

Civic Coalition in Transition to Democracy: The 2000 General Elections in South Korea

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1. Introduction

In South Korea's recent and ongoing transition from a state-dominated to a citizen-driven society (hereafter civil society), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become increasingly salient political actors. Despite a late start, they now figure heavily in the private pursuit of public purposes not only on the local but also national and international levels. They are steeped in such issues as economic justice, corruption, education, consumer protection, the environment, human relief, gender equity, human rights, and grassroots development. To protect and pursue the public interest, NGOs have become independent engines of policy development and monitor government and business policy implementation (Kim, H. 2001). More important, they are significant alternative providers of public services that markets and governments leave unmet (Clark et al., 1998; Etzioni, 1973; Fish, 1998; Kim, H. 2000, 2001; Korten, 1990, 1998; MaCarthy et al., 1992; Salamon, 1995; Salamon and Anheier, 1996; Weiss and Gordenker, 1996; Wolch, 1990; Wuthnow, 1991).

NGOs have most recently turned their focus on becoming politically relevant organizations that enable citizens to exercise the social responsibility required of them if government is to become and remain democratic (Cohen and Arato, 1994; Tocqueville, 1955). Participatory democracy is the watchword and theoretical framework that describes such direct citizen political engagement in political reformation (Cook and Morgen, 1971). Citizen initiative through NGOs in articulating and pursuing public purposes of government has brought new issues and values into the public domain and enhanced consensus on democratic principles.

In the 16th General Elections (2000), NGOs across Korea joined together to champion citizen sovereignty. On 12 January 2000 over 450 NGOs formed a coalition—Citizens' Alliance for General Elections (CAGE)—to ensure that traditionally corrupt political practices would not determine the April 2000 general elections of assembly members. The number of participant NGOs reached to 1,055 when the CAGE concluded its activities. CAGE mobilized unprecedented public support as it undertook campaigns to reform the nomination process, to eliminate regional party monopoly, and to defeat blacklisted politicians. Despite controversy over its legitimacy and conspiracy charges, CAGE enjoyed considerable success, ousting 59 out of 86 listed candidates from office.

Nevertheless, behind the occasional spectacular CAGE victories lay significant institutional, organizational, and socio-cultural problems that impaired the coalition's effectiveness. For one, CAGE remained illegal despite its election successes and enormous public acclamation. Also, its elitist internal structure and failure to offer

alternative candidates diminished its ability to mobilize voters. Finally, CAGE was unable to overcome the chronic problem of regional party monopoly. Such difficulties brought to the fore constraints on Korean NGOs when they move beyond public issues in general to devote their interest in reform to the structure of politics itself. This represents an emerging paradox in the development of a civil, democratic society.

As civil groups and NGOs sought to become a political presence, they campaigned against bureaucracy and collusion in the political arena. Ironically, it appears that they needed in fact to become as skilled at networking and cooperation among themselves as the conventional bureaucracies and political actors they opposed. Adept at acting on discreet issues in limited arenas through direct channels and instruments, NGOs were not equipped to enter a forum that required networking and cooperation. Individual NGOs have pursued pending issues case-by-case, not in a systematic or coordinated manner that aggravated amorphousness of their behaviors and actions. Moreover, they failed to develop effective citizen networks. This reduced grassroots participation in collective action—as demonstrated in the drive for political reform engineered by CAGE. They simply attacked political institutions without providing alternatives but stood in need of becoming an effective institution themselves. Paradoxically, civil groups and NGOs became hyperactive in the process of political reformation, and their actions unintentionally degenerated the roles and functions of conventional political actors in society.

In this paper I address the roles of the CAGE alliance in the 16th General Elections. By assessing the significance and limitations of CAGE, I mean to cast a light more generally on NGOs' efforts to create a participatory democracy. Accordingly, the first part of this paper focuses on the meaning of "participatory democracy" in emerging Korean discourse. I then turn attention to CAGE formation and activities and controversy surrounding it. Finally, I analyze the movement's limitations, implications for the current phase of Korean NGOs, and possible future developments in social governance.

