

**The Place of Religion**  
**Catholicism and Politics in South Korea, 1974-1987**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation is a study of the spatialities in the role of dissident Catholic figures and organisations in South Korea's democracy movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Its thesis is that the religious spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul enabled the South Korean Catholic Church, through providing a sacred, immune, and thus strategic site of opposition, to play a salient role in the democracy movement that is distinctive compare with other dissident Christian denominations and religious organisations. The spatial politics of Myeongdong Cathedral further shaped critical junctures of South Korea's democratisation movement in the 1970s and 1980s. By the agency of dissenting South Korean Catholic figures and organisations, and their coordination with other movement actors, the effect of the spatial politics of Myeongdong Catholic Church constituted significant phases of South Korea's democracy movement through mobilising, sustaining, and networking the movement.

The scholarship of the history and sociology of the South Korean democracy movement, while mainly focusing on temporal progress of contentious politics, has noted on particular actors that have made important contribution to South Korea's democratic transition such as students and workers. This study asks to move beyond this actor-oriented perspective that is limited to account for the multi-layered dynamics of how protesting actors are mobilised, connected, and diffused which is the core aspect of achievability of a social movement, and suggest a religious spatial analysis that can securely explicate the relational dynamics between movement actors for the developments of pro-democracy movement in the South Korean context. This dissertation speaks further to the linkage between spatialities of religious contentious politics and developments of social movements in respects to durability and effectiveness of collective actions through exploring a constituting role of the religious spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral in South Korea's democracy movement.

## **Abbreviations**

ANSP	Agency for National Security Planning
CBCK	Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea
CFA	Catholic Farmers' Association
CJP	Committee for Justice and Peace of the Korean Catholic Church
CPAJ	Catholic Priests' Association for Justice
GSPI	Gaudium et Spes Pastoral Institute
JOC	Young Catholic Workers (Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne)
KBS	Korean Broadcasting System
KCIA	Korean Central Intelligence Agency
KDF	Korea Democracy Foundation
MCP	Myeongdong Cathedral Protest
MFD	March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation
NCCK	National Council of Churches in Korea
NCDC	National Committee for a Democratic Constitution



PMCDR      People's Movement Coalition for Democracy and Reunification

UIM          Urban Industrial Mission

USAMGIK    United States Army Military Government in Korea

YPA          Young People's Association of Myeongdong Cathedral

To my mother Jeong Soon-oak

THE PLACE OF RELIGION  
CATHOLICISM AND POLITICS IN SOUTH KOREA, 1974-1987

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction:

#### **Religious Space and South Korean Social Movements**

On 6 June, 1995, the Kim Young Sam administration, which was a long-awaited government, democratically elected after decades of military dictatorship in South Korea, sent police troops into Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul to arrest executive members of the Korea Telecom's Trade Union. They had been waging sit-in demonstrations in the cathedral. This action of the Kim Young Sam government against the trade unionists ignited opposition from various civil society groups. After two days of police deployment in the cathedral, *Hankyoreh Newspaper* criticised the state's abuse of power in this way, "the Kim Young Sam government devastated [Myeongdong Cathedral which was] the last hope and conscience of the Korean society, a symbolic shelter for those victimised." Its editorial also stated that the police's intrusion into Myeongdong Cathedral was "shocking" because even authoritarian military regimes of the past had never invaded the cathedral before. In his sermon on 11 June, 1995, Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan criticised the government's clamp down as follows:

I did not expect this would occur under a civilian government. Influential personnel in the present regime used to wage sit-in demonstrations in Myeongdong Cathedral bracing tear gas. The infringement of Myeongdong Cathedral is the same as devastation of the birthplace of the present government. Furthermore, it is inconsolable that we have lost a shelter for the socially disadvantaged (Kim Sou-hwan 2009, 404).

As Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan pointed out, Myeongdong Cathedral was one of the crucial bases for the 1987 June Uprising in South Korea, a watershed for the country's democratic transition, where numerous demonstrators had held sit-in protests inside and around the cathedral. This is why the Korean press and civil society groups strongly opposed the entry of the state forces into Myeongdong

Cathedral. How has Myeongdong Catholic Church come to attain this status as the “shelter for the victimised” and the “sacred place for Korean democratisation”? This study explores the processes and development of Myeongdong Cathedral as a religious space, showing how it attained this status and examining how the spatial dynamics/politics of Myeongdong Catholic Church shaped some of the most significant junctures of the South Korean democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

### **1.1 The South Korean Democracy Movement and Religion**

The main actors for the South Korean democracy movement were known as students and workers. Among other movement sectors, the role of the student movement was crucial for the democratic transition of South Korea in the 1970s and 1980s (Lee Nam-hee 2007; Choi Jang-Jip 2012). Given so, why do we pay attention to the role of Christian groups,<sup>1</sup> especially the dissident Catholics, in the movement process of South Korea’s democratisation? What role did dissenting Korean Catholic figures and organisations play in this social and political transition then?

Existing comprehensive studies on South Korean social movements of the 1970s and 1980s to date, if not all, tend to briefly mention or underestimate the role of Christian churches in the democratisation movement with few exceptions (e.g. P. Chang 2015; Park Myung-Lim 2011; Chung Chul-hee 1994; Sohn Hak-Kyu 1989). As Shin Gi-Wook et al. found out (2011, 33-35), it is correct that the frequency and saliency of the participation of religious actors, especially and most importantly Christians, relatively decreased in the 1980s, as compared to the

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<sup>1</sup> When reference is made to Korean Christianity or Korean Christian churches, it refers to both Catholic and Protestant Christianities and churches in Korea. When it is necessary to distinguish between them, they are identified as the Korean Catholic Church or Korean Catholicism on the one hand, and the Korean Protestant churches or Korean Protestantism on the other.

1970s because protest tactics and strategies became more “disruptive”. However, the role of Christian churches as a relatively autonomous base for organising, inculcating, nurturing, strengthening, protecting, and thus empowering the activism of students and dissident intellectuals (Chung Chul-hee 1994), and that of workers (Koo Hagen 2001), and opposition politicians (Sohn Hak-Kyu 1989) was definitive during the democratic transition of South Korean politics in the 1970s and 1980s.

When state repression on the formation and activities of social movement groups that could oppose authoritarian regimes was strong, dissident Korean Christian (both Catholic and Protestant) figures and organisations, although it was minority in number, had acted as a vital social base, due to its organised structure and international networks (Chung Chul-hee 1995; Baker 2007). The progressive Korean Christian churches, including elements of the Catholic Church, established an influential solidarity of dissidence with students, critical intellectuals and urban industrial workers that opposed Korea’s military dictatorship and state authoritarianism (Choi Jang-Jip 1993, 34).

During the Park Chung Hee regime in the 1970s, backed by its well-established systematic organisation and transnational channels, the dissident Christian churches were the first and leading group which began the salient opposition against the Yushin system. In the account of political scientist Park Myung-Lim, the “networks, sermons, and pamphlets” from Christian churches were instrumental in building necessary shared knowledge among dissident groups in order to develop and sustain the democracy movement during the Yushin period (Park Myung-Lim 2011, 376-90; see also Sohn Hak-Kyu 1989, 179). In the 1980s as well, the Korean Christian churches have offered both discursive and material spaces that were vital for the dissident movement to bring down the authoritarian Chun Doo Hwan regime (Cumings 2005, 391-92; see also Im Hyug-Baeg 2006).

Then why is it significant to note the role of Korean Catholicism in particular, among other Christian denominations and religious organisations that were active in the democratisation period of Korea in the 1970s and 1980s? In

respect of the quantitative contribution, the dissident Korean Protestants outnumbered the Catholics in terms of number of participants in protests for democratisation in South Korea (Sohn Hak-Kyu 1989; Shin Dong-youub 1994). However, when we consider public perception, we find that the Catholic Church is perceived as making the greatest contribution. In a 1991 survey, 91 per cent of the public answered that the Catholic Church crucially contributed to the democratisation of South Korea. And 84 per cent of respondents named the Korean Protestant Church's role for democratisation (Shin Dong-youub 1994). Furthermore, in the 1989 survey of 300 university professors in South Korea by the news magazine, *Sisa Journal*, which asked about "the most influential figure" in South Korean society, the respondents answered that Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan was only second to then President Roh Tae Woo (Choi Jong-cheol 1992, 205). Until his death in February 2009, Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan's influence was apparent. In the Gallup Korea survey conducted in the same month of his death, participated by 814 members of the public who were over nineteen years old, the respondents were asked if they "respect" Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan and, 87.7 per cent of respondents answered in the affirmative (Gallup Korea 2009). Considering that Korean Catholicism was not a major religion in terms of its organisational size between the 1970s and early-1990s, this highly prominent, positive perception of the general public on the contribution of the Catholic Church to Korea's democratisation, and the social influence of the Catholic leadership ask for further explanation and examination.

Political scientist Samuel Huntington (1991) termed the transition of former authoritarian states to democracy in the regions of Latin America, Asia and Europe during the 1970s and the 1980s as the "Catholic Wave" (1991, 76). Next to economic development, Huntington placed Catholicism as the second impact that brought the democratic transition of the 1970s and 1980s (1991, 85). However, in the case of Taiwan, South Korea's East Asian counterpart, where the transition to democratic politics took place in the similar period of the 1980s, the Taiwanese Catholic Church had little impact on the democratisation of the country. As mentioned by political scientist Kuo Cheng-tian, "The liberation

theology of Latin American Catholics found very little audience in Taiwan's Catholic community" (Kuo 2009, 54). Then Huntington's claim on the "Catholic Wave" is not valid for every democratic transition of East Asian countries. Grounded on the South Korean social movement context, this study will show that dissident Catholic figures and organisations playing a crucial role in the South Korean democracy movement of the 1970s and 1980s and it will explore the background and mechanisms that facilitated this in a country in which Catholicism was not a major religion.

## **1.2 Religion in Modern Societies**

To situate this study within a wider context, this section first charts the public place of religion at the international level. Then the section moves on to offer a review on literature that examines the status of Christianity in the societal and political context of modern Korea. The present social and political status of Korean Christianity has been constructed from the influences and conditions it encountered since its introduction to the Korean peninsula. The following sections will unfold how Korean Catholicism had acted as a social transformative force from its introduction to the peninsula of Joseon Korea. Colliding with the established social norms and cultures of Joseon Korea, Catholicism provided the impetus of social change to Korean society as a new worldview and ideology from its beginning. This section then will be able to excavate some valid connections between the distant past of Korean Catholicism and its contemporary vibrancy in the 1970s and 1980s.

### **1.2.1 International Context**

This section explores contemporary scholarship on religion and society including a discussion on secularisation theory and other empirical case studies in various

parts of the modern world. For the past few decades, scholars of religion have noted the so-called secularisation process, which generally speaking, can be regarded as the decline of religion in modern societies (Berger et al. 1999; Casanova 1994; Davie and Woodhead 2009; Martin 2005; Taylor 2007; Davie 2013). Sociologist José Casanova categorised the concept of secularisation into three aspects:

[S]ecularisation as differentiation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, secularisation as decline of religious beliefs and practices, and secularisation as marginalisation of religion to a privatised sphere (Casanova 1994, 211).

