, the founder of CCEJ, the government promised to favor the Korean-Chinese.²³ The state therefore recognizes and controls migrant workers by creating new categories, such as legal/illegal, more/less than four years, manufacture/service sector, and Korean blood or not. All of these categories manifest economic and national concerns. Therefore, the seemingly conflicting voices within the cabinet and the supposedly inconsistent policies are orchestrated by the state to the tune of the nationalistic project of

²¹ According to the revised Korean Nationality Law in 1998, foreigners who have resided in Korea for more than 5 years are qualified to apply the Korean citizenship.

²² *Yonhap News*, Nov. 16, 2003.

²³ *Yonhap News*, Nov. 30, 2003; *Chosun Ilbo*, Nov. 30, 2003.

economic development. Hence, they should be seen as calculated flexibility rather than losing control or failure in policy.²⁴

The last actor which deserves our examination in relation to migrant workers is the labor union. In the early 1990s, the labor union opposed the importation of foreign workers. After they were brought, as a labor union, who in particular still stick to the Left wing ideology, the two national labor unions the Korean Confederation of Trade Union (KCTU) and the Federation of Korean Trade Union (FKTU), officially support the rights of migrant workers. However, in practice, they are inactive to show their support except the rhetorical support of the KCTU, a more progressive union at the conference with NGOs or media. The migrant workers are not their issue, especially under the environment in which the labor market flexibility has been sought after the IMF remedy of structural adjustment for the financial crisis in 1997 and has transformed jobs into “disposable” ones.²⁵ The following speech by a staff of KCTU in 1999 at the JCMK meeting illustrates the concerns of KCTU:

[In regard to organizing migrant workers' union by KCTU] It is true that there is no plan. The leadership takes organizing the 7 million part time irregular Korean workers as priority. We may pursue to include migrant workers under unions according to sectors. However, if we organize migrant workers union in separation from Koreans', there might be conflict [with Koreans]. We have to be attentive to the response of the Korean workers if trying to organize migrant workers union (JCMK Memorandum June 8, 1999; quote from Lee 2005:58 in my translation).

²⁴ What I mean by calculated flexibility is the state's adept maneuvering with which the state responds to the changes in the market and the society in its territory and tries to coordinate the need between the market and society by utilizing its material and ideological resources and populations.

²⁵ Korean companies used to maintain the policy of life-long employment before the economic crisis. However, the pursuit of flexible labor market made the companies give up this practice.

Thus, the some NGOs have expressed the concern that the labor unions should show more practical support for migrant workers according to the union's ideology.²⁶ There is a few unions at local level, for instance, *Saangso* union in *Taegu*, include migrant workers. Even April in 2005, a unit of KCTU headquarter and some migrant workers organized a migrant workers' union and tried to register in the Ministry of the Labor.²⁷ Obviously, this demonstrates the KCTU's interest in supporting migrant workers. Nevertheless, KCTU does not seem to take migrant worker seriously, for the full time position for the unit became downsized into a part-time position and was replaced by a new person who had no experience of working with migrant workers at all.²⁸ In general, while the leadership of the unions at top level shows their advocacy for migrant workers though with symbolic or rhetorical support, most Korean native workers at workplace are apathetic. It implies that Korean workers are anyhow better treated than migrants' and that their interest is not yet intersected or threatened by migrant workers'.

I have illustrated the "success" of the movement. However, the history of success itself is the history of contention, negotiation, and compromise of the parties in the issue of the migrant workers. Not only the program of training for two years and employing for one year, as the failure of enacting the special law in 1995-98, but also the new law to allow the employment system but not to abolish the trainee program in

²⁶ *Deubureu sanun saam* (Living in solidarity), a newsletter by Association for Foreign Workers' Human Rights in Pusan, June 2003. Even at the public protest against deportation policy in November 2003, tension between labor unions and some NGOs group were explicitly expressed. Rev. Lee, the leader of *Heemang* Migrant Workers Center, criticized the policy of union in his speech, which provoked counter-criticism by KCTU.

²⁷ Reportedly, the number of members, most of whom are known as undocumented, is around forty. KCTU did not inform the membership, concerning the danger of deportation. The government did not acknowledge its validity because of the "illegal" status.

²⁸ Interview with a KCTU staff on July 21, 2005.

2003 are such examples of contention and negotiation among the KFSC, the government, and the NGOs in the movement.

D. Factors to Bring Achievement

What makes the JCMK and NGOs win over the KFSB in terms of public opinion and bring about the changes of the policy? In spite of the resources, KFSB is much stronger than JCMK. However, JCMK persuasively framed the issue, maintained moral superiority, and utilizes the religious resources. In terms of framing, while KFSB counter-frames the issue in terms of national interest, NGOs frames with human rights. Human rights framing can evoke more public concerns, in particular post-authoritarian Korea. The experience of military dictatorship left Koreans to detest human rights violations. As a consequence, the emerged middle class cannot admit the violations even for the foreigners, although imbued with the nuance of national pride. To them, national interest KFSB presented echoes the slogan of previous dictatorship. The authoritarian regime used to justify the abusive power and labor exploitation with national development or national security.

The persuasiveness of human rights framing can be also understood in the context of Korean state's drive for globalization in 1990s. The Korea government has abided by the norm of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 1991; it joined OECD in 1992; and the newly elected president Kim Young Sam in 1993 pushed Korea to become a country of "globalization."²⁹ After the democratization in 1987

²⁹ "Fellow citizens: Globalization is the shortcut which will lead us to building a first-class country in the 21st Century. This is why I revealed my plan for globalization and the government has concentrated all of its energy in forging ahead with it. It is aimed at realizing globalization in all

and the Seoul Olympic in 1988, through 1990s up to now, the Korean government strove to make Korea “a world class country” and thus has become sensitive to the international recognition,³⁰ especially in regards to human rights violations. In this context, the strategy to appeal to the court was compelling in the earlier period of NGOs’ activities, because, by juxtaposing the international norm with the state’s efforts for globalization, it urged the state to be consistent in its word and practice.

While I claim for the effectiveness of human rights framing, I am cautious of the danger of inflation of the effectiveness of human rights discourse (Joppke 1998a; Schuck 1998). Some scholars argue that human rights discourse becomes a universal norm (Benhabib 1995; Cheng 2002) and constitutes a human rights regime as it has become a norm of transnational institutions such as the UN and international NGOs (Soysal 1994; Meyer et als. 1997). However, it is misleading. Any idea such as human rights discourse, when it becomes effective, requires an agent to concretize it in the specific context, a context which contains structural constraints and cultural tensions (Gurowitz 1999). Thus, a legitimate agent, employing the idea, willing to pay for utilizing the discourse, and able to interpret in the particular context, can produce a successful outcome through dialogue, negotiation, and struggle with the structural constraints and cultural tension. Without a competent agent, human rights discourse can be an empty idea with no normative effectiveness. Human rights discourse can

sectors—politics, foreign affairs, economy, society, education, culture and sports. To this end, it is necessary to enhance our viewpoints, way of thinking, system and practices to the world class level.” (Kim Young Sam, January 6, 1995, Korea Broadcasting Station (KBS) Television). The globalization President Kim conceived was an outcome of the history of the developmental state. It was an expression of the desire to become an advanced country, whose rhetoric is ironically based on neo-liberalism and nationalism.

³⁰ Globalization puts Korea into a situation, more applicable to the notion of certification McAdam et al call (McAdam et als, 2001).

become effectual only through a competent agent. By neglecting this agency and context, scholars who argue for the existence of the universal human rights norms cannot appropriately deal with the social and political struggle in its employment and enforcement.

This reflection leads us to attend to the NGOs' struggle for promoting the rights of migrant workers and discern the factors which make achievement possible. First of all, NGOs' tireless struggle stands out. As I stated earlier, the establishment of employment permit program is an outcome of the ten years' struggle against KFSB and the government. In the initial period, ignited by the sit-in at the Cathedral in 1995, the NGOs movement for the new enactment on migrant workers and the revision of the trainee program went well with strong public support. Soon, however, it faced hostile situation, not only due to the opposition of the Department of Justice and the KFSB, but also due to the economic crisis in 1997 – 98. Obviously, the NGOs had at least three major experiences frustrating their efforts to enact employment permit program: first, economic crisis in 1997, followed by the revision of trainee program, that is 2 years trainees and 1 year employment; second, the delay and then disappearance of the proposal of the ruling party and the Ministry of Labor in which the government would enact a new law to abolish the trainee program and legalize employment permits in August 2000; third, the delay of voting the proposal June 2003. However, the NGOs persistently resumed their activities and protested the government's control of migrant workers, including several major protests such as the hunger strikes and street campaign against the government's plan of the deporting "illegal" workers in 2000, the sits-in at the Nation Assembly for enacting employment

permit program in June 2003, and multi-located sits-in in November 2003 against the plan of deporting “illegal” workers as a way of preparing for employment permit program.³¹ The sacrificial struggles have made the public not to lose their concern for migrant workers and have pressured the government to update the system and practice in accordance to the standard.

Second, moral authority of NGOs enhances their persuasive power. Although KFSB frames their position with national interest, public suspects it to be more interested in its own interest than national interest. KFSB have collected the fees in assigning the trainees to workplace. In comparison, the NGOs work not for their own interest but for migrant workers. Their framing of human rights is not for their own rights but for migrants. The sacrifice they have made is evident in the struggle.

It is indirectly illustrated in the remark of the role of the media in the promotion of migrant workers’ rights by an activist, the leader of an NGO with no relation with religion, who describes herself as atheist and Marxist activist. According to her, the issue of migrant workers was exploited by mass media, favorably to the NGOs.³² She suggests two reasons why the mass media have favorably dealt with the migrant worker’s issue: sensationalism and national pride.

“You know, to Koreans, the issue of foreigners in Korea is still foreign. It means something fresh and sensational, which fits well with what the media wants. Thus, the mass media present migrant workers as hard working in a difficult environment away from their family and home country. Another reason is related to the general societal drive for globalization. The media tries to lead the Koreans to know about Asia or the rest of the world but with evoking national pride. The media present them as hardworking but exploited by ugly employers and then

³¹ One of the multi-located sits-in was at the Cathedral, organized by the group whose goal was to organize union. The sits-in lasted for 380 days but ended without any fruit.

³² Benford and Snow (2000) mention the importance of the media play in framing contention.

deliver some instructive message: 'How could this mistreatment happen in Korea? This is ugly and shameful.' Don't you know the TV show, 'Asia, Asia!' in '*nukkimpyo*', do you?³³ To me, the TV show makes use of migrant workers although the individual migrant worker in the air can get some benefit. Koreans may come to know more about the country and their culture through the life of the migrant worker in '*nukkimpyo*'. But the media make them an object of Koreans' pity and help. Although I don't like this media play, it is true that it works favorably for migrant workers",³⁴

This activist's critical analysis can be seen as an affirmation of the play of the mass media in public opinion. However, more importantly, it implicitly manifests the legitimacy of the NGOs' activities and struggles from a different angle. It would be correct to understand that because of the moral superiority, although mass media represents the migrant workers with their own taste and project, the NGOs can get the favorable treatment by mass media with respect to the issue of migrant workers. It becomes clearer when it is compared to the labor unions' strike, about which the tone of the report in the mass media is not as positive as in the case of migrant worker. Seol, a sociologist who has studied migrant workers in Korea, also points the moral superiority of the NGOs. Among the diverse protest by different groups in front of the National Assembly in June 2003, the JCMK and the NGOs for the migrant workers were the only ones who advocate for the benefit of weaker groups, not for their own.³⁵

E. Achievement and the Church

³³ '*nukkimpyo*' is a TV show which has become popular. It closes up the story of a migrant worker each time and arrange a family reunion by brining his/her family members to Korea. In spite of the positive aspect of family reunion, the show represents the origin country of the migrant worker in an exotic way and presents migrant workers as an object of Koreans' benevolence. (Kim 2005)

³⁴ Interview on July 22, 2003.

³⁵ Interview on Aug. 4, 2003.

How, then, is the Church related to the promotion of the rights for migrant workers and the vitality of the NGOs? I will address three points: (1) the human rights framing; (2) leadership by the ministers, and (3) the moral authority enhanced by sacrifice.

1. Human Rights Framing

The historical context in which the human rights framing becomes persuasive is rooted in the church's employing of human rights discourse in 1970s. Both the JOC (Catholic Young Workers Organization), a forerunner of the labor movement in Korea, and the Catholic social movement for democratization strategically utilize human rights discourse in order to advocate the rights of emerging labor class and fight against the military dictatorship.³⁶ They exploited the discourse not only because of the influence of the Catholic social teaching as well as the Second Vatican Council,³⁷ but also for the purpose of avoiding the government's labeling them as a communist.³⁸ This historical experience has constituted the Korean social and cultural context in which the current human rights discourse can sit. Hence the human rights discourse in the social movement for the migrant workers is not a newly imported cultural item in accordance to the globalization process, but a re-appropriation of the historical sediment.

³⁶ In regard to the JOC and the Church's role in the labor movement in 1970s, see Koo (2001: Chap. 4).

³⁷ In line with the biblical and natural law tradition, the recent Catholicism after the Second Vatican Council has emphasized human dignity and human rights. For Catholic social teaching, see David O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (1992). For an analysis of the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church upon the Catholic Church in Korea in regard to socio-political involvement, see Kang (2005)

³⁸ Making use of the division of the North and the South Korea as well as the Cold War, the military dictatorship oppressed the democratic and social movement by associating them with the communism and condemned it by calling it a threat to national security.

Two examples of the statements by the Catholic Church in regard to the human rights violation of the migrant workers in the earlier period the movement demonstrate an example of contextualizing and framing of human rights. As the human rights violations in regard to migrant workers emerged in the early 1990s, in a Statement of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (1993), "Do Not Neglect the Stranger, for You Were Once Strangers Yourself," the bishops addressed the human rights issues, pointing out that serious human rights violations take place in the area of work-related injuries, delayed wages, and physical violence at the workplace. It argues that "the medical care even for the undocumented foreign workers in case of work-related injuries is a part of right for living, which cannot be entitled or deprived by the state. This is a *heavenly bestowed right*" (emphasis added). This rhetoric deserves attention. The bishops understood human rights in the concrete situation of the foreign workers, instead of drawing from the abstract notion of human rights. They demanded a universal medical care for work-related injuries, regardless of legal status and claim it as a heavenly bestowed right. The rhetoric may be originated from the concept of "inalienable" natural rights in the Western human rights history as well as the natural law tradition of the Catholicism; yet, at the same time, the notion of "heavenly bestowed right" echoes "Heaven" in the East Asian philosophical and religious traditions. Heaven is the central agency of the cosmos and moral order, as well as the foundation of morality in Confucianism and Shamanism. In addition, it states that "promoting human rights is a duty of the state" (no. 2). This statement also echoes the traditional Confucian emphasis of the ethics of duty rather than rights. The demand of

duty of the state in this context evokes a compelling argument for the rights of migrant workers.

The second example is “A Statement Concerning the Human Rights of Foreign Workers by the Labor Pastoral Commission (LPC) of Seoul Archdiocese: Their Situation of Constraint Should Not Be Exploited.” The statement was made after the protest of thirteen Nepalese workers at *Myung-dong* Cathedral in January 1995. The statement claims that foreign workers are “key members of our society.” It is radical against the background that Korea is a homogeneous, nationalistic society. Traditionally, in Korea, the basic social unit is family, and this fact of ethnic homogeneity encourages a blood familial notion of the nation itself. This is why the Korea state has acknowledged citizenship only based on blood (*ius sanguinis*) and has invigorated the myth of mono-ethnic nation.

From this national culture and moral atmosphere, naming foreign workers as “key member of our society” is a radical claim to break down the boundary between us and them, based on ethnic identification, and to imply questions: Who are Koreans?; What is Koreanness? During the time of economic crisis in 1997, an employer bluntly criticized the staff of CCMW who visited him and tried to get the unpaid wage of a migrant worker: “You are a Korean, right?”³⁹ This question implies: “If you are a Korean, how can you claim for the wage for the foreigners at this bad time of economy?” The way that the employer legitimated was based on the distinction between Korean as “us” and foreigners as “them.” To him, the LPC, calling foreign workers “key members of our society,” might ask who he thinks is a Korean

³⁹ I met at least three different activists at different locations who heard similar words.

and what he means by Koreanness. Here, we can see the way LPC articulates human rights norms in the context of the Korean nationalistic culture and tries to expand the horizon of a narrowly defined Koreanness.

Obviously, the Catholic voice does not stand for all the NGOs in this field. Nor do those pastoral statements aim at a direct political effect. Nevertheless, the impact is beyond the boundary of the Catholic Church, and the statements illustrate how the human rights framing is articulated.

2. Leadership by Ministers

Leadership by ministers has opened new directions in the movement. Churches, both Protestant and Catholics, are the major forces in the movement not merely in terms of numbers, but more importantly, of leadership. Like any other social movement, leadership has played a crucial role. In this case, the fact that leadership is mainly from Christian ministers is significant. Such figures include Rev. Kyu-ho Shim at *Sarang* Migrant Workers Center, Rev. Yun-tae Lee at *Heemang* Migrant Workers Center, and Rev. Seung-ryong Nam at *Midum* Center. The ministers can easily mobilize migrant workers as well as funds through religious networks in comparison to the leaders of non-religious NGOs. However, I will pay attention more to their role in opening new directions of the movement. Three key directions in the NGOs movement are led by ministers.

First example is the abolishment of the trainee system. Both Rev. Kyu-ho Shim and Rev. Yun-tae Lee were the key leaders in JCMK until the introduction of the employment permit program. In the earlier stage of the movement in the mid-1990s,

they defined the trainee program as the modern slavery system, a practice that is evil and should be overcome. Both pushed the JCMK to the direction of abolishing the trainee program.

Second is the call for citizenship debate in the public sphere. Rev. Cheon-ung Park is the first figure who brought the “citizenship” debate for migrant workers into the public. In this regard, he opens a new field not only in the NGOs for migrant workers, but also in civil society in Korea in general. In regard to the migrant workers issue, he challenges the previous Korean perception of migrant workers primarily as guest workers, not as migrants, and calls for the change of perception into seeing them as migrants. The implication is that NGOs direction has to be move beyond their labor rights toward their integration into Korean society and the transformation of Korea into a multi-cultural society.⁴⁰ In regards to civil society in general, the citizenship debate can be applied to Korean-Chinese or the ex-North Koreans beyond migrant workers of foreign blood.⁴¹

Final direction is the claim for recovering the Korean nationality of the Korean-Chinese. Rev. Suh, another well-known protestant minister who mainly focuses on Korean-Chinese, used it as a tactic in November 2003 as a way of evading the government’s plan for deportation.⁴² When the government began to arrest and deport the “illegal” migrant workers in November 2003 as a path for installing the

⁴⁰ Around the time of the establishment of the employment permit program in 2003, Rev. Lee withdrew from JCMK and participated in a new coalition, NMR.