2. Transition in Search of Participatory Democracy

For decades Korea has been in a process of transition to democracy, moving from an authoritarian state to a citizen-driven, or civil, society. Initially transition was marked by intense confrontation between a repressive state and opposing grassroots activists. Only after the 1987 Democratic Movement did the movement toward democracy gain its stride (Lee, S., 1993; Kim, H., 1997, 2000; Kim, S., 1997). Since then, Korea's transition has enjoyed a socio-political environment conducive to the rise of diverse interest groups. Active, comprehensive middle class support of the 1987 Democratic Movement was one of the most notable and important factors in its success. Middle class citizens joined the struggle convinced that true democracy required replacing indirect with direct elections and that economic development could not be at the expense of political freedom.

Activities of the citizens movement in the late 1980s contrasted notably with those of the militant and confrontational labor movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Lee, S., 1993). The change in movement issues and tactics derived from the policy reforms implemented by the Roh Tae Woo government in the wake of a hyper-repressive authoritarian regime. Under Roh, civilian repression declined substantially (Lee, S.,

1993; Kim, S., 1997; Burton and Ryu, 1997). In keeping with the promises of the June 29 Declaration—the symbol of Roh’s claim to legitimacy—Roh proved quite open to political opposition, as indicated in his tolerance of an independent and self-regulated mass media. Roh also restored the local political autonomy suspended by the military regimes of 1961. Government control over university policies and activities lessened as well.

Despite the 1987 government statement on democratic reform, citizen groups continued anti-government protests under Roh as two visions of democracy competed for ascendancy (Kim, S., 1996, 1997). One vision descended from the traditional people’s (*minjung*) movement of the 1970s. Supported by radical people’s groups, it emphasized comprehensive substantive democratic reform—such as socio-economic equality, Korean economic independence, and national reunification. Moderate and practical citizens’ groups invoked a narrower definition of democracy that stressed the procedural fundamentals of democracy.

When Kim Young Sam assumed power in 1993, most scholars and activists were deeply skeptical that he could break with the authoritarian past and promote democratic development. They anticipated a continuance of past military and quasi-military authoritarian practices. To their great surprise, Kim carried out a series of unprecedented reforms in 1993 and 1994 (Burton and Ryu, 1997). The Kim government not only tolerated but encouraged the activities of moderate citizen movements, announcing policy initiatives similar to those such groups suggested and augmenting the groups’ influence. The government recruited from the moderate groups to fill several high-ranking public positions and even sought to normalize relationships with radical movement organizers by publicly discussing proposals and policy and accommodating some demands. As a result, the Kim government seemed to win strong movement support.

In this environment moderate citizens’ groups prevailed in the struggle between competing visions of democracy. The class-based, confrontational strategies of the past were abandoned in favor of nonviolent and lawful tactics and specific policy alternatives. The relationship between civilian movements and the state was accordingly cooperative during the initial two years of the Kim Young Sam regime. Relations deteriorated, however, when Kim failed to adequately address several key issues raised in the politics of democratic consolidation.

The relation between the state and civilian groups entered a new phase when Kim Dae Jung assumed office in 1998. Not only academics but the popular press noted an explosion of citizen interest in securing democracy (Kim, Y. and Kim, H., 1999). The newspaper dailies reported on the growing power of civil groups, which had broadened their range of issues and moderated their tactics and goals, eschewing the radical and illegal activities of the past. Strong reader interest in civil movements caused the dailies to devote increased coverage to their activities.¹

The government sought to embrace movement leaders by co-opting them and appointing them to head or advise relevant organizations. As part of this tactic, the Second Nation Building Committee was organized to advise the president on means to

¹ In 1999, *Donga Ilbo* began to devote a section to the phenomenon called “The Fifth Power: Civilian Movements,” and *JoongAng Ilbo* launched “Simin Kwangjang NGO.” *Kyunhyang Shimun* reports on civilian movement activities in “NGO Madang” and *Hankyoreh Shinmun* runs “The Twenty-first Century, with the Power of Citizens.”

promote voluntary participation by civilian groups in political decisions. President Kim also recruited several of his ministers from the ranks of the movements in order to still more effectively engage with the them.² In addition, the government and ruling party negotiated a bill on NGOs meant not only to assist them financially but with other several special benefits (*JoongAng Ilbo*, 12 July 1999). NGOs will be able to compete for financial support by submitting project plans to a screening committee. The bill secures NGOs free lease of buildings and offices, tax-exemption for donations, postage discounts, and more. These benefits will conspire to strengthen and broaden the activities of civil groups and enhance their efficiency and effectiveness.