The “differentiation of the secular spheres” from the religions refers to the trend of which primary entities that constitute modern society such as economy, law, and education form their autonomous areas of function and work. In terms of the second aspect of the secularisation process, Casanova pointed out that this decline of religions has been most apparent in modern Western European societies (Casanova 1994, 212-13). It is in the third aspect of secularisation that Casanova himself, through his study has argued that the “privatisation” of religion is not a necessary feature of modern societies. This means that “there can be and that there are public religions in the modern world which do not need to endanger either modern individual freedoms or modern differentiated structures.” (Casanova 1994, 215)

In fact, scholars who once advocated secularisation theory have begun to recognise this public salience of religion in the modern world. In the 1960s, sociologist Peter Berger viewed the growing tendency of diversification in modern societies as a threat to existing religious communities (Davie and Woodhead 2009, 529-30). However, at the end of twentieth-century, Berger has changed his view about secularisation:

My point is that the assumption that we live in a secularised world is false. The world today [...] is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more



so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled 'secularisation theory' is essentially mistaken. [...]

Although the term "secularisation theory" refers to works from the 1950s and 1960s, the key idea of the theory can indeed be traced to the Enlightenment. That idea is simple: Modernisation necessarily leads to a decline of religion, both in society and in the minds of individuals. And it is precisely this key idea that has turned out to be wrong (Berger 1999, 2-3).

Arguing that modernisation has also brought contesting elements against secularisation, Berger opined that the decline of religion at the societal level did not necessarily mean the diminishing of religion at the individual level. For the two religions that showed the most rapid growth rate in the modern world, Berger named Islam and Evangelical Christianity (Berger 1999, 3-9).

According to sociologist David Martin's observation, this global Evangelical upsurge is taking place mainly in the form of Pentecostalism. Bearing political implications itself (Martin 1999, 38-39), these Pentecostal Christian communities are active not only in religious fields but also in social and political realms at the global scale. Evangelicals are enthusiastic "at most to constitute an effective pressure group, pressing corporate institutional interests and broad moral principles" and usually obtaining a social and political voice (Martin 1999, 39). Thus Martin considered these Pentecostal Christian communities to have significant impact on the public realm of the modern world (Martin 1999, 48-49; see also Freston 2001; Anderson 2004; Andrew Kim 2011).

In the framework of the global system, political scientist Eric Hanson (2006) presented three potential elements of religion that can contribute to political affairs. The first is related to the nature of religious practice as a common human experience, which can thus establish connecting relationships in communities of the adherent regardless of ethnicity and class (Hanson 2006, 315-16). The second feature refers to the power which religion can give to individuals and communities, that "enables significant sacrifices, even of life itself, for the good of the community and the progress of humankind" (Hanson 2006, 316). Here Hanson provided such examples as Nelson Mandela, as well as the late

South Korean President (in office 1998-2003) and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kim Dae Jung. The third aspect which Hanson claimed was that religion provides the pivotal individual and communal identity in the midst of the fast-changing environment of the world. In conjunction with these positive effects, Hanson also pointed out religion can cause harm to human society in the sense that it can demonise other rival groups and encourage justification of use of destructively violent ways to protect themselves or demolish others in competitive settings of the contemporary world (Hanson 2006, 317).

As mentioned, Samuel Huntington (1991) offered an analysis from an international perspective on the contribution of Catholicism to the democratic political transitions of the countries formerly under the authoritarian regimes in the 1970s and 1980s. However, in his work Huntington paid little attention on the local context/differences of this Catholic wave. For example, he viewed the Korean case as that “economic development promoted the expansion of Christianity, and the Christian churches, their leaders and communicants, were a major force bringing about the transition to democracy” (Huntington 1991, 74). However, his view shows an inadequate understanding about the Korean case. It was not only the economy which brought the extraordinary numerical growth of Korean Christianity. Many other cultural, societal and religious factors of Korea need to be discussed to establish this argument.

Although the aforementioned works by Casanova (1994), Berger (1999), Martin (1999), Hanson (2006), Huntington (1991), and others (e.g., Beyer 2006; Davie 2013) attempt to forge a general account of the place of religion in social and political arenas in the modern world, providing sufficient explanations on the status of religion in the global scale, encompassing the vibrancy of local dynamics between religion and politics in one or two volumes of work, is hard to avoid offering simplified, over-generalised accounts on the theme. In this light, a growing body of work on the history and sociology of religion (e.g., Marshall 2009; van Klinken 2013; Phan et al. 2010; F. Yang 2012; Chow 2013; T. Lee 2010; Kim and Kim 2015) attending to regional contexts on the relationship between religion and society yields outcomes that are instrumental to construct more

holistic and thus genuinely global accounts of the place of religion in modern societies. While acknowledging the importance of considering the transnational aspects of religion in modern societies, this study aims to explore the place of religion (in this case Catholic Christianity) within the local dynamics of social change in the Korean context.

### **1.2.2 The Korean Context**

The previous section found that the power and role of religion in the modern world is not confined to a privatised area. In fact religious organisations can be an active and salient form of civil society, which are able to play their part in social and political realms (e.g., Clark 2007, 171-72; Kim Sun-hyuk 2000, 74-76). In Asia, one of the notable public roles of religion was observed to be related to the democratic transition of the countries which were formerly under authoritarian regimes. The Islamic groups in Indonesia, the Buddhist movements in Thailand, the Filipino Catholic Church, the Korean Christian churches, and the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church exerted the conclusive influence on their countries' political democratisation (Cheng and Brown 2006, 3).

Although the reasons for the participation of these (Asian) religious organisations in contentious politics for democratisation varied according to the local contexts, observers have largely held that they relate to: the discursive foundation of their doctrine/theology for public good and social justice (Casanova 1994, 230); the religious organisations' relationship with the authoritarian regime or the opposition group (Cheng and Brown 2006); or the institutional interests of a religious organisation (Im Hyug-Baeg 2006). Each of these can lead the leaders and members of a religious organisation to join in protests against authoritarianism.

Among these drives above for religious organisations to become dissident, the following chapters of this study have identified, in the case of the Korean Catholic Church, it was mainly the theological transformation of Catholic social

teaching derived from the Second Vatican Council<sup>2</sup> and the response to the infringement of the institutional interests of the Korean Catholic Church (Chapter 3) which initially drove the dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations such as the CPAJ and CJP to stand together with demonstrators for the fight for democratisation in the 1970s and 1980s (see also Chang Yun-Shik 1998, 14-15).

While the following chapters address the question of why the dissident Korean Catholic figures, organisations and adherents participated in the democracy movement, much of this thesis accounts for how the participation of the Korean Catholic Church through the form of spatial dynamics/politics of Myeongdong Cathedral shaped the development of the democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

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<sup>2</sup> The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was de facto one of the most influential factors—along with the emergence of Latin American liberation theology—which determined how the global Catholic Church engaged with society and politics thereafter. For a comprehensive collection of the primary materials ranging from Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) to post-the Second Vatican Council documents of Catholic social thought, see David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1992). One can see an in-depth examination of Catholic social teaching in Charles E. Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002). On the general and comparative discussions of church-state relations of the Catholic church since the Second Vatican Council, see Paul Christopher Manuel et al., *The Catholic Church and the Nation-State: Comparative Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2006). As a recent publication on the global impact of the Second Vatican Council, Ian Linden's book is notable. See his *Global Catholicism: Diversity and Change since the Second Vatican Council* (London: Hurst Publishers, 2009). Regarding the influence of the Second Vatican Council on the social participation of the Korean Catholic Church, see, among others, Kang In-Cheol, "Hanguk gyohoe-ui sahoe chamyeo-wa je 2cha batikan gonguihoe" [The Korean Catholic Church's Social Participation and the Second Vatican Council], *Gyohoesa Yeongu* 25 (2005): 13-60. See also Chapter 2 of this thesis.

This section shall review a body of literature on the social and political role of Christianity in Korean society. Existing studies have mainly examined the social place of Korean Christianity with historical approaches (e.g., Cho Kwang 1984; Wells 1990; Kang Wi-Jo 1997; Baker 1998; Kim Heung-Soo 1999; Grayson 2002; Yoon Seon-Ja 2002; Buswell and Lee 2006; Clark 2007; Ryu Dae-Young 2009; K. Kim 2010) and with social scientific methods, generally focusing on church-state relations (Hanson 1980; Chung Chul-hee 1994; Kim Nyung 1996; Chang Yun-Shik 1998; Koo Hagen 2001; Keele 2003; Ro Kil-Myung 2005; Kang In-Cheol 2006).

Those studies that approach the theme from a historical point of view can be further divided into three main streams. Firstly, literature that explores the unprecedented growth of Korean Christian churches (e.g., Ro and Nelson 1995; Park Myeong-su 2003). Secondly, studies which examine the place of Christianity within a selected topic or context, such as Christianity and nationalism (Wells 1990) or Christianity and the Korean War (Kim Heung-Soo 1999). Thirdly, general surveys of the history of Korean Christianity (Grayson 2002, 155-76; Kim and Kim 2015).

Donald Clark (1986) presented a few characteristics of Korean Christianity. Firstly, due to Korean Christianity's past resistance to Japanese colonial rule, the former was seldom regarded as part of imperial power like elsewhere. Secondly, Christianity in modern Korea is generally conservative tending to be socially and politically stable and emphasising the non-secular, religious life of their adherents. Thirdly, both Catholic and Protestant churches in Korea are internationally connected institutions (Clark 1986, xi-xiii). Also, Clark pointed out that the Christian Church in Korea has been under the explicit influence of Korean shamanism and (neo-) Confucianism (Clark 1986, 51).

Studies dealing with the period of the early introduction of Catholicism to Korea in the eighteenth and nineteenth century noted its ideological impact upon traditional Confucian Joseon society (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 49-50; see also Cho Kwang 1984; Geum Jang-tae 2004; Yi Won-sun 2004). Historian of Korean Catholicism Cho Kwang (1984) viewed Catholicism as a factor in the socio-

cultural change of pre-modern Korea to modern society. Cho saw that Korean Catholicism had had the potential to be an important religious and cultural stimulant for social change since its beginning. The Korean Catholic Church played the role of propagating egalitarian thought in Joseon Dynasty (Cho Kwang 1984, 15). Cho noted the influence of early Catholicism in Korea both on the masses and on the ruling class of the royal government of Joseon Dynasty, which was based on blood ties or on the order of estates, in persuading them to recognise the different political system of equality in the latter half of Joseon period (Cho Kwang 1984, 21-22).

Although the social participation of the Korean Christian churches during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945) after the end of Joseon Dynasty is generally assessed as restricted due to the oppressive external environment (e.g., Yoon Seung-yong 1997), observers have noticed the resistance of the Christian churches to the Japanese government such as the 1919 March First Movement, which was mainly led by Christian church leaders. Timothy Lee viewed that the participation of the Korean Protestants in the March First Movement was crucial for its later growth in Korean soil (T. Lee 2000, 142; see also Park Chung-Shin 2003, 136-38; Kang Wi-Jo 1997).

