

Dear workshop participants:

This is a paper that has been sitting on my shelf for a couple of years and I can't wait longer to send it out to journals. It was originally a paper presented at the ASA which limited the length to 20 pages. So I added a little here and there, mostly the theoretical parts, and made it longer. I didn't have time to go over the paper again, so I am a bit wary about its consistency/coherence. Any comment on how to make it better shaped for publication (including organization, evidence, argument, etc.) will be of great help.

The conceptual figure I present is part of my ambition to classify how movements exist/change in the contemporary world (some of you may be familiar with it as this is not the first time I am presenting my idea). As a longer-term project, I would love to hear your thoughts on whether my framework is viable (and in what sense if it is or isn't): Do you think it captures the varying ways in which social movements institutionalize? Do you find autonomy as a useful concept? What do I need to do to improve the framework?

Many thanks in advance.

Sun-Chul

Power of Movement: Defiant Institutionalization of Social Movements in South Korea

Sun-Chul Kim
Barnard College
(sk840@columbia.edu)

Two months before the General Elections in 2000, a broad national coalition named the Citizens' Coalition for the 2000 General Election (CAGE) was formed. The goal of the coalition was to block "unfit" candidates from running for office, or being elected. The coalition was hoping to affect the nomination process in each party at first, but the response they received from political parties was lukewarm. This eventually led them to publicize a "blacklist" of eighty-six "corruptive," "undemocratic," or "anti-reformist" candidates, which they had meticulously sorted out earlier. The negative campaign was ruled illegal by election authorities and the coalition received constant warnings from the Prosecutor's Office. However, the coalition defied these warnings and soon a national campaign to vote out the blacklisted candidates ensued. The blacklist included politicians not only from the conservative parties, but also from the more reform-minded governing party. Well aware of the power potential of South Korean social movements, major political parties reacted apprehensively. The head of the policy board of the conservative Grand National Party (GNP) impugned the campaign out of indignation and charged that it was "a sophisticatedly plotted out stratagem [to favor the governing party]." Another conservative party more to the right, the United Liberal Democrats (ULD) screamed out that the campaign was violating the law, defining the campaign as a "political terror against the sovereignty of the voters." The ruling National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) also censured the illegal campaign, with an admonishment that "civic groups should not break away from the boundaries of law." A *Donga Ilbo* article aptly expressed the atmosphere of the moment: "Political parties are trembling."¹

Accusations leveled from all political parties and the conservative media. Still, the coalition carried on its campaign, employing various tactics that ranged from conventional public demonstrations to street festivals and concerts. Many candidates on the blacklist were forced to defend themselves in face of the public. CAGE executive director, Park Won-Soon, was reported to have received dozens of calls from politicians fearing they might be on the list; Citizen's Alliance for Political Reform, a civic group that had been preparing an independent report on delinquent MPs during the 15th National Assembly session was reported to have received over a hundred-fifty reference materials from MPs. They were all sent out voluntarily from MPs' offices in their own defense². As CAGE shook up the electoral cycle, which normally would have been a process dominated by political parties, more and more movement groups joined the

¹) "Political Parties are Trembling: What if I am on the List?" *Donga Ilbo*, January 13, 2000.

²) "MPs Bow Down: Documents Flood CAGE in Self-defense." *Donga Ilbo*, January 21, 2000.

coalition. In the beginning, CAGE had four hundred and sixty three member groups, already an impressive number; the number grew to more than a thousand by the time of the election. Public support was behind CAGE's back as well. Gallup Korea conducted three polls during the campaign period (January, March, and April), which carried an almost identical set of questions concerning how the respondents viewed the blacklist movement. Asked whether the blacklist movement was desirable or legitimate, 59% of the respondents answered yes on January 12th, which increased to 70% (March 17th), and eventually to a significant majority of 78% on April 14th, a day after the election³.

In the end, several key leaders of the campaign got arrested and later convicted on charges of election law violation. However, the result was astonishing: CAGE thwarted fifty-nine powerful politicians' intention to reenter the 16th National Assembly. This was nearly 70% of all blacklisted candidates, who were mostly powerhouses in South Korean politics. In the capital city of Seoul, nineteen out of twenty blacklisted candidates were boycotted. The result even surprised the staff members at CAGE⁴. But the impact of the CAGE mobilization far transcended the immediate results in the election. In addition to the prevention of a gerrymandering law bargained out by representatives of the major parties prior to the election, political parties began to change the ways in which they were nominating their candidates: from a top-down mechanism in which party bosses held sweeping power to the gradual adoption of primary elections where party grassroots gained a bigger voice (Choi 2000; Kim H 2000; Horowitz and Kim 2002; Shin 2003).

The CAGE action reveals several features characteristic of South Korean social movements in the post-authoritarian period. The first is the *broad scope* of the coalition. Proposed first by a number of influential social movement organizations, the initiative was soon answered by hundreds of groups both at the national and local levels, which generated a huge impact on national politics. Secondly, the coalition activities were *nonpartisan*. In spite of a "liberal vs. conservative" configuration in the party system, the coalition strictly maintained political neutrality and maintained autonomy from any political party throughout the campaign. Thirdly, the coalition's stance was highly *defiant* in regards to legal matters. Despite the negative ruling by the election authorities, which was later affirmed by the court, CAGE leaders didn't show much hesitation in using nonconforming tactics. Lastly, the employment of unlawful tactics didn't prevent the coalition from generating *public support and political impact*. On the contrary, polls revealed that a majority of South Koreans acknowledged that the information publicized by the CAGE coalition influenced their voting behavior to a significant extent. In sum, the CAGE mobilization represents a prime example through which South Korean social movement groups were able to demonstrate their organizational capacity and political influence at a national scale.

³) Source: <http://www.gallup.co.kr/gallupdb/> (member access only).

⁴) "Success of the Blacklist Movement – Teaching a Lesson How to Check Political Parties." *Donga Ilbo*, April 15, 2000.

In fact, South Korean social movements have built a reputation for maintaining a powerful presence long after democratic transition in 1987 (Kim S 1997; Aleman 2005; Nam 2006; Gray 2008). Moreover, the perceived power of South Korean social movements was to such an extent that many Korean social scientists began to express concerns over how social movements have been overshadowing political parties, and democratic consolidation (Kim S 2000; Kim and Diamond 2000; Kim 2000). In South Korean academia, it is not unusual to come across the term "quasi-party" to describe the political function that social movements play in articulating, aggregating, and representing societal interests and formulating social programs (Choi 2000; Hong 2004; Kim and McNeal 2005).