With such gradual developments between the state and civilian groups, discourse on participatory democracy and the reform of government itself began to accelerate. Controversy centered around whether participatory democracy should be supplanted completely by representative democracy or whether it is a complement necessary to compensate for the limitations of representative democracy (Sung, 1997). Some argue that participatory democracy is a more broad political category or philosophy, not to be a replacement of or replaced by liberal or representative democracy. They would have discussion center, not on the concept of participatory democracy, but on how to institutionalize democratic ideals so as to enhance citizen participation. By focusing on the process of implementing and guaranteeing participation, the nature of participatory democracy, it is argued, is made clear. Discussion of representative democracy is subsumed by this broader discussion.

The development of NGOs seemed to offer the preconditions for participatory democracy. Milbrath and Goel (1977) argue that social diversity, institutional deregulation, and open communication networks can lead to democracy through encouraging participation in the determination of governmental practices and structures. The diverse NGO activities in Korea, it has been thought, offer a new forum for the expression of the manifold interest of civic actors. In turn, the more flexible and responsive government attitude towards the diversity reflected in NGOs fosters their development and, accordingly, participatory democracy.

3. Civil Coalition in the 2000 General Elections

3.1 The Political Reform Movement in the General Elections

Before the political liberalization of recent years, Korean politics had long been monopolized by politicians and bureaucrats to the exclusion of citizen involvement in political decisions. Politicians and civilians alike in Korea had for decades sought political reformation. However, demands heightened and came from more diverse sources as the 2000 General Elections approached, due to the crippled parliamentary proceedings and outcomes of the 15th General Elections, deepening mistrust between civilians and an authoritarian political regime, and greater awareness of institutional barriers preventing citizen participation in politics. Suggestions were put forward that

² Kim Myong-ja, co-representative of the Green Consumers' Coalition, was appointed to the ministry of the environment; and Kim Sung-jae, committee member of People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy and chairman of the Korea Federation of the Handicapped, was appointed to head the newly established civil administration office.

an organization comprising NGOs, academics, and the media be formed to monitor the elections. Political reform assumed top-priority in Korea, and on 12 January 2000, over 450 NGOs formed a coalition—Citizens' Alliance for General Elections (CAGE)—mandated to eradicate corrupt and unscrupulous political practices and restore citizens' fundamental right to participate in political reform.

On 10 January, Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ), a leading NGO, released its first list of "unfit" politicians. It named 167 persons CCEJ considered undesirable candidates for 13 April parliamentary elections based on criteria such as corruption, embezzlement, involvement in past elections irregularities, resistance to reform, fanning regional antagonism, and incompetence (*Korea Herald*, 12 January 2000). As expected, political parties uniformly denounced CCEJ, impugning the legality, objectivity, and credibility of the list. Heated debate ensued, particularly fueled by targeted politicians.

Immediately after the CCEJ release, CAGE consecutively provided two lists of "incompetent, corrupt, and lazy" politicians. Seven criteria were invoked: involvement in corruption; participation in election irregularities; human rights violations; fanning regional antagonism; betrayal of duties; resistance to reform bills and policies; and negative findings of the National Election Commission (NEC) regarding such matters as property reports, military service, tax payments, and criminal record (*Korea Times*, 26 January 2000).

The first list, dated 24 January, cited 67 members of the 15th National Assembly whom CAGE targeted for defeat in the nomination process. It had major implications for the current political landscape as it comprised Korea's most prominent political figure, Jong-pil Kim, honorary president and founder of United Liberal Party and dozens of political heavyweights in ruling and opposition parties. As with CCEJ, CAGE and the criteria were vehemently denounced.