The Shinto shrine worship among the Korean Christian churches was a controversial issue during the Japanese colonial rule period. Kim Sung-Gun (1989) examined how the Korean Christian churches (Presbyterian, Methodist, and Catholic) reacted to the Japanese enforcement of Shinto shrine worship. Kim Sung-Gun argued that theological emphasis, missionary policy, and the structure of church were three important factors in causing the differences of attitudes among the Christian churches towards Shinto shrine worship (Kim Sung-Gun 1989; see also Kang In-Cheol 2006).

In respect to the period from the 1950s to 1960s, Kang In-Cheol (2003) analysed the response of the Korean Catholic Church to the Korean War and the relationship between the Catholic Church and anti-communism in South Korea. Sociologist and Catholic priest Oh Gyeong-hwan (2004) explored the social history of Korean Catholicism after 1945 based on the four directions that the

Korean Catholic Church had developed, which were: evangelisation, indigenisation, participation of church members, and religious devotion.

Of studies with a historical approach that examine the democratisation movement period of the 1970s and 1980s, Historian Yoon Seon-Ja (2002) dealt the relationship between the Gwangju Uprising and the Korean Catholic Church. Donald Baker (1998) surveyed the active social participation of the Korean Catholic Church in the 1970s and 1980s noting its transformation from a socially silent religious organisation since the late eighteenth century to a major social movement force in a contemporary time. Apart from the influence of the Second Vatican Council as an indispensable factor for the transformation of Korean Catholicism, Baker pointed out the Koreanisation of priests and the urbanisation of its believers in the 1970s and 1980s for the background that facilitated its active political engagement for Korean affairs. He also viewed that the developed Catholic infrastructure of higher education and hospitals since 1945 played a role of producing educated people who can express dissenting ideas from a Catholic faith standpoint (Baker 1998, 160-63). Although Baker presented a welcome historical account of the Korean Catholic Church's transformation as an influential social movement force, his findings, mostly based on survey data, are insufficient for conveying the multi-layered significance and implications of the socio-political engagement of the dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations.

It is clear that these historical studies on the social role of Korean Christianity provide useful accounts that are necessary to build up chronological understanding of both Catholic and Protestant Christianities' place in Korean history and society. Yet it is also obvious that these historical narratives tend to have pitfalls of providing simplified teleological interpretations of the past events for the purpose of grasping the reasons of the present state. In other words, by focusing on temporal progress, these accounts are missing the relational dynamics between the subjects and actors of the past events. Historical events do not simply consist of a neat chain of cause and effect. The past is woven with contingent chances and exceptional cases that attracted little attention when

observers only follow the rule of temporality. The contribution of the spatial approach, as used in this thesis, lies in illuminating the contextual positionalities of subjects and actors of the past events. This epistemological turn to a spatial perspective thus opens up new dimensions and possibilities of understanding the past with more sensibilities to the relational dynamics between actors, and yields a complementary explanation on the locational context of the past events (Warf and Arias 2009).

Focusing on church-state relations, social scientific studies of the opposition of the Korean Christian churches against the authoritarian regimes have investigated the participation of the churches in the democracy movement from various viewpoints ranging from labour and civil society to institutional aspects of the Korean Christian churches.

Koo Hagen (2001) investigated the special linkage between the Christian churches and democratic labour movement in the 1970s. The impact of two Christian organisations on the labour movement were particularly profound: the Urban Industrial Mission (UIM: Dosi Saneop Seongyohoe) of the Protestants and the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chretienne (JOC, Young Catholic Workers: Gatollik Nodong Cheongnyeonghoe) of the Catholics.<sup>3</sup> Koo Hagen highlighted the fact that the church leaders in the labour movement had promoted cell group activities. These small groups were vital for establishing the “union consciousness” and thus crucial for the emergence of the “grassroots union movement” of the 1970s (Koo Hagen 2001, 75).

Chang Yun-Shik (1998) assessed another major Catholic organisation which actively participated in the democratic labour movement, the Catholic Famers’ Association (CFA). The primary aim of this association was to support farmers to establish “themselves into an autonomous collective force” or being a

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<sup>3</sup> As Eric Hanson (1980) noted, Korean Catholic and Protestant organisations cooperated in their democratic labour movements in the 1970s. Two critical sources for the labour movement of Christian organisations are George E. Ogle, *South Korea: Dissent within the Economic Miracle* (London: Zed Books, 1990) and Cho Wha Soon, *Let the Weak Be Strong: A Woman’s Struggle for Justice* (Bloomington, IN: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988).



stimulus for democratisation of the rural area (Chang Yun-Shik 1998, 453; see also Sohn Hak-Kyu 1989, 150; Kim Nyung 1996, 276-81).

Chung Chul-hee (1994) investigated the role of the Korean Christian churches as an initial driving force for mobilisation of the democratisation movement. But Chung's work did not make a distinction between the social participation of the Korean Catholic Church in the 1970s and the 1980s. It thus reveals limitations for assessing the influence of the Catholic Church in the democratisation movement in micro-perspectives. Chu Gyo-yun (2005) asserted that the power of the moral authority of the Catholic Church acted as a catalyst for mobilisation of dissident groups in the democratisation period (Chu Gyo-yun 2005, 230).

Social scientists also have noted external and internal factors, and conditions which enabled the Korean Christian churches to oppose the authoritarian regimes so effectively (e.g., Hanson 1980; Sohn Hak-Kyu 1989; Im Hyug-Baeg 2006; Kang In-Cheol 2000). Hanson (1980) presented a combined analysis of the external and internal factors for the social participation of the Korean Catholic Church in the 1970s. Hanson regarded three major aspects as related to the church-state conflicts in South Korea: leadership, participation in ritual, and mutual criticism. Firstly, the church leaders led Catholic opposition in Korea. It was mainly the influence of the activism of Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan and the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun that bound the Korean Catholics together. Secondly, the Korean Catholic protest was waged in religious ways (Hanson 1980, 104; see also Biernatzki et al. 1975). The opposition of the dissident Korean Catholics to the authoritarian regime was demonstrated mainly in masses and prayer services. Thirdly, mutual criticism, which the state and Catholic protest leaders exchanged, was also observed in the Korean case (Hanson 1980, 102-108). Sohn Hak-Kyu (1989) suggested that the anti-communist tendency of the Korean Christian churches "allowed it to enjoy a certain immunity from pressure by a regime always ready to invoke the threat of communism in responding to its critics." (Sohn Hak-Kyu 1989, 179)

The review thus far shows that existing studies of social scientific inquiry have tended to be one-sided in emphasising church-state relations as a framework of analysis. The problem that rises from this monotonous approach of the church-state relations is that it is likely to ignore the role and activities of other diverse movement actors of civil society (cf. Kim Sun-hyuk 2007, 67). In fact, the role of extensive civil society groups and mass mobilisation were decisive in the democratic transition of South Korea (Armstrong 2007, 3; Han Wan-sang 1997, 9; Im Hyug-Baeg 1990, 66; Kim Sun-hyuk 2000). Furthermore, this single-sided analytical framework of the church-state relations/conflicts can miss other elements, such as the contribution of the general public and the religious/symbolic power of Korean Catholicism as an established religious institution that made the participation of dissident the Korean Catholic figures and organisations in the democracy movement more effective. In these respects, examining the role of Catholicism in the Korean democratisation focusing on the church-state relations cannot avoid lacking explanatory limitations. For a thorough investigation of the influence of the Korean Catholic Church on the democratisation movement, this study will explore the linkage between Korean Catholicism and civil society in forthcoming chapters. Beyond the limited perspective of church-state relations, this thesis will demonstrate that spatial and geographical frameworks of analysis can offer a more holistic, multi-layered explication on the role of the Catholic Church in the Korean democracy movement of the 1970s and 1980s.

### **1.3 Myeongdong Cathedral in Contemporary Korea**

After liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, Myeongdong Cathedral became the nucleus of the Korean Catholic Church since it is a cathedral of Seoul diocese, the centre of the whole Catholic Church in South Korea (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 223; Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 270; see also Cho Kwang 2010, 257-94). The importance of Myeongdong Cathedral as the heart of the Korean Catholic Church

after liberation could be explained, for instance, by pointing out that two major Catholic publications, *Gatollik Cheongnyeon* (Catholic Youth) and *Gyeonghyang Japji*<sup>4</sup> (Gyeonghyang Magazine) were published through the cathedral in the late 1940s (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 227).

Situating the cathedral in the post-war situation of South Korean society and in relation to the dictatorial Syngman Rhee regime, sociologist Ro Kil-Myung argued that Myeongdong Cathedral had stood as a symbolic space embodying sacredness in the midst of the devastation and chaos caused by the Korean War (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 248; see also section 2.3 of Chapter 2). Two other critical factors contributed to this symbolic importance of Myeongdong Cathedral in the 1950s. One was the active relief efforts that were channelled through Myeongdong Catholic Church. The other was the opposition of the Catholic Church against the autocratic rule of the Syngman Rhee government (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 248).<sup>5</sup> The social strata of adherents of the Korean Catholicism began to change from the 1950s. Against the background of this good image of the Catholic Church, represented by Myeongdong Cathedral, which stood for social welfare and justice in the post-war society, many intellectuals, the middle-class and social celebrities converted to Catholicism during the 1950s (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 268; see also Seo Woo-Seok 1994). This was despite the limitations of the social and pastoral activities of the Korean Catholic Church in the 1950s, such as: an insufficient theological basis for social participation of the Church, the absence of a boundary for church-state relations, and support for the Catholic politician Chang Myon who opposed Syngman Rhee (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 259).

In the 1960s, Myeongdong Cathedral was at the centre of the social pastoral activities of the Korean Catholic Church such as the pro-life movement,

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<sup>4</sup> *GyeonghyangJapji* (Gyeonghyang Magazine) is the oldest magazine in Korea with over 100 years of history. It has been published since 1906 and is still being published by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, the Catholic founded daily newspaper *Kyunghyang Shinmun* was discontinued in 1959 by the Syngman Rhee regime for reporting critical comments on the dictatorship.

the Catholic Farmers movement, and the Catholic student movement during this period (Cho Kwang 2010, 275-76; 288). As the background for Korean Catholicism's socio-political participation during this period, historian of Korean Catholicism Cho Kwang proposed three aspects. First, the Korean Catholic Church was reflecting on its historical duty, considering its limited social participation under Japanese colonial rule. Second, the Korean Catholic Church had experience of social and pastoral activities under the Syngman Rhee regime in the 1950s. Third, together with these reflections and the historical experience, the Second Vatican Council provided more systematic theories for the social participation of Korean Catholicism in the 1960s (Cho Kwang 2010, 273-74).

Although it is a well-established ontological fact, and widely accepted, that the status of Myeongdong Cathedral, both as a religious institution/space and as the centre of Korean Catholicism, evolved in close interrelation with the social political development of South Korean society after 1945 (see for instance Yoon Seon-Ja 2002, 186; Im Hyug-Baeg 2006, 143; Clark 2007; Cho Kwang 2010, 272), the question of through which processes and mechanisms Myeongdong Catholic Church has been intertwined with and has shaped the social and political dynamics of contemporary Korea remains unanswered. To address this question, this study explores the period of the 1970s and 1980s when contemporary South Korea underwent one of the most socially and politically vibrant periods for democratisation. This study then, proposes to investigate the evolution of the democratisation movement of South Korea through the lens of a religious space, Myeongdong Cathedral. Through adopting the religious space as an epistemological framework of investigation, this thesis will provide a new interpretation of how the movement participants were mobilised (Chapter 3), how the vitality of protests could be sustained (Chapter 4), and how the crucial movement actors were connected and networked (Chapter 5) through Myeongdong Cathedral throughout the democratisation period of the 1970s and 1980s. In these empirical chapters, the study will show how the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral shaped the Korean democracy movement at some critical junctures in the 1970s and 1980s.