⁴¹ The issue of integration of overseas Koreans and North Koreans has emerged in Korean public sphere. It is anticipated to be a critical issue in the upcoming years as the interaction between South and North Korea has dramatically become increased and intensified in spite of the international concern of North Korea nuclear issue.

⁴² His organization is not a member of JCMK or NMR.

employment permit program, the JCMK, NHR, and union group set a public protest in separation. While these NGOs sought to fight for “amnesty for all undocumented migrant workers,” Rev. Suh and *Chosunjok* church made a massive protest for reclaiming the Korean nationality of Korean-Chinese. Whereas Rev. Park’s proposal for citizenship is innovative toward the long-term direction, if not for an immediate goal, Rev. Suh’s tactic of reclaiming for the nationality of Korean-Chinese is groundbreaking, allowing undocumented Korean-Chinese to eschew the immediate grip of capture and deportation. Rev. Suh’s movement was able to have its impact because the government has been keen to any criticism in regard to discrimination against Korean-Chinese in comparison to Korean-American.⁴³ The protest drew nationwide attention and came to an end with the visit of President Roh to the *Chosunjok* church and his promise of bestowing Korean-Chinese with privilege based on co-ethnicity. The protest became successful not only due to the personal influence of Rev. Suh, but also due to the public nationalistic sentiment.

In comparison to Protestant ministers, the leadership of the Catholic priests in the movement has not been significant. There are several factors for this difference. First, native Korean priests seem to be reluctant to work with Protestant ministers. CCMW, the most influential group in the earlier period of the migrant movement, did not join JCMK. The ones who actively participated in JCMK were missionary priests, thus their leadership within the movement had limitation. While Catholic priests were

⁴³ Korean government enacted “The Act for Entry and Status of *Jaeoe dongpo* (overseas Koreans)” in 1999, in which the article 2-2 defines the overseas Koreans. However, Korean-Chinese with the help of NGOs appealed to the court that the article discriminates against Korean-Chinese but favors Korean-Americans. The Court for Constitution concluded on November 29, 2001 that the definition of *Jhaeoe dongpo* is not consistent with the Constitution and proceeded to revise the article. Finally, it was revised on February 9, 2004.

reclusive within their own groups or within Catholic coalition which mainly focuses on labor counseling, these three Protestant ministers, together with some other Protestant ministers, have become nationally recognized civic leaders in this field.

3. Moral authority

The Church has enhanced moral superiority of the NGOs by sacrificial leadership. These ministers are not merely preachers or visionaries, but “moral entrepreneurs” who pursue their goal by taking risks, making sacrifices, and mobilizing activists. When the government announced the deportation plan in 2002, Rev. Shim and Rev. Lee, together with the other leaders of the NGOs, fiercely resisted the plan, demonstrating their unyielding will by engaging in a hunger strike or shaving their hair. Rev. Suh, when he led the protest of Korean-Chinese in November 2003, chose to make it a hunger strike as well. Rev. Seon, an assistant to Rev. Shim, illustrated the sacrifice Rev. Shim has made:

[Rev. Shim] was beaten up by the police thirteen times, brought into the emergency room one time, and put into prison. All his suffering became fertilizer to bear fruits nowadays and we can work in a good environment. <...> There was a Russian who is alcoholic and suffer from epilepsy. One day the minister (means Rev. Shim) served him with dumpling soup. He ate in half-consciousness, so half of the soup in his spoon was put into his mouth and half was dropped back into the bowl. The minister shared the soup [in the same bowl] together with him. All our staff can imitate every action the minister does but this one. The other migrant workers at the room, seeing this scene, [were moved and] wept. <...> The minister works for them regardless day and night. In average, he works all night twice a week.

Rev. Seon’s remark is a powerful witness to genuine sacrifice, because she is the one who was moved by his exemplar life and joined his NGO. It was a “conversion” to

her, because she herself, a hardcore evangelical minister and well-know itinerant preacher with 2 – 3 years' appointment in advance, had little interest in social activities of the church. She continued to say:

After I met, I could not join him (Rev. Shim) at once, because I already have two years of schedule for preaching national wide. As I have met so many ministers, I know about them. However, I realized that he is really genuine. He works not for fame, nor for his own interest, without hypocrisy. I have worked with him for eight years and have observed him. He is real!⁴⁴

My point here does not lie in the individual ministers' sacrifice or achievement. Rather, I try to point to the fact that these ministers' sacrificial leadership enhances not only the activists' perseverance during the tiring ten year struggle, but also the power of the NGOs' framing of human rights and their moral superiority over the KFSB and the government. As I shall describe in Chapter VI, major ministers come with the background of *minjung* theology and have participated in progressive activities for marginalized people in 1980s. Some of the ministers have already experienced arrest or physical violence by police under the previous authoritarian regime before coming to the field of migrant workers. This became the backdrop of the sacrificial struggle and moral authority of the NGOs.

Conclusion

In the examination of how NGOs have succeeded in promoting the status and rights of migrant workers, I have pointed out the following factors as significant: the human right framing, sacrificial struggle, and moral authority. I have argued that

⁴⁴ Interview June 22, 2005.

church has contributed to this accomplishment through the human rights framing, the ministers' leadership and the moral authority created by sacrificial leadership. This finding suggests disputing Mancur Olson's argument that there is no altruistic collective action (Olson 1971). According to Olson, rational self-interested individuals will not contribute to securing 'collective goods' because of the superior rationality of 'riding free'. However, the activists in my case are motivated by moral commitment and religious belief in the common good and risks being arrested and imprisoned. My illustration also suggests that the human rights discourse, warning the danger of its inflation in the discussion of the emergence of global public culture or transnational normative system, can produce a successful outcome when it is accompanied by a legitimate agent, employing the discourse, willing to take risks for utilizing the discourse, and able to interpret in the particular context through dialogue, negotiation, and struggle with the structural constraints and cultural tension. The churches in Korea have played a role as that agent.

V. Inside the NGOs

Introduction

The NGOs have contributed to the promotion of the rights of migrant workers as well as their integration into Korean society. At the same time, the NGOs have strengthened the emerging civil society, so that the issue of migrant workers can be a part of an important topic in civil society, and that ordinary Koreans can be more sensitive to the human rights of these “strangers.” I have demonstrated the vitality of church-related organizations and their contribution to civil society.

The NGOs’ contribution to civil society, however, has many dimensions. Significant ones would be independence from the state or the achievement in and opening of a new direction of the field of civil society. As the idea of civil society contains the ideal condition of society, in which voluntary and critical associations of morally autonomous individuals can check and balance power, the analytic use of civil society has a normative dimension to discern for conditions of the realization of the democratic ideals (cf. Seligman 2002; Madsen; 1998). Thus, as I discuss in Chapter II, it is important when assessing NGOs to distinguish not only between those groups that are conducive to ideal social self-governance and those that are not, but also those practices that are contributing to the ideal and those that are not. Given this reflection, I will turn to the examination of the activities of the NGOs while concentrating on the inter-NGOs’ relations and the internal practices within the organization. This will allow to apprehend their moral characteristics within society. Although the NGOs’ contributions that have been made in the previous chapter are

concerned with the *ad extra* activities with regard to the state and society, in this chapter, the analysis will be directed to the *ad intra* activities.

In order to do this, I will first review the history of divisions, based on fault lines, and then draw the landscape of the NGOs, focusing on coalitions and allies. In contrast to previous researches (Grey 2003), I will argue here that not only the ideological orientation, the difference of goals and strategies, or the religious affiliation, but also the lack of civility¹ in the NGOs movement has caused the divisions. Then, I will illustrate how the lack of civility is widely practiced wide inside the NGOs regardless of organizational affiliations, in particular, with respect to vertical relationship and lack of cooperation. This examination, in turn, will provide a general foundation in the next chapter for a discussion of how the church-related organizations and civil society is embedded in the democratization movement of the past decades and the Confucian hierarchical culture.

A. History of Divisions: Fault lines among the NGOs

In the earlier overview of the NGOs for migrant workers, I mentioned the major divisions within the NGOs' movement for migrant workers. Fault lines among activists have emerged, as the issue of migrant workers has become heated, and the NGOs have gradually succeeded in drawing recognition and making some outcomes I mention in the precious chapter. These fault lines were followed by non-

¹ Scholars emphasize that civility is crucial for the vitality of civil society (see Keane 1998, 2003; Madsen 1998). Putnam enumerates some of the main characteristics of such a relationship of civility; 1) civic engagement: the members must be "alive to the interests of others"; 2) a predominance of "horizontal relationships of reciprocity and cooperation" over "vertical relationships of authority and dependence"; 3) high levels of solidarity, trust, and tolerance; 4) openness to involvement with different, overlapping associations, which moderates and expands loyalties and interests (1993:87-90).

collaboration, division, and even accusations among the NGOs, usually justified by the differences in strategies and goals. This section will investigate the three major fault lines and examine how they interact with the organizational alignment.

1. Individual Humanitarian Assistance or Changing the Program of Importing Migrant Workers

As I stated earlier, the protest at the Cathedral by the Nepalese trainees was in fact an orchestration of Protestant Minister J. Kim of the CCEJ.² He was the one who organized these Nepalese trainees and made them protest. However, although CCMW, was located just next to the Cathedral, Rev. J. Kim neither informed the plan of the protest nor collaborated with CCMW prior to the protest. During the protest, which lasted for 10 days, CCMW did not directly support the protest itself, but indirectly assisted it by announcing the official statement in the name of LPC whose discourse of human rights I examined in the previous chapter. In addition, when the emerging NGOs, ignited by the protest, moved to form a coalition, CCMW decided not to join the coalition, for CCMW wants to concentrate on labor counseling rather than on politically involved activities. Several churches and the local government-funded organizations which were later founded also were not involved in socio-political activities but only in individual assistance and the provision of social services. Those who focus on social services rather than political involvement for a change of policy are not concerned about forming coalitions or networks.

² The thirteen Nepalese protesters were afterward deported.

Meanwhile, the NGOs, who aimed at changing the trainee program, created the JCMK which has led the activities for migrant workers within civil society.

2. Labor Permit Program or Employment Permit Program: Labor Union of Migrant Workers or NGOs

The pursuit of abolishing the trainee system led JCMK to internal discussion on what alternative system JCMK would set as its goal. Two possible systems were examined: the labor permit system and the employment permit program. While the trainee system does not recognize the trainees as laborers, both systems define foreign workers as laborers who can legally have labor rights, and so can be protected under the Korean labor law. The main difference between the systems lies in their rights to move to between workplaces. While the employment permit program does not allow migrant workers to change their assigned workplaces with only a few exceptions³, the labor permit system does. Although JCMK acknowledges that the labor permit system is ideally more beneficial to migrant workers, it has strategically chosen the employment permit program. The rationale behind this strategy was that the gain in which the labor permit system might bring would not exceed further against the cost and time JCMK would pay for it. JCMK chose a path that would lead toward a gradual and realistic change, although it may not be an ideal one.

Against this background, in May 2001, Ms. Mi-seon Park, a former staff member at the JCMK office, together with some other activists and migrant workers, organized a unit of migrant workers called the *Seoul-Kyonggi-Inchon Region Equality*

³ For instance, when an employer does not follow the condition of the original contract, migrant workers can inform it to the office of Labor Ministry and can get permission to change the workplace.

Trade Union (SKIRETU)—a regional union affiliated with the progressive Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). She claimed that the unit was composed of about 150 members whose identity she could not reveal due to the fact that they may be deported.⁴ This group demanded the protection of labor rights for migrant workers and insisted that the labor permit system be the substitute for the trainee system. It was an indirect critique of JCMK. Thus, SKIRTU defined itself as a labor movement *by* migrant workers rather than a human rights movement *for* migrant workers as CCMW and JCMK portray each organization.

JCMK did not make an official response. However, the relationship between JCMK and SKIRETU was complicated. Although JCMK had no objection against unionizing migrant workers, it had a problematic history with the key figure who organized the union. When Ms. Park had worked as a general secretariat at JCMK, she criticized some main leaders due to their undemocratic procedure. As a result, she was warned of being dismissed, however, in response, she resigned in 2000. The effect of this internal disturbance was not limited to the conflicts of the few individuals involved, but would be later expanded into an organizational realignment. Her resignation was followed by the withdrawal of some active NGOs under the direction of the former president and vice-presidents of JCMK. The withdrawal, however, was neither due to the pros-and-cons of the employment permit program nor to the direct support for Ms. *Park*. In fact, according to informants, it was due to the accumulated internal tensions caused by undemocratic procedures within JCMK,

⁴ This number would be intentionally inflated. The real member who actually participated in the union would be much less than 150. As they were undocumented, organizing the union by the undocumented was already unlawful.

which led to the development of a new coalition called Network for Migrants Rights (NMR), to which I will turn in the next section. As a result of this complicated historical background, SKIRETU was born with an uneasy relationship with JCMK.

Unfortunately, this unit of migrant workers under SKIRETU did not last long. No matter how ideal and noble it seemed, the organization of a union of undocumented migrant workers was practically unrealistic. Soon a leader, Tafa, a Nepalese migrant worker, was arrested and deported; and the union became invisible. However, the fault line between the employment permit program and the labor permit system remained in the NGOs and was intensely manifested in their protest in 2003 against the government's policy to deport the undocumented. Furthermore, the migrant workers' union was re-established with the assistance of KCTU in 2005.

3. Formation of a new coalition: the emergence of Network for Migrants Rights (NMR)

In March 2003, when the struggle for enacting the employment permit program was at its peak, the NGOs who withdrew from JCMK started to make an informal forum that later developed into the NMR in February 2004. The leaders in the NMR included the former president and vice-presidents of JCMK and the NGOs, who withdrew from membership of JCMK in 2000 when Ms. *Park* resigned. In regards to alternative policies the NMR did not make a sharp contrast with JCMK as did SKIRETU. However, whereas the SKIRETU eventually meant to a withdrawal of some individual activists for JCMK, the emergence of the former became a major division within JCMK. Therefore, as a key officer of JCMK told me: "The division

of SKIRETU has its ideological ground and political significance. However, the separation of NMR is merely a division which weakens the strength of the social movement for migrant workers. As NMR does not differ significantly from JCMK in terms of ideological orientation and goals, both have to be re-united in the future.”⁵ However, activists in the NMR see the division as necessary, because JCMK not only lacks a democratic procedure and is dictated by a few strong Protestant ministers, but also is “corrupted” by the government’s funding. I will discuss this later.

As there seemed to be no apparent contrast between the two groups, activists and researchers in this field interpret the division in terms of several angles. The first angle is leadership conflict. In this explanation, competition and conflict between the two charismatic leaders within JCMK, namely, Rev. Lee and Rev. Shim, caused the division. Some, who extend this angle, see the division as a result of denominational conflicts between Jesus-Presbyterian (*Tonghap*) and Christ-Presbyterian organizations, to which both ministers respectively belong.⁶ These explanations capture well the situation of the predominance and influence of the Protestant ministers leadership in JCMK. However, these angles neglect the fact that the majority of NMR also come from female-directed organizations, such as *Anyang Joen Jin Sang* Center (Anyang Center), *Hankuk* Migrant Workers’ Human Rights Center (HMWHRC), Association for Foreign Workers’ Human Rights in *Pusan*, and *Kumi* Catholic Workers’ Center.

⁵ Interview with Soo-il Joo on June 23, 2005.

⁶ Interview with Rev. Nam-il Yong on June 10, 2005 and with Ms. Won-sook Kim on July 24, 2005. The Presbyterian Church in Korea has been divided into several denominations due to theological difference and internal tensions. Jesus-Presbyterian, in particular, *Tonghap* denomination and Christ-Presbyterian are the major Presbyterian denominations, and both are considered relatively progressive denomination with the history of active participation in the social movement during the authoritarian regime.

Thus, the division cannot be simply reduced to a leadership or denominational competition and conflict. The strong presence of female leadership in NMR suggests another perspective, that is, the male versus female director. In fact, the first two presidents of NMR were female directors.

The final viewpoint gradually emerged when the NMR made its distinctive public voice claiming social integration of “migrants.” While JCMK still mainly focuses on the rights of “migrant workers,” NMR tries to turn public perception of them from migrant workers to “migrants” who claim to be social members of Korean society. Therefore, it raises the public discussion of citizenship for social integration of migrants. To conclude then, these diverse observations suggest that the division is caused by a multitude of factors that cannot be reduced into one.

B. Landscape of NGOs

Based on the fault lines in the inter-relationship among NGOs and the framing⁷ of coalitions, I can identify four different coalitions of NGOs. However, some Catholic organizations simultaneously belong to two coalitions.

Catholic organizations: Catholic organizations are complicated in terms of their collaboration and alignment with other groups. Unlike the popular perception of the Catholic Church as a hierarchically and uniformly organized institution, these individual organizations lacked an organizational network and a united Catholic voice until the establishment of the Committee for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants under the Federation of Korean Bishops Conference in May 2003. Until

⁷ I define framing as the construction of meaning in the movement, following the concept of Benford and Snow (2000).

then, Catholic organizations acted independently issue by issue in accordance with their leaders' position. Even the establishment of the Pastoral Commission under the Bishops Conference has not yet resulted in a strong Catholic voice in the public sphere.

In spite of diversity in terms of activities and alignment, two sub-groups can be categorized: one is the organizations directly under the direction of the diocese; the other is the one relatively independent from the diocese. While CCMW represents the former, *Anyang Center*, which is a leading NGO for migrant women, does the same for the latter. While the first primarily has concentrated on labor counseling and does not participate in social and political protests, the second has been involved in coalitions, first in JCMK and then NMR. While the directors of the organizations of the first group are diocesan priests, those of the second groups are lay persons or those who belong to religious orders. Even though their service directly targets migrant workers whose issues cannot be separated from government policy regarding the labor market and national identity, the former organizations do not want to engage in those issues and tend to avoid making fault-lines with the state or the other civil society actors. The former organizations frame the issue of migrant workers with human rights violations, which directly challenges the Catholic principle of the dignity of a human person. The framing of the latter organizations resembles JCMK or NMR.

One might anticipate that the establishment of the Pastoral Commission for Migrant Workers, as an overarching committee under the Bishops' Conference, would eventually lead to the weakening of the autonomy of the organizations of the second

group. Thus the Commission may enhance the tendency of providing social services while being indifferent to social, institutional changes. However, it is too early to conclude that humanitarian assistance will be overshadowed, because in this issue Catholic social teaching can be re-appropriated and a call can be made for broader social reform according to this re-appropriation. The invited speaker for both the 2004 and 2005 workshop for the Catholic migrant workers' centers was a Scalabrini priest from the Philippines. The workshop attracted approximately 70 and 90 participants in 2004 and 2005 in respect. The workshop included not only the Catholic Church's documents on pastoral ministry on migration, but also a social scientific analysis of migration in the East and Southeast Asia. The priest, in addition to individual assistance for migrants, also called for the advocacy by the Church for a change of government policy.⁸ Thus, it is not yet clear how the establishment of the Commission will impact the landscape of the Catholic organizations and what kind of Catholic voice it will raise in civil society.