Confident that the first list would figure prominently in party nominations, CAGE released a list of 47 additional incumbent or former assemblymen. The parties heedlessly selected numerous blacklisted nominees. Dismayed but undeterred, CAGE ratcheted-up criticism, demanding withdrawal of the nominations and denouncing the parties as undemocratic and steeped in backroom dealing. When the parties ignored the attacks, CAGE proceeded with illegal election activities. Promulgating a final list of 86 major targets for defeat in the 16th General Elections, it focused on 22 districts. Conflict grew acute when candidates initiated countermeasures.

In view of the movement's public support, other civic organizations and associations joined rank. CAGE also used the Internet to mobilize the 65 percent of the voting population who were young people. Practical Internet use contributed to establishment of M-tizen, a cyber community where the younger generation shared ideas and opinions about CAGE, political reformation, and general elections. CAGE did not communicate via the Internet exclusively with the younger generation, however. It broadcast press releases and related materials to all on-line. Its homepage reportedly was accessed nearly 900,000 times in three months. In addition, through bus tours CAGE improved collaboration with local NGOs. Through these varied activities it appeared to effectively exploit its national network of affiliated groups and organizations to demand an end to factional regionalism and party domination, backroom dealing, and corrupt politics. Subsequent events proved to the contrary.

3.2 Controversy Surrounding Citizen's Coalition Activities

Questions as to the legality of the CAGE movement stirred as soon as lists of “unqualified” politicians were released. All major political parties sought legal action, alleging violation of election law, as well as character defamation. They invoked the 87th article of election law, stipulating that no civilian organization or association may perform or abet any activity in support of or opposition to any specific political party or candidate during an election period.³ The citizens’ alliance rejoined that any law barring civil organizations from electioneering is unconstitutional in a democratic state, as it restricts freedom of expression and the right to participate in political action. CAGE sought to broaden popular recognition of citizens’ constitutional rights by circulating citizen petitions to revise election law. Great public support and favorable comments by President Kim Dae Jung and the National Election Commission (NEC) conspired to achieve some assembly review of election law. Laws were subsequently revised, though to little effect, earning the excoriation of CAGE as an inadequate product engineered by politicians. Pre-election citizen campaigns, including petition drives, street rallies, and pamphlet circulation, remained illegal.

CCEJ was driven to amend the first release of “unfit politicians” twice after hearing appeals by those targeted (*Korea Herald*, 12 January 2000). The list was vulnerable to charges that it lacked objectivity and that it was unreasonable to judge politician as “unfit” simply on the basis of opposition a certain bill.

Conspiracy allegations flew as soon as the ruling party and President Kim Dae Jung commented favorably on NGO general election activity. The opposition Grand National Party (GNP) accused the governing party of collusion with the blacklisting campaigns, with a “carefully designed political conspiracy” (*Korea Herald*, 22 January 2000). It cited the coincidence of ruling party financial support of NGOs and appointment of NGO leaders to state agencies with the breakout of citizens’ movements.

The United Liberal Party (ULP), many of whose members figured on the blacklists, similarly castigated the citizens’ alliance and ruling party. It claimed not only that the movement enjoyed ruling party support but that the party contrived it in order to ruin ULP. Resentment led to breakup of the coalition between ULP and the New Millennium Democratic Party that weathered the first two years of the Kim Dae Jung administration. CAGE dismissed conspiracy allegations, reaffirming its exclusive devotion to political reform and accusing critics of seeking to defame and destroy them by questioning their ethics and purpose.

4. An Emerging Paradox in the Transition to Democracy in South Korea

The short history of civilian movements in Korea would seem to offer little hope that they can achieve their goals. However, their two-stage strategy of campaigning to prevent parties from nominating blacklisted candidates and then enjoining citizens not to vote for listed candidates who won nomination over their objections managed to oust 59 candidates from the arena. Seventy percent of 86 listed candidates were defeated and a number of fresh figures with no history of corruption elected. The

³ The article was excerpted from a section of laws and regulations concerning elections. See NEC homepage <http://www.nec.go.kr>

citizen coalition also brought lawmakers to review election law and readjust electoral districts to preventing gerrymandering by political parties. These victories established the movements as a healthy antidote to the corrupt electioneering of the past. However, external and internal limitations of the movements warrant close scrutiny, as they have significant implications for the conduct and functions of NGOs and for the possibility of institutionalizing citizen participation in social development.