These aspects of social movement politics in South Korea present a puzzle to students of social movements and contentious politics: As a new democracy, the persisting vitality of South Korean social movements and their defiant attitude defy theoretical expectation that social movements would demobilize after democratization; the development of a highly cohesive social movement community comes in stark contrast to other places where fragmentation is the norm; and South Korean social movements' audacity to challenge the party system as whole, rather than working with or through reform-minded parties, challenges established understandings concerning the relationship between social movements and political parties in democratic settings. How could South Korean social movements avoid cooptation, remain active, and grow politically influential? How were they able to maintain political influence without building cooperative ties with political parties? What are the implications for social movement theory and practice?

Internal Cohesion, Autonomy and Patterns of Movement Institutionalization

As more countries democratize and social movements around the world exchange thoughts and experiences with greater ease, many social movement scholars are turning their eyes to the patterns of interaction between social movements and the political system they purport to challenge. This change is epitomized by the idea of the social movement society, which points to the trend in which social movements are increasingly turning into a routine element of normal politics in modern democracies (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Goldstone 2003, 2004; Tilly 2004, 2007; Meyer 2007). The keyword is institutionalization, "the creation of a repeatable process that is essentially self-sustaining; it is one in which all the relevant actors can resort to well-established and familiar routines" (Meyer and Tarrow 1998: 21). Yet the idea of a social movement society carries a hazard to lump together processes that may well have significant differences. Recurring instances of collective action based on well-established routines abound. For example, routine exercise of terrorist tactics by militant groups in the Middle East would be an instance of "institutionalization," but then one cannot but wonder to what extent and how it differs from institutionalized interest groups in other parts of the world.

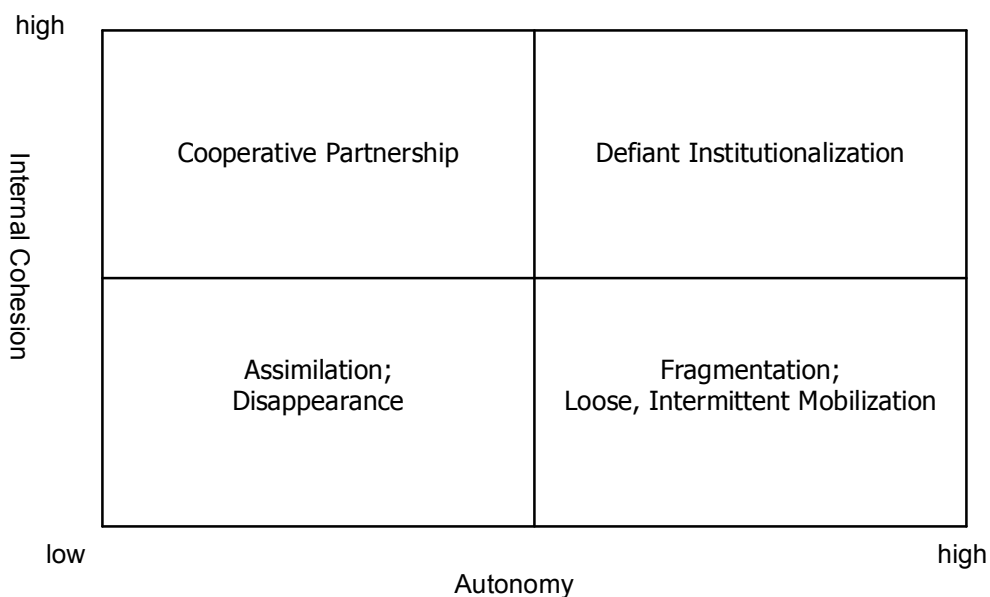
A narrower, alternative definition of institutionalization associates institutionalization with demobilization and incorporation into formal politics. Patricia Hipsher defines institutionalization as “a process that involves a shift towards more standardized, nonthreatening forms of collective action that entail less mobilization and less disruption. ... Institutionalization involves greater reliance on negotiations, the electoral process, and working through government institutions and agencies” (1998b: 157). Associating institutionalization with demobilization, moderation, political cooptation or incorporation has been the normal practice in the scholarship (Tarrow 1989; Hipsher 1998a, 1998b; Rucht 1999). From this, it is not surprising that recently there are recurring questions about whether institutionalization in the context of a social movement society is so great that the social movement as we have known it “is losing its power to surprise, to disrupt and to mobilize, and to provide a meaningful and effective alternative form of politics for those without access to more conventional means of influence” (Meyer and Tarrow 1998: 26; also, McAdam 1998; McAdam et al. 2005).

Many researchers have shown that social movements can produce meaningful change working within established institutions (Staggenborg 1988; Katzenstein 1998) and that the powerful institutions in our modern world came about as responses to social movement mobilization rather than the other way around (Goldstone 2003, 2004). The sticky problem, though, lies in the underlying assumption that generating movement outcomes requires social movements to give up their autonomy to a certain extent. Theories would tell us, for example, that cooptation may involve expansion in political participation and bring new policy adoptions as byproducts; but this comes at the price of a movement’s acceptance of the rules of the game (e.g., Gamson 1975). Here movement success and movement incorporation are inextricably interwoven. But are they necessarily the same processes? Can’t there be social movements effecting meaningful change acting within institutional structures while at the same time remaining outside the rules and logics dictated by the political system? If so, how do we identify such social movements? It seems as though we are lacking the proper tools to explore the different patterns of institutionalization and the varying degrees of transformative potentials social movements may carry in the newly emerging social movement society.

This paper is a preliminary attempt at filling in the void. It starts from the premise that institutionalization may take varying forms, that *institutionalization* of social movements, that is, social movements becoming an everyday fabric of politics, and *political incorporation* or *assimilation* of social movements, i.e., social movements becoming a routine part of formal politics through transforming themselves rather than the political system, are different. Perceivably, the former is more comprehensive in scope and the latter may be one, but not the only, way in which social movements institutionalize. In this paper, an alternative pattern of institutionalization is proposed as *defiant institutionalization*. It is institutionalization in that social movements become a routine part of everyday politics, but differs from political incorporation to the extent that social

movements are able to establish themselves as an independent player and secure autonomy in public politics and, therefore, are allowed more power and freedom to challenge the political status quo. I propose two aspects as the determining characteristics of defiant institutionalization: internal cohesion of social movements and their autonomy from institutionalized politics. Internal cohesion of social movements refers to the development of solidary ties among social movement groups and points to the resources they may acquire within the social movement sector. By movement autonomy I refer to the ability of social movements to formulate and carry out movement agendas independent of powerful actors, e.g., the government, political parties, and other major institutions such as the military or religious institutions. Internal cohesion of social movements may provide the necessary condition for movement autonomy, but the two are analytically separate as social movements may develop strong solidary ties from within at the same time building cooperative ties with political parties. Focusing on the two aspects, we are able to construct a conceptual framework for theorizing the variations in the patterns of social movement institutionalization.