JCMK: *JCMK* is mainly composed of the Protestant church-related NGOs. Born against the backdrop of the Nepalese protest at the Cathedral in 1995, it has framed the concern for migrant workers with human rights violations and promoted their rights through legal institutional changes. Thus, it played a leading role in publicizing the issue of migrant workers and the enactment of the employment permit program until NMR emerged. However, it experienced internal divisions twice and this resulted in the emergence of SKIRETU in 2001 and NMR in 2004. Moreover, the recent changes challenge *JCMK* to re-establish its identity and strategy. The

⁸ Participant observation in April 19 – 22, 2005.

challenge comes not only from the division and the subsequent emergence of NMR, but more importantly from the ambiguous relationship between the leading organizations within JCMK and the government. As the main leaders of JCMK become not only more public, but also frequently invited to the government's meeting as a representative of civil society organizations, the sharp voices on behalf of migrant workers have been weakened. In particular, the two recent delegations of the government-funded migrant workers' centers in both Rev. H. Kim's and Rev. J. Lee's organization caused concerns in regard to the relationship and the boundary between NGOs and the state. Rev. H. Kim was delegated by the Ministry of Labor to run the Migrant Workers Center in Korea in 2004 in Seoul; and Rev. J. Lee, by the local government, to run the Social Welfare Center for Migrant Workers in 2005, near Seoul in Kyounggi-Do. As both of them were former presidents of JCMK and had played key roles in it, their new projects of managing the gigantic center for migrant workers funded by government has caused concerns from the other activists on the danger of maneuvering between NGOs and semi-governmental organizations.⁹

NMR: NMR is composed of diverse organizations, from Protestant-related organizations, to civic or labor ones, and furthermore to Catholic-related organizations which are not directly under the leadership of the Catholic diocese. As NMR's goal is the promotion of "migrants' rights," it frames the current issues with citizenship

⁹ In case of the Catholic Church, it raised a sharp voice against the authoritarian state in the 1970s – 80s. However, in particular, since mid-1980s, its engagement in many government-funded social service institutions, and thus the increase of the multi-level collaboration with the government has had the effect of the Church avoiding the conflict with the government and has gradually weakened its voice in regard to social issues (Kang 2003).

rather than the labor permit system as the unionists do or obtaining legal status for undocumented workers as JCMK does.

The former president of NMR, Ms. Jung, a woman director of a civil society organization, understands that the NGOs' movement for migrant workers is now in transition through the establishment of the employment permit program. She states: "Until recently, as the NGOs' movement for migrant workers has been made out of humanitarian motivation, it has been somewhat sentimental, narrowly focusing on social service. However, it is time to be differentiated and specialized into a religious project, social service, labor movement, and civic and social movement" (Jung 2005:3). In her remark, she indirectly draws a landscape of the NGOs. She refers to: a religious project whose activities of the Protestant-related NGOs apparently emphasize more a religious mission; social service to the NGOs that run the government-funded centers which provide services, such as Korean language programs, computer programs, a gym, and cultural programs; and finally, labor movements by a few unions which try to incorporate migrant workers into their union activities or to set up separate unions of migrant workers. Some organizations in JCMK and Catholic organizations under the direction of the diocese can fall into the category of a religious project or social service, whereas the SKIRETU falls under the labor movement. In her category, NMR is to be a civil and social movement group that pursues two directions. One is seeking social integration of "migrants"; the other, seeking solidarity with the NGOs in Asia through the network of returned migrant workers.

Unionist: As I described in the previous chapter, there have been attempts to organize labor unions *of* migrant workers. These groups fundamentally conceive the issue of migrant workers as that of workers vis-à-vis the capital and the state who exploit the workers. They try to be in line with the Korean labor movement, although migrant workers are practically in marginal positions in the two federations of Korean labor unions. To them, ethnicity or race is subordinated to class, and the protection of labor rights is the way in which they prevent both human rights violations and labor exploitation and improve the lives of migrant workers. Furthermore, they find fault with the NGOs, arguing that NGOs have failed to make migrant workers a subject but rather have treated them as a passive receiver of the Koreans' benevolent assistance. Thus, what is needed is the organization *of* migrant workers, not the assistance *for* or *on behalf of* them.

In regard to making migrant workers a subject as a social actor, theoretically and ideally, NGOs have acknowledged its importance. However, they have said otherwise, based on their practical experiences. In fact, major NGOs, for instance, CCMW, Rev. Y. Lee's and Ms. Won-sook Kim's, etc., have endeavored to help build migrant workers' own community by nationality but have come to realize that building low-level networks is more realistic than building communities which have their ethnic leaders. This is because those who could be a leader are usually those who stay long enough to be accustomed to life in Korea. In the current context, it means that they are undocumented workers who stay beyond the limit set by the visa. When the leading figures leave from pressure or are caught, the community easily falls apart. Given this situation, NGOs are frustrated in building the community of

migrant workers. Two attempts to organize unions have also experienced similar failure when the leader was caught and was deported by the police.

In conclusion, by using terms of diagnostic and prescriptive framing¹⁰ the landscape of NGOs can be summarized in the following table.

Table 5-1: Landscape of NGOs

	<i>Diagnostic framing</i>	<i>Prescriptive framing</i>	<i>Main activities</i>
Catholic organizations under diocese	Human rights violation of person	Pastoral care	- Humanitarian assistance - Community building
JCMK	Human rights violations of migrant workers	Protecting labor rights	- Humanitarian assistance - legal and institutional reform
NMR	Human rights violations of migrants	- Social integration - Citizenship	- Humanitarian assistance - legal and institutional reform - community building
Unionist	Violation of Workers rights	Protecting labor rights	- Organizing Unions of migrant workers

¹⁰ Diagnostic framing refers to the way in which a social movement organization (SMO) articulates the situation of injustice, and prescriptive framing refers the way in which an SMO articulates the solution in accord with its diagnostic framing.

Ultimately, framing shows the difference in perceiving who migrant workers are. The Catholic position principally perceives them as human persons; JCMK, as migrant workers; NMR, as migrants; and unionists, as workers. Each perception emphasizes a certain aspect of who the migrant workers are.

As the history of internal division illustrates, the coalitions have complicated relationships among themselves which cannot be simply reduced into ideological orientation or the difference of goals. First of all, the Catholic organizations, under the direct leadership of the diocese, are indifferent to the network or alignment with other NGOs. Catholic organizations, mainly directed by religious order or lay persons, have actively aligned with other coalitions, first with JCMK and later with NMR. Second, JCMK and NMR are potentially in competition because NMR was separated from JCMK. Officially, NMR sees JCMK as a partner rather than a competitor in order to promote the rights of migrant workers. However, because NMR has emerged in separation, it can be said that both coalitions are potentially in competition. In particular, as both coalitions have to deal with the state, other civil society actors, and media in their *ad extra* activities, it would be unavoidable to compete with each other in order to draw more recognition from the public and the state, as well as get resources, whether symbolic or material. Finally, unionists are closer to NMR than to JCMK. This fact does not necessarily reflect ideological alignment, but concentrates more on the network of the NMR key leaders who have

good relationships with unions or have labor movement experiences in their background.¹¹

C. Problems of Civility Behind Divisions

The history of internal divisions and the landscape of NGOs suggest the multi-layered factors that cause division. Again it is not merely the difference in framing, the goals which NGOs aim for, nor the power struggle among leaders, nor the denominational difference that caused division. Given this background, there are diverse interpretations offered in order to understand the divisions. For instance, some leaders in JCMK interpret the emergence of NMR as a division that disturbs the alignment of NGOs and weakens JCMK's power to press against the state.¹²

However, NMR, as I wrote earlier, deems the emergence as unavoidable.

Furthermore, an activist interprets the division as an advent of differentiation and specialization of NGOs into a religious project, social service, labor movement, and civic-social movement.

Whether this history can be understood as a division or a transition for differentiation, I would argue that the history of tension and division is not merely the result of difference in ideology or vision, but it is the lack of moral characteristics for civil society that Putnam (2003: 87-90) addresses, such as a predominance of “horizontal relationships of reciprocity and cooperation” over “vertical relationships of

¹¹ For instance, the former president of NMR was a labor activist for many years before she moved into this field.

¹² Interview with Soo-il Joo on June 23, 05.

authority and dependence” or high levels of solidarity, trust, and tolerance. A leader of NMR who also was in the leadership position in JCMK expresses:

NGOs’ movement for migrant workers worked for the protection of basic human rights until the enactment of the employment permit program in 2003, especially through the abolishment of the trainee program and the introduction of the labor permit program. NGOs could easily reach an agreement for alignment and coalition in order to seek these two goals. However, the struggle for enacting the employment permit program resulted in internal tension and division. The issue was whether to accept the employment permit program as a fruit of NGOs’ movement or to reject it as another path toward distortion. *However, the actual fault line did not lie in the ideological difference or the direction the NGOs’ movement pursued, but in the distrust of each other* (Jung 2005:2, my translation with added emphasis).

How is the lack of civility manifested in the *ad intra* practices of NGOs?

Based on my observation and interviews, I identify the following practices with a lack of civility: authoritarian leadership style, lack of cooperation and unnecessary competition, and paternalism. These practices occurred in repetition and were widely practiced across the NGOs regardless of the religious and the organizational affiliations.

1. Authoritarian Leadership

Most activists within NGOs are in a hierarchical relationship rather than in a horizontal one. Activists are dependent upon directors who are normally the founder of the organization. They join the NGO in hopes of working for migrant workers. Most of them have been in this field for less than two years whereas the director has been in the leadership position from the beginning. In fact, directors of the

influential NGOs have worked in them for more than 10 years. It means that there is a gap between director and staff in terms of skill and knowledge. As the director becomes an expert in regard to the issues related to migrant workers, the other younger staff members have only to rely on the director. As a consequence, the vertical relationship or the dependency of the lay activists on the director seems inevitable and reasonable.

Nevertheless, the problem is the perpetuation of dependency on the authority of leaders due to the high rate of the constant replacements of activists in short terms. Most activists work in this field for only two or three years, burn out, and leave. First, this is the result of characteristics of work in this field. Major common activities of NGOs deal with labor counseling, unpaid wages, compensation for labor-related injury, etc. Such work requires tedious follow-up that involves the local office of the Ministry of Labor or factory managers. Activists themselves say in a humorous way that the work for migrant workers are the 3D jobs in the civil society movement. In addition, migrant workers, by virtue of problems in language and ignorance of Korean administrative procedure, tend to rely on the services provided by the NGOs. The passivity and dependency of migrant workers increase demand on the activists. Thus, it is draining to work for migrant workers. A leader of NMR expresses the difficulty of activists in the field:

Someone told me an observation in a humorous way: “The policy of the government in regard to foreign workers aims at the short term rotation of migrant workers (in order to prevent permanent residence in Korea). However, ironically, the effect of the policy is manifested in the rotation of activists in the field, but not of the migrant workers (for they become undocumented).” This statement

poignantly captures the difficulty of activists in the field. Activists, although motivated by the passion and compassion for migrant workers in inhuman conditions, become tired in 2 to 3 years. Labor counseling is endless; they can hardly see the progress of the migrant workers as a subject; they become disappointed at migrant workers who always request, demand, and are dependent; they feel frustrated in organizing migrant workers when the leaders have to leave whether by deportation or leaving out of stress; they feel their endeavor are in vain in accordance with the dissolution of the migrant workers' community. They also feel disappointed in themselves when they find themselves treating migrant workers in a bureaucratic way rather than in a personal way. ... These committed activists become tired, gradually burn out and leave (Jung 2005:4, my translation).

Only committed activists of strong motivation can continue to work in this field, because committed activists are not motivated by economic incentives, and their wage is low even under the minimum wage.¹³ In this case, what sustains the activists' commitment is more related to meaningfulness or moral rewards rather than other incentives. At this point, the hierarchical relationship and democratic practice seriously matters. Put more straightforwardly, the exercise of authority and leadership in a non-democratic way or the "monopolization" of symbolic and moral rewards by the leaders undermines the meaningfulness of activists, weakens their commitment, and eventually leads them to leave the field.

When new staffs are recruited, they have to rely upon the director as they are a novice in this field. As they get tired of this work and are not supported with sufficient meaningfulness, they come to leave in two or three years. Afterwards, the same pattern is repeated. In this practice, staff members are not trained as activists

¹³ According to Seol's research in 2003, the average wage of an activist is 530,000 Won (around \$ 530) per month and an activist works 41 hours per week with one day off (Seol 2003b:32). This is less than the minimum wage.

with professional qualities but they are used up and replaced. The high rate in the replacement of staff is the way in which the hierarchical relationship between the leader and the activist is reproduced.

Now I will examine how leadership is exercised in a non-democratic way and how symbolic and moral rewards are mainly appropriated by the leaders. First, although many material rewards are not given in this field, as the Korean society becomes more aware of the issues related with migrant workers, symbolic rewards become more available. This includes attention from media and attendance to international meetings.¹⁴ As I indicated in the previous chapter, mass media have played an important role in the “success” of the NGOs’ movement for migrant workers. In this process, the media have conducted numerous interviews with activists. However, the main interviewees are usually the same leading figures who become good at dealing with the media. The other staff members, who know the case with more accuracy, are usually not accessed by the media. The more a leader is exposed to the media, the more the leader is likely to be interviewed or quoted by the media in the future.

It is noteworthy to analyze the way in which the media describes these leaders. Media tend to depict these leaders as human rights activists who sacrificially work for the dignity and rights of migrant workers. Usually, these leaders are Protestant ministers or Catholic priests. Thus, whether intended or not, two axes are contrasted: devoted minister activist versus migrant workers who work hard with a “Korean dream” and living in difficulty and sometimes loneliness.

¹⁴ I am indebted to Gui-soon Jung for pointing out media interview and the attendance of international meeting as forms of symbolic reward.

My aim here is not to downgrade the commitment and sacrifice of these leaders. In the previous chapter, I already demonstrated how their sacrificial struggle is crucial to the promoting of rights for migrant workers. My purpose is to illustrate how the leaders, whether they recognize it or not, come to monopolize moral and symbolic rewards by the media's appropriation, while the staff members who work in the field with their hands and feet do not get sufficient support.

The same can be applied to the attendance at international meetings. As NGOs seek international networking with the NGOs in the East and Southeast Asia¹⁵, more opportunities to go abroad and attend meetings are available for activists. Attending international meetings are a good symbolic reward. It is a chance not only to help extend the horizon of activists, meeting other activists who work in the same field in other countries and sharing information and experiences, but also to affirm their "vocation" as activities by fostering meaningfulness. However, again, the access to these international meetings, particularly, in the earlier stage of the movement, was limited to the leaders. This was not merely due to the lack of financial resources or to the gap in knowledge and skills between leaders and lay activists, but also to the lack of concern for lay activists by leaders. This is what I call the "monopolization" of symbolic and moral rewards.

Second, it is also popular to exercise authority and leadership in a non-democratic way. The most common pattern in this regard is to replace staff members, who do not agree with the directors or with whom directors find it hard to

¹⁵ NGOs have network and joint-meetings with Solidarity with Migrant Workers (Japan) or Migrant Forum in Asia which has 21 organizations from 11 countries in 2003. For Migrant Forum Asia, see <http://www.mfasia.org/>.

handle personally, with the ones who are “docile.” Professional skill or experience in the field gives way to docility. Here are some cases of major representative NGOs which illustrate the pattern of replacing staff members with the ones “easy” to deal with.

Case 1: Ms. Hee-ran Cho, the director of Human Rights Center for Migrant Workers, affiliated with MNR, was a staff member under Rev. Shim¹⁶ at the *Sarang* Migrant Workers’ Center in the earlier years of the center. In the earlier years, when the issue of migrant workers was not seriously treated, she was the person who was practically in charge of the activities for migrant workers in the Center while Rev. Shim concentrated on domestic labor activism. She was even arrested with Rev. Shim while protesting against the police’s detention of undocumented workers the Center provided shelters for. However, the teamwork between the two gradually broke down as Rev. Shim added more religious color on the activities of the Center. While she considered that the Center should not pursue a religious purpose or provide social services in connection with religious activity, Rev. Shim thought otherwise. Based on his experience, he was convinced that material help itself is not good enough unless it helps the moral and spiritual dimension of migrant workers.¹⁷ Rev. Shim came to encourage religious service directly and indirectly although this did not necessarily mean that participating in religious service was a condition for receiving social service. As the activity of the Center flourished, the gap between Rev. Shim,

¹⁶ Rev. Shim is the minister who was delegated to run the government-funded migrant workers’ center.

¹⁷ He explains his conviction through his experience of dealing with a migrant worker from Bangladesh. He assisted the worker to get injury compensation and later found that the worker spent the compensated money in obtaining another wife when he returned to his own country. This experience led him to a belief that material help alone cannot be sufficient unless it is accompanied by moral and spiritual assistance.

the director, and Ms. Cho, a second person in the Center, became more obvious. Out of this tension, she took a year leave of absence to the US in 1999. When she returned, she found herself marginalized because several seminarians were recruited to the Center. She quit and later founded a new Center which claims to be a civic organization with no religious affiliation.¹⁸ Rev. Shim now runs several centers as a general director in the Seoul metropolitan area, and each center is directed by Protestant ministers who are in line with him.

Case 2: *Heemang* Migrant Workers Center, founded in 1994 by Rev. Y. Lee, is twelve years old and now has about ten staff members. In spite of its history, all the current staff members, with the exception of Rev. Lee, the founder and director, and his wife, have been in this field for less than two years. Rev. Lee attributed the high ratio of short-term replacement to the problem of commitment and believed that this problem can be overcome with hard work. He explained:

“In the earlier days, there were some activists whose background was social movement for democratization.¹⁹ However, all of them left the Center, because the work was demanding and the wage was not enough to live on. I realized that unless the staff member is ready to make a serious commitment the work in this field is unbearable. This naturally made me seek out seminarians or ministers instead of ordinary activists.”²⁰

However, the fact that the ministers or seminarians also have not worked in the Center long enough suggests that the issue of commitment may not be the main factor for

¹⁸ *Sarang* Center has become the largest Center which has several branches in other cities. The Center Ms. Cho founded has also become a key organization in NMR.

¹⁹ As the social movement for democratization in the 1970s and 1980s was a societal phenomenon, it produced many activists who are characterized by a leftist ideology, a strong social commitment, and militancy.