#### **1.4 Beyond an Actor-Oriented Perspective**

Existing studies of the South Korean democracy movement have tended to concentrate on particular actors that crucially engaged in the dissident movement of the 1970s and 1980s. They have mainly noted the role of students and intellectuals (Lee Nam-hee 2007; Park Mi 2005; Chung Chul-hee 1994), workers (Koo Hagen 2001), civil society (Kim Sun-hyuk 2000; Armstrong et al. 2007), and the opposition political system (Sohn Hak-Kyu 1989; Im Hyug-Baeg 1990).

Among other actors in the South Korean democracy movement, scholars have analysed and assessed the leading role of students as a pivotal and conclusive one for South Korea's transition to democratic politics (Choi Jang-Jip 2012, 82; Lee Nam-hee 2007; Kim Dong-Choon et al. 1997; Seo Joong-Seok 1997; Park Mi 2005). For the background and reasons of the students being salient movement leaders, Korean scholars attempted to find the answer in several factors: the historical illegitimacy of the South Korean ruling class since its founding President Syngman Rhee in the 1940s to Chun Doo Hwan to the 1980s, which caused the activism of groups of students and intellectuals, as found in the role of "intelligentsia" in countries such as Russia and Poland in the 20th century (Kim Dong-Choon et al. 1997, 62-64); in the absence of the political influence of the opposition parties under the Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan regimes (Choi Jang-Jip 2012, 83-84); in the relative organisational autonomy of university students (Chung Chul-hee 1994); and in that the students rightly targeted the needs of the time such as democracy, national unification, and constitutionalism (Kim Dong-Choon et al. 1997, 65-66).

The merit of an actor-oriented perspective is evident since it enables an in-depth investigation concentrating on particular persons/sectors that facilitated the democratisation movement of South Korea. Nevertheless, this actor-oriented analysis is limited in offering a multi-faceted account of South Korea's democratisation from the dimension of social movements that has fluid streams

of events, conflicts, opportunities, threats and changes because the analytical framework only deals with a particular actor and certain limited elements of the movement. While acknowledging the advantages of the existing approach, this study attempts to complement the actor-oriented analysis by adopting a spatial framework of examination.

Philosopher Henri Lefebvre claims that the analysis of space is pivotal in exploring the social relations of the contemporary world. For Lefebvre, the fundamental of social relations is spatial (1991, 404). Influenced by Lefebvre's formulation on space in society, scholars of the wide-ranging fields from history, sociology, and geography to religious studies have taken spatial framework of analysis to develop their methods of study (Henry 2014; Brenner and Elden 2009; Soja 1989; Elden 2007; Miller et al. 2013; Owen 2010; Knott 2005a/b; 2008).

Led by Lefebvre's work on spatial analysis, the "spatial turn" in research methods has been developed in a wide range of disciplines in humanities and social sciences (e.g., Arias et al. 2009). This spatial turn in epistemological and methodological dimensions has been also emerging in the field of Korean studies. Anthropologist Peter van der Veer has led an internationally collaborative research project on the relationship between urban space and religion in Seoul, titled "Urban aspirations in Seoul: Religion and megacities in comparative studies"<sup>6</sup> and has produced a useful edited volume on the topic (van der Veer 2015). Political scientist Ha Sang-bok used Gwanghwamun (the main gate of Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul) as a spatial lens to analyse Korean political authority from Joseon Dynasty to contemporary period (Ha Sang-bok 2010).

Adopting Lefebvre's schema that explores social relations through a lens of spatiality together with history (Elden 2007, 109), this thesis examines the spatial dynamics and practices of Myeongdong Catholic Church that shaped and played a constituting role in the South Korean democracy movement of the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, it is the contribution of this study that it demonstrates

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<sup>6</sup> See project website: <http://www.mmg.mpg.de/research/all-projects/comparative-study-of-urban-aspirations-in-mega-cities/urban-aspirations-in-seoul-religion-and-megacities-in-comparative-studies> (accessed 29 March 2016)

the significant role of religion (Catholic Christianity) in facilitating the democratic transition of South Korea in the 1970s and 1980s from a spatial framework of analysis. Analysing the religious spatial dynamics of the South Korean democracy movement, this thesis will explore (a) how the contentious politics and social movements during South Korea's transition to democracy have been shaped and influenced by the spatial practices in and around Myeongdong Catholic Church, (b) the overlooked connections between movement participants, and (c) untold opportunities and narratives of the development of the movement. As a result, the study explicates the spatial constitution of the South Korean democracy movement through the lens of Myeongdong Cathedral and implies a distinctive role of the spatial dynamics of a religious place that can mould and develop some critical junctures of social movements.

In particular, the following empirical chapters explicate how some representative spatialities of social movements (Jessop, Brenner, and Jones 2008; Leitner et al. 2008; Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013), that are place (Chapter 3), scale (Chapter 4), and networks (Chapter 5) constituted the processes of South Korea's democratisation in the 1970s and 1980s through the spatial dynamics of the dissident movement developed in and around Myeongdong Cathedral (see also section 3.2 of Chapter 3).

## **1.5 The Religious Spatial Dynamics of the South Korean Democracy Movement**

Then the central question of the thesis is this: Is Myeongdong Cathedral's ontological positionality, both as the centre of Korean Catholicism *and* the sacred zone of Korean democracy, relevant and significant to understanding the dynamics, developments, and evolution of South Korean social movements in the 1970s and 1980s? Aided by the recent scholarship on the interconnectedness between space and social movements (see Miller et al. 2013; Arias et al. 2009), this study shows that examining the spatial dynamics and politics of Myeongdong

Catholic Church in the movement context of South Korea's democratisation offers a new understanding of the Korean democracy movement through an epistemological turn to the spatial framework of analysis. Beyond the existing actor-oriented perspective and the trend to concentrating on temporal progress of the Korean democracy movement, the thesis attempts to offer a more holistic account on the development of Korea's democratisation movement by adding a spatial account which unfolds connections between movement actors and, opportunities and mechanisms that facilitated the critical movement phases and evolution throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

### **1.5.1 Method and Data Sources**

Document analysis is used as the main method for this research. The term "document" here, refers to a broad-range of readable/interpretable sources from archived materials, personal and official documents, and mass-media outputs to Internet resources. In terms of selecting and assessing the document sources, the "authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning" will be critically considered (Bryman 2012, 543-44).

The primary source for this research is eight volumes of archived materials on the social participation of the Korean Catholic Church during the democratisation movement period, *The Torch in the Darkness* (Amheuk Sog-ui Hwaetbul) published by the Gaudium et Spes Pastoral Institute in South Korea (GSPI: Gippeungwa Huimang Samok Yeonguwon). These eight volumes include important primary sources such as declarations, messages, and statements issued and delivered by the dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations in campaigns, marches, masses, prayer protests, press conferences, and public demonstrations between 1974 and 1987. To maintain a comparative and complementary perspective, eight volumes of the archived materials on the activities of the Korean Protestant dissident figures and organisations published



by the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK: Hanguk Gidokgyo Gyohoe Hyeobuihoe) during the same period will also be investigated.

Other significant primary sources on the social participation of Korean Catholicism in the 1970s and 1980s include *A History of the Human Rights Movement of Korean Catholicism* (Hanguk Gatollik Ingwon Undongsa) compiled and published by Myeongdong Catholic Church in 1984 and *The Status of the Korean Catholic Church* (Hanguk Cheonju Gyohoeui Wisang) compiled and published by the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ: Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan) in 1985.

Regarding the political engagement of the Korean Catholics during the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, important primary materials are *Resistance and Meditation* (Jeohang-gwa Myeongsang) authored by Archbishop Youn Kong-hi et al. and *Gwangju, The Cross of South Korea* (Gwangju-yeo Urinara-ui Sipjaga-yeo) compiled and published by the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of Gwangju (Cheonjugyo Gwangju Daegyogu Jeongui Pyeonghwa Wiwonhoe) in 1985. The significant primary source for the activities of the Korean Catholic Church during the 1987 June Uprising period is four volumes of *Documenting the June Uprising* (6-wol Hangjaeng-eul Girokhada) which were published in 2007 by the Korea Democracy Foundation (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe).

With regard to sources for Myeongdong Cathedral, two volumes of *A History of Myeongdong Cathedral* (Myeongdong Bondangsa) authored by the Research Foundation of Korean Church History (Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso) and the two volumes of *The Collected Newspaper Articles on Myeongdong Cathedral* (Myeongdong Seongdang Sinmun Gisa Jaryojip) compiled by the Archdiocese of Seoul will be examined. For a general survey on the history of Korean Catholicism, *A History of the Korean Catholic Church* (Hanguk Cheonju Gyohoesa) published by the Research Institute for Korean Church History (Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso) is helpful.

Catholic periodicals which are now all digitised such as the weekly *Gatollik Sinmun* (Catholic Newspaper), the monthly *Gyeonghyang Japji*

(Gyeonghyang Magazine), and monthly *Samok* (Pastoral Care) during the 1970s and the 1980s are also useful sources. Other than these Catholic materials, the articles of general Korean newspapers (many of which also have a high accessibility through digitisation) that dealt with the engagement of the Christian churches in the democratisation movement are selectively and critically examined given the fact that the newspaper articles were under censorship by the authoritarian regimes during the 1970s and 1980s.

### **1.5.2 Outline of Chapters**

With its long history as the centre of Korean Catholicism and its geographical advantage in relation to social movements, Myeongdong Cathedral was widely perceived as a sacred place symbolising the desire of the Korean masses for democratisation and its spatial dynamics developed by the dissident Catholic figures and organisations became a crucial mechanism providing opportunities for reinforcing the vitality of the movement and diffusing protests beyond Myeongdong and Seoul in the 1970s and 1980s. In line with this theme, Chapter 2 addresses the questions: How has Myeongdong Catholic Church achieved its status as the sanctuary for South Korea's democratisation? How could a religious place receive such attention of being a social movement space for secular contentious politics? Chapter 2 examines how Myeongdong Cathedral had risen as the centre of Korean Catholicism over the course of the tempestuous history following the liberation from Japanese colonial rule, during/after the Korean War, and the Syngman Rhee and the early Park Chung Hee government period. The chapter also offers a contextual survey of the relationship between Korean Catholicism and national/international politics during this period.

Chapter 3 explores the processes by which Myeongdong Cathedral began to be produced as a contentious sanctuary for the democratisation movement throughout the 1970s, especially during the period of the Yushin system (1972-1979) of Park Chung Hee. Chapter 3 will answer the following questions: Why did

Korean Catholics participate in the democratisation movement? What were the internal drivers for their participation other than the external drivers, such as the impact of the Second Vatican Council? To answer these questions, Chapter 3 shows first that the infringement of institutional interests of the Korean Catholic Church such as the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun was the crucial internal factor that drove the Korean Catholic Church to join in the 1970s democracy movement.