[Figure 1] Patterns of Institutionalization



The figure consists of four spaces along the axes of internal cohesion and autonomy, but the four spaces merely serve the purpose of simplification and convenience. It would be better to see each axe in terms of changing degrees. For example, the axe of internal cohesion may be spread out along a line to include movements show extreme fragmentation and densely organized formal coalitions that show high degree of overlap on the opposite pole. Likewise, the axe of autonomy would follow a continuum in which one pole is occupied by social movements that can hardly be differentiated from government institutions to a rare situation of dual power on the opposite pole. While

accepting the proposition that the majority of political challenges will eventually institutionalize, the purpose of the figure is to see how patterns of institutionalization may vary along these two axes. The figure is constructed having national politics in mind (i.e., a social movement sector in a nation state as a unit of observation), but it may as well be applied to individual social movement organizations. The organizing idea behind the axe of organizational capacity is that stronger ties among movement groups is positively correlated with their power potential, while the autonomy axe depicts the range of freedom challenger groups have in their agendas and forms of action. Combined, the two axes create four patterns of institutionalization as ideal-types. I posit that greater internal cohesion and higher degree of autonomy may be conducive to a form of institutionalization that carries the strongest power of the movement.

The upper-left hand box represents institutionalization through *incorporation*, that is, political challengers gaining official access to the power center in exchange for complying with the rules of the game. Movements may develop high degree of solidary ties among themselves, but the typical way they operate is through building a partnership with political parties. Institutionalization of social movements via political incorporation may bring cooperative partnership between social movements and political parties, but social movements are likely to face bigger constraints with respect to the range of choices they can make and movements may fall into the trap of betting their success on the electoral success of political parties (Maguire 1995; Rochon and Meyer 1997; Ho 2003).

Moving clockwise, *defiant institutionalization* represents institutionalization to the extent that it becomes a steady presence in public politics. But, unlike incorporation, political challengers are not fully absorbed into the structures and norms of the political establishment. Political challengers carry relatively high degree of organizational capacity due to maximizing resource from within and could be taken seriously by institutionalized actors, yet they are able to maintain autonomy due to various factors (e.g., the way they strategize or aspects of the political environment). This offers them room to employ a greater degree of freedom compared to social movements that underwent incorporation. The relationship between challengers and institutionalized actors may be cooperative with specific issues at times, but there is also a greater potential for the relationship to grow confrontational due to their distance from political parties.

Assimilation represents challenger groups being absorbed by political establishment without particular recognition or trade-off. Because of the low level of organizational capacity, social movements are not considered to be potential partners by institutionalized actors. Because of the low degree of autonomy, on the other hand, fragmented challenger groups are likely to be colonized by institutionalized actors. The most likely result is assimilation into the system or to disappear as a social movement. In either case, social movements in this space will be the least meaningful in terms of their power potential.

Intermittent mobilization represents a conceptual space in which challenger groups that possess relatively high autonomy are scattered around, weakly connected, thus having little political impact. However, mass mobilization may occur when challenger groups are able to find the right moment and erupt in concerted action. Such occasions will be facilitated when seemingly isolated groups are connected through weak, invisible ties that, although remaining latent for the most part, could activate as the tissues that connect otherwise separate groups. High degree of autonomy will grant them a relatively wide range of freedom for action, and at times such mobilization can generate greater impact. The mobilization against the WTO in Seattle could be seen as an example of autonomous groups coming together temporarily in common action, which was largely due to the new means of communication, i.e., the Internet, and cheap transportation (Smith 2001).

The four boxes represent ideal-types and we may face difficult problems when trying to fit all empirical cases into one of the boxes. In addition, scope conditions need to be specified in detail and the effects should be considered in relation to other important factors that shape contention, e.g., elements of the political opportunity, in order to prove its utility. However, it gives us an intuitive insight as to how internal cohesion and autonomy could be used to understand the varying patterns of institutionalization. It also offers an insight into the power potentials of political challengers. While the judgment of success or failure of a mobilization can be difficult in times of normalcy, we might hypothesize that the power potential could be greater for mobilizations by movements in the defiant institutionalization category in times of greater uncertainty, i.e., during times of major protest cycles. Or, we might expect a move from the upper-left box to the upper-right in times of uncertainty as new conflicts arise within the institutional arrangement. This implies that social movements cannot be assigned to any of the boxes based on their internal properties. Instead, we will benefit more if we expect to see a trajectory of social movements moving between the boxes as a combined result of changing circumstances and the interplay of movement action and system response.

In the remaining, I use South Korean political process as an example and examine the processes and mechanisms that led to its defiant institutionalization of social movements. More specifically, I examine the development of a cohesive network within the social movement sector that allowed social movements as a whole to emerge as a unitary and autonomous actor, and the causal processes that allowed for its emergence and political effectiveness. Special focus is put on repeated coalition actions and the constantly shifting political environment that allowed greater opportunity for social movements. The findings challenge the bias in social movement studies that takes for granted the dependence of social movements' success on established political actors, and suggest the need to reconceptualize how we understand the relationship between social movements and their political allies.

For illustration, I make use of protest event data based on reports from one of the leading national daily newspapers, the *Daily Hankyoreh*, in addition to archival and secondary sources. The protest data contain 1317 counts of protest events that contain qualitative and quantitative information on claim makers, issues and targets of claims, means of protest action, and major campaigns, etc., and are drawn from the sample years of 1990, 1994, 1998, and 2002, which allows us to observe the changing properties of public contention in South Korea over time.

Coalition Dynamics and Emergence of a Social Movement Community

Coalition is an indispensable element in the world of social movements. Despite ideological, tactical, and organizational differences, social movement groups often engage in coalitions in order to maximize favorable outcomes. There have been abundant studies on coalitions, but prior understanding of coalitions were limited to viewing coalitions as emergent byproducts of protest cycles (McAdam 1982, 1995; Tarrow 1989, 1994; Rochon and Meyer 1997), or as an optimal state in which interaction among participant groups find the fine balance between cooperation and competition (Staggenborg 1988, 1986; Ferree and Hess 2000; Jones et al. 2001; Van Dyke 2003).