²⁰ Interview on August 5, 2003.

frequent turnovers. In other words, only those who can comply with Rev. Lee can continue to work in the Center. In spite of his theoretical knowledge and experiential skills, due to his hierarchical leadership style, activists in the field do not seem to support the idea that Rev. Lee becomes the president of their coalition.

Case 3: CCMW, a Catholic organization, also has a similar history. Ms. Mi-young Park, working now at a migrant workers center funded by a local government, was the “actual” founder and director of CCMW. The official director was a priest for the CCMW, but Ms. Mi-young Park was the person who practically ran the center. She resigned from CCMW in 2000 during the transition of priestly leadership. The new director, a Priest, Rev. Kang, was appointed by the Diocese. Soon, Rev. Kang began to experience tension with the staff members who held the major position, including the tension with Ms. Mi-young Park. Because she was faithful to the church hierarchy, instead of confronting Rev. Kang, she chose to resign and leave in silence.²¹

Later, a nun took the position of Ms. Mi-young Park with the rumor that she was recruited as a person to *watch over* the staff members. However, later, when the nun had trouble with Rev. Lim, another new director, she was also asked to resign and was replaced in 2003.²² She also left in silence and later opened a new center. In comparison to Ms. Mi-young Park or the nun, a staff member who was laid off those days made an appeal to the local unit of the Ministry of Labor against the CCMW for

²¹ She is a member of a lay association who made a vow to assist the local bishop. In this transition, the staff members who held the major position either resigned or were laid off. In addition to Ms. Mi-young Park, the program director of the unit for domestic workers was laid off and a researcher resigned.

²² After she left, the nun established an organization, together with other nuns, and continue to work for migrant workers.

not following labor procedure. His appeal was accepted and he was able to go back to work. However, even though he recovered his job, he resigned because his relationship with the director was already broken. All the current staff members in CCMW are “new comers,” having been in CCMW for less than two years.

While the first two cases deal with the leadership of Protestant ministers, the last one deals with that of Catholic priests. In those centers affiliated with a Protestant church, a center is based on the personal vision and talents of the ministers. The ministers establish and direct the centers. In some sense, these ministers act more or less like a moral entrepreneur who takes risks and tries to draw public attention to their activities. In comparison, the leadership of the organizations under the Catholic Diocese is a matter of assignment from the Catholic Hierarchy. Sometimes, the priest assigned to the leadership is not the person who willingly volunteers for the job. Thus, whereas the stability of the Protestant center lies in the personal vision and talents of the ministers, that of the Catholic center lies in the institutional church as a whole. In spite of this institutional difference, these centers have a similar pattern of replacing staff members. The docile or the loyal remain; the dissidents resign or are asked to leave.

Interestingly, the authoritarian leadership pattern is visible not only in Christian organizations, but also in non-Christian organizations as well. Here are some cases.

Case 4: Mr. Je-young Chung, now a staff member at a civic organization for migrant workers, was an executive director of the unit for migrant workers in a Buddhist organization. He was laid off from the unit in 2003 when he demanded

financial transparency and a more democratic practice in the organization. The director in this case was not a Buddhist monk, but a famous civic activist who has worked for democratization and has contributed to relating Buddhists to the public sphere.²³ In spite of the splendid contribution of this director to building Buddhist social activism, the way in which he exercised his leadership was authoritative.

Case 5: Mr. Il-kyu Chi, a well-known labor and civic activist since the 1970s, is the director of the Human Rights Center for Migrant Workers which has no religious background. In 2002, when the government suggested an “amnesty” for a year for undocumented workers as a condition of their registration to the labor department, he silenced one of his staff members in public. The context of the silencing was within the debate among NGOs discussing whether NGOs were to accept the government’s “offer” and help or not.²⁴ The staff member expressed his own opinion to the media that was, unfortunately, different from Mr. Chi’s. Even though there was no accusation, Mr. Chi “ordered” him to keep quiet in public for the sake of unity and for the whole movement. The staff member later quit.

As these cases suggest, the authoritarian practice in exercising leadership is quite popular regardless of religious affiliation or ideological orientation, even among the well-known leaders who have gained fame in their contribution to the democratization movement. As several laid-off dissidents continue to work in this field, it is not a matter of their lack of commitment as Rev. Y. Lee argues. The replacement of the dissident staff member for a docile or loyal one is widely practiced,

²³ In comparison to Christianity, Buddhism in Korea has been inactive in regard to engaging in social issues.

²⁴ As the government has little access to undocumented workers who are the majority of migrant workers, the government needs the assistance of the NGOs in order to enforce policy.

usually in the form of asking for their resignation or laying-off the dissidents. In replacing a staff member, one's professional skill or experience in the field is not a significant consideration.

Interestingly, Protestant and Catholic organizations have a similar pattern in replacing staff members: they both replace lay staff with seminarians, ministers, or religious. Just as the activists, motivated by ideals and meaningfulness of their work, do not seek personal interest, these religious also do not seek such things. These religious easily make sacrificial commitments. Thus, that is the primary reason for directors to prefer hiring these religious. However, at the same time, it is not difficult to imagine that the hierarchical relationship among seminarians, religious and the ordained, will enhance the authority of the directors, who are themselves an ordained minister or priest in addition to their authority as a director in the organization. The vertical relationship of a staff member and a director is strengthened by the hierarchy in religious relationships. An activist, who once worked at an organization affiliated with a Protestant church and now runs a civic organization in this field, observes: “[Directors] usually delegate their authority only to the loyal. Thereby, only vertical relationships prevail [in these NGOs]. I'd like to call this a minister-type-leadership.”²⁵

Given this background, it is not surprising that the democratic decision making process is not practiced at the level of a coalition. The public debate for the enactment of employment permit program was heated in 2003. As the newly elected President Rho promised to change the system in regard to migrant workers, the KFSB

²⁵ Interview on June 9, 2005.

seriously lobbied for delaying the enactment in the National Assembly. Against this countermove, JCMK and the NGOs, who previously withdrew from JCMK, agreed to ally themselves again in order to fortify the pressure and elected Rev. Y. Lee and Mr. Il-kyu Chi as their representatives. However, at the joint meeting in June, Mr. Chi and the insiders already created an agenda and made decisions without discussion and consultation, and announced them to the other organizations. Rev. Lee was not even informed. The excluded leaders and activists reacted strongly by yelling and fighting. The joint meeting could not be continued. This incident was the final point of a long process of bifurcation between JCMK and NMR.

In sum, I have demonstrated how the vertical relationship has been internally practiced and reproduced within the NGOs. This has been accomplished through monopolization of symbolic or moral reward by leaders and the replacement of staff members with more docile ones.

2. Lack of Cooperation

The second aspect that reveals the lack of civility is the lack of cooperation, which in fact is closely related to the undemocratic decision making procedure. This was already anticipated in the thirteen Nepalese protest at the Cathedral in 1995. The CCEJ team strategically chose the cathedral as the protest site but with no cooperation from the nearby CCMW. In addition, although the protest made the front page of the major newspapers on the first day, CCMW also did not attempt to direct support for the protest, and announced only a statement a few days later. Meanwhile, the priests at the Cathedral, whose ministry was primarily parish work, intervened for a

negotiation between the protest team and the government; for they did not want that the protest lasted long at the Cathedral. What is worthy of attention is the fact that it was the lay staff at CCMW who suggested cooperation with the protest team for this significant protest. However, the leadership did not take any action, because the leaders thought the Protestant organizations make use of the Catholic ones.²⁶ As the previous discussion on the vertical relationship suggests, the decision-making process has been a top-down style in almost all NGOs. The lay staff's recommendation did not affect the decision.

After the Nepalese protest, JCMK moved for cooperation among the other NGOs. However, as I stated earlier, CCMW did not participate in the cooperation while some other Catholic organizations, such as *Anyang Center*, *Kumi Cneter*, *Emmaus* in Suwon, and *Galilea* in Ansan, actively took part in it for some years.²⁷

Another important organization, *Chosunjok* church, founded in 1999, could not join JCMK because JCMK declined its admission. The case of *Chosunjok* church deserves a special examination. First, although it identifies itself as a church rather than a NGO, its activities have been restricted to religious ones but have included providing social welfare, lobbying for the privilege of the Korean-Chinese, and leading a massive hunger strike to demand the restoration of Korean nationality for Korean-Chinese. In some sense, the activities of this Church have been no less powerful than those of the other small NGOs. Second, the founder, Rev. Suh, has been a leading minister-activist who opened the field of the "citizens' movement" in

²⁶ Interview with a former staff member on June 2, 2005.

²⁷ All the Catholic organizations withdrew from JCMK later with different reasons. The leaders mentioned the abuse of power by the Protestant ministers as one of the main reason for their withdrawal.

the mid-1980s. He, by establishing the CCEJ, has differentiated himself from other wide spread, left-wing leaning *minjung* movements. He is a politically influential person, currently leading a new rightist movement in the Korean political landscape. Thus, this Church has played an important role not only in the issue of *Chosunjok*, the Korean-Chinese migrant workers, but also of migrant workers in general.

The way in which the *Chosunjok* church was not admitted into JCMK manifested a competition rather than a cooperation among the so-called leaders. My informant, a former high-rank of JCMK, revealed the behind scenes story of how it took place. According to him, another minister who also has been a leader in JCMK opposed the admission of the *Chosunjok* church. To his surprise, the minister, who objected to accepting the *Chosunjok* church, not only belongs to the same denomination as Rev. Suh but also is from the same school. In Korea, where networking is based on belonging to the same school, hometown, or along blood lines plays a crucial role in public, my interviewee was surprised at seeing that the opposition came from who he thought would be the strongest supporter. He cautiously suspected that the objection came out of a sense of competition.

Actually, it is ironic that while there is little visible competition, perhaps more indifference, between the Catholic and the Protestant organizations, the competition among the Protestant organizations is more visible. The reason is that, in terms of the organizational culture, the Catholic organizations tend not to be aggressive in their activities or even reclusive, believing that solid substance is more valuable than

appearance.²⁸ In comparison, the Protestant organizations are passionate enough to reach out, which usually tends to be aggressive and violates boundaries that may not be officially made.²⁹ Most conspicuous is the setting up of a center just nearby the other centers, thus the competition to draw more migrant workers is inevitable.

Woncheon city, a satellite city of Seoul, is a typical case. *Woncheon* city has many small medium-sized factories which attract migrant workers, and even a district in the city, called a “borderless village,” has more foreigners than native Koreans. In this small area, three Protestant centers have its own units in addition to one Catholic center. Needless to say, there is little collaboration between the Catholic and the Protestant centers, and these three Protestant centers have little cooperation among themselves as well as little networking. Each director of these three units is a nationally recognized civic leader and from time to time collaborates on the national level. Nevertheless, local cooperation has been rarely sought, but individual, competitive efforts by each center have been made. Activists in the field observed that the division between the two leaders, Rev. Shim and Rev. Lee, originated from the incident that Rev. Shim established a center in this area without giving any prior information to Rev. Lee.

The lack of cooperation has culminated in the protest against deportation in 2003.³⁰ After enacting the employment permit program on July 31, 2003, the

²⁸ A former staff member of LPC said: “I owe my work principle and inner attitude to the former director. It was his principle to treat a laborer as Jesus who visited him. He spent hours and hours for one person. In his case, it does not matter how many people he worked for.” Interview on June 22, 2005.

²⁹ In the Korean Protestant Church, it is quite popular to establish a new church next to a church. The practice is similar to opening up a new shop next to a shop of the same occupation.

³⁰ For analysis of this sit-in protest, see Lee (2005).

government announced its plan to arrest and to deport undocumented migrant workers who were in Korea for more than five years, , starting in November.³¹ The government has threatened undocumented workers in the past by means of arrest and deportation in order to induce voluntary leaving by undocumented migrants. The government's past efforts have been mitigated by the NGOs' resistance and by the practical rationale that undocumented migrant workers benefit the economy with their jobs and Korean language skills. However, this time, the government made it clear that it would resolutely enforce its plan, because otherwise, the employment permit program, supposed to be effectuated in Aug. 2004, would be in peril.³² From November 17, as announced, the government team nationwide started to arrest undocumented workers. Some undocumented workers committed suicide out of stress and fear or got wounded while trying to avoid arrest.³³

The NGOs fought against the government's enforcement by staging public sit-in protests. The nationwide sit-in protests were held in several different places. In Seoul, whereas Korean-Chinese gathered at the two Protestant Church Halls, the main protest site by NGOs was again the Catholic Cathedral. On November 15, 2003, the unionists, JCMK, and representatives from KCTU gathered at the Cathedral.

However, on the first day, it became clear that a joint protest was not possible because

³¹ The Korean naturalization law requires at least five years of residence in Korea for a legal foreigner to apply for naturalization. Even though there are other qualifications, such as the Korean language proficiency and a proof of financial ability, required to apply for naturalization, the government's criterion of five years primarily aims to prevent the possibility of naturalization.

³² The government evaluated that the employment permit program would not be successfully established if there were more than 30,000 undocumented migrant workers. In November 2003, in spite of the legalization of some who have been in Korea less than three years, the total number of undocumented migrant workers is over 120,000.

³³ For a month, starting on November 11, at least 5 migrant workers committed a suicide (cf. Lee, 2005:73)

of the disagreement over who and how to elect the executive committee for the protest. After quarrelling, JCMK decided to move to the Episcopal Cathedral for continuation of the protest.³⁴ Meanwhile, the government tried to deport undocumented workers.³⁵ However, the government knew the limitation of the deportation policy, because it knew it is impossible to reach less than 30,000 undocumented workers unless the government successfully induces undocumented workers to voluntarily leave Korea. For this voluntary leaving, the government needs NGOs' help. Thus, the government began to negotiate the NGOs. The "carrot" the government offers was that the undocumented who voluntarily leave Korea possess advantages in re-entering under the employment permit program. Whereas JCMK, as well as the major local protests in other cities, accepted the government's negotiation and ended the public protest around February 4, 2004, the unionists at *Myung-dong* rejected it and continued the sit-in. Again how to respond to the government's policy is a manifestation of the fault line of the groups. The sit-in protest at *Myung-dong* lasted more than a year but with no fruition.³⁶

What is manifested in the division of the protest includes not merely a geographical split, but also a criticism among the protest groups. At *Myung-dong*, a

³⁴ HMWHRC, a civic organization which actively supported the migrants' union, remained at the Cathedral with the hope of bridging between the NGOs and unionists. But since the unionists continue to accuse the NGOs of perpetuating the dependency of migrant workers, it finally withdrew from the sit-in at the *Myung-dong* Cathedral but joined the JCMK's at the Episcopal Cathedral.

³⁵ From November 15 to January 19, the government deported 3061 undocumented workers and the voluntarily departed was 9253 (Hankyureh newspaper, February 5, 2004).

³⁶ It began on November 15, 2003 and ended on November 28, 2004 but did not achieve any goals. The organizers evaluated it as the first sit-in protest by migrant workers in history but a failed protest. An activist in JCMK attributed the long but fruitless struggle to the fact that the *Myung-dong* protest was inclined to the hard line. In his view, the group who organized the *Myung-dong* protest was composed of diverse labor movement fractions who competitively sought for ideological purity in the movement (Interview on July 24, 2005). Actually, the Korean labor movement has been well-known for its militancy (Choi 2005).

militant fraction, called the Laborers' Committee for the Future, distributed pamphlets which called the NGOs who work for the migrant workers "an opportunistic" and criticized them by saying that they "corrupt migrant worker with slavery spirit of submission and negotiation rather than strengthen the spirit of struggle" (quote from Lee 2005:77). In response to this pamphlet, HMWHRC demanded the executive committee to exclude the Laborers' Committee for the Future from the Protest team because of their divisive action but later stepped back by accepting an apology. However, the same pamphlet was distributed again later, and this time HMWHRC withdrew and moved the protest to the Episcopal Cathedral, arguing that "Because the executive committee does not demand responsible action by the Laborers' Committee for the Future, we cannot but consider that the committee agrees such divisive action is backsliding while pretending to seek solidarity" (quote from Lee 2005:78). In this competitive or even divisive atmosphere, not surprisingly, the protest against the deportation and the urge for the legalization of undocumented workers did not create any result.

3. Paternalism

As the centers have become more established, the competition to draw migrant workers has also become more intensified among them, similar to the competition of the Protestant churches.³⁷ The competition is usually expressed by providing free

³⁷ In case of the Catholic Church, competition among parishes is prevented through the Catholic Hierarchical coordination, based on geographical division. However, in case of the Protestant churches, due to their lack of institutional coordination among denominations, churches, which are located in the neighborhood but belong to different denominations, compete each other for attracting more members. As a consequence, many churches provide Sunday worshippers with transportation

gifts when migrant workers participate in the centers' events and organizational activities. The competition, however, does not necessarily result in the improvement of the quality of the service migrant workers can get as "clients." Rather, it makes migrant workers depend more on the centers rather than cultivate their commitment and responsibility. An activist criticizes this competition, describing that it fosters the "beggar's spirit":

[Some migrant workers] now take the centers' services for granted. <...> For instance, they say, "The other center gives us this and that, why don't you provide those?" They compare what the centers can do for them and move to other center when they think they can get more over there. <...> Migrant workers are not only young and healthy, but also progressive enough to make their lives better. That is why they moved to Korea. Why do so many centers make them to become dependent upon themselves and to beg for Koreans' pity?³⁸

In fact, most migrant workers are young and healthy (otherwise, they cannot be hired). In addition, most of them have more than high school education and can be said to be courageous enough to make a decision to go to a foreign country in order to change their lives. For this activist, it is the centers which are to be blamed primarily for making migrant workers rely on their services. The centers spoil these active migrant workers who have so much potential to dream and to make their own way in life. Thus, the centers' competition has an unintended consequence upon migrant workers. When they compete with each other to attract more migrant workers, they tend to treat migrant workers as objects of the centers' service and tend to make them

service and aggressively reach out for "evangelization." Even they make converts from other churches.

³⁸ Interview on March 2, 2005.

continue to depend upon the centers for their needs. It is the characteristics of paternalism.

Therefore, not surprisingly, some centers treat migrant workers as an object of mobilization even for public protests. Participation in protests, in principle, helps migrant workers to be aware of and claim their rights. However, in some cases, they tend to become objects of mobilization by Korean activists, rather than agents who struggle against the structural forces which limit them with legal and racial boundaries. They become objects in dual ways. First, the top-down decision making process objectifies them. Secondly, competition among the centers also objectifies them as well. The former can be anticipated, due not only to the hierarchical practice of the centers and the lack of democratic discussion, but also to the gap of knowledge and skills between native staff members and migrant workers. Yet, the latter way of objectification is more serious. The competition for leadership among the centers is sometimes expressed in the manner in which a center mobilizes more migrant workers for a protest. Then migrant workers become a means for centers to get recognition and “power.” A researcher reports a migrant worker who was in Korea for nine years and worked closely with a center in *Ansan*:

The Center and Rev. Park have committed amazingly for us migrant workers. It is remarkable. However, we don't know what Rev. Park has in mind. Even when we went for public protests, we did not know what we were going for. When we arrived there, we were informed [for what the protests were] (Oh and Jung 2006:85, my translation).