Chapter 3 also explores the developing processes by which Myeongdong Cathedral came to attain its status as a contentious sanctuary for the democratisation movement in the 1970s and explains how the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral through the event such as the promulgation of the 1976 March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation (MFD: 3.1 Minju Guguk Seoneon, also called as the Myeongdong Incident) was decisive in reinforcing the spirit of dissidence of the 1970s and developed international solidarity for South Korea's democratisation.

Chapter 4 investigates how Myeongdong Cathedral had symbolised and represented the longing of the Korean people for political change during the 1980s when the South Korean democracy movement was in a relative decline due to harsh state repression after the 1980 Gwangju Uprising. The analytic focus of Chapter 4 is how the democracy movement of the 1980s had been sustained through commemorating rituals and media representations on the Gwangju Uprising by the Korean Catholic churches in Seoul and Gwangju. The spatial mediation of the Gwangju Uprising through Myeongdong Cathedral was also crucial for sustaining the vitality of the dissident movement in the 1980s before the June Uprising of 1987.

Chapter 5 analyses in what ways Myeongdong Cathedral and the Korean Catholic Church had engaged with the 1987 June Uprising. It pays particular attention to how the dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations played a role of connecting movement actors across the social movement hub of the time—Myeongdong Catholic Church—through the progress of the June Uprising. Based on a firm analysis of the movement context of the uprising, Chapter 5 argues that the spatial politics of Myeongdong Cathedral during the June Uprising

period, most representatively the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest (10-15 June 1987), worked as a significant driving force for diffusing a wave of protests across the country for the constitutional revision and democratisation of South Korea.

Extending further beyond the realm of Korean studies, the findings of this research will provide implications for scholars of (religious) space and social movements. As will be shown in the following chapters and will be highlighted in the concluding chapter, this study will offer implications regarding the linkage between the religious space and the development of social movements with regard to how taking a religious space as a strategic site of resistance can influence the progress of social movements in terms of durability and effectiveness of the collective actions, and what conditions would constitute such outcomes of social movements.

### **1.5.3 Note on Romanisation and Translation**

Employing the Revised Romanisation System of Korean, the best effort was made to be consistent in Romanising Korean names throughout the thesis. Following Korean practice, the surname comes first in the text, and a hyphen was put between the syllables of personal names. Exceptions were made when Korean authors clarified their preferences for spelling their names in publications. Also, since the system allows, exceptions were made for common Korean surnames such as Kim, Lee, Park and Chang. In respect to well-known figures, places, and terms, more conventional spellings were used for instance Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee. To avoid any possible confusion regarding Romanisation when searching Korean sources, in the Bibliography original Korean Hangeul scripts were added for author's name and the title of publication. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Korean to English in the thesis are by the author.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **The Historical: Establishment of the Religious Spatial Salience**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The construction of the present Myeongdong Cathedral began in 1892 and completed in 1898. Myeongdong Cathedral was first called as Jonghyeon Cathedral for the land on which it was built was Jonghyeon hill. During the Japanese colonial period, the cathedral was named differently as Myeongjicheong Catholic Church following the Japanese administrative districts. The name Myeongdong Cathedral was not given immediately after 1945. It was when the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) reorganised the former Japanese administrative districts in October 1946, the name of the cathedral changed into present Myeongdong Cathedral (Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 97-100; 179).

This chapter provides the historical background to the social and political salience of Myeongdong Cathedral and Korean Catholicism in the 1970s and 1980s. It explores some connections between the emergence of the religious spatial centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral during from 1945 to the 1960s and the religious spatial politics of the cathedral in the South Korean democracy movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Based on this relevance to the later period, the chapter characterises the spatial features of Myeongdong Cathedral between 1945 and 1971 as politicising, empowering, and relational space. Firstly, after the 1945 liberation until the break-out of the Korean War in 1950, Myeongdong Cathedral developed into a politicising space. Under the acute situations of ideological conflicts and the vortex of both national and international power politics, Myeongdong Catholic Church came to be emerged as a significant politicising space beyond the realm of religious circles.

Secondly, between 1950 and 1960, the chapter focuses on how Myeongdong Cathedral stood to be perceived as an empowering space to exert both practical and symbolic influence to the generation of the lost and dispossessed by a destructive warfare. Thirdly, during the 1960s, Myeongdong Catholic Church arranged and strengthened its organisational structure. And it was the 1960s when the Korean Catholic Church came to attain empirical knowledge about having various relationships with Korean national politics. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) held in this period also called for the ecclesiastical, theological, and social political response of the Korean Catholic Church and Myeongdong Cathedral as a symbol of the global Catholic Church. Hence in many respects, situated in this web of both national and international relations, the post-liberation history of the Korean Catholic Church and Myeongdong Cathedral from 1945 to the 1960s explains much of the background for its salient social and political engagement and spatial dynamics in the democracy movement of the 1970s and 1980s.

## **2.2 Politicising Space, 1945-1950**

After liberation from Japanese colonial rule, Korea was divided by the occupations of two foreign powers: the northern part by the Soviet Union and the southern by the United States. Korea's division, in the global context, can be said as the outcome of the international ideological conflicts between capitalism and communism and hegemonic struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union (Kang Man-gil 2005, 176; Cumings 2005, 186). The Catholic magazine *Gyeonghyang Japji* shows then chaotic situation of the period as below:

Being told that there is going to be an important announcement; everyone paid attention to radio broadcast at noon, on the historical day of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven on 15 August, 1945. It was the announcement by the Emperor of Japan. However, the broadcast was unclear so most listeners could only guess that the war was coming to an end. Only few were aware that Joseon Korea was

liberated. The ceasefire came as a surprise to the majority of people because until then, the public had access only to Japanese propaganda. Thus, on 15th of August, the majority were still unsure if the news about liberation was real or not.

Then on 16th of August, when it became clear that Joseon Korea was indeed liberated from Japan, the street of Gyeongseong literally turned upside down as shouts of national independence rang through the town. There were cheers and jubilation everywhere. This went on until nightfall. At first, the Japanese Government General of Korea and even the Japanese military police were confused. However, from 17th August, when the Japanese in Korea were informed that they were still responsible for securing public order until the American troops arrived, the armed Japanese military police and officers began to go about their work again. Nevertheless, it was extremely difficult for the people to assess the situation as rumours abound, such as the Soviet forces would arrive soon, or that the American troops had already landed in Incheon; that the Japanese army was preparing the last showdown with the Allied Forces in Gyeongseong [...] (Gyeonghyang Japji August 1946, 6-7).

The article above indicates the confusing and complex situation of the Korean peninsula facing the liberation. According to this excerpt, the Korean people in August 1945 did not have a substantial understanding of the significance of their country's liberation from Japan nor comprehend the then reality of international politics surrounding the Korean peninsula (see Kang Man-gil 2005, 175). On the day of 15 August 1945, most Korean people "only figured out that the boring war would come to an end, and only few knew" Joseon Korea actually was liberated from Japan.

After two days since liberation, on 17 August 1945, then diocesan Bishop of Seoul Roh Ki-nam issued a following statement:

Blessings to all church officials and fellow Catholics in the parish. The disastrous warfare of the world has now ceased. Currently, the new order is established in our Joseon Korea, which shall determine crucially, our future. Therefore, one has to make the utmost effort not to make imprudent speeches or take rash actions. Until our new legitimate government settles down and fully assumes its

responsibility [...] I instruct you to pray everyday for the benefits of the glory of the Holy Spirit (Gyeonghyang Japji August 1946, 7).

This announcement reveals succinctly, the perception of one of the foremost Catholic leaders of Korea during this time. Bishop Roh Ki-nam, unlike the majority of the people who were still kept in the dark, highlighted the fact that the new political order was soon to be established which would hold the key to the country's future. He also urged his followers to remain vigilant by refraining from imprudent speeches and actions.

### **2.2.1 Korean Catholicism and Politics after 1945**

In the post-liberation period, there was a structural change in the parishes of the Korean Catholic Church. Until 1941, only one Korean priest (the Prefecture Apostolic of Jeonju) was leading a parish out of eight parishes in Korea. In 1946, however, four out of eight parishes (in South Korea, three out of five parishes) came to be led by Korean priests. Thus, this indigenised leadership of the Korean Catholic Church is a notable aspect in the post-liberation period (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 220-21; Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2010, 136). After 1945, the nurturing system of Korean priests also made progress. By 1949, the number of Korean priests reached 144, which increased 33.3 per cent compared to 108 Korean priests by the end of 1944. During the same five years between 1945 and 1949, the number of foreign priests increased from 48 to 58 priests with the increase rate of 20.8 per cent. For the case of nuns, during the same period, foreign nuns increased 23.1 per cent from 13 to 16, whereas Korean nuns increased 56.5 per cent from 246 to 385 in South Korea (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 221).

Unlike during the colonial era, the change of social and political conditions of the post-liberation period enabled the South Korean Catholic Church to be emerged as a prominent religious organisation supported by the United States (Yoon Seung-yong 1997, 104; see also Kang Don-gu 1993). One of the primary changes that influenced Korean Catholicism was the new religious



policy of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK), which was different from the Japanese Government General of Korea. The USAMGIK opened the freedom of religion by pronouncing a new law on religion (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 143-44).

The editorial of the 1947 December issue of the magazine *Gatollik Cheongnyeon* (Catholic Youth) mentions, “In fact, for Joseon Catholicism, the period of contemplation and self-examination has already passed. It is facing the time for action.” (Gatollik Cheongnyeon December 1947, 1, cited in Kang In-Cheol 2006, 126) The Korean Catholic leadership under Japanese colonial rule indeed restricted the scope of Catholic action, by not dealing with the problems of politics and the class. In the post-liberation period, however, the notion of Catholic action widened for Korean Catholics including the arena of political issues and matters of the class (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 127).

In September 1945, about forty Catholic lay leaders entered the political party Hanguk Minjudang (Korea Democratic Party). Bishop Roh Ki-nam, requested by politicians, actually encouraged the church members to join the party (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 146). His approval to hold conferences of conservative political parties and other organisations at Myeongdong Cathedral shows his enthusiasm for political participation (Park Do-won 1985, 286).

Furthermore, when Syngman Rhee came back to Korea on 16 October 1945, Bishop Roh Ki-nam held a welcome banquet for Syngman Rhee at Myeongdong Cathedral. Afterward Rhee asked Bishop Roh Ki-nam an active support from the Korean Catholic Church for the establishment of an independent state. Since then, these two important and influential figures of the time held frequent meetings to discuss political matters. Syngman Rhee also had a good tie with priests Yun Eul-su and Kim Cheol-gyu, who were then main figures in the Seoul diocese. There also existed a close association between the Korean Catholic Church and the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) after the liberation in 1945. The then Archbishop of New York Francis Joseph Spellman landed in Seoul with the US Military on 8 September 1945. Next day, Archbishop Spellman celebrated a mass at Myeongdong

Cathedral. As a notable figure in the American Catholic Church, Archbishop Spellman was also influential among the American generals who came to Korea. When there was a chance to come to Korea, Archbishop Spellman met Bishop Roh Ki-nam and helped Bishop Roh have a close relationship with the American generals in Korea (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 145-47; Park Jae-jeong 2001, 72).