4.1 Institutional Limitations

CAGE was illegal throughout its tenure. As mentioned above, it sought to address this by proposing that article 87 of election law be revised. Despite favorable comments by the ruling party and President Kim Dae Jung regarding proposed revisions, only minor adjustments were made and NGO participation in campaigns remained illegal. Accordingly CAGE had no official authority to undertake its campaigns. This made it particularly vulnerable to challenges to its credibility. Judging criteria for blacklists were impugned as overly inclusive, as they ranged from involvement in corruption to being of “low-quality” such as prone to abusive language on the floor or resistant to reform. To judge a politician as “unfit” simply for opposing particular bills gave the appearance of intolerance of diversity of opinion. CCEJ’s two reworkings of its list only reinforced its image as incompetent and rash (*Korea Herald*, 12 January 2000).

For these reasons, some politicians charged that CAGE headquarters had exceeded its authority by purporting to represent the public interest when it actually had the mandate of only a small group. Similarly, some citizens opposed illegal actions of any kind, no matter what the goal. They were both distrustful of and disinterested in civilian organizations. Well-established tradition held that movements should remain neutral towards and uninvolved in political activities. Barring that, NGOs lacked credibility necessary for support and could not survive (*Daehan Maeil*, May 29, 2000).

For CAGE to secure legitimacy and trust in its objectivity, it needed to work for election law revisions prior to engaging in electoral affairs. It should have researched and analyzed its own legal status and monitored politicians’ activities before making nomination recommendations. Although some effort was made to engage with private organizations representing civilian groups, academia, and the press to jointly monitor assembly members and polls (*Korea Herald*, 17 December 1999), no adequate institutional structure existed to coordinate among the various groups with their differing agendas.

4.2 Organizational Limitations

Initially CAGE comprised fewer than 15 organizations (MBC PD Suchup, 18 April 2000). However, more than 400 claimed affiliation immediately prior to 12 January 2000 when CAGE formally announced its formation and intentions.

The fact that most members joined the movement right before its official debut caused some to doubt its organizational ability and democratic character. Its apparently hurried formation suggested poor management. Worse, it implied that discussion among participating organizations about the details of movement measures and strategies were shortchanged in a non-democratic process. In addition, circumstances surrounding CAGE activities were dynamic, unpredictable, and sometimes volatile, requiring the rapid response that only a strong centralized structure could provide.

The appearance of a top-down command-structure opened CAGE to criticism. A centralized authority guided primarily by a single member organization—People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)—seemed to dictate its major

strategies. Because media and the public focused on members noted for their decency, eloquence, and expertise, the impression grew that an elite organized, ruled, and monopolized CAGE. To all appearances, CAGE was every bit a bureaucracy as the organizations it opposed.

Moreover, of its more than 400 affiliates, only a fraction participated in most campaigns, which threw doubt on CAGE’s organizational ability and democratic character (Munhwa Ilbo, 2 May 2000). Also, civil groups intensely competed for dominance when CAGE was forming. CCEJ refused to join and undertook its own fair-election activities (Hankyoreh Shinmun, 2 June 2000). That such a highly renowned organization would not participate in CAGE heightened suspicion of power struggles among major groups and tainted the reputation and intentions of civil movements generally.⁴

Conflict among civil groups has not been confined to the CAGE movement. Power struggles between groups co-opted by the government and those intending to become their own political force have been continuous. Similarly, radical groups and conservative, “new social movement” groups have battled over ultimate goals and tactics. These two major types of conflict have created a more comprehensive hegemonic conflict within the general civilian movement. The outcome is a movement that flies the banner of collaboration for the public good but is itself racked by dissension.