Note the ambivalence of this migrant worker's attitude toward the director. He admires the remarkable commitment for migrant workers. Yet, his words manifest

how he and companions were mobilized for protests even without proper information. The center works devotedly for migrant workers, but the decision is in the director's hand. It is a characteristic of a relationship between patrons and the protected. This case is more striking, because this center has pioneered to bring the "citizenship" issue into public discussion and has pursued a most progressive project, entitled Building a Borderless Village. This project aims to build a multicultural environment in Wonkok-Dong, Ansan, and integrate migrant workers as members and neighbors into the local community. However, in spite of the progressive philosophy of the project, in actual practice inside the center, migrant workers are not treated as equal members, needless to say about the actualization of the goal, that is, "borderless citizenship" of the local community (Oh and Jung 2006, my translation).

D. Growing Awareness of Undemocratic Practice

In spite of the lack of civility, I encountered several directors and activists who are well aware of the danger of undemocratic practices within and among the NGOs. They are concerned with the leaders' monopolization of the achievement of the activities and making use of the staff. They worry about the authoritarian cultural practice in the field, in which the NGOs' movement in the field has evolved around the so-called leaders. They are aware of the situation that lay activists are used up without being supported and trained by leaders, come to be burned out, and eventually leave the field; as a consequence, the NGOs' advocacy for migrant workers have come to rely more on a few nationally recognized leaders rather than on the NGOs as a whole. The concern is the mechanism which produces the high rate of replacement

of activists. These directors perceive that meaningfulness of their work and relationship are crucial to sustain the commitment of activists. An activist emphasizes the significance of the non-material motivation of activists:

My organization is not affiliated with a church. I would like to call my organization a “*shimin woondong dahnche*” (literally, “an organization for citizens’ movement”), which runs relying only on the voluntary commitment of our staff. We do not work for making money. Thus, the main wellspring of our staff comes not from wages, but from having a sense that we are contributing to make our society better; that our organization helps migrant workers; and that individual staff is more cultivated. ... These are a driving force for us. Because we do not work for wages, it is so important for individual staff to be cultivated. I think of the goal of our activity as a cultivating of activists, as well as migrant workers, so that activists can make a life-long commitment with vision. (Quote from Seol 2003b:36; translation mine)

A director told me: “My relationship with the other staff is that of *seunbae* (literally, senior) and *hoobae* (junior) rather than employer and employee. Directors should treat their staff members as their *hoobae*.” In saying this, she implicitly criticizes the practice of authoritarian leadership by the other directors. The terms *seunbae* and *hoobae*, derived from traditional Confucian ethics, refer to an “organic” relationship between two persons.³⁹ Note that the terms already connote the vertical characteristics in this relationship by means of seniority. Nevertheless, what she meant is the affective care and the commitment for a common moral vision in the *seunbae* and *hoobae* relationship rather than the vertical characteristics of senior and junior. While an employer can treat an employee from top-down approach and even

³⁹ In Confucian ethics, the individual cannot be fully human without being in a social relationship, and each relationship requires moral commitment for each other. In this way, it differs from the Western individualistic notion of personhood.

can lay off, *seonbae* is not supposed to do that toward *hoobae*, because there is a moral and personal responsibility in this relationship.

Based on this perspective, the leader tries to train her *hoobae* as an activist who has both competence and vision. For this purpose, in addition to attending available international meetings, her organization provides staff members with overseas travel for a month, called “human rights travel,” mainly in Asia, such as Afghanistan, Nepal, Cambodia, Thailand, etc. Normally what is allowed is one person per year in turn, as a way of renewing and cultivating one’s vision and sensibility. The name, “human rights travel,” implies the double aims of the travel, that is, the renewal of the staff member and the extension of his/her horizon into Asia. The former concerns a more immediate goal; the latter involves a more ambitious, long-term goal, that is the training of a human rights activist in the arena of the emerging civil society in Asia. In this travel program, her organization makes use of the network of returned migrant workers whom the organization assisted while they stayed in Korea. Because both the program and the partnership with the other NGOs in Asia are in an early stage, it is too soon to evaluate their activities. However, we can see that this organization seeks a more horizontal relationship and tries to cultivate the activists’ vision and qualities for long term commitment. The staff members tend to be more specialized in their roles and take an active part in running NMR.

Another leader concerns herself with the relationship pattern between director and staff in NGOs. Her reflection is more nuanced:

I have thought that the factors, such as the vertical structure, the undemocratic decision-making process, and the lack of self-development of staff in NGOs, have led the staff to quit easily. Thus, I have

emphasized these aspects. I have tried to make the decision making process democratic and encourage self-cultivation of the staff members. However, recently, I have come to acknowledge, though it sounds too simple, that there is a generational gap between me and them [staff members]. <...> I [once] considered them as a *dongjee*⁴⁰, but now as a *hoobae*. Then, I realize that I need to train them. <...> Sometimes when I feel frustrated, I am even inclined to treat some of them just as an employee. I move like an oscillator between *seunbae* and employer.⁴¹

Her personal reflection comes out of the experience of exercising leadership, trying to adjust herself to young activists. In the earlier years of her leadership, she was more or less idealistic and expected the staff to act as her *dongjee*, namely, as an equal partner. She consciously sought this relationship because she had observed that the undemocratic practice and the vertical relationship in the NGOs, including the organization she worked for several years ago, led the activists to be burned out and eventually quit their activities. However, after years as a director, she realizes that the staff members do not have the same degree of her knowledge and experience and that it is not realistic to expect them to act like a *dongjee*. Then, her model of leadership is now a *seunbae* and *hoobae* relationship, even though she sometimes finds this model idealistic as well. Here again we can see a leader's struggle for building a horizontal relationship inside her organization.

Before moving to the conclusion, it is noteworthy to point out two observations which I am going to discuss in the later chapter. First, the two directors I cited define their relationship with the staff in the traditional Confucian category of *seunbae* and *hoobae* in order to capture the personal, democratic and horizontal aspect

⁴⁰ Literally meaning "the same will," it refers to the companion who commits him/herself out of the common social and moral vision.

⁴¹ Interview June 9, 2005.

of the relationship in opposition to the vertical structure and the undemocratic practice. This framework re-appropriates traditional ethics and puts them in the context of an anti-vertical relationship. This is opposite to the negative cultural practice in Korean society in which the relationship between *seunbae* and *hoobae* functions to enhance the vertical relationship and engenders the implicit expectation of loyalty from *hoobae* and benevolence from *seunbae*. Their re-appropriation suggests an instance of how Confucianism can be re-appropriated for conceiving a civil society (cf. Madsen 2002). Second, among the directors and staff members whom I encountered, the ones who were more sensitive to the vertical relationship and the undemocratic practice were mainly women. In consideration of the fact that the NGOs in this field are predominantly affiliated with Christian churches and that the public sphere is also a gendered area (Kwon 2005; Moon 2005), we must examine whether gender, the NGOs' practice, and churches interact or not, and if so, how they are related to one another.

Conclusion

In spite of the success of the advocacy and the promotion of the rights of migrant workers, in this chapter, I have argued that the NGOs are not successful in practicing democratic ideals within and among themselves. I have examined the fault lines and divisions among NGOs and their coalitions and have argued that not merely ideological orientation or religious affiliation but also the lack of civility plays a crucial role in the tension and division. Furthermore, I have demonstrated how the vertical relationship and the undemocratic procedure are widely practiced regardless

of religious affiliation. These findings not only challenge the previous researches (Grey 2003) that attribute the division to the difference in ideological position, but also question the assumption that the organizations affiliated with Protestant churches would be more horizontal than the ones affiliated with the Catholic churches. The task, then, is how to understand the co-existence between the moral authority and the sacrifice of the NGOs, mainly led by the Christian ministers, and the wide practice of the vertical relationship together with the lack of cooperation in the NGOs. I will turn to this task in the following chapter.

VI. Paradox of the Democratization Movement: its Legacy and the Double-Edged Authority

Introduction

The discussion of the practices of the NGOs in the previous chapter reminds of the danger of Michels' "iron law of oligarchy." Actually, researchers on NGOs have found that NGOs are vulnerable, like other institutions, to problems, including the dangers of routinization and the gradual change of democratic to oligarchic rule. They have found top-down planning, funding, or upwards accountability in the practices of NGOs which negate participation or their egalitarian ideology (Fisher 1997:455). NGOs are not an exception to the "iron law of oligarchy" (Michels 1959; Fisher 1997; Kopecky 2003) and can negate the development of civil society.

The shadowy internal practices within and among the NGOs in the human rights movement for migrant workers in Korea seem to fit into another case of Fisher's concern. However, as I illustrated earlier, NGOs' activities have not only constrained but also have contributed to the development of civil society. Then, one may raise two questions. First, how could the Janus-faced phenomena, that is, the ad extra successful achievement in regard to the promotion of the rights of migrant workers and the ad intra uncivil practices within and among the NGOs, have taken place? Second, how is the Church related to these double phenomena? If these questions are answered, I can examine what the findings imply to the development of civil society in Korea in its democratic transition. This chapter aims to answer these questions.

One way of explanation to these questions can be grounded in what Nancy

Rosenblum calls the “congruence thesis” (1998:36). The thesis argues that associations that are good for democratic ideal should mirror democratic practices and principles in their internal processes (Putnam et al. 1993; Skocpol 1999; Diamond 1999). The discrepancy between the *ad intra* internal practices and the *ad extra* activities of the NGOs’ would be a case to reject the congruence thesis.¹ Based on this rejection, one might ask if the churches and the Christian leaders, pointing out the hierarchical structure of the church, are responsible for this incongruence. However, this connection between the effects of the church and the incongruence cannot explain why this incongruence is also found in most of the other NGOs with no affiliation to the churches in this field. In addition, more democratically oriented groups I described in Chap. V include the ones even under the clergy. Thus, it also does not support the causal relationship between the Church and the incongruence.

Instead of this explanation, in regard to the first question, I would argue that the two simultaneous phenomena are rooted in the practices of the democratization movement of the previous decades. The NGOs in this field are heirs of the democratic movement, and this past experience not only enhances the strength of the NGOs, but also hinders the cultivation of civility in the emerging civil society. To this end, I will first briefly examine the biographical background of the NGOs’ leaders, followed by investigation of the ideological position and the tactics of this NGOs movement. This examination will illustrate how the NGOs movement in this field is not only indebted to, but also constrained by the democratization movement of the previous decades.

¹ Rosenblum herself rejects the thesis.

In regard to the second question, I would argue that the role of the activist-ministers as NGO leaders in this field, intertwined with patriarchal and authoritarian culture, has not only empowered the NGOs but also constrained the development of civility. It calls for an examination how the authority of these activist-ministers has been constructed and exercised. In this examination, I will focus on the Korean cultural environment in which the authority of activist-ministers has double-edged effects.

Finally, my illustration implies that the NGOs for migrant workers work in the resistance model of civil society. The state is perceived as a violator of human rights of migrant workers whereas NGOs conceive their mission as the antithesis of abusive power of the state. In this self-understanding, the lack of civil practices is considered as secondary. It also qualifies the application of “the iron law of oligarchy” to NGOs. Michels’ classic “iron law of oligarchy” focuses on the analysis of the bureaucratization process of an organization and neglects its cultural environment and the historical legacy and how they interact with the organization. My analysis will show that the authoritarian practices of NGOs is rooted in the historical and cultural environment and thus that the application of the iron law to NGOs needs cautious examination of the context of organization.

A. NGOs as an Heir of the Democratization Movement

Scholars have emphasized the distinction between the civil society movement and the *minjung*/labor movement in the recent Korean political landscape (Cho 1998; Koo 2002b). It is due partly to the ideological battle between the two, especially

when CCEJ was founded. Whereas the latter targets *minjung* and laborer as the agent for social change, the former claims that citizens are to be the agents of social change in post-authoritarian Korea. However, in spite of the ideological disagreement between the two, there has been no empirical examination of how their practices are different, or even how the “civil society movement” has been influenced by the *minjung*/labor movement.

In this section, I will argue that the practices of the NGOs in this field are rooted in those of the democratization movement of the past decades, and that this historical legacy not only strengthens the NGOs vis-à-vis the state or other actors but also encumbers the cultivation of civility in the emerging civil society. They are an heir of the democratization movement in which the *minjung*/labor movement took a significant part. In short, there is continuity between the *minjung*/labor movement and the NGOs’ movement in this field in terms of biography, ideological position, and repertoires.

1. Biographical Background

Most activist leaders, ministers included, working for migrant workers were also activists for the democratization movement in the 1970s or 1980s. There are patterns for their organization of and involvement in NGOs:

- With respect to Protestant ministers, they became involved in student activism when they were seminarians, such as Rev. Shim and Rev. Lee. Even those who entered the seminary after college were already active in student movements in their college days (Rev. Suh). They studied contemporary progressive theologies,

including *minjung* theology. After becoming ordained ministers, they worked mainly in the *minjung* church movement which targeted building a community of urban poor or workers. In the early stage of migration of foreign workers, most of them did not pay serious attention to them. They considered the issue of migrant workers as a minor one in comparison to that of Korean *minjung*. However, they gradually came to realize the inhuman situation of migrant workers which reminded them of the Korean workers in the 1970s and began to commit themselves to this field. The protest at the Cathedral in 1995 also impacted their commitment. These ministers openly spoke of the continuity of their commitment from native Korean *minjung* to migrant workers as a new *minjung* (Rev. Lee, Rev. Shim, and Rev. Joo).

- With respect to Catholic activists, they are mainly from two groups. The first is from the background of JOC or the Catholic labor ministry. It included Rev. Won, the former director of CCMW, Rev. Myung, the former international director of JOC, Mi-young Park, the actual founder of CCMW, Hyun-hee Choi, a general secretariat of a Catholic Center, etc. They all have been involved directly or indirectly in the labor movement in the previous decades. When JOC and the Catholic labor ministry for the Korean laborers have become weakened after democratization², migrant workers have become a new object for their ministry. This path is similar to those Protestant ministers who involved in activism and the *minjung* church movement.

² It is because the Korean labor movement has become vitalized and no longer need the support from the Church. Furthermore, the Korean labor movement was ideologically more inclined to the Marxist position since the 1980s'.

The second group is not from the former activism. They began their engagement in this field once they realized the significance of migrant workers in Korean society. This group mainly included recent missionary priests from the Philippines, Italy, and Ireland and some native Korean priests and lay activists. These missionaries who arrived in Korea relatively recently (meaning, after mid-1980s) chose this field for commitment because they realized that native Korean priests in general were not interested in it. In case of the Catholic, the transnational character of the Catholic Church is noticeable. Not only the missionaries' involvement but also the JOC network played a significant role, because Ms. Mi-young Park, inspired by her attendance of an international Catholic workers' meeting in 1988, came to establish the CCMW.

- With respect to non-religious activists, most of them have passed the path of student movement and labor movement and now have become activists for migrant workers, such as Won-sook Kim, Hee-ran Cho, Mi-soo Choi.

This biographical background tells us that most leaders of the NGOs in this field are from the democratization movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Some of my interviewees explicitly told me about its negative aspects. A leader of an NGO, an ex-deacon in a Protestant church, was critical of some Protestant ministers. Before she founded the NGO where she is currently director, she worked as a general secretariat in a Protestant church-related organization. Based on this experience, she is critical of the motivation of the ministers who turned their commitment from the *minjung* church movement to the field of migrant workers. To her analysis, the democratization in 1987 resulted in the unfavorable social context to the *minjung*

churches: the disappearance of the visible target and the vitalization of the other channels through which people can express and demand their rights. Thus, the democratization effected the weakening, rather than the strengthening, of *minjung* church. From this context, these ministers changed their commitment from Korean *minjung* to foreign *minjung*, that is, migrant workers.

Another leader, this time a leader of an NGO affiliated to the Catholic Church, expressed similar observation. As a recent Catholic missionary priest who came to Korea in the early 1990s—and thus who can keep distance from the social movement of 1970s and 80s, he is also critical of the activists who came from the last period. He said:

It would be interesting to sociologically investigate how many activists have come from the 3-8-6 generation and why?³ I am sure most activists have come from them. Why do they come to this field? Do they wish that they may accomplish what they did not accomplish in the [native Korean] social movement? [In other words] do they project their dream into migrant workers? Or, [do they] want to serve them [=migrant workers]? They [Korean activists] have to ask themselves [these questions].⁴

These criticisms qualify the motivation of these ministers' or activists' commitment from an insider's perspective. However, these criticisms can be seen as an indirect indication of the contribution made by the activists out of the democratization movement. In other words, these ministers and activists came to this

³ The word 3-8-6 generation becomes a popular jargon since the mid-1990s. It literally signifies the generation in the age of 30s, in college in the 1980s, born in 1960s. However, colloquially, it is used to designate the generation of the student movement in the 1980s. Sociologically, it is the generation who was grown up with economic development and modernization since 1960s, spent their youth period (the age of 17-25) under the military dictatorship, and involved in student movement for democratization during their college days. Here he uses the term loosely to point out the activists from 1970s and 1980s.

⁴ Interview on May 26, 2005.

field of movement for migrant workers, not with empty hands, but with certain ideological positions, skills for organization and repertoires of activism, and cultural characteristics, dating back to the democratization movement under the authoritarian period. Hence, these positions, skills, and cultural characteristics the ministers and activists brought from the previous experiences not only have constrained but also have enhanced the NGOs movement for migrant workers. The promotion of the status and rights of migrant workers in a relatively short period should be attributed to their contribution. Then, the task is to show how the *ad extra* success and *ad intra* uncivil practice is intertwined. I will examine this task through ideological legacy, repertoires, and organizational cultures.

2. Repertoires

As the leading figures were the ones who actively participated in the democratization movement in the previous decades, it is natural that they brought the repertoires, skills, and strategies into this field. I will examine two repertoires in this section: appeal to the court and public protest.

a. Appeal to the court:

In Chapter IV, I have stated that the rights of migrant workers have been promoted through court verdicts. In fact, scholars pay attention to the fact that the court in Korea has weighed in on the issue of migrant workers (C. Lee 2001, Seol and Skrentny 2004).⁵ The Korean courts have ruled since 1993 that undocumented

⁵ As I stated in Chapter IV, the historical background behind the court's favor decision to migrant workers lies in democratization in 1987 and the Korea's abide by the norm of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 1991.

workers were entitled to compensation for industrial accidents. They also encouraged the Labor Ministry to agree and issue regulations in 1994 that stated that undocumented workers were covered by both the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act and the Labor Standards Act. A 1995 case also ruled that trainees were workers under the Labor Standards Act under some conditions. In particular, the first decision was made in 1993, before the first public protest for the rights of foreign workers took place in 1994, while the movement was just emerging. It set an example for later court decisions, and thus gave the rights of immigrant workers a legal base.