The story of coalitions in South Korea builds on prior accounts, but takes on a slightly different direction. First of all, whether or not coalition activities under examination are part of a protest cycle is unclear. Most likely, we will be looking at coalition activities that appeared *after* a protest cycle that peaked in 1986-1987 in the form of a nationwide pro-democracy struggle. Secondly, we will not be looking at coalition as a one-time event, but at coalitions as a recurring action pattern. Lastly, we will take an historical point of view in regards to the emergence and outcome of coalition action. The point of reference is the idea of contentious repertoires, a limited set of practices available to contentious actors in a specific historical moment. Repertoires, according to Charles Tilly (1978, 1981, 1995), are learned cultural creations that emerge through struggles, which help us understand "not only what people do when they make a claim" but also "what they know how to do and what society has come to expect them to choose to do from within a culturally sanctioned and empirically limited set of options" (Tilly 1978: 151). Repertoires in a given time and space greatly constrain contentious collective actors, but at the same time the availability and innovative use of repertoires may often lead to unforeseen outcomes.

In a similar vein, we can understand the development and consequences of coalitions in South Korea as a process in which political challengers discovered the coalition form as a readily available and effective means of struggle. At first, coalition was one of many available, if difficult, tools of struggle. However, the successful experience of a grand coalition in 1987, the "National Coalition for a Democratic Constitution (NCDC)," forced the authoritarian government to yield to popular demands and set a clear model of

coalitional action for later struggles (Chung 1997).

In addition to the availability, it was the sluggish pace of democratization that motivated movement groups to draw on successful repertoires of the past. Electoral processes were set in motion and other reforms ensued, but the successors of the past military regime were still in high offices; administrative practices showed little change; labor unions were systematically excluded from official channels of political participation; and, above all, the new government continued to severely repress popular protest and movement organization (Billet 1990; Kim 1997). Apparently, there was a sea change in how politics was to be conducted but practically all the elements that helped build the broad NCDC alliance in 1987 remained: threats from the repressive state, dense network among activist groups, and the master frame of democracy that was still relevant. Only this time, there was more political space.

[Table 1] Major Protest Campaigns in South Korea

Year	Description	Duration	# Events (annual %)
1990	Workers fight for recognition and against repression	Jan-May	77 (14.78)
	Mobilization against three-party merger	Jan-Mar	71 (13.63)
	Democratization of the public Korea Broadcasting Service	May-Jul	34 (6.53)
	Defense Security Command's surveillance of civilians	Oct-Nov	32 (6.14)
1994	Impending rice market opening with the Uruguay Round	Feb-Apr, Dec	65 (19.94)
	Public railroad workers organize for recognition	Jun-Jul	51 (15.64)
	NK nuclear crisis triggers ideological turmoil and repression	Jul-Aug	43 (13.19)
	Broad demands to punish ex-military leaders in 1980 coup	Oct-Dec	21 (6.44)
1998	Financial crisis leads to IMF control of S. Korean economy	Jan~Dec	105 (52.24)
2002	Energy workers fight against privatization of the industry	Feb-Apr	26 (9.67)
	Disputes over collective bargaining spread nationwide	May-Oct	38 (14.13)
	Mass rally to change SOFA between US and S. Korea	Nov-Dec	46 (17.10)

As a result, mobilization from below remained very active and major clashes between the state and political challengers, or what I coded as "protest campaigns⁵," persisted into post-1987 South Korea (Shim 1989; Lee 1993; Kim 1997). Table 1 shows the major protest campaigns that occurred in the years of survey. One may notice how many of the campaigns were related to incomplete democratization or authoritarian remnants. Although somewhat in a decrease over time, the proportion of events that are part of a campaign constitutes almost half the total protest events (44.54% of all events surveyed). Analysis of the data not presented in this paper also shows that protest events occurring as part of protest campaigns tend to be initiated by more radical sectors, launched more against the central state, focused more on political issues, more

⁵) A *protest campaign* is defined as a subset of protest events that develop around a salient issue in a delimited period and was coded for issues that are a) the major focus of more than 20 protest events; b) more or less clustered around a certain time period; and c) involve participants from more than one actor category.

anti-governmental in claim forms, larger in the scale of participation, and more disruptive in the tactics employed.

In a sense, protest campaigns resemble protest cycles to a great extent, only in a smaller scale: Temporal concentration of protests heightens the level of political conflict; protest activities tend to extend to broader sectoral and geographical reach; movement organizations are reinvigorated through struggles; master frames are tested and negotiated while being articulated with more specific frames and issues; and new forms of collective action are invented and diffused through the intermingling of early risers and latecomers (Tarrow 1989, 1994, 1995).

[Table 2] Proportion of Coalition as Primary Actor in Protest Events

<i>Year</i>	<i>All Events (%)</i>	<i>Campaigns (%)</i>
1990	19.58	31.31
1994	21.47	23.89
1998	14.93	12.38
2002	20.82	19.09
Total	19.59	23.65

Protest campaigns became a nursing ground for coalition work (Table 2). On average, coalition action was more active in events that were part of protest campaigns, especially in the early years. The trend begins to change in the later years most likely because if, in the early years, the primary need for a coalition was at making expeditious action against arbitrary government action, the needs for coalition diversified in the later years. However, the change occurred only after active coalition work in the early years left a significant imprint on the structure of South Korean social movements.

The resemblance of protest campaigns to protest cycles and the frequent occurrence of protest campaigns are the keys to understanding the development of coalition as a standard repertoire in post-1987 South Korea. On the one hand, protest campaigns, like protest cycles, provide greater opportunity for dense interaction among movement groups from different sectors, which in turn help facilitate the development of solidarity and a common identity (McAdam 1995). On the other hand, frequent occurrence of protest campaigns encourages the accumulation of coalition experience. Like any repertoire of contention, once movement groups go through an experience of working together, it becomes easier the next time as they learn from the experience and lessons of the past (Kleidman and Rochon 1997; Whittier 1995).