Further, in part because CAGE urged citizens to not vote for blacklisted politicians but offered no alternative slate, voter turnout was the lowest in Korean history—this despite the movement’s prioritization of increasing voting rates (*Donga Ilbo*, 13 April 2000). Although 59 listed politicians were defeated, citizen apathy and distrust were clearly extreme. The movement had failed to restore faith in the possibility of establishing a true democracy.

4.3 Socio-cultural Limitations

The most remarkable failure of CAGE in the 16th General Elections was its inability to end regional party monopoly, a phenomenon most salient in the Youngnam area, long a GNP stronghold. GNP regional power was still greater after the election, despite public support for CAGE. Table 1 compares the number of seats occupied by each party after the 1996 15th General Elections and the 2000 16th General Elections. The 16th election shows greater party parity in most regions.

Table 1: The Number of Seats by Respective Party in the 15th and the 16th General Elections

Area/Party	GNP*	NMDP*	ULP
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⁴ Competition was most glaring when CCEJ undertook to release its own list of “unfit” politicians just two weeks before the CAGE announcement. The list was hurriedly compiled without adequate investigation, earning it harsh condemnation and resulting in the need for two revisions. It is assumed that CCEJ refused to join CAGE because PSPD had usurped the leadership role in CAGE that it coveted. Also, CAGE excluded the Democratic Labor Party and Korea Teachers’ Union from membership, allegedly in order to remain politically neutral, yet many of their local branches actively participated in CAGE within their own districts (Munhwa Ilbo, 2 May 2000).

	15 th	16 th	15 th	16 th	15 th	16 th
Sudokwon	54 (56.3)	40 (41.2)	30 (31.3)	56 (57.7)	5 (5.2)	1 (1.0)
Youngnam	51 (67.1)	64 (98.5)	0	0	10 (13.2)	0
Chungchung/ Kangwon-do	12 (29.3)	7 (21.2)	0	13 (39.4)	26 (63.4)	11 (33.3)
Honam	1 (2.7)	0	36 (97.3)	25 (86.2)	0	0
Total	121	112	66	96	41	12

Source: National Election Commission (<http://www.nec.go.kr>)

- (): Percentage of seats occupied by each party in each area
- GNP*: In the 15th elections, the party was named as New Korea Party
- NMDP*: The party name was National Congress for New Politics in the 15th elections.

GNP dominance in the Youngnam area, however, grew markedly to the total exclusion of the other two parties. Some took this to portend deepening regionalism with implications both for the economic future of the area and support for reunification (*Hankook Ilbo*, 20 April 2000).

Tables 2 and 3 compare the blacklisted candidates who were elected and defeated to reveal any change in the number of votes in the two elections. “Difference” in Table 2 is obtained by subtracting the voter rate of the 15th from that of the 16th elections. In the Youngnam area (Pusan, Ulsan, Taegu, Kyongbuk and Kyongnam) the average difference is 5.42 percent. This implies that blacklisted candidates had more support than in the 15th elections despite CAGE. The average of -20.88 percent in the Chungchung/ Kangwon area and -6.11 percent in the Honam region indicates blacklisted candidates received fewer votes, though not enough to lose. CAGE also had little influence on citizens in the Youngnam area, and in fact may have fanned the regionalism that led to support of most listed candidates.

Table 2: The Difference of the Number of Votes (The Winners)* (%)

Region	15th	16th	Difference
Sudokwon (1)	41.10	49.06	7.96
Youngnam (15)	51.45	56.87	5.42
Honam (2)	65.75	59.64	-6.11
Chungchung/ Kangwon (3)	52.97	32.09	-20.88
Total	52.53	53.22	0.69

Source: National Election Commission (<http://www.nec.go.kr>)

Note: The number in parenthesis is the number of candidates. Of 86 blacklisted by CAGE, only 27 were elected in the 16th elections. Among them, 6 were elected for the first time or had not campaigned in the 15th elections.

Table 3 shows the change in the number of blacklisted politicians elected between the 15th and 16th elections. The average is -21.83 percent in the Youngnam area, -0.9

percent in Honam, and -18.58 percent in Chungchung/Kangwon. The average across all regions of -15.08 percent implies that Youngnam citizens most strongly objected to the defeated candidates. However, those defeated in the region were not GNP, reinforcing the impression that party regional domination continued unabated, despite CAGE. GNP in fact fared still better in the 16th than in the 15th elections.