The 1993 decision is attributed to the strategy of CCMW, utilizing its repertoire and network. It began with several enquiries of Mr. Moo-young Park, the director of the Catholic Labor Counseling Center in Kuri, east of Seoul, to the Ministry of the Labor in regard to the application of the Labor Standard Law, minimum wage, and compensation for labor injuries to trainees in 1992. Because the Kuri Center concentrated on domestic workers, it collaborated with CCMW. The cooperation was not difficult because Mr. Park and the staffs of CCMW belonged to the Catholic labor movement and were under the same LPC. Then, in 1993, with the help of a lawyer, CCMW appealed through administrative litigation that the case of labor injury be acknowledged and compensated, and won its case against the Ministry of Labor on November 26, 1993. In this case, Kuri Center, who worked for native Korean workers, utilized its skill of dealing with compensation for labor injuries and applied it to the case of a trainee; CCMW, a counter-partner of Kuri Center for migrant workers, utilized a lawyer through the network of LPC and filed a suit against the

Ministry of Labor. Thus, the 1993 decision was possible through the organizational collaboration, based on human and social networks, between Kuri Center and CCMW. Thus, filing a suit became a repertoire in promoting the rights of migrant workers. .

b. Public Protest:

The 1993 decision was not accepted at once, for the Ministry of Labor did not give up and appealed to a higher court for reversal of the verdict. However, a sit-in protest made the Ministry cancel the appeal. The sit-in by undocumented workers, composed of workers from Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines and Ethiopia, centered on a demand for compensation for labor injuries and unpaid wages for undocumented workers. It was coordinated by Rev. J. Kim, a Protestant minister at the headquarter of CCEJ, the most influential NGO in those days, from January 10 until February 7, 1994. The workers who took part in this protest all had suffered serious industrial injuries—one woman from Nepal had lost all her fingers on one hand. Yet, none had been able to receive compensation from their employers. Given their situation, Rev. Kim and the staff of CCEJ coordinated the workers and organized a sit-in protest. Owing to CCEJ, which also helped to publicize the incident through its network of contacts in the Korean media, the sit-in protest found social echoes in public. It was followed by the order of President Kim Young Sam on January 13 that the Ministry of Labor was to prepare a humanitarian policy for undocumented workers. Thus, the Ministry of Labor canceled its law suit on February 7, and the sit-in protest was dismissed on the same day.

The sit-in protest at CCEJ was followed by the Nepalese protest at the Cathedral at *Myung-dong* one year later, which I described in the Introduction. Even

though thirteen Nepalese were deported, the protest awakened the Korean society and resulted in the formation of JCMK. After the two sits-ins, public protest was the main repertoire in the struggle for the abolishment of the trainee program.

Furthermore, Protestant ministers and Church-related NGOs were the main organizers to coordinate and mobilize migrant workers for the protests.

A sit-in protest does not necessarily aim to achieve the purpose for which it is organized, such as the opposition to deportation in 2003. In many cases, most NGOs are familiar with protests as the activists come from a tradition of the protest since their college days. They are not only well aware of the process but also can estimate the possible outcome they can achieve.⁶ In this regard, Korean activists use the sit-in as a channel for education and conscientization of the migrant workers. It is a means of not merely confronting the state power or employer, but also to educate and mobilize migrant workers. This was also the repertoire for education of activists in the student movement and other democratization movements in 1980s (Kwon 2005).

In fact, the sit-in protest by workers, assisted by church organizations, was a typical repertoire during the authoritarian regime, in particular, the 1970s. UIM and JOC were the main assistants in this labor movement. Later in the 1980s, the labor movement became more independent from church organizations but instead was influenced by students-workers and Marxist ideology.⁷ However, public protest was

⁶ Choi (2005:126) also observes that the Korean labor unions have practical estimation of the possible outcomes out of strikes but use them as a way to demonstrate their will to fight against the state and capital.

⁷ It was partially because many student-workers entered labor movement and partially because laborers themselves became more organized (Koo, 2001).

still the main repertoire in 1980s not only to demonstrate the will to fight against the state and employer, but also to educate the workers for conscientization.

In addition, the NGOs' choosing of the *Myung-dong* Cathedral as the site for the protest illustrates their calculated strategy. The Cathedral became a symbolic site of protest for democratization and for claiming the rights of the oppressed. The NGOs aim to present the protest as being aligned with the established labor and democratic movements so that the protests might draw public attention.

3. Ideological Legacy

The ideological legacies of the democratization movement of the past decades are found in several areas. I would examine three major legacies: state-centrism, class centrism, and conscientization.

a. state-centrism

The first is the state-centrism in the movement. Under the authoritarian regime the progressive social movement was inevitably centered on the state. The state tried to control every aspect of society by state apparatus and state-initiated social organizations. In addition to KCIA or the police, the authoritarian regime tried to co-opt intellectuals, media, and voluntary organizations. The co-opted organizations were called *eyong danche* in Korean, which literally means an organization for the use of the king. To be called *eyong* has been a disgrace, for it implies becoming pro-government and distorting the political position and truth for one's own self-benefits. Democratization movement tended to seek political purity against the co-opted *eyong danche* and led to emphasize its struggle in opposition to the state.

It is no wonder that the activists, arising out of this historical background, have a distrust of the state and conceive civil society as anti-state, as it is found in post-communist Eastern Europe (Mudde 2003). However, in practice, the relationship with the state is ambiguous and ambivalent. For instance, until the introduction of the employment permit program in 2003, the main target of NGOs' movement was the state, as they sought to abolish of the training program. Yet, the government funding, which was brought into JCMK since 1999, have made the boundary between NGOs and semi-governmental organizations blurred. JCMK, a unified coalition those days, applied a government funding program which was designed for the laid-off or the marginalized in the context of economic crisis and came to receive some fund. It was the beginning that the government funding was inflow to this area. As the state realized the need for social services for migrant workers, such as Korean language program or health, it came to provide more fund to the NGOs in order to delegate social services to them. When the employment permit program was enacted in 2003 and more governmental funding flew into the NGOs, the relationship between the NGOs and the state became more ambiguous. However, the governmental funding caused a tension and, even some say, corruption and division among the NGOs.

Several interviewees openly expressed their concern for the autonomy and critical distance of the NGOs. In particular, they kept in mind the two former presidents of JCMK, Rev. Kim, a Protestant minister, and Rev. Lee, an Episcopal priest. They have been respectively assigned to run the *Migrant Workers Center in Korea*, a government-funded center, in 2004 and *Social Welfare Center for Migrant*

Workers, a partly government-funded one, in 2005.⁸ Both were presidents of JCMK before the division. Their involvement in government funded centers caused suspicion and criticism from other NGOs. “The large NGOs have become too close to the government,” like *eoyong danche*, so that “the government tries to tame the NGOs in this field.”⁹ “They become like a *chaebul*, expanding their organizations and choking the other NGOs.” However, I also met several activists who wished for the chance to get government funding or to run a government funded center even though they emphasized the need for a critical distance from the government.

When I asked each of these two ministers about this concern that government funding might result in the domestication of their role as NGOs, each strongly affirmed their critical distance. Each of them similarly argued that their organizations were willing to give up the government support whenever it seemed needed and thus they would not lose the role of critical stance against the government in spite of the fact that their organizations were funded by the state. Their defense demonstrated not only their awareness that the other activists looked at them with the gaze of suspicion that they have become a semi- *eoyong danche*, but also their conception that NGOs should be critical toward the state.

An activist narrated a more extreme perception in regard to the relationship with the state, saying:

[My organization relies on voluntary donation,] 100%. There is no government funding. 100% [of financial resources] come from the church or individual. We do not receive governmental funding, because it is dirty. Of course, it comes from tax. However, project [in order to

⁸ The former is funded and assigned by the Ministry of Labor; the latter is funded by the central and local government.

⁹ Interview on March 7, 2005.

get the government fund] should tell a lie. It is scornful and dirty. Why do we have to do the dirty work while working in a NGO? It is dirty to present a project as fancy by polishing the document and earn money [from the government] while a running Korean language program or a [proposed] project. They [activists] who commit for NGOs or social movement should not act such a way. (quote in Seol 2003b:31)

Yet, all NGOs do not have this perspective of civil society vis-à-vis state.

CCMW, who does not join any coalition, views that its relationship with the state is to be supplementary, not antagonistic. The two Catholic priests, the current and the former head of CCMW, expressed their opinions that CCMW does not view the state and itself as occupying contradictory positions. They criticized JCMK with the acknowledgement of exaggeration: “The one purpose of the coalition used to organize public demonstrations against the state.”¹⁰ Actually, it was one of the reasons that they directed CCMW not to join coalitions like JCMK, for the coalitions, in their view, only criticize government policy. However, in the eyes of many other NGOs, the direction of CCMW is oriented toward social service for individual migrant workers, not toward the change of the system itself.

b. the priority of class over gender or individual need

The second legacy is the emphasis on class. The progressive circle in the previous decades was strongly influenced by the *minjung* ideology, and then, Marxist analysis, as both provided an ideological framework to capture the issue of the urban poor and laborers which rapid industrialization produced. Because class is considered as the primary contradiction, other issues, such as gender, are considered secondary. The progressive circle was not sensitive to gender issues (Koo 2001:96-

¹⁰ Interview on July 8, 2005. The theological position behind their view is that CCMW is not a part of civil society but of the Church and that the church does not belong to, but is *above* civil society.

98; Kwon 2005). Class and gender were regarded separated and potentially competing with one another rather than interconnected (Koo 2001:97).

The legacy was vividly manifested in the sit-in protest organized by unionists in 2003 against deportation, which lasted for more than a year.¹¹ The sit-in was led by the leadership of Korean activists. Among migrant workers, male workers from Nepal and Bangladesh were the main participants; a few female migrant workers joined the sit-in. However, these women workers were easily neglected in general meetings and even exposed to sexual harassment by fellow migrant workers. Yet, the “men” at the sit-in ignored this women’s issue, treating it as “trivial and private,” and focused on the unity of the workers for “struggle,” the purpose of the sit-in.

Lee reports a story of a migrant woman participant regarding the need for a separate tent for women.

In the earlier days, the tent had no distinction between men and women. The women with boyfriend or husband were OK, but those without them had hard time. We [three women migrant workers] asked for a separate tent to sleep in. <...> [I heard them saying] “We came here for struggle. What’s the matter? Man or woman is not important.” <...> After three months since we asked, a tent was assigned for women (quote in Lee 2005:112, my translation)

The story shows how insensitive the leadership of the sit-in protest was in regard to the issue of gender. It also shows the same logic and practice, widely and uncritically accepted in the progressive movement in the past decades which Kwon (2005) detailed. The primacy of collectivity over the individuals—because it is private and trivial—and of class over gender!

¹¹ Lee’s MA thesis (2005) contains detailed description of this sit-in.

It is out of the ideological context of the primacy of labor that the NGOs activists for migrant workers frame the issue of migrant workers mainly with labor and human rights. In the earlier stage, because the issue was evolved around the trainee system, the labor and human rights framing was appropriate. Raising the issue of gender, ethnicity, or citizenship in relation to migrant workers is a recent development that began after activists became aware of the importance of the gender issue and the formation of family among migrant workers.

C. Conscientization

Third is the ideological legacy of conscientization. Influenced by Paulo Freire, conscientization became a catch word for the progressive movement in the late 1970s and 1980s; and it meant to awaken *minjung* that they would become a subject of their history.

Since the mid-1980s, however, the wide spread of Marxism introduced a nuanced change in this notion. Conscientization still meant making *minjung*, in particular, the labor class, a subject of history, but the emphasis was placed on the relationship between the elite and the people. As Marxism was received as a counter-ideology for revolution against the dictatorship, the leadership of the revolutionary activists as conscientizer was emphasized as the *avant-guard* in changing people from class-in-itself to class-for-itself. As a consequence, people, in particular the masses, became an object that needed the guidance of revolutionary elites; in this picture, the mutual interaction between the elite and the people in conscientization process was diminished. In other words, intellectuals and activists were presented as catalytic agents in *minjung* ideology and theology, and thus, the

relationship between them and people were more horizontal, at least, in principle. However, the relationship became more vertical as Marxism was applied to the activism. This nuanced change left the philosophical and ethical question unexamined during the time of struggle against the authoritarian regime: what is the power relationship between them like? How is conscientization different from manipulation? The legacy of these issues is observed in the practice of the NGOs movement regardless of their positions.

The NGOs have faced the problem of how to make migrant workers become the agents rather than the passive recipients of the service the Korean NGOs provided. In appearance, it was a main reason for unionists to criticize JCMK, together with the demand of labor permit system instead of employment permit program, arguing that JCMK only reproduce the dependency of migrant workers upon the NGOs. The unionists criticize the practice of JCMK that there is little participation by migrant workers in the decision making process in the NGOs and argue that the movement *for* migrant workers should be the movement *of* migrant workers. In spite of this criticism, the actual situation is more complicated.

In principle, not only unionists but also the other coalitions claim that they, trying to avoid paternalizing migrant workers, strive to make them subjects of their rights. However, practically, migrant workers have clear constraint, as a foreigner, in taking social action because of their limited knowledge of the Korean language, law and customs. Migrant workers who have some knowledge are usually over-stayers; and it means that they are undocumented and thus vulnerable. Therefore, the NGOs have endeavored to build the community of migrant workers by nationality but have

been frustrated by practical conditions. The community leaders the NGOs trained tend to return back to their own countries of origin either by deportation or voluntary departure. Fundamentally, under the current policy whose aim is oriented not to allow permanent residency but to rotate migrant workers within short periods, there are many practical problems for migrant workers to become community leaders. Due to this reason, CCMW opposes involving migrant workers in public protests, asking “Is it for the benefit of the NGOs themselves or of the migrant workers?”

Due to the gap between Korean native activists and migrant workers in resources, local knowledge and Korean language skills, the leadership of the former is unavoidable. It is also unimaginable for migrant workers not to rely on the Korean activists because of their legal status. Thus, in spite of their claim that migrant workers should be not the object but the subject of the movement, unionists did not fully differentiate themselves from the other NGOs in terms of the participation of migrant workers in the decision making process.

The sit-in protest at the *Myung-dong* Cathedral in 2003 against deportation provides a case in illustrating the gap between unionists’ ideology and practice. In her analysis, Lee (2005: 105) reports that the participation of migrant workers was more or less formalistic and that the voices of the Korean activists overwhelmed those of migrant workers who participated as representative in the protests. In other words, unionists alienated migrant workers from decision making during the protest. The disregard of women migrant workers’ request for having a separate tent came out of this context. Korean activists treated it as “trivial and private” and tried to seek the unity of the workers for “struggle” which they believe was the purpose of the sit-in.

Furthermore, unionists made the sit-in a site of conscientization of migrant workers. They tried to educate migrant workers to identify themselves as labor class and to commit themselves to organizing labor union of migrant workers, similar to the process of organizing Korean labor unions by intellectual-activists in 1970s and 1980s! Actually, some of the migrant workers who participated in the sit-in become the major leaders in the union of migrant workers which went public in 2005.¹² However, unionists as a descendent of the Korean labor movement tended to emphasize the historical role of labor unions and ignored the individual needs and desires in the conscientization process. Thus, the gap between the duty for 'community' of migrant workers and the need of the individual is observed. Lee states:

It is needed to view that organizing union is merely a resource for migrant workers to need. It means that there are other ways for migrant workers to become a subject. However, the education [by unionists] that migrant workers can become a subject of the movement only by means of organizing union cannot correspond to the situation of migrant workers. Eventually, the education put migrant workers into the dilemma between the duty of fighter [for fellow migrant workers] and [the desire and need of] an individual human person. (Lee 2005:111)

Hence, what the unionists potentially aim at through conscientization is to make migrant workers labor activists who can fight for a greater ideal. To unionists, individual interests are trivial and private enough to be sacrificed. The question remains as to who can define which interests are trivial and private. Here, we can see the blurred boundary between conscientization and manipulation.

¹² Interview on July 21, 05.

The same dynamism is also found in other NGOs who have different positions in this field. Just as unionists want to transform migrant workers into labor activists, some NGOs in JCMK or NMR also aim to transform them into activists in civil society, if not in Korea, then in their origin countries when they return. Won-sun Yoo, a leader with no religious affiliation in NMR, expresses this concern. Having worked in an international NGO in Hong Kong, she envisions that the NGOs in this field will extend their networks to the other NGOs and build civil society in opposition to neo-liberal globalization in Asia. Thus, working for migrant workers is not only meant to help them individually but also to contribute to civil society in Asia by transforming migrant workers into activists equipped with social consciousness and moral responsibility.

Rev. Shim, a representative leader in JCMK and a highly regarded Protestant minister among progressive intellectuals¹³, has a clear vision in this regard. Before he came into this field, he actively participated in the democratization movement since his seminary days in 1980s and while working at a *minjung* church near Seoul after ordination. His desire to conscientize migrant workers came out of this background. He sees that migrant workers are elites in their origin countries: they graduated from college and was able to raise money enough to enter Korea, paying for airfare and fees for brokers. He is the only one who opened a medical hospital run solely for migrant workers; and, as a consequence, he has financially struggled to manage his hospital. However, he believes that it is not enough to assist individual migrant workers here in Korea. He wants to go further, saying:

¹³ He was elected by a progressive circle as one of the five religious persons who most strongly influence upon Korean society.

We have to solve the fundamental problem of the origin countries. We envision building a college to train and conscientize people who come to Korea and work as migrant workers that they can be renewed and lead [their origin society] when they return. <...> The key [of my goal] is to conscientize and train them that they can work for democratizing their [origin] society, helping the poor, and developing their country. Many of migrant workers are elites with good family background, graduating college in their [origin] countries, and have capability to raise money and enter Korea. We need to utilize them in order to make Asia better.¹⁴

He uses the language of conscientization in a straightforward way. His vision does not merely remain within the assistance of migrant workers and the promotion of their rights in Korea, but also includes the change in Asia by conscientization of migrant workers. The scale of his horizon is extended toward Asia; however, the spirit behind it is the same as when he worked in the democratization movement as a seminarian and in *minjung* church. His vision is to conscientize migrant workers, that is Asian *minjung*, just as he worked for it in regard to Korean *minjung*.

Therefore, the legacy of conscientization is still wide-spread among the NGOs. It motivates and empowers them in working with and for migrant workers, even gives them pride in the sense of carrying out a “historical mission” in strengthening Korean or Asian civil societies. However, it still leaves a question unanswered in regard to the power relationship between the elite and the people, in this case, between Korean activists and migrant workers. The question, raised by a Catholic missionary priest in the earlier, is provocative: “Why do they come to this field? Do they wish that they may accomplish what they did not accomplish in the [native Korean] social movement? [In other words] do they project their dream into migrant workers?”