If a large-scale mobilization provided movement groups with incentives to work together, frequent mobilizations crystallized that tendency. The success of the 1987 NCDC coalition furnished movement groups with an organizational model to emulate, and protest campaigns provided the necessary opportunities for South Korean movement groups to act together. Because protest campaigns occurred frequently, it

was easier for movement groups to pass down the experience of concerted action in one campaign to another. Coalition was not a one time result of a protest cycle, nor was it much a problem of finding equilibrium among competing groups. Rather, coalition was discovered and established as a historical repertoire through an eventful trajectory of popular mobilization.

Repeated use of coalition helped South Korean activist groups to build a densely knitted social movement community, but the process was not automatic. In the early 1990s, South Korean social movements encountered a severe crisis after years of unproductive mobilization. The crisis was coupled by the collapse of the socialist bloc in Russia and Eastern Europe, and became aggravated with the election of Kim Young Sam, former democracy fighter and first civilian president in more than three decades. With the change, the tradition of anti-authoritarian struggle based on leftist ideals seemed to have expired. It was at this moment when a new stream of movement emerged out of the old.

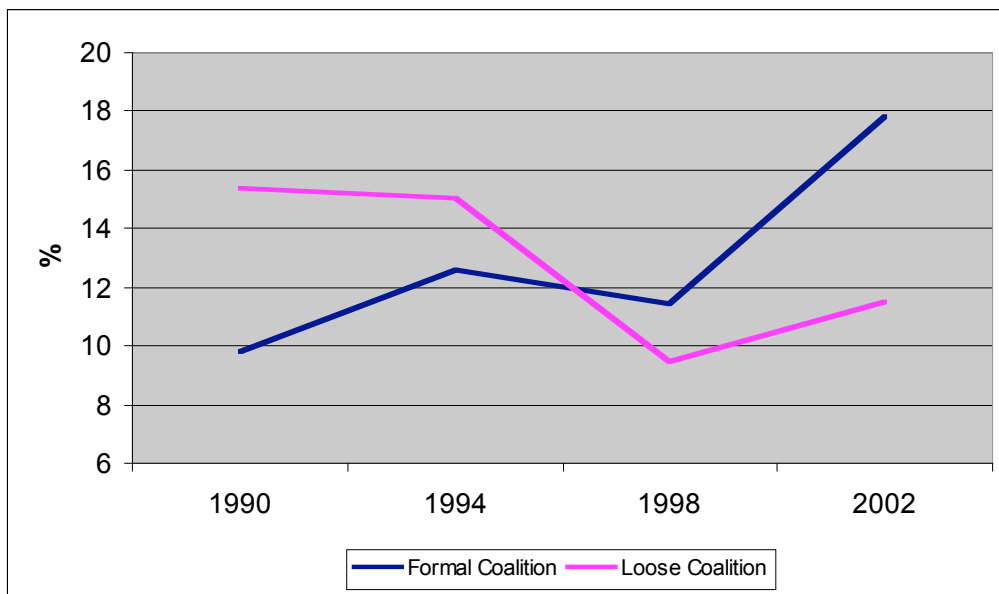
The new civic movement groups discarded the "state vs. the people" dichotomy that long dominated the South Korean social movement scene. Instead of aiming at overthrowing the existing power structure and install an ideal egalitarian-democratic state, the civic groups formulated a political identity based on an idea of participatory citizenry. These groups picked up social issues that had been neglected by the conventional movements, such as the environment, gender, health, bureaucratic transparency, better use of science and technology, etc. Instead of directly engaging the state through mass demonstrations, they sought to influence public opinion employing new tactics, such as public hearings, litigations, petitioning for legislation, sidewalk campaigns, etc. The innovation of social movement attracted great attention from the media, and the government also seemed to favor their activities over the traditional leftist movements. However, the new political identity and tactics generated dismay among leftist movements and became a source of conflict in the beginning.

The tension was mitigated, though, by several factors. The most important factor was the *personal ties* crosscutting the old leftist groups and the new civic groups. Most of the new civic leaders were former radicals who were discontented with the inflexible thoughts and practices of established movements⁶. For them, seeking activism in the civic movement was not a political conversion and they maintained close ties with their former comrades. Given the highly "personalized mobilization" pattern of South Korean movement groups (Song 2000), it was rather natural that information flew along personal connections and mutual understanding grew between the two strands of social movements. Secondly, the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), a major civic organization founded in 1994, was very instrumental in *brokering* the two

⁶) For example, a special edition of the *Weekly Donga* introduced fourteen "third generation new leaders" in the civic movement, among which more than two-thirds were tagged as former radicals who served prison terms (Song 2003). Also, an empirical study found that the civic groups were "not clearly distinguished from the old movement network" at the level of individual activists (Yee 2000: 90).

movement families (Kim 2003: 88). PSPD was a mixture of the contentious stance from the old leftist movements and the innovative tactics from the new civic movements. Its goal of “promoting justice and human rights in Korean society through the participation of the people” (<http://eng.peoplepower21.org/contents/about.html>) also mirrored its midpoint position between the two movement families. Unsurprisingly, PSPD from the start was critical of the stance of earlier civic movement groups that positioned themselves against leftist movements and sought to build broad solidarity networks across the two movements (Kim 2003: 88; Hong 2004). Lastly, the political success of the civic groups was a target of *emulation* for the old guard movements. Leftist activist groups started to adopt the new tactics of civic movement groups while not abandoning the uncompromising political stance. In turn, civic movement groups started to show more openness toward their radical counterpart.

[Figure 2] Organizational Forms of Coalition Action



As a result, concerted action between the two movement families began to increase by the mid-1990s (Kim 2003). Participation in a grand coalition to protect the rice market against the Uruguayan Round treaties in 1993-4 was probably one of the first events in which the leftist and civic groups jointly coordinated mass protest campaigns. In 1995, the two families came together again to forge another broad coalition calling for the investigation and punishment of past authoritarian leaders, which eventually led to the arrest and indictment of two former presidents for corruption, insurrection, and mass murder (Koh 1996; Ahn 2002). However, it was not until 1997 when many civic groups came to support a general strike and joined the leftist radicals in a campaign to protest the passage of a retrogressive labor law reform that the two started to construct firm ties (Sohn 1997; Kim 1998; Mo 1999; Kim and Moon 2000). The financial crisis that struck South Korea in late 1997 also helped create greater opportunity for joint action, not only between the two movement families but also among many other grassroots

groups that had been weakly connected to public politics.