On 9 September 1945, Brigadier General Nister, who was the political advisor of the military commander of South Korea John Reed Hodge<sup>1</sup> asked Bishop Roh Ki-nam to recommend 60 South Korean politicians of being potential leaders (Kim Soo-Ja 2010, 73). Upon this request, Bishop Roh Ki-nam discussed thi matter with Chang Myon and recommended potential South Korean leaders including Syngman Rhee, “asking to settle down the chaotic state of affairs as soon as possible” (Yeo Jin-Cheon 2009, 169; see also Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 21).

The fact that Bishop Roh Ki-nam, the supreme leader of the Korean Catholic Church after 1945, came to have close tie with the leadership of the USAMGIK and attempted to have social influence through engagement with Korean politics contributed to solidifying the status of Myeongdong Cathedral as the symbol of Korean Catholicism and thus shaped the religious spatial centrality of the cathedral of the time. It can be said that the origins of Myeongdong Cathedral’s status as a contentious sanctuary and strategic site for democratisation movement during the 1970s and 1980s may be found since the post-liberation period.

Although freedom of religion was guaranteed by law, the USAMGIK in fact developed a lenient attitude towards Christianity (Kang Don-gu 1993, 17). Many Korean Christians were also involved in political affairs of the government in the post-liberation period. According to Protestant missionaries Harry Rhodes and Archibald Campbell,

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<sup>1</sup> For the political role of General John Reed Hodge during the post-liberation period under the USAMGIK, see Cumings (2005, 192-202).

In 1946, of fifty Koreans who were in official positions in the Korean government, 35 were professing Christians. Of the ninety members of the Korean Interim Legislative Assembly in 1946, the number of professing Christians was 21, including seven ordained ministers. In the first Korean Legislative Assembly, of 190 members (from August, 1948), the number of Christians is reported to be 38, of whom thirteen were ordained Christian ministers. A Vice-President of the Assembly was Elder Kim Tong Won, who for many years was a prominent Christian layman in the city of Pyongyang [sic]. In Syngman Rhee's second term, the Rev. Ham Tai Young, a Presbyterian minister, became Vice President (Rhodes and Campbell 1965, 380-81, cited in Kang Wi-Jo 1997, 75-76).

In December 1946 and March 1947, the US military authorities invited all the Catholic and Protestant missionaries in South Korea and requested their assistance for settling the Army Military Government in Korea. Since March 1947, this gathering continued on a regular basis until September 1947 (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 147-48). Rhodes and Campbell present a more detailed account on this gathering:

American government officials welcomed the help and enlisted the cooperation of all missionaries in the task of reorganisation. Twice, in December, 1946, and in March, 1947, the military government called all day conferences with all missionaries, Protestant and Catholic, who could attend. The missionaries were told that since they knew the Koreans, the Korean language and conditions in Korea, their assistance and advice in establishing a stable government in Korea would be welcomed. For some six months until his death in September, 1947, General Lerch, the military Governor, set aside an hour at 10:00 o'clock each Friday morning for a conference with the missionaries. They ate at the Army mess, were allowed to buy at the Army post-exchange and commissary, were furnished with billets in former mission property, technically owned by the Army as spoils of war, using household equipment and provided with transportation facilities, APO mail service, hospitalisation and so forth (Rhodes and Campbell 1965, 379-80, cited in Kang Wi-Jo 1997, 75).

On 26 September 1945, Bishop Roh Ki-nam held a welcome ceremony for the American military personnel at Myeongdong Cathedral after offering a “Thanksgiving Mass for the Recovery of World Peace” (Yeo Jin-Cheon 2009, 169). Then regular Sunday masses for US troops were started to be held at Myeongdong Cathedral led by Bishop Roh since the late 1945. Through these occasions, surely, Bishop Roh Ki-nam could have established close relationships with the US military personnel (Kim Soo-Ja 2010, 74). The first military governor of Korea Archibald Arnold also attended this Sunday mass until he left Korea in September 1946 and had meetings with Bishop Roh Ki-nam (Yeo Jin-Cheon 2009, 169). The American Maryknoll priests who stayed within Myeongdong Cathedral played a role of connecting the Korean Catholic Church and the USAMGIK. Also, the appointment of Bishop Patrick Byrne, who was a missionary in Korea, as the Pope’s representative in Korea was also one of the factors which made the association between Korean Catholicism and the American military authorities closer (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 148; see also Kim Soo-Ja 2010, 73-75; Choi Seon-hye 2014).

There is also evidence that the Korean Catholic Church participated in the labour issues from the 1940s. Then President of Songsin University (now The Catholic University of Korea), priest Yun Eul-su attended the founding ceremony of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in December 1949 as one of the representatives of South Korea. Also, for the first South Korean Constitutional Assembly election in May 1948, the Korean Catholic Church actively recommended the adherents (among others, most notably Chang Myon) to run for the election. The leadership of the church such as Bishop Roh Ki-nam developed election campaigns utilising the church organisations and press for this. Even the membership of the hierarchy of Korean Catholicism such as priests Yun Eul-su and Kim Cheol-gyu tried to run for the election (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 131).

After the liberation, the fields of the press, education, and publication of the Korean Catholic Church made a salient progress. In October 1946, the Korean Catholic Church started the newspaper for the general public *Kyunghyang*

*Shinmun*. Then by taking over the management of another daily newspaper during the Korean War, *Daegu Maeil Shinmun* (now *Maeil Shinmun*), the church came to attain more public influence for South Korean society. Since the late 1940s, the Korean Catholic Church also made efforts to establish Catholic higher education institutions. This endeavour resulted in the founding of Hyosung Women's University (now The Catholic University of Daegu) in April 1952 and the Jesuit institution Sogang University in April 1960 (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 131-32).

The political geography of South Korean Catholicism in the post-liberation period was along the line of then Vatican's anti-communism. Historically, the anti-communist ideology of South Korean Catholicism was revealed since the Japanese colonial period of the 1920s (Chérel-Riquier 2013, 70). In the account of sociologist Kang In-Cheol, the anti-communism of the Korean Catholic Church in the post-liberation period has a few characteristics. Firstly, it sets its background of the bipolar world politics of the Cold War. Secondly, it argues that Korea is a central site in this world conflict of the post-Second World War era. Thirdly, the anti-communism of the South Korean Catholic Church included focusing on the persecution of religion under the communist countries. Fourthly, the fact that the "religious" aspects of communism had been emphasised made contribution towards amplifying the harmful impression of the communism. Lastly, it focuses on the congeniality between liberal democracy and Christianity (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 135).

Indeed, during this period every Korean Catholic priest should take the oath of anti-communism when they were ordained (Cho Kwang 1989, 90). Since this was the case, the top hierarchy of then Korean Catholicism such as Bishop Roh Ki-nam was enthusiastic about disseminating an anti-communist ideology. Before the general election of 1948, Bishop Roh Ki-nam sent the official notice to parish churches which ordered to offer prayers to the Virgin Mary for the "recovery of human rights and freedom of the workers who are doing forced labour under the power of communists, and also for communists who oppose Christ to repent" (Gyeonghyang Japji May 1948, 75). Moreover, in 1947, then

Pope's representative in Korea, Bishop Patrick Byrne stated that "At this time when communism wants to sweep away everything in Korea, Catholic movements are really the only force capable of crushing it. Consequently, we have a mission to enlarge them even more." (Chérel-Riquier 2013, 77; see also Choi Seon-hye 2014)

As a local church of the global Catholic Church, the interconnectedness between the message of Vatican on communism and the regional Catholic Church in Korea is shown below which was the 1937 encyclical of Pope Pius XI's *Divini redemptoris*:

[T]he Catholic Press can play a prominent part. Its foremost duty is to foster in various attractive ways an ever better understanding of social doctrine. It should, too, supply accurate and complete information on the activity of the enemy and the means of resistance which have been found most effective in various quarters. It should offer useful suggestions and warn against the insidious deceits with which Communists endeavor, all too successfully, to attract even men of good faith (Encyclical *Divini redemptoris* 56).<sup>2</sup>

About one third of the articles of *Gatollik Cheongnyeon* (Catholic Youth) between 1947 and 1950 showed the anti-communist attitude of the Korean Catholic Church. The Korean Catholic magazines during this period shows prevalence of propagating anti-communism as Pope Pius XI's encyclical above suggests as the work of what Catholic press should do (Chérel-Riquier 2013, 71). The anti-communism of the articles in these Korean Catholic publications, in the account of Evelyne Chérel-Riquier, has the following characteristics. First, its section on international news mainly covered the poor conditions of living under the communist countries such as the Soviet Union and the ones in Eastern Europe. Second, the other focus of the anti-communism was to criticise the absence of freedom under these communist regimes. Third, these articles also dealt with the

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<sup>2</sup> *Divini redemptoris* is available online at:

[https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19370319\\_divini-redemptoris.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19370319_divini-redemptoris.html)

situation of the religious oppression of the Catholic Church in China and Northern Korea by communist authorities. Fourth, the Catholic press also condemned a religious nature of communism identifying it with the devil, whereas promoting Catholic social teaching as a capable foundation for the future system of Korea. Fifth, *Gatollik Cheongnyeon* also advocated the owning of private goods (Chérel-Riquier 2013, 71-74; see also Cho Kwang 1989, 90-91).

The anti-communism of South Korean Catholicism was along the line of the international ideological confrontation of the Cold War. It is also important to note that the persecution of the Catholic Church in North Korea and Manchuria, together with the repression against the Church in China and Eastern Europe, contributed shaping the anti-communist ideological landscape of Korean Catholicism during this period (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 136; Cho Kwang 1989, 89-90).

### **2.2.2 Myeongdong Cathedral in the Post-Liberation Period**

The end of the Second World War and liberation from Japanese colonial rule gave more freedom to religious activities for the Korean Catholic Church. The first significant ceremony that was held in Myeongdong Cathedral after liberation was the 1945 Christmas midnight mass. During Japanese oppressive rule period, having a Christmas mass had some restrictions.<sup>3</sup> The 1945 Christmas midnight mass could be held since the US military troops requested Bishop Roh Ki-nam to celebrate one. About 800-900 people from the military attended this mass. Also, since 1946 Myeongdong Cathedral started to offer courses for learning Catholic doctrines, which intended to draw the literati class to Catholicism (Hanguk

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<sup>3</sup> Since 25 December was the same date when Emperor Taishō of Japan (r. 1912-1926) died in 1926, it was difficult to hold both ceremonies together for the Korean Catholic Church and was not permitted by the Japanese authorities either. Furthermore, when it shifted to a wartime posture after the late 1930s, celebrating Christmas became even harder than before under Japanese rule.

Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 178-80). Myeongdong Catholic Church also opened the Lent Special Lecture Series in 1947. The fact that the first lecture of this series on 23 February 1947 was broadcast nationwide by then national Seoul broadcasting system reflects the advantaged status of Korean Catholicism compared to other non-Christian religious organisations in Korea during the period (Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 180; Kang Don-gu 1993).