¹⁴ Interview on June 22, 2005.

Hence, the NGOs for migrant workers are an heir of the democratization movement in the previous decades in terms of social network, repertoire, and ideological positions. The network, repertoire, and ideology have been useful resources in making allies, demanding a change of system, sustaining their commitment, and acquiring moral superiority over the state or the employers. At the same time, however, these have made the NGOs blind to the *ad intra* hierarchical and undemocratic practices while focusing on the *ad extra* struggle against the state.

B. The Double-Edged Authority of Activist-Ministers

How, then, has the church affected the two inter-related phenomena of the NGOs? As activist-ministers have formed the crucial leadership in this field, it is necessary to examine how their roles work for double-edged effects, that is, in promotion of migrant workers' status and rights, and reinforcement of uncivil practices. In this examination, I will focus on the double-edged authority of activist-ministers.

I have already mentioned how the Church has contributed to the "success" in Chapter IV by means of the contextualized human rights framing, leadership by the ministers, and moral authority enhanced by sacrifice. The activist-ministers have made these means possible by playing the role of an organic intellectual in Gramscian sense. As a religious leader, they can mobilize symbolic and material resources inside and outside the church for the NGOs. As activists, they, in general, have committed themselves to the causes of migrant workers and brought the skills and repertoires that they have acquired from the previous involvement in the progressive

circle. They are more experienced and skillful than most staff members or activists in the field. Most of them are not only a founder and director but also a fund-raiser, partly owing to their status as a minister. In addition, their commitment to migrant workers is seen as noble; they are perceived as working for a stranger in a country where, until recently, its people lived in a myth of a mono-ethnic nation. They are sometimes called as a protector and promoter of human rights. In other words, they enjoy the moral as well as religious superiority. All these aspects are enough to give them “authority,” not merely based on religious tradition, but also on rationality in terms of skill, and experiential and theoretical knowledge, and even, in some case, charismatic leadership.¹⁵ Their authority is powerful and the government cannot easily disregard them.

However, I argue that the authority of the activist-ministers has double-edged effects in the Korean Confucian cultural environment. On the one hand, the Korean Confucian cultural environment empowers the authority of the activist-ministers to influence sympathizers to take their side, to make it easy to mobilize the resources, and to pursue their goals, that is, the promotion of migrant workers’ status and rights. On the other hand, however, it makes them insensitive to the patriarchal and hierarchical practices in the way they exercise their power based on authority. In other words, when their power is exercised, it is exercised in the Korean cultural context in which the organizational cultures of the NGOs and of the church are located. The patriarchal and hierarchical ways of exercising power are reinforced in the organizational cultures of the church and of the NGOs. For this argument, I will

¹⁵ In Max Weber’s term, their authority is not merely based on tradition, but also on rationality and even on charisma.

examine two levels of cultures: first, the organizational cultures of the NGOs and churches and then a broad Korean Confucian cultural environment in which the organizational cultures are embedded.

First, the ecclesial culture in Korea fosters hierarchical and patriarchal practices. The clergy enjoys authority not only in religious matters, but also in administrative ones with which they can “govern” the church or the affiliated organizations, like a “king.” The hierarchical and patriarchal practices are common from the conservative Christian circle to the progressive one, as well as from the Catholic to the Protestant Church. However, the way in which the hierarchical and patriarchal practices are fostered varies, depending on the denomination and the political orientation.

For the conservative, their hierarchical understanding of the Church, represented in the image of shepherd and sheep, justifies the practices. In this view, obedience to God is overlapped with the obedience to clergy who represents God. The difference between Catholics and Protestants is the institutional character. While a Protestant minister’s authority is rooted in his personal charisma rather than the institution, Catholic priests rely on the institution rather than personal charisma. However, it is hasty to conclude that the institutional hierarchy renders the Catholic clergy to become more authoritarian than the Protestant clergy. Since the Catholic Church in Korea makes it a policy to rotate its clergy, a priest has less possibility to run a church or an affiliated organization on his own. The rotation policy functions to check the despotism of the clergy. In comparison, Protestant ministers have more cultural space to become authoritarian, partly because personal charisma works more

effectively and partly because the community is usually composed of the followers of the minister.¹⁶

However, the progressive circle has more in common with the activist-ministers' case. For the progressive, their commitment to justice or democracy justifies the practice. In his study of the Catholic Church, Kang correctly illustrates the affinity between the progressive priests who are involved in the democratization movement and the authoritarian culture in the church (2003). According to him, the progressive clergy also tend to become authoritarian, not because they rely on the hierarchical view of the Church but because they try to mobilize the resources of the church despite the opposition of the conservative laity (2003: 27). Their sacrifice in the democratic struggle during the authoritarian regime earned them moral authority to the point of being seen as a prophet-like figure oppressed by the dictatorship. Therefore, it is not merely the hierarchical characteristics of the Catholic hierarchy, but more importantly, the commitment outside the church for justice or democracy that makes the clergy become hierarchical and authoritarian in their exercise of the authority inside the church. As to the Protestant culture within the progressive circle, what matters are again personal charisma, vision, and capability of a minister. When a church or an organization depends on personal charisma rather than institutional arrangement, authoritarian and patriarchal practices can easily occur in a Korean hierarchical and patriarchal cultural context.

Second, the Korean NGOs' culture also cultivates authoritarian and patriarchal practices. It is indebted to the fact that the NGOs in Korea are an heir of

¹⁶ The most vivid example is the handing over of a church from a minister to his son in some mega-churches.

the democratization movement. In other words, the practices of the NGOs are inherited from those of the SMOs for the pro-democratization movement. I have discussed the hierarchical and patriarchal culture inside the pro-democratization movement organizations in Chapter III. Korean scholars have recently examined the hierarchical and authoritarian practice within the progressive SMOs under the authoritarian regime. In her study of the student movement in 1980s, Kwon (2005) states that the student movement, which played an avant-garde role in the Korean democratization movement, was blind to its own hierarchical and patriarchal practice. She argues that modernization of Korea under the authoritarian regime fed “military culture” which gave over-priority to hierarchy, social order, and efficiency. Ironically, according to her, the generation of students-activists, the so-called 3-8-6 generation in Korea, although they fought against military dictatorship, grew with these values under the military culture. Thus, the activists themselves have internalized the authoritarian and patriarchal practices and lacked sensitivity to gender issues or to horizontal democratic procedures. In spite of their pro-democratization struggle in the political realm, the student movement reproduced the pattern of hierarchical and patriarchal practice, based on hierarchy, order and efficiency (Kwon 2005: Ch. 2).¹⁷ In short, the root of authoritarian practice in the progressive circle is cultivated in a broader authoritarian and military culture under the authoritarian regime in which the activists grew up.

Moreover, the SMOs had to seek efficiency with limited resources in the struggle against the omnipotent dictatorship. Thus, secrecy and top-down decision

¹⁷ In particular, women were required to accommodation or obedience to this order and hierarchy (Kwon 2005:123).

making were widespread, and the activists were not sensitive to the hierarchical practices in the democratization movement.¹⁸

Given this organizational culture of the church and of the NGOs, it is not surprising to observe that the activist-ministers in the NGOs for migrant workers exercise their authority in an authoritarian and patriarchal way. As Kwon suggests, they also grew up with the values of the military culture which emphasized hierarchy and efficiency. In addition, they came to the NGOs with the culture of SMOs of the previous democratization movement and the ecclesial culture, both of which have a hierarchical decision making process. In this culture, any criticism against the activist-ministers is not easy to make and is usually unaccepted even when it is made.

During my research, I wrote an essay on the need for cooperation between Catholic and Protestant organizations. In particular, because it is widely known that the CCMW was negative toward the participation in the networking with the other organization (Seol 2005), I explicitly addressed this issue and showed it to a priest who was a staff member in the CCMW—he is a missionary priest from France. After I pointed out the paragraph in which I mentioned the CCMW, the following conversation ensued between us:

M (missionary priest): What matters is that if you raise this [the need for cooperation], it won't be helpful.

I: why do you think so?

M: as I told you, it is a matter of authority.

I: what do you mean?

M: well, they (meaning, the priests) act like a king here [within the Catholic organization]. However, if they go out [for cooperation with other organizations], they cannot act [like a king].¹⁹

¹⁸ The tension between organization and hierarchical decision making process is well examined by Michels' discussion on the iron law of oligarchy through the case of German socialist parties.

¹⁹ Interview May 24, 05.

His observation deserves our attention in the juxtaposition of the views of the former and the current director of the CCMW, an American priest and a Korean diocesan priest, respectively, in regard to why the CCMW did not participate in the JCMK or other networks. When I asked each of them, they both answered that the CCMW has different goals and strategies from other Protestant organizations. To them, participation in the JCMK means collaboration with Protestant organizations because they are the main actors in this field. Moreover, the former director pointed to the past experience of the difficulty in collaboration between the JOC and the UIM. He further mentioned that in his experience, the Protestant organizations made use of the Catholic ones for their own benefit, not for the common purpose. In comparison to the views of these two directors, this French missionary priest attributed the real reason behind the lack of collaboration to the desire and practice of acting like a king. With regard to my essay, he advised me not to explicitly state the case of the CCMW because it would upset the former and the current director and thus would not result in the collaboration as I wished. When I asked if this practice of top-down decision making process is popular in the French Catholic Church, he answered negatively. Interestingly, he argued that this authoritarian practice is attributed to the Confucian cultural background in Korea. To him, the authoritarian and hierarchical practices are an heir of the Confucian cultural background.

Among the staff members in the Catholic organizations, those who have experience of working with missionary priests prefer the missionaries to the native Korean priests as their directors precisely for this reason. They worry that top-down

decision making process is a habit of the native Korean priests, and thus, when a Korean priest becomes director, the participation of the staff will become weaker and their relationship with the director becomes more passive and vertical. This concern also illustrates the authoritarian practice of the Catholic priests.

As to the Protestant activist-ministers, Ms. Hee-ran Cho observes that the hierarchical leadership style is rooted in the combination of the cultural practice of the progressive circle and the church. She says:

Yes, it (the organization run by the Protestant ministers) is very hierarchical. [It is because] they (the ministers) are not trained in the non-authoritarian structure. In other words, their generation has never been experienced in democratic decision making process, such as consultation. Even when they were in *Undongkwon* (the progressive circle for the pro-democratization), they are tamed to follow the [disciplinary] order of their seniors and thus are not educated in the democratic management of an organization. Moreover, religion (religious hierarchy) is added. Even though they make efforts, they do not have capacity to run a horizontal and egalitarian organization. <...> If they cannot manage such a way, I have to accept the reality. They are doomed to do it.²⁰

In her tone of frustration, she points that the activist-ministers lack democratic skills even though they put forth the effort. She attributes it to the combination of a generational problem and the ecclesial hierarchy. What she says as a generational problem is the cultural practice of the so-called 386 generation which shapes the organizational culture of the SMOs of the progressive circle.

I have argued that the organizational cultures of the NGOs and the church foster the hierarchical and patriarchal practices of the NGOs. However, these hierarchical and patriarchal ways of exercising authority are not merely practiced in

²⁰ Interview July 20, 05.

the church and the NGOs. A vivid and astonishing example is on the issue of the inheritance of ownership and management relating to the leader's son. Samsung, a renowned global business organization, whose CEO is a son of its founder, is preparing for the succession of its leadership to his son. When it takes place, it will be the third generation of succession. Other major *chaebuls* are also working along the same path. In addition, only in North Korea among communist countries, a completely different world from the capitalist business organization, the power is handed over from Kim Il Sung to his son, Kim Jung Il. North Korea is now preparing another leadership succession to Kim Jung Il' son. Even, a mega-church in Seoul recently approved the appointment of its current pastor's son as successor. Thus, the hierarchical and patriarchal exercise of authority and power in the NGOs or the churches should not be attributed solely to their organizational cultures. Rather, it would be more accurate to interpret that these organizational cultures are embedded in the broader Confucian cultural environment, in which the doctrine of "three bonds" between ruler and minister, between father and son, and between husband and wife has been considered as the core of Confucian teaching and has been practiced in authoritarian bonds.²¹ In this Korean Confucian cultural environment, authority and power is understood and exercised, even inside churches and among the clergy both in Catholic and Protestant Churches.

²¹ It would be a hasty and wrong conclusion that Confucianism is inherently antithetical to democracy, based on this observation of the interpretation of three bonds as the core of Confucian teaching and its authoritarian practice, as Madsen correctly shows (2002: 194-196). Confucianism has been historically re-interpreted in response to the historical changes and has diverse internal traditions, just as Christianity has diverse traditions, such as Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox. In addition, as I described in the discourse of some activists in the previous chapter, some Confucian ethics are employed as an alternative to the hierarchical leadership.

Therefore, the authority of activist-ministers has produced the double-edged effects in the organizational cultures of the NGOs and the Church against the backdrop of the Korean Confucian cultural environment. It has empowered them to fight against the abusive power of the state and thus to contribute to the development of the NGOs. However, it has also hindered a more democratic and horizontal practice in the NGOs. It has thus reinforced the paradox of the democratization movement in the NGOs' activism for migrant workers. In other words, both the achievement of the activism for migrant workers and the internally undemocratic and authoritarian practices have been grounded in the democratization movement and have been reinforced by the activist-ministers, most of whom are from the democratization movement. The religious and moral authority of activist-ministers, exercised over the backdrop of the Confucian cultural environment, has led to the double-edged effects.

Conclusion

I have illustrated that the *ad extra* successful activities and the *ad intra* uncivil practices are indebted to the historical legacy and the cultural context of the NGOs. In short, the NGOs are an heir of the SMOs for the democratization movement of the previous decades in terms of the biography of the NGOs leaders, their ideological positions, and their tactics. Moreover, ecclesial and organizational cultures have shaped the cultural environment of the NGOs. In this context, the authority of the activist-ministers has played a role, on the one hand, as a catalyzer for promoting the status and the rights of migrant workers by mobilizing resources and raising public

awareness; on the other, as an anticatalyzer in preventing the development of civility by maintaining authoritarian and patriarchal practices within and among the NGOs.

What does the explanation imply to the development of civil society in post-authoritarian Korea? The accomplishment and the uncivil practices, rooted in both historical legacy and organizational culture, tells that the NGOs for migrant workers work in the resistance model of civil society. The state has been perceived as a violator of human rights of migrant workers or, at least, a failure in protecting their rights. In contrast, NGOs conceive their mission as the antithesis of the abusive power of the state and as being morally superior to the state apparatus. Consequently, the state is suspected and distrusted, being treated as the main target to be resisted or to be corrected by the standard of human rights, rather than as the main partner to work with for the promotion of migrants' rights. In other words, the NGOs tend to reify the state as a monolithic entity and suspect how it oppresses people. All these fit into the resistance model. NGOs put their legitimacy in the struggle against the target *out there* and thus "conflates civil society with opposition per se," similar to Kopecky's observation on civil society in post-communist Eastern Europe (2003:4). In this model, the lack of civil practices is easily neglected or considered as secondary.

My illustration qualifies the application of "the iron law of oligarchy" to NGOs. Michels' seminal work on "the iron law of oligarchy" focuses on the analysis of the bureaucratization process of an organization and neglects its cultural environment and the historical legacy of organization and how they interact with the organization. Fisher is right to point that NGOs are not free from the danger of the iron law. Surely, NGOs can be vulnerable to top-down planning and funding; and

upwards accountability in the NGOs negates participation. However, the NGOs he refers to are international NGOs and their networks in which the power relationship between them is asymmetrical, manifested in the relationship between South and North NGOs. In comparison, the NGOs in my case are oligarchic due to the historical legacy and the cultural context rather than to the organizational evolution.

VII Conclusion

The NGOs' activism for migrant workers illustrates a new, vibrant civil society "after democratization" in Korea. The NGOs' activism has accomplished a significant elevation of the rights and status of migrant workers and has contributed to their integration into Korea. However, it also exemplifies a lack of civility and undemocratic practices by maintaining authoritarian and paternalistic practices within and among the NGOs. In other words, despite the accomplishment, there is incongruence between the *ad extra* advocacy for migrant workers and the *ad intra* management within and corporation among the NGOs. In this activism, the Church and the clergy have played a leading role in dual senses: a role of a catalyzer to promote the accomplishments as well as an anticatalyzer in preventing the development of civility. I have argued that the role of Christianity and the incongruence are the double-edged effects of the democratization movement of the previous decades. The churches and the NGOs in this field are heirs of the democratic movement. This heritage not only has enhanced the strength of the NGOs, but also has hindered the fostering of civility in the emerging civil society. The leadership of activist-ministers has reinforced the double-edge effects of the democratization movement under the Korean political cultural context.

Environment and Labor Activisms

The other fields of civil society also show similar practices in their activism. Among the many fields, I shall briefly examine the environment and the labor

movement. I chose these two because they also well represent the growth of civil society after democratization. In addition, the many environmental NGOs are linked to religions, in particular, Buddhism and Catholicism, whereas labor unions are now independent from religious networks, for instance, from the earlier influences of the UIM and the JOC. Thus, both fields may illustrate whether or not the religious factor affects their internal practices.

First, the environmental advocacy organizations emerged recently. Although the Korea Pollution Research Institute was founded in 1982 as the first professional environmental NGO, the rise of the major environmental NGOs took place after democratization and was culminated in the organization of the Korean Federation for Environmental Movements in 1993.¹ In spite of this short history, the activism has made progress in building public mechanisms to educate the public, to participate in the design of the environmental policy, and to monitor the state's implementation. Jeong enumerates the NGOs' contributions: civil monitoring and reporting, for instance, the establishment of the "Environmental *Sinmungo*" in March 1996; building public-private cooperative forums in the search for a compromise between governmental authorities and residents of the concerned region; organizing campaigns and education programs to induce citizen participation and raise people's environmental awareness (Jeong 2002:53). Accordingly, a Western observer assessed that the environmental NGOs in Korea had more influence upon the policy making process than did their counterparts in either Japan or the US (Schreurs 2002:57). Both Jeong and Schreurs attribute the successful participation of the

¹ As of June 2000 there were 453 environmental NGOs in Korea, of which 132 were registered at the Ministry of Environment and 271 were not registered (Jeong 2002:55)

Korean environmental NGOs in the policy making process to the democratic transition (Jeong 2002; Schreurs 2002).

However, the NGOs activism sometimes leads to ineffective administration, resulting in a lot of “unnecessary costs and delays” (Jeong 2002:54).² In particular, the advocacies against two established projects are most well-known: the Saemangeum reclamation and the Mt. Cheunsung tunnel projects. The former was a coastal wetland reclamation enterprise to expand agricultural lands while the latter was a tunnel project, a part of the new express train railroad from Seoul to Pusan. Environmental groups insisted a reassessment of the environmental influence for the latter and a change for the first. Both advocacy activities included not only the appeals to the court but also serious protests including radical actions. The first included *saambo-ilbae* from Saemangeum to Seoul for sixty-five days from March 28 to May 31 in 2003.³ For the second, a Buddhist nun made five fasts from 2003 to 2006, more than 300 days in total. These activisms hindered the implementation of the projects for several years until finally the Supreme Court re-confirmed them.