Table 3: The Difference of the Number of Votes (The Defeated)* (%)

<i>Region</i>	<i>15th</i>	<i>16th</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Sudokwon (14)	37.31	27.50	-9.81
Youngnam (11)	43.74	21.90	-21.83
Honam (3)	23.6	22.7	-0.90
Chungchung/ Kangwon (12)	39.17	20.58	-18.58
Total	38.61	23.53	-15.08

Source: National Election Commission (<http://www.nec.go.kr>)

Note: The number in parenthesis is the number of candidates. Of the 86 blacklisted by CAGE, 59 failed to win in the 16th elections. Among the 59, 19 were elected for the first time or had not campaigned in the 15th elections.

GNP preference might have had a variety of causes. For one, announcement immediately before the election of plans for a summit meeting between the two Koreas may have bolstered GNP support within Youngnam. In any event, CAGE failed to accomplish its fundamental purposes and in fact may have contributed to regional division and domination, particularly in Youngnam. Koreans were confirmed in their belief that regional party monopoly was and would remain a formidable barrier to political reform.

Data for the 22 areas where CAGE focused on a relatively small number of candidates for defeat also demonstrated its socio-cultural limitations. Table 4 shows the difference between actual voter turnout and poll estimates for the areas. Sixty-eight percent of 22 candidates failed to be elected. This was not a particularly heartening result for CAGE, as the candidates in most areas acquired more than polls estimated at the end of March 2000. Only in the Honam area did candidates receive fewer votes than anticipated. In addition, 9 candidates in the 22 areas held their lead in polls immediately before the election. This suggests that competition remained fierce up until the end and that CAGE had no meaningful or apparent effect on citizens' decisions. Floating voters appear to have been vital to defeat of blacklisted candidates and supporters were unswayed by CAGE campaigns.

Table 4: The Difference between the Poll and the Voting Turnout (%)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Poll</i>	<i>Voting turnout</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Sudokwon (0/7)	29.26	32.84	3.58
Youngnam area (5/8)	35.87	48.56	12.69
Honam area (1/3)	48.00	41.24	-6.76
Chungchung/Kangwodndo (1/4)	27.67	34.45	6.78
Total	35.20	39.27	4.07

Sources: Citizens' Alliance for General Elections (<http://2000.ngokorea.org>) and

National

Election Commission (<http://www.nec.go.kr>)

Note: The number in parenthesis is the number of targeted candidates elected in the 22 focus areas. The poll figure is the average number of votes estimated—mostly at the end of March—for blacklisted candidates in the areas.

4.4 An Emerging Paradox in Transitional Politics

Considering South Korea's relatively short history of democracy, the CAGE movement made marked strides in disclosing what citizens desired by way of reform in the governing system. However, the NGO's prospects for achievement in the political arena were less than was hoped. Citizens voluntarily and rigorously participated in activities independent of the government meant to improve social justice and the environment, either because they were deeply involved in those issues or would be direct beneficiaries of improvements. However, success in those areas led NGOs to overestimate their ability to become a significant force for political reform. Action on behalf of overarching improvement of the government itself, such as CAGE championed, attracted far less citizen interest than activities for the public good in such discreet areas as social service, the environment, and social justice. This implies that civil groups must tailor their manner of mobilization and degree of coordination to the particular objectives sought. CAGE embodied the effort to expand the scope and scale of civil action into the political arena. Its failure to practically and effectively do so has important implications for the future trajectory of civil movements and NGOs generally.

First, NGO engagement in public affairs was in its infancy when expansion into the political arena was taken on. Individual NGOs were accustomed to dealing with social issues on a discreet basis, without addressing any interrelationship among NGOs or issues. Civil movements had developed no institution or systematic network among NGOs or across the civil sector capable of engineering collaborative action across issues, regions, and social groups such as political reform required. The 450-plus NGOs of CAGE failed to cooperate, several releasing their own blacklists of candidates. The competition within and undemocratic organizational structure of CAGE especially betrayed its failure to effectively network for civil engagement. Ironically, the CAGE movement fell on its own sword in advocating the de-institutionalization and internal disruption of civil society. It offered no viable governing alternative, even in its own operations.