With regard to numerical growth, Myeongdong Cathedral was also in a better position for a demographic factor. After liberation, the population of Seoul rapidly increased. The 1946 population of Seoul was 1,266,057 people, which increased 40.5 per cent from the 1945 population of 901,371. In a year, with a growth rate of 30.1 per cent, the population of Seoul in 1947 became 1,646,902 (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 118). Among other areas in Seoul, Jung-gu where Myeongdong Cathedral was located marked the highest population growth. The 1946 population of Jung-gu in Seoul was 168,351 which increased 116.1 per cent from the June 1945 population of 77,902. With a growth rate of about 45 per cent, the 1947 population of Jung-gu became 244,651. The numerical growth of the Catholic Church in Myeongdong region in the post-liberation period raised the need for establishing a new parish church in the vicinity. For this reason, on 29 June 1947, Sajikdong Catholic Church (now Sejongro Catholic Church) was founded in Jongro-gu, Seoul (Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 180-81).

In the post-liberation time, Myeongdong Cathedral was also an important site for foreign priests. Among other Catholic missionary societies, the presence and influence of Maryknoll was notable. It appears plausible to explain this salience of Maryknoll was partly possible for the fact that Maryknoll was an US Catholic organisation in the post-Second World War era (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 218-19; see also Choi Seon-hye 2014). During this period, the influence of Paris Foreign Missions Society and the Missionary Society of St. Columban showed a decline compared to Maryknollers. As previously pointed out, the appointment of Maryknoll priest Patrick Byrne as Apostolic Visitor in 1947 (promoted to Apostolic Delegate in 1949) was particularly encouraging to the Korean Catholic Church. The presence of Apostolic Visitor in Korea was perceived as the Vatican's



recognition of South Korea as an independent state (Yeo Jin-Cheon 2009, 189-90; Park Jae-jeong 2001, 72-73).

In this period of post-liberation, Myeongdong Cathedral was a crucial site for the press and publication as well. Two Korean Catholic magazines, *Gatollik Cheongnyeon* and *Gyeonghyang Japji* were published through Myeongdong Catholic Church. *Gatollik Cheongnyeon* was political in its nature and intended to promote political awareness of the adherents. *Gyeonghyang Japji* was published as an official periodical of the Korean Catholic Church (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 227-28). In 1947, the laity members of Myeongdong Cathedral voluntarily founded a Catholic publishing company called Jonghyeon Gatollik Chulpansa (Jonghyeon Catholic Press) to concentrate publishing church-concerned books. Jonghyeon Catholic Press published various Catholic materials including catechism in 1947 (Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 185).

This period was also marked by the setting up of various Catholic lay organisations and apostolate; with Myeongdong Catholic Church as the centre (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 229-30; Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 187-89; see also Cho Kwang 1989, 93). One of the notable groups among these organisations was the Virgin Mary Mercy Association (Seongmo Jabihoe). The association was composed of female members over the age of fifty and was in action from the colonial period. In its 1949 general meeting, the association announced that they brought 607 people to church. The activities of the Young People's Association of Myeongdong Cathedral (YPA: Myeongdong Seongdang Cheongnyeon Yeonhaphoe, Myeongcheongyeon) also became vibrant in the post-liberation period (Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 187-88). The War Victims Sodality (Jeonjae Gyuhoe) was founded at Myeongdong Cathedral in July 1947. The Association for Catholic Education (Gatollik Gyoyuk Hyeophoe) was established in 1948 and had a founding ceremony at Myeongdong Cathedral (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 229). Seoul Catholic Chorus (Seoul Gatollik Hapchangdan) was the “only Catholic cultural organisation” during this period. This chorus was founded in 1939 and became more active in its role after the liberation (Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 189).

Then how had the Korean Catholic Church responded to the political situation of the establishment of the two Koreas? The relationship between the Northern Catholic Church and the Communist Party was not hostile immediately after the liberation. Indeed the Catholic Church and communists “exchanged invitations: the priest was invited and participated in the welcome ceremonies for the Soviet army” in 1945, and in the next year, “a representative of the Haeju People’s Committee participated in the centennial commemoration of the martyrdom of the first Korean priest, Kim Taegon” (Chérel-Riquier 2013, 75). The Seoul Catholic parish also made efforts to embrace the Northern Catholic Church in Hwanghaedo region over which it had authority. Bishop Roh Ki-nam of Seoul placed the acting parish priest for Sariwon Catholic Church in Hwanghaedo region and also sent another priest, who was ordained at Myeongdong Cathedral, as parochial vicar for Sariwon Catholic Church, crossing the 38th parallel (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 230-32; see also Cho Kwang 1989, 95-96). After the formation of the two separate Korean states in 1948, however, the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Northern communists became intensified (Kim Soo-Ja 2010, 81-84; Chérel-Riquier 2013, 76).

As the period itself between 1945 and 1948 on the Korean peninsula was turbulent, the political attitude of the South Korean Catholicism also showed a variety of patterns according to the situations of upheavals during the time. However, overall, it is observed that the Southern Korean Catholic Church was dependant on the hegemony of the political authorities in its path to the formation of the South Korean state in 1948. In other words, it is hard to assess that the Southern Korean Catholic Church had voiced its independent initiative against then political change and uncertainties with a long-term vision.

Bishop Roh Ki-nam and the Southern Korean Catholic Church maintained the close connection with Syngman Rhee during this period. When Brigadier General Nister asked Bishop Roh Ki-nam to recommend promising future political leaders of South Korea, Bishop Roh listed the name of Syngman Rhee on the first. Hence Korean Catholicism backed the idea of establishing a separate

South Korean state and cooperated in the propagation of anti-communist ideologies of Syngman Rhee (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 156-57).

From the late 1947, the Southern Korean Catholic Church supported the establishment of a separate South Korean government. As pointed out, for Korean political leaders and the leadership of the Catholic Church in Korea, the fact that Pope Pius XII sent his Apostolic Visitor priest Patrick Byrne in October 1947 to Seoul was also perceived as Vatican's "diplomatic recognition" of South Korea as an independent state (Yeo Jin-Cheon 2009, 189-90; Choi Seon-hye 2014, 365-66). As such, the Southern Catholic Church stood in the side of building a separate state from the North through the May 1948 general elections (Kang In-Cheol 2006, 174-77; Chérel-Riquier 2013, 78).

This support of the Southern Catholic Church for establishing a separate state in the South meant endorsing the political direction of Syngman Rhee. The Syngman Rhee regime and the Korean Catholic Church had de facto maintained a close relationship until the mid-Korean War period (Cho Kwang 1989, 92; Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 156-59). The Vatican also sent the congratulatory message for the establishment of the separate South Korean state on 15 August 1948. This mutual dependence between the Syngman Rhee government and the Catholic Church was also reflected in that Syngman Rhee appointed the Catholic politician Chang Myon as the head of the Korean delegation to the United Nations General Assembly in Paris in 1948 (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 157; Yeo Jin-Cheon 2009, 199-203). For the Syngman Rhee regime, it was crucial to attain international accreditation and recognition via the United Nations for the establishment of the South Korean state (Yeo Jin-Cheon 2009, 188). On his way to the UN General Assembly in Paris, Chang Myon made a visit to Archbishop Spellman in the US and gave the letter of Syngman Rhee, asking for support. Pope Pius XII also operated the diplomatic channels of the Vatican to help the South Korean delegation. As such, the Korean Catholic Church had indeed worked as a crucial supportive organisation for the Syngman Rhee government in the post-liberation period (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 158-59; see also Cho Kwang 1989, 91-93).

In this tempestuous period of social and political upheavals, the Korean Catholic Church was better positioned to develop their organisational structures based on their international network and the close relationship with the USAMGIK. The aforementioned advancement of Myeongdong Catholic Church during the period of post-liberation, that were, its numerical growth, international support of the United States Catholic mission and the Vatican, its leading infrastructure of producing knowledge through publication, and human resources through well-organised church groups contributed to establishing the religious and social spatial centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral of the time. This infrastructural development of Myeongdong Catholic Church as the hub of Korean Catholicism during the post-liberation period appears to lay the foundation for its salient role in the time to come afterward, during the Korean War and the democratisation period.

### **2.3 Empowering Space, 1950-1960**

This section examines the characteristics on the role of Korean Catholicism and Myeongdong Cathedral in the 1950s South Korean society that are pertinent to its social and political role of the 1970s and 1980s. Certainly the Korean War (1950-1953) has been the formative event that exerted and is still exerting enormous impact on the two Koreas (Cumings 2005, 298; Park Tae-Gyun 2005). Hence, focusing on how Myeongdong Catholic Church had coped with the post-war situation of South Korea provides us a good lens to discern some important aspects of Korean Catholicism and the cathedral during the 1950s. In relation to its salience during the 1970s and 1980s, the social role of Myeongdong Cathedral in the 1950s can be characterised as empowering space. In the ravaged land of Seoul after the war, it is observed that Myeongdong Catholic Church had continued to establish its religious spatial salience as empowering space that materially and psychologically reinvigorated the general public who were in despair under the conditions of war-stricken poverty and dispossession.

In the 1950s, Myeongdong Cathedral could build its religious spatial salience as a crucial point to furnish war relief aid. The Korean Catholic Church in the 1950s was one of the foremost crucial agencies that US aid were circulated (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 237). In the post-Korean War time, foreign aid was significant part of national income for South Korea. From 1953 to 1960, according to statistics, 70 per cent of national income was from foreign aid during this period (Chang Jeong-ran 2001, 247). In this foreign aid, the support from the United States was considerable. And much of this US support of the relief aid was from the Catholic Church. For instance, in the year 1950 when the Korean War broke out, the amount of aid from the National Catholic Welfare Conference of the US took more than 70 per cent of the total amount of the support from US aid organisations in that year (Chang Jeong-ran 2001, 197; see also Chang Dong-ha 2001, 289; Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 197-98).<sup>4</sup>

The relief aid was mainly distributed in Seoul where relief cases were concentrated. Among other places, Myeongdong Cathedral was a major site to provide aid from the US Catholic Church. Hence, the active aid programmes of Myeongdong Catholic Church in the 1950s, as sociologist Ro Kil-Myung argues, appears to have naturally established the spatial congeniality with the cathedral (2005, 238-39; 265-66).

Such vibrant work of war relief came to contribute to promoting the people's interest in the Catholic Church and influencing organisational growth of Korean Catholicism.<sup>5</sup> In fact, during the 1950s, after the cease of the war, the

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<sup>4</sup> Some critics, however, point out that this foreign aid from the United States' Catholic Church and other religious organisations came to standardised the type of social work that developed later in South Korea. Since the nature of this foreign aid was centred on charitable, philanthropic, and facility-oriented work, according to these critics' argument, the boundaries of the South Korean social work by the Catholic Church and other organisations which developed after the Korean War came to be limited to rather private and non-political realms (see Park Jae-jeong 2001, 86-87).

<sup>5</sup> For a comparative growth rate of Catholic and Protestant Christianities in Korea, see Baker (2006).

annual average increase rate of adherents of Korean Catholicism reached 16.5 per cent (Cho Kwang 1989, 98-99; see also Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2010, 142-43). With regard to the numerical growth of Myeongdong Catholic Church, in 1959, the number of its believers increased 87.8 per cent, compared to its numerical value in 1953 (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 263-64).

The conspicuous role of the Korean Catholic Church and Myeongdong Cathedral for the activities of war relief was structurally possible since the Catholic Church itself was an internationally-networked religious organisation. Furthermore, the Korean Catholic Church's close relationship with the US since the period of post-liberation might have influenced the remarkable contribution from the US Catholic Church (Chang Jeong-ran 2001, 194-96). Based on these structural benefits, geographical centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul facilitated promoting positive congeniality of the cathedral as the pivot of this significant work of social welfare during the (post-) war time.

The 1950s was the period when the religious spatial resonance of Myeongdong Catholic Church derived from the activities of war relief gave a psychological empowerment to the dispossessed people of the time. As sociologist Lee Won-Gue points out, the religious consciousness of the Korean people following the 1945 liberation indicated that many people had sought for alternatives in religions against their situations of social unrest and chaos (1993, 192-93; cf. Yoon Seung-yong 1997, 106-107). It is plausible to understand that the destruction of fundamental bases of life led the people to turn to the world of beyond and thus increased the religiosity of the generation (Cho Kwang 1989, 99). Benefited by this religious spatial salience as a crucial site for the war aid work during the 1950s, Myeongdong Cathedral was perceived as a place of shelter and salvation that provided the necessary psychological empowerment to the people of Myeongdong and Seoul during the 1950s (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 244-48; cf. Kilde 2008, 200-201). Chapters 3 and 4 respectively will explore how this religious spatial resonance of Myeongdong Cathedral began to be established in the 1940s and 1950s comes to be flourished and furthered in the context of democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

## **2.4 Relational Space, 1960-1971**

For Korean Catholicism, both locally and internationally, the 1960s was another dynamic part of its history prior to the democratisation period. In March 1962, the hierarchy of the Korean Catholic Church was established. The celebratory mass for the establishment of the Korean Catholic Church was held at Myeongdong Cathedral on 29 June 1962. Through this the Korean Catholic Church now was constituted with eleven official dioceses, including three archdioceses of Seoul, Daegu, and Gwangju. And Myeongdong Catholic Church became the official cathedral of the Archdiocese of Seoul (Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 220-21). It is thus observed that Korean Catholicism and Myeongdong Cathedral came to be charged with more ecclesiastical, theological, and social vibrancy after the 1962 establishment of the hierarchy.

This section characterises Myeongdong Cathedral of the 1960s as relational space, in the sense that its social and political course was closely interlinked with and shaped by both international context and domestic socio-political change of the time. With regard to the international context, there was the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965. And Korean Catholicism and Myeongdong Cathedral were inevitably influenced by this significant, transformative event in the history of Catholic Christianity (see also Chapter 1). Nationally, Korean Catholicism and the Myeongdong Cathedral had developed an ambivalent relationship with the South Korean state; there was accord and cooperation on the one hand but on the other hand, they also came head to head during the 1960s.

The main influence of the Second Vatican Council to the Korean Catholic Church was the changes in liturgical rites, vitalisation of the role of the laity, and ecumenical movement (Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 224-26). Myeongdong Catholic Church in the 1960s was of course under this impact of the Second Vatican Council. Among other aspects, it is notable that the establishment of

various laity groups in Myeongdong Catholic Church during this period contributed to reinforcing the organisational structure of the cathedral. In fact, with regard to numerical growth, the number of believers of Myeongdong Cathedral increased from about 5,000 to 9,000 people during the 1960s (Cho Kwang 2010, 292-93; Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 226-28). Catholic student and youth movements were also organised during this period at Myeongdong Cathedral. In 1968, Bishop Kim Sou-hwan was appointed as the diocesan Bishop of the Archdiocese of Seoul. Next year, in 1969, Archbishop Kim Sou-hwan was named as the first Cardinal in Korea. During the 1960s, Myeongdong Cathedral and the Korean Catholic churches also paid attention to the issues of labour and human rights (Cho Kwang 2010, 288-293; see also Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 23-24; Gatollik Jeongui Pyeonghwa Yeonguso 1990, 30-32). Most of founding and core priest members of the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ: Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan), which played a pivotal role for the social and political participation of the Korean Catholic Church in the democracy movement of the 1970s and 1980s, were also ordained after the Second Vatican Council (Kim Jeong-nam 2005, 55).

Myeongdong Cathedral and Korean Catholicism also had interconnected relationships with the vortex of Korean national politics. For most part of the Syngman Rhee regime during the 1950s, the Korean Catholic Church had maintained to raise dissident voices against the regime for its immoral and authoritarian characteristics. Therefore, the fall of the Syngman Rhee regime by the 1960 April 19 Revolution also acted as a positive momentum for the Korean Catholic Church to continue and revitalise its social and political participation afterward (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 161-64; 171). Then diocese of Seoul and Myeongdong Catholic Church also supported the April 19 Revolution. The funeral mass led by Bishop Roh Ki-nam for a student victim who was killed during the protest was held at Myeongdong Cathedral on 23 April 1960. The fact that the diocesan Bishop of Seoul celebrated the funeral mass (it was before the removal of President Syngman Rhee) for the victim of the revolution which attempted to



subvert the authoritarian regime, as Cho Kwang suggests, is an indication that can be interpreted as Korean Catholicism and Myeongdong Catholic Church were supportive for the 1960 April 19 Revolution (2010, 261-62; cf. Kim nyung 1996, 226-29; Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 22-23).

After the establishment of the Chang Myon regime, the Korean Catholic Church attempted to engage more in social and political arenas. During this period, Korean Catholicism endeavoured to promote the diplomatic relations between South Korea and the Vatican and urged its adherents to participate in social affairs (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 174). Despite this enthusiastic social and political activism under the regime of Catholic politician Chang Myon, however, the Korean Catholic Church did not show any salient opposition against the 1961 May 16 coup of Park Chung Hee and his following military government during the 1960s (Cho Kwang 2010, 268; Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2010, 146). Overall, it can be said that Korean Catholicism in the 1960s had been both directly and indirectly in support of the military government of Park Chung Hee (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 61-62; Cho Kwang 2010, 268-72; cf. Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 176-78).

Nevertheless, in the late 1960, the Korean Catholic Church made some notable social voices for public good (Yoon Seung-yong 1997, 122-24). Among others, the 1968 Gwanghwado Simdo Textile Company incident which members of the Korean JOC (Jeunesse Ouvrière Chretienne) were involved in the labour disputes is remarkable. The Korean JOC members who joined in this dispute were denounced as “communists” (Cho Kwang 2010, 276). But the diocese of Incheon and the Korean college of Bishops supported these JOC members and asserted the legitimacy of the fair labour movement. Through these efforts of the Korean Catholic Church, the Simdo Textile Company conceded to permit organising labour unions (Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984, 50-54; Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 201-205).

In the 1960s, Myeongdong Cathedral came to strengthen its organisational structure through the increase of its believers and the vitalisation of the laity

groups. With regard to its relations to the governments, Myeongdong Catholic Church and Korean Catholicism manifested variations of tension, closeness, and support during this period. It is interpreted that the experience of Korean Catholicism and Myeongdong Cathedral with the politics of the 1960s provided the empirical knowledge prior to its vibrant engagement in South Korean social movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore, under the influence of the Second Vatican Council, Myeongdong Cathedral played its role as part of the global Catholic Church that was under great transformation. In this light, Myeongdong Catholic Church hosted interfaith dialogues with other Christian denominations during the 1960s (see Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2007, 225-26). As such, Korean Catholicism and Myeongdong Cathedral during the 1960s strived, and partly succeeded to place itself in the dynamic context of ecclesiastical, political, local and global relations of the time.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter's characterisation of the social and political history of Korean Catholicism and Myeongdong Cathedral after liberation in 1945 until the 1960s helps to understand the religious spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral during the democratisation period of the 1970s and 1980s as a historically developed continuum. What this chapter has shown was that the both religious and social spatial centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral in the period of democratisation had evolved since this period of post-liberation. The progressive and contentious nature of Korean Catholicism and Myeongdong Cathedral in the 1970s and 1980s that will be unfolded in forthcoming chapters has connections with its prehistory since 1945.

Externally and internationally, the Korean Catholic Church was under the influence of the Second Vatican Council which called for a transformative change especially in Catholic social teaching and the role of laity. Springing from this renewed theological foundation, a prominent religious social movement

organisation such as the CPAJ could develop their dissident activities against the autocratic rules of the Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan regimes. At domestic level, the Korean Catholic Church and Myeongdong Cathedral came to be reinforced with more authoritative organisational structure during this period through the establishment of the hierarchy in the Korean Catholic Church in 1962 and the first appointment of Cardinal-Priest of Kim Sou-hwan in 1969.

Moreover, during this period, the Korean Catholic Church and Myeongdong Cathedral could accumulate empirical knowledge in terms of coping with and responding to turbulent socio-political situations of the liberation, foreign domination, war, military coup and following authoritarian rules. This chapter argues that these accumulated knowledge and experience with politics before the Yushin system contributed for Korean Catholicism and Myeongdong Catholic Church to prepare and establish its methodological tactics and strategies of having relationships with Korean politics. The main arguments of following chapters will be developed with explanatory correlations with three key spatial characterisations of Myeongdong Cathedral explored in this chapter: politicising space (Chapters 3 and 5), empowering space (Chapter 4), and relational space (Chapter 5).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **The Spatial: Mobilising the Movement**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores how Myeongdong Cathedral was established as contentious sanctuary in the context of the societal and political events of the 1970s, particularly during the Yushin (1972-1979) period. As a crucial factor which facilitated the making of Myeongdong Cathedral as contentious sanctuary during the 1970s, Chapter 3 examines the central role of numerous prayer services and religious rituals held in and around Myeongdong Cathedral. Prayer services are, in their inherent nature, collective social actions.

The previous chapter has examined how the historical spatial centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral was influenced by and shaped through the situational conditions of the tempestuous local politics and international relations of the Cold War. During the Korean War period, it was mainly situational factors of an unprecedented national calamity that made Myeongdong Cathedral a salient, sacralised haven for the lost and dispossessed. Chapter 3 will investigate how Myeongdong Cathedral was produced as contentious sanctuary through the politics of body and religious rituals responding to external factors such as social injustice and political oppression. Then Chapter 4 examines how Myeongdong Cathedral had come to attain the symbolic status as the representation of democracy through the role of media representations disseminating the image of Myeongdong Catholic Church as a sacred platform to voice democracy and spread common knowledge on the 1980 Gwangju Uprising and other dissident movements against the Chun Doo Hwan regime. Chapter 5 explicates the contested aspects of Myeongdong Cathedral around the events of the 1987 June Uprising as a religious sacred space and political site of resistance.

The core analysis in Chapter 3 consists of two parts. The first explains how Myeongdong Cathedral was produced as contentious sanctuary through the 1974 incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun. The arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun for his alleged involvement in the Mincheong Incident was a crucial momentum for the social participation of the Korean Catholic Church in the 1970s. The incident of Bishop Chi de facto ignited extensive dissidence from the Catholic side against the Park Chung Hee government for this time it was a Bishop who was under intimidation. Bishop Chi Hak-sun's arrest was further interpreted as a state's attack on Catholicism and thus the institutional infringement of the