Obviously, their radical sacrifices provoked public attentions and debates. Each case involved a tension between the regional and national developmental projects and the environmental preservation; and each required complicated scientific debates in regard to the impact of the engineering project upon the environment. The

² For instance, the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a pro-business association, estimated that the economic cost, due to the delay of the projects, reached 4,179,300 million won (US \$ 4,179.3 billion) (ChoongAng Ilbo Jan. 28, 2007). However, environmental NGOs argued that it intentionally overestimated the cost, pointing out that the researcher and the research method were not revealed.

³ *Saambo-ilbae* was led by a team of a Catholic priest and a Buddhist monk. It literally means three steps and one bow. It is a practice of Buddhist asceticism—a move with a Korean traditional bow at every three steps—in order to repent their mistakes and sustain the life of all the suffering creatures of the earth. Thus, the moving speed is about 1 km per hour and the move over a long distance is supposed to hurt their knees.

issues were intersected with the debates on policy priority and complex scientific and technological examinations. This differed from the issues of human rights violations, such as in the case of migrant workers, in which injustice is more visible and easily arguable. Observably, the engagement of religious leadership and their extreme sacrifice stirred up a wide public response. However, these radical sacrifices were seen as a threat to impose their position, rather than to engage in a persuasive dialogue.⁴

Secondly, in the field of the labor organizations, the suppressed labor movement has erupted after democratization. Accordingly, the organization of labor unions has been sharply increased; and the wages have been raised. The newly organized labor party in 2000, whose organizational foundation is rooted in the KCTU, a more progressive national labor union, got seats in National Assembly in 2004. The improvements in the economic and political power of the labor unions have taken place for the past twenty years. Moreover, owing to its institutionalization and relatively longer history than the environment, the reliance on individual leadership is not so conspicuous as other fields.

However, Korean labor unions are well-known for their militancy. The labor militancy is not only manifested in a high rate of strike, but also in workers' remarkable physical and emotional commitment to the movement (Choi 2005:243). The strong involvement entails violent actions, such as street demonstrations followed by serious confrontations with police, or long term struggles outside their workplaces.

⁴ In particular, as the Buddhist nun repeated fasts for the case of Mt. Cheunsung,, public opinions turned into hostile to her. Even a columnist in a progressive newspaper criticized her uncompromising struggle as a form of fundamentalism, see <http://www.hani.co.kr/kisa/section-008003000/2006/01/008003000200601101813705.html>; accessed on February 5, 2007.

Owing to the historical legacy of protest of the previous decades, Choi points out that “[i]n Korean labor movements, resistance is considered legitimate but negotiation is still considered as a shameful concession” (Choi 2005:240). In addition, sometimes, militancy is expressed internally. The recent fractional conflicts within KCTU are well-known to the public through the incident of disrupting the National Congress of KCTU by violence in 2005. In these practices, the labor unions are criticized as focusing on their own established interests rather than the interests of the other workers, most significantly, the two groups of workers filling the bottom of the working class—native irregularly employed workers and migrant workers. All these show the lack of virtues and skills for negotiation, trust, tolerance, coexistence with difference, the abidance by their organizational rules, and aliveness to others’ interests.

Hence, like the NGOs for migrant workers, both the environment NGOs and the labor unions’ activities illustrate that both fields are vibrant in terms of *ad extra* contention, lacking civic virtues and civic skills. Obviously, they were not only one who was responsible for radical actions. The state was also responsible by not being transparent and skillful enough at reaching social consensus. Moreover, not all the NGOs conceive civil society in the lens of the resistance model; and the internal hierarchical and undemocratic practices are not found in all the NGOs. Several environmental advocacy groups seek more or less partnership with the state and are conscious of the bigger public good beyond NIMBY (not in my backyard). In the field of migrant workers, in the earlier chapter, I also illustrated the NGOs which were aware of the internal, hierarchical problems and pursued alternative programs to make

their organizations closer to the democratic ideals.⁵

Nevertheless, the general view of the emergent civil society suggests that the civil society in Korea has developed, based on the “resistance” model which distrusts the state and conflates opposition to the state with the main virtue of civil society. The struggle during the authoritarian regime has fostered a resistant spirit, but not much of a spirit of tolerance; skills for protest, but not much for horizontal cooperation. The ideologies, skills, and cultural practices in the democratization movement contributed to the emergence of civil society under the authoritarian regime; however, the NGOs still rely on old practices in a new democratic context.

Consequently, the new democratic context requires the “cooperation” model, in which civil society organizations are concerned: not only with the state but also with other civil society organizations, not only resistance but also public deliberation and civility, not only the *ad extra* efficiency in struggle but also the *ad intra* democratic practices and cooperation. In other words, they have to embrace each other with different political visions and seek horizontal cooperation, fostering moral qualities of civil society, such as pluralism, tolerance, solidarity, democratic negotiation, in order to deepen democracy.

Implication for the NGOs for Migrant Workers

The recent transformation of the state confirms the need for this cooperation model. I have argued that the NGOs in Korea tend to suspect and distrust the state, conceiving it as the main target to resist or to count-balance, rather than as the main

⁵ Interestingly, the leaders of these NGOs are women and missionaries who are in a minor position in this field.

actor to work with for the promotion of migrants' rights. This perception of the state as the target reflects more on the past historical legacy than on the actual performance of the state whose orientation has been rapidly changed. Although it has focused on solving the shortage of the labor force, even before the introduction of the employment permit program, the government endeavored to end the vulgar exploitation of migrant workers. Especially, both the past and the current presidents, Kim Dae Jung and Rho Mu-Hyun, who place priority on human rights, have tried to apply the human rights concerns to their policy in regard to migrant workers. Furthermore, the government had recently taken the decline and the aging of the Korean population seriously and has begun to discuss the possibility of accepting immigration. In this sense, The Korean government has worked to adapt itself to the changing environment in relation to migrant workers.

In particular, a recent move of the government illustrates how it carefully considers the general immigration policy which Korea has never had before. According to a recent government document "*Uegoogin Jeungchek Khibon Banhyang mit Choojin Chekye*" (literally meaning, the Basic Policy Orientation for Foreigners and the System for its Implementation; hereafter, UJ), President Rho ordered the Ministry of Justice in April, 2005 to proactively seek "the policy of nationality and the legal protection of migrant workers by re-examining the entry law which is based on the mono-ethnic notion of nationhood" (UJ 1). In response to the President, the Ministry of Justice published the UJ after several consultations with migration scholars and NGO leaders—note that the majority of the consulted NGOs leaders were Protestant ministers. UJ deserves our examination because it outlines the general

direction which the state is going to take. It proposes to establish the Korean Immigration Service in order to comprehensively deal with immigration and refugee issues, and to recommend the establishment of a migration studies program in universities which up to now no Korean university offers.

The move of the state is striking, because imagining of the reception of immigration itself is foreign to most Koreans. Due to the fact that Korea has been a country of emigration, there is no Korean word equivalent for immigration. Thus, UJ begins with the explicit note that *Yimin*, the Korean word for migration, means emigration from Korea to other countries in practice. In order to discuss immigration, UJ names the document “*Uegoogin Jeungchek*” (literally, *foreigner policy*) rather than “*Yimin Jeungchek*” (literally, *migration policy*) which means emigration policy in practice. However, UJ states that it is to be translated into “*immigration policy*” in English (UJ, 1). This note already indicates the difficulty to discuss the reception of immigration. For this reason, it is provocative for the government to open up the discussion of immigration.

UJ conceives that the reception of immigration is unavoidable. It presents three major factors for its necessity: first, the rapid growth of global exchange of people and capital due to globalization; second, the demographic changes in Korea, that is the rapid increase of ageing population and the low fertility rate, namely, 1.08 in 2005,⁶ one of the lowest in the world; third, the diversification of foreigners’

⁶ Hankyoreh Newspaper May 9, 06.

staying in Korea, such as the increase of Koreans' inter-racial marriage⁷ and the influx of migrant workers, and the increase of their over-staying. In particular, due to the fact that Koreans avoid working in the 3D sectors and that the number of the labor force is decreasing, the government anticipates that 2,000,000 foreign workers will be needed by 2050 (UJ, 3). The government recognizes that immigration is not something to be faced in the future but to be prepared now.

Therefore, UJ proposes a paradigm shift in regard to the policy of foreigners and the establishment of a department of Immigration Service which coordinates the related issues. UJ acknowledges that the current policy is oriented toward both national interest and the control of foreigners (UJ, 6). It also explicitly states that until recently the government has not considered the integration of migrant workers but only with concerns about the labor shortage in the 3D sectors. The result, UJ continues, is the increase of undocumented migrant workers. Hence, it states that the focus of the policy needs to be counter-balanced by human rights and integration of migrant workers and proposes a new department to cope with the multi-dimensional issues of migration.

UJ reveals the statecraft of the Korean government. The Korean government is not only observing the influx of migrant workers and their impact upon society and the economy, but also trying to guide them—a legacy of the state-guided-development. Furthermore, UJ shows the fact that the state pays attention to the lessons, learned from the recent French unrest in 2005, caused by the failure in the integration of

⁷ The ratio of inter-racial has rapidly increased from 1.2% in 1990 to 13.6% in 2005. In particular, the ratio reached 1/3 in the countryside (<http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/20060606/040302000020060606150350K8.html>, accessed on June 6, 06).

Islamic migrants; and it learns that the state has to work for the integration of foreigners.

However, the Korean state still does not give up the self-understanding of its role, that is, to promote national development. This is expressed in the principles of immigration policy: first, by the active inducement of professional and skilled immigration; second, by the restricted introduction of unskilled immigration in order to reduce social welfare cost and latent social tension; and finally, by the preference for overseas Koreans because of the cultural and linguistic advantage (UJ, 6). These principles aim at promoting “national competitiveness.” Put differently, the Korean state tries to channel immigration as an instrument for economical goals in tune with nationalistic sentiment.⁸

Therefore, the statecraft illustrates the danger of reifying the state. It is too a simplified view that the Korean state is an abuser of human rights as it was for the sake of the authoritarian regime or an instrument of capitalist accumulation. Rather, in regard to immigration, the Korean state is the one that has tried to adapt itself to the rapidly changing economic and social situation. As it acknowledges, it used to concentrate its focus merely on the shortage of labor power in the 3D sectors. However, it recognizes not only the decline and the ageing of population, but also the limit of controllability of immigration. This limit has been manifested in the fact that even the strong deportation policy could not significantly lower the number of undocumented workers (Table IV-3). Thus, UJ no longer talks about the short term rotation of migrant workers which aimed to prevent permanent residency. Rather, it

⁸ Skrentny et al (2005) also argue that East Asian states use the co-ethnic preference instrumentally, for economic goals.

carefully calculates who the state wants to include and who to exclude in order to promote “national competitiveness.”

The statecraft of the Korean state shows multiple goals of the state: maintaining security; building economic development; and regulating migration. The examination of permitting immigration is designed in this matrix of market and society. Thus, the Korean state simultaneously prepares the permission and the regulating of immigration, similar to the double-edged strategy of Western liberal states, allowing rights to the already arrived and tightening the control of the ones who are to come (Joppke 1998b). Would it lead to a path that the Korean state be trapped in what Hollifield (2004) calls a “liberal paradox”? In other words, would the Korean state become like a Western liberal state which, in order to maintain a competitive advantage, “keep their economies and societies open to trade, investment, and migration” and, thereby, is exposed a political risk, such as the issue of national identity, that of racial and religious pluralism and integration, brought by migration (Hollifield 2004:885)? Or, is the UJ a sign that the Korean state emerges as a migration state “where regulation of international migration is as important as providing for the security of the state and the economic well being of the citizenry” (Ibid)? It is yet too early to answer to these questions. The point is that although the state is not transcendental over or neutral from nationalistic or economic preference, the examination of migration policy shows the transformation of the state and its governance in response to the global changes in market and population.

The transformation of the state needs a new envisioning of civil society beyond the distrust of the state. A strong civil society needs a strong state. Thus, a new

civil society must be based on the cooperation model for the synergy effects of the state and civil society. The resistant model fits the authoritarian state which lacks political legitimacy and encourages conflictive relationship with the state. Constant suspicion of and attacks on the state, while easy in the anti-state political sentiment, only make the state weak and fragile. Neither does this help to bring about just rights of migrant workers, nor to deepen democracy. In a post-authoritarian political context, civil society needs for constructive partnership with the state. It requires an art of judgment with respect to when conflict is necessary and when cooperation is desirable.

Similarly partnership among and within NGOs is needed. Like the state, NGOs face the same challenges: the increase of numbers of migrant workers, their diversification in terms of legal status, ethnicity, religion, and the increase of inter-racial marriage and the families which follow. These rapid changes demand that the NGOs be more differentiated and specialized. They need to professionalize themselves on the basis of main activities, the targeted migrant workers regarding ethnic origins or religious affiliation, geographical coverage, etc. This specialization and differentiation would enhance a social condition for cooperation, helping to avoid unnecessary competition due to overlapping in particular fields.

Moreover, partnership must be cultivated within NGOs. Authoritarian, even hierarchical, leadership for the sake of efficiency hinders the capacity building of staff members and activists as well as discourages their commitment. NGOs, thus, should develop their ability to promote internal cooperation and to train staff members, so that new leaders may eventually surpass the old ones in moral-political vision and

professional capacity. The *seunbae* and *hoobae* relationship addressed in the Chapter V captures this desire already sprouted in the NGOs. It implies that leaders should not use up junior activists. Rather, senior and junior activists are in moral relationship in which they should cultivate the personal and affective ties as companions and grow in the commitment to a common moral and political vision.

Implication for the Church and the Church-related Organizations

My research also illustrates how the Church and the church-related organizations continue to contribute to the development of civil society. Democratization does neither have weakened the Church's engagement in and contribution to civil society; nor has it brought the withdrawal of the Church into the religious area narrowly defined. Yet, much more can be done in order for the Church to become what it ought to be according to its own mission. Under the authoritarian regime, it contributed to the emergence of civil society by delegitimizing the regime through counter-ideology, organizing farmers and workers, and training the leadership of social organizations. The Church was at the frontline of the resistance movement against the authoritarian state. Then, the cooperation model in the post-democratization context calls the Church to turn its engagement from the state to civil society.

In fact, the Church-related organizations for migrant workers have not only more resources than other NGOs, but also rich theologies for this turn. In terms of transnational network, the Vatican takes ministry for migrants serious. It runs the council of ministry for migrants, whose current head is a Japanese bishop who himself

used to actively involved in migrant workers in Japan. Thus, the Catholic Church's advocacy for migrants, that is happening not only in Korea, Japan, France, and the US suggests that the advocacy not merely is a matter of individual local/national churches, but has institutional response.⁹

In terms of theology, in particular, the good society which Catholic social teaching envisions is close to the civil society in the cooperation model. Catholic social teaching conceives the role and responsibility of the state in protecting basic human rights and pursuing and mediating the public good¹⁰; it also urges solidarity for the common good and the preferential option for the poor; it calls for the inculturation of the gospel, meaning both the contextualization of the gospel into culture and transformation of culture through the gospel.

Although Vatican II inspired and encouraged many Korean priests and laity to get involved in democratization movement, the major themes of the Catholic social teaching, superceded by liberation theology and *minjung* theology, have not yet fully explored the Korean context. Catholic social teaching can provide a good guideline for political and social ethics for Korean society in the new context in which neo-liberal ideology prevails over the "old" left ideologies. First, the notion of common good now can challenge Koreans to go beyond nationalistic definition of national identity and national interest which tend to instrumentalize migrant workers as a means for the development of Korea. Secondly, the solidarity, with which the

⁹ For the role of the Catholic Church for the advocacy for migrants in France and the US, see Moony 2006.

¹⁰ Catholic social teaching calls public good common good which it defines "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment" (*Gaudium et Spes* [26] in Abbot 1966).

democratization movement defeated the authoritarian regime, is to be newly formulated for the pursuit of constructive partnership and for the newly marginalized, moving beyond the old solidarity formulated for the struggle against the common enemy, dictators. Finally, the Church can engage in the examination of nationalistic culture and can foster a more multi-cultural environment in the context of immigration. These would mean a new way of interpretation of Catholic social teaching in the context of migration and political changes.¹¹

All these ethical reflections have potential to provoke public discussion and deliberation. This means that the Church and the Church-related organizations must develop the discursive or dialogical dimension of the public sphere more seriously. Put differently, they must engage in public dialogue with other members of the larger society. Needless to say, it does not discourage their current activities for migrant workers, centered on social services for migrant workers and the participation in the policy making process, even the struggles, when necessary, vis-a-vis the state.

Who, then, can actualize the potential of the Church and its organizations for the cooperation model of civil society? The negative synergy effects between the Church's hierarchical structure and the hierarchical element of Confucian cultural environment imply that the clergy alone are not be the best for this role. The double-edged authority of clergy illustrates the liability of its synergy effects. However, exclusion of the clergy is not practical in building more cooperative Church-related organizations. They are the religious experts who can put theological legitimation and religious symbols together and the leaders who can easily access and mobilize

¹¹ For an application of Catholic social teaching to migration in the Korean context, see Kim (2006).

organizational resources. Obviously, the role of the clergy is crucial. Thus, the key to actualize this potential of the Church for the development of civil society would depend upon the cooperation between clergy and laity. Some Church-related organizations, whose directors are relatively recent missionaries, show a good example in this regard. The environment which these missionary directors created differed from the counterpart of the native Korean leadership. This cooperative environment and leadership resulted in the “envy” of staff members in other NGOs. Thus, the cooperation between clergy and laity suggests a key contribution that the Church organization can make in this field and society at large, against the hierarchical cultural backdrop.

In Conclusion, the potentials and the limits of the NGOs for the development of a democratic civil society will evolve around how activists respond to the complex of structural factors, such as population, economy, the state, political and national cultural sentiments toward immigrants, the change of North Korea, and global changes. Obviously, each of these factors is beyond their capabilities and resources to cope. Although I have argued that the legacy of the democratization movement leaves the double-edge effects upon the NGOs, the most valuable resource of the leaders in this field is their embodied history. They were anguished, beaten, tortured, and imprisoned; but, they defeated the authoritarian regime. They made history! They overcame oppression with political vision rooted in moral responsibility and solidarity. Then, the future will be shaped by how the activists keep this embodied history alive in them and thus inspire the coming generation to dream and commit for

a new political vision, rooted in moral responsibility and solidarity. This would advance a society in which immigrants can be better treated with due rights and dignity.

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