CAGE did manage to oust some corrupt politicians and some new blood entered the arena. However, in the process CAGE betrayed the institutional, organizational, and socio-cultural weaknesses of civil movements. A newly emerging political institution, civil society had searched for direct instruments through which to win not only comprehensive participation in political decision making but also political influence on the entire society. This notion of participation was hoped to be a complementary tool of representative democracy. Ironically, the means through which participation was sought diminished the role of traditional political actors and worked against representative democracy.

5. Conclusion

Korea's state and civil society suffered a turbulent relationship over the last several decades. A series of authoritarian regimes in the 1960s and 1970s severely suppressed and controlled civil society. During those years, civil movements made defiance of the military regimes in favor of democratization their fundamental purpose. After the 1987 Democratic Movement, civil society partially enjoyed the democracy it sought. In the ensuing decentralized and deregulated environment, civil society and the NGOs it created flourished, expanding not only in scope and scale but also in general social impact.

In Korea's democratic progress, NGOs have played an important role by addressing aspects of the general welfare neglected by the state. They have become policy initiators and institutions that monitor social development. Even so, desire for a substantial democracy rather than mere improvement of a procedural democracy has grown unabated. Citizens want to participate significantly and responsibly in governance.

Toward that end, Korean NGOs formed the Citizens' Alliance for General Elections. CAGE meant to eradicate political corruption and establish a guarantee of practical citizen participation in governance. Politics were long the monopoly of political parties and politicians that believed citizen sovereignty inhered only in citizens' periodic right to vote in elections—elections for which they largely determined what candidates would be in the running. In defiance of this undemocratic legacy, CAGE mobilized unprecedented public support for its movement to reform the nomination process, to end regional party monopoly, and to defeat politicians it blacklisted. CAGE ousted 59 out of 86 blacklisted candidates from the political stage despite attacks on its legitimacy and allegations of conspiracy. Citizens and media alike extolled the movement as “the only winner of the election.” This success encouraged some to hastily conclude that the conventional governance paradigm—in which legislation and enforcement were the prerogatives exclusively of parties and politicians—had been supplanted by a paradigm that incorporates civil society.

However, the impressive statistics only temporarily masked the movement's institutional limitations. CAGE remained illegal to the end, which triggered distrust and apathy among citizens who eschewed actions without legal imprimatur. Also, its organizational ability was found wanting—CAGE failed to effectively mobilize voters because it provided no alternative candidates and mismanaged voluntary resources. Finally, CAGE failed to secure a democratic internal structure and was dominated by a small number of members. Ironically, in its campaign to create direct channels for participation in governance, CAGE so attenuated the influence of political parties and the National Assembly that the democratic forum in which it hoped to participate was undermined.

Civil society is sometimes called the third or voluntary sector vis-à-vis the government and business sectors (Kim, H., 1997, 2000). Its resource mobilization requires shared values, dedication, and volunteer effort, whereas the state can turn to regulation, legislation, or coercion and the business sector to trade, finance, and impersonal markets. Therefore, third sector constituents focus more on cooperation than competition, on horizontal relationships than vertical domination. The CAGE organization, although located in the third sector and claiming to represent the public

welfare, was excessively centralized and bureaucratic and racked by competition among NGOs for hegemony. Ironically, contrary to its founding ethic of participatory democracy in which democratic, decentralized, and participatory processes prevail, CAGE became an authoritarian structure, not unlike the state it attacked. In this sense, despite its early successes, CAGE inadvertently represented and created regression in democratic development towards a civil society. Civil organizations expanded too rapidly in number and agenda to meaningfully analyze the roles of citizens, civil organizations, and government in the search to create and maintain democracy. The most urgent task before civil organizations today is to stipulate their functions and to rearrange their internal structure and networks among themselves so as to become an effective factor in the move toward participatory democracy in Korea.

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