Overlapping networks multiplied and movement groups came together with more ease in numerous coalitions and ad-hoc committees aimed at solving timely social issues. Compared to the early years, more stable coalitions coping with relatively long-term reform issues, including reform of the judiciary, education, the media, public health system, the civil law to expand grassroots participation, and etc., both at the local and national level, were in an increase by the late 1990s (Eun 2004; NGO Times 1997, 2000, 2003). As coalition experience accumulated, loose and temporary coalitions were replaced by more formal and stable ones (See Figure 1). A highly cohesive social movement community that was to become an independent player in South Korean politics was in the making.

Elite Contention and Political Autonomy

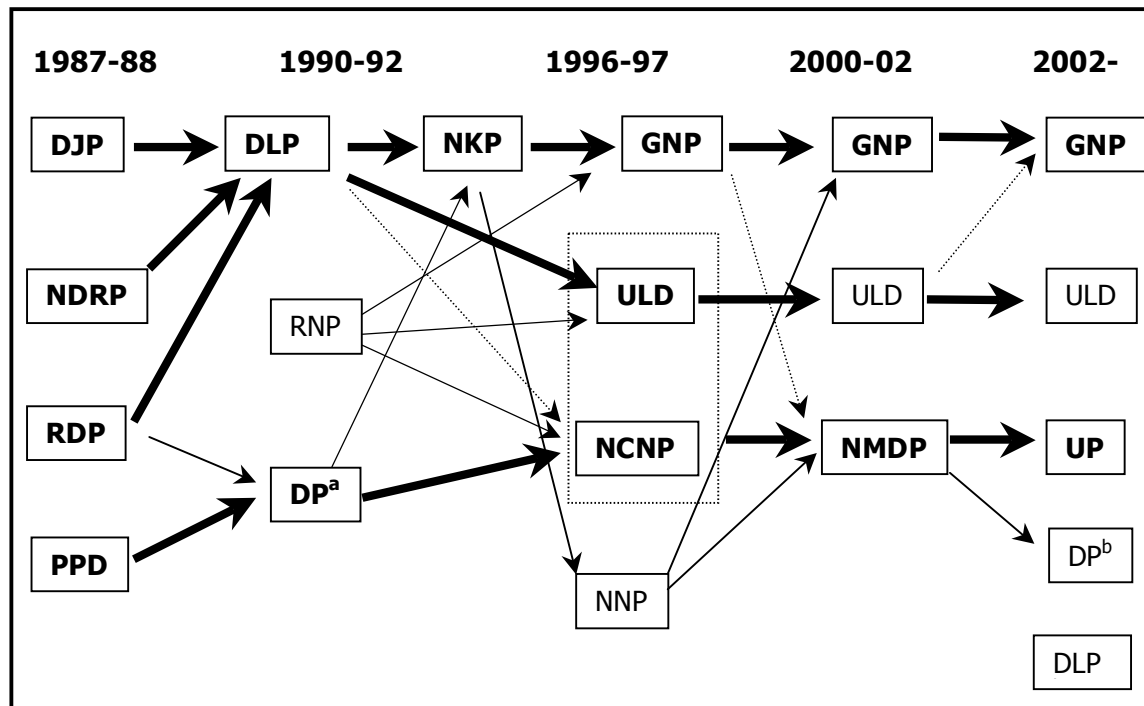
Innovation of social movements amidst crisis, diffusion of innovation through brokerage and emulation, and recurring coalition action gradually led to a tightly knitted social movement community. Yet constitution of a new collective actor was a far cry for exerting political influence. The movements needed to gain autonomy and demonstrate effectiveness of action. It was only through seizing the opportunities that derived from the patterned relationships between social movements and institutionalized actors that defined the degree of autonomy and its emergent power.

The relationship between social movements and political parties was never static in South Korea. At first, a close relationship developed in the mid-1980s during anti-authoritarian struggle. Even though many activists occasionally questioned the opportunistic nature of party action within the broad alliance, relatively close ties with more democratic opposition parties continued to the early 1990s. This was due to the continuing presence of authoritarian practices throughout the Roh presidency (1987-1992). In times of anti-authoritarian struggle, opposition parties needed the support of the movements and the movement needed the necessary resources. However, interests began to diverge moving into the mid-1990s. As early as in the 1992 General Elections, the opposition party found the militant social movements less helpful. The NDP rejected the call from the leading movement coalition to form a "pan-democracy" electoral alliance in order to "shake off its radical image and to make appeal to the middle classes" (*Donga Ilbo* Jan 15, April 2, 1992). This in part reflected the declining influence of the movement. Political parties instead might have found the newly emerging, moderate civic movement groups more attractive. But for the civic groups it became more and more apparent that maintaining close ties with political parties would put them in danger of being perceived as a same kind from the public. There was interest in putting parties at an arm's length on the part of civic groups.

The key to understanding the political interest of the civic groups lies in the historical

context through which political parties have evolved. South Korean political parties all had their roots in puppet parties shaped by the central state. South Korean political parties were highly dependent on the state for their survival and had to operate within an extremely skewed ideological range due to strong anti-communist state ideology. During authoritarian rule opposition parties lacked autonomy and were largely deficient of political ideology or policy agendas. Restrictive laws and heavy political bans rendered the meaning of opposition irrelevant. Instead of political ideology or organizational principles, prominent leaders were the only organizing mechanism for the parties. The hierarchical structure of the parties was reinforced with regionalism becoming the organizing principle in the post-authoritarian period (Kim B 2000; Lee 2001). Because party bosses had the power to nominate candidates, MPs were forced to be responsible to their bosses rather than to their constituencies. Party alignment after democratization closely resembled previous patterns. Lacking political philosophy and programs, political parties emerged and vanished in line with the whims of political bosses. As a result, at least twenty political parties came and went in the fifteen years following the 1987 transition (Figure 2). Although there were somewhat different political tendencies along party lines, the constant vortex in party alignment left little room for the public to develop longstanding party loyalty (Lee and Glasure 1995).

[Figure 2] Post-1987 Party System



[Note: Bold arrows represent major movements and thin arrows minor movements.]

DJP: Democratic Justice Party
 NDRP: New Democratic Republican Party
 DLP^a: Democratic Liberal Party
 RNP: Reunification Nation's Party
 GNP: Grand National Party

RDP: Reunification Democracy Party
 PPD: Party for Peace and Democracy
 DP^a: (New) Democratic Party
 NKP: New Korea Party
 ULD: United Liberal Democrats

NCNP: National Congress for New Politics
NMDP: New Millennium Democratic Party
DP^a: Democratic Party

NNP: New Nation's Party
UP: Uri Party
DLP^b: Democratic Labor Party

Growing public distrust towards political parties was a natural consequence. Public trust towards social movement groups grew in inverse direction. Despite variation in numbers, opinion polls have put civic organizations as the most trusted social institution in South Korea abound. For example, a Gallop poll conducted in 2001 revealed that civic groups were the most trusted public institution in South Korea (73.2%) with more than a fifteen percentage margin over educational institutions, the second highest (Seong 2001). Newspaper poll results were not so different. *Hankook Ilbo's* 2005 poll showed that civic groups were receiving more trust from the general public than ten other institutions surveyed, which was consistent with its 2001 survey (Jan 28, 2005). Even polls conducted by the *Chosun Ilbo*, the most conservative medium critical of left-leaning movement groups, ranked civic groups as the most trusted among eight public institutions surveyed. The result was also consistent with its 1996 poll result (Jan 3, 2005). In all opinion polls mentioned, the parliament or political parties consistently received the least amount of trust or ranked top as the institution of greatest discontent.

In addition to the party politics, a unique pattern of elite contention supplied social movements with political opportunities. Since 1993, the presidency has always remained insulated from the majority in the National Assembly and from the mainstream elite circles. In response, they were compelled to mobilize and rely on popular support as a way to enhance their strategic position within the elite establishment. The inauguration of Kim Young Sam (1993-1998), a former opposition leader who participated in the 1990 three-party merger, as a president in 1993 set off the process. With the relatively liberal faction producing the candidate and winning the 1992 presidential election, clamor within the ruling party accentuated. Although the president was granted unparalleled power under the South Korean presidential systems, the fact that the right-wings constituted the party majority narrowed Kim's room for maneuver. President Kim Dae Jung (1998-2003), another long-time opposition leader who succeeded Kim Young Sam and realized the first peaceful transfer of power to the opposition, entered the presidential office mainly because he was able to form an uneasy electoral alliance with a right-wing United Liberal Democrats. But later when this awkward alliance broke down, he and his party also found themselves a minority in the political arena, being the target of cantankerous attacks (Park 1999; Yoon 2000). Again, the new president Kim had to rely much on mobilizing sympathetic public opinion and social movement forces for political support. The same pattern continued with another presidential election in 2002 that brought the underdog Roh Moo Hyun (2003-), a self-taught, former labor-rights lawyer, to the presidential office, mainly because he was able to capitalize on grassroots mobilization (Lee 2003).

Under the circumstances, the administrations were not hesitant to ride on and take advantage of the political campaigns already in progress outside formal politics. Kim Young Sam was especially ardent in picking up the social movement agendas and

turning them into government campaigns (Cha 1993; Lee and Sohn 1994; Yoon 1996). For example, in 1995, Kim launched a campaign to “rectify history,” in which he rode on public sentiments that called for the persecution of two former presidents for their leading role in the past military coup, mass murder, and corruption. However, this was a campaign that was already in progress since 1993 by student groups, which later grew into a coalition of 297 movement groups by 1995 (*Donga Ilbo* Oct. 27, 1995). President Kim Dae Jung also took advantage of the longstanding popular demands for the reform of the *chaebols* (conglomerates), reunification, and media reform, all long demanded by social movements, to consolidate his power amidst a never-ending political deadlock with his political opponents (Yoon 2000; Ha 2002).

From the beginning, such reform campaigns were often accused of being “politically motivated” by conservative opponents (Yoon 1996: 514). However, the tension and conflict in formal politics provided opportune moments for social movements. Succeeding presidents’ intention to take advantage of social movement campaigns in their power struggle further empowered movements by adding more credence to their agenda and action. The repeated rhetoric of reform by the political leaders reinforced public conviction that something was wrong and needed to be fixed. Media attention of social movements exploded and social movement figures were frequently consulted as reform experts. Increasingly, social movements were gaining “moral, social, and political hegemony” in South Korean society, defining what was to be reformed and how (Seong 2000).

One may ask why was it that increased cooperation between social movements and the state didn’t lead to cooptation. But South Korean social movements were wary about keeping their autonomy. In 1998, for example, President Kim Dae Jung, allegedly to overcome the financial crisis and to pursue comprehensive reform tasks, vigorously sought to mobilize various NGOs and social movement groups for a government campaign called the “Second Nation Building.” He allotted a big budget for the campaign and invited movement groups to participate, but the response was lukewarm, if not total indifference. To Kim’s frustration, the campaign eventually lost steam without the cooperation of major civic groups, which continuously criticized undemocratic government practices and relentlessly pressed for further reforms (Park 1999: 136).

In discussing the relationship between political parties and social movements, Anne and Douglas Costain (1987: 196-7) wrote, “the greater fluidity of social movement organizations and their more limited agenda of political concerns make it easier for them to work through political parties than vice versa.” While the statement could be held in general, there were two aspects in how social movements and political parties have related to one another in South Korea that diverge from the Costains’ observation. First, as we have seen, in South Korea political parties showed as much fluidity, if not more, as social movements. Even if any social movement group established a working relationship with a political party, it could not have sustained, not because of the fluidity

of the social movement but because of the constantly changing boundaries of the party system. Second, although many social movement organizations had limited agendas (e.g., environment, women's issue, media, etc.), many other organizations that have acted as the hub of social movement networks were multi-issue organizations. The "octopus-like" nature of catch-all movement organizations (e.g., PDPD) occasionally became the target of criticism, but it gave them greater independence from political parties largely due to their ability to coordinate and balance divergent issues on their own capacity. They were social movement organizations, but their wide range of activities and policy expertise enabled them to move beyond "policy advocacy to policy formation and governance" and placed them as "alternative quasi-public institutions" (Kim and McNeal 2005).

South Korean social movements were not working through political parties. They were not competing with political parties either. If there is anything that the episode of the CAGE campaign can tell about South Korean social movements, it is their role in making adjudications of what political parties should do and how. Without the significant degree of autonomy social movements came to possess, this type of action would be unimaginable. However, social movements did not have the capacity or the autonomy to engage in such action from the beginning. Intensified conflicts were taking place over the direction of change between the old guards and the newcomers in formal politics. In the process South Korea was moving towards a more inclusive system of political representation, but the pace was slow and the scope limited. Most importantly, conflict among elites threw party politics into an irreparable deadlock to the extent that citizens could not see political parties as a functioning avenue for political participation. In addition, the new elite factions that took over the government were always in a minority position, in search of support from outside the polity. Social movements, which had recreated themselves in the wake of a damaging defeat in May 1991 and had built strong solidarity in the process, appropriated this ambiguous political situation and inserted themselves into the void. With increased media attention and high public support, social movements found themselves in an auspicious position, enabling them to exercise autonomy.

Still, the power of social movements could not match the power of the state or political parties. They were the ones that commanded national resources and made crucial policy decisions. In addition, increased interaction, however hostile, between social movements and institutionalized politics, and reform-oriented social movement action are processes that are highly conducive to political cooptation. In this context, we need to ask why social movements continued to remain outside of institutionalized politics, rather than finding their niche inside of formal politics despite the allure of power and resources. That party politics was highly unpopular was one reason. But there were other reasons as well.

Firstly, needs of the government and/or political parties were simply greater than the inducements they could offer to social movements. Integrating social movement

elements into the polity took place as a short-term pursuit of the political interest of elite factions, not as part of a political program that would ensure long term benefit for the social movements. Movement leaders who entered party politics or government offices did so mostly as individuals, not as representatives of a social movement or a popular organization. In the meantime, popular organizations, such as the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) that represented organized labor, remained unrecognized from the government and maintained their illegal status for years. Given that the bargaining power of social movements had been already established, there just were not enough incentives for social movements to take a more cooperative stance towards institutionalized politics.

Secondly, political conservatives and vested interest groups were entrenched in the position of attacking the government for its reform policies. Any defense of reform policies by social movements brought accusations that social movement groups were acting as the “Red Guards” of the government. While some, though more individually, did take on the role of shielding the reform governments from attacks by entering institutional politics, most groups found it more useful to stay in neutral ground in order to better carry out the task of democratic reform. An activist-scholar affiliated with the PSPD put it this way: “[In the context of political polarization, movements] need to maintain political neutrality by putting political power at an arm’s length in order to be immune from the attacks of conservative forces. Hence it is necessary to cut the ties with the political authorities in order to construct a new vision. Building ties with institutionalized actors may generate positive impacts in times of movement emergence and growth, but it could be an obstacle, once the movement obtains momentum” (Yoon 2004: 31; my translation).

Thirdly, the economic crisis that struck South Korea in late 1997 triggered a fierce reaction against the collapse of the standard of living and soaring unemployment, yet the government was hamstrung by IMF mandates that enforced neo-liberal reforms and didn’t have much room to offer concessions (we will probe deeper into this issue in the following chapter). Most Koreans were suffering from economic shocks while the government was pursuing pro-business reforms. The apparent inability and unwillingness of the government to work out policies for its people came as a moral question to most South Koreans. For social movements defending the public interest, this put greater constraint on the range of options they could take, and deterred increased collaboration with the government. The strong ties built during the general strike in 1997 between the *minjung* and civic movements and the dense networks that spanned the entire social movement field generated a centrifugal force that kept social movement groups from any probable splits under the trying circumstances

In sum, the social movement community discovered a political space to avoid cooptation and preserve their autonomy. Recurring coalition action helped otherwise fragmented social movement groups to come together and forge a common identity. Gradually, social movements established themselves as a coherent actor, and actively

used their power to challenge the status quo. It cooperated with the government insofar as government policy accommodated their agenda. But movement groups rarely saw political parties as partners for reform; rather, parties were perceived as targets of reform. In pushing their reform agenda South Korean social movements often defied the rules of the game, for changing the rules was their ultimate goal.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have proposed a conceptual framework to identify the varying patterns of institutionalization using internal cohesion and movement autonomy as key variables. Using South Korea as a case, I have also argued how South Korean social movements followed a path of defiant institutionalization and how the power of movement may reside in the internal cohesion among social movement groups and the autonomous institutionalization of social movements.

The incomplete, conservative nature of transition precipitated chains of protest campaigns, providing the historical context within which coalition was opted as a standard repertoire. Through repeated coalition action, South Korean social movement groups developed dense ties that grew into a cohesive collective. Incompetence of the party system and unstable political processes generated a unique political configuration which allowed social movements to carve out a strategic position. From this position grew an autonomous social movement community. As a collective, social movements did not actively seek allies within the formal politics. Instead, by accumulating coalition experience, they found reinforcement within themselves and used the power to expand their popular base. Instead of working through the mediation of political parties, they established themselves as a party-like actor. The South Korean social movement community refused to assimilate into the structure of formal politics and instead inserted themselves into the political alignment as an independent player. The use of coalition action and securing political autonomy not only helped movement groups reach and mobilize larger groups of people, but also helped create a new political alignment of which social movements were a key part.

The trajectory of South Korean social movements represents an example of social movement institutionalization in that social movements have become an indispensable fabric of political processes. But the way in which social movements have become institutionalized in South Korea is significantly different from the usual approaches that emphasize the complementary relationship between movements and formal politics (Goldstone 2003, 2004). The relationship evolved to be more competitive than complementary, as movement groups tended to pursue defiantly independent action rather than to seek mediation of political parties. With political autonomy, social movements enjoyed a broader range of political action which enhanced their leverage vis-à-vis institutionalized political actors.

While there have been steady attention to aspects of coalition building and movement networks, the concept of autonomy has been largely absent from social movement studies. This might be unfortunate. If the role of social movements in modern democracies is to bring in new issue demands, develop new forms of political participation, and thereby expand the boundaries of democratic politics (Dalton 1993), the extent to which such processes take place will depend largely on social movement autonomy, that is, the ability of social movements to supply alternatives to the status quo. But if social movements lack the ability to generate, demand, and press for alternative visions of politics, their agendas and actions become indistinguishable from those of existing political actors. In other words, the autonomy of social movements becomes a crucial factor in envisioning a virtuous circle between social movement input and democratic expansion (Dryzek 1996; Huber et al. 1997).

In a similar vein, autonomy may help provide answers to one of the critical questions raised by the authors of the "social movement society," that is, to what extent are social movements domesticated in modern democracies (Tarrow 1998; Meyer and Tarrow 1998)? To activists, ordinary citizens, and scholars, the notion of social movements has symbolized an emancipatory spirit and transformative potential in a world full of perceived wrongs. However, the highly institutionalized and increasingly routinized tendency of contemporary social movements is making us question whether such beliefs will always hold in our time. To the extent that social movements are successful in building broad coalitions, secure their autonomy, carry the power to supply alternatives, and to expand the contours of public politics, we might say the power of movements has not disappeared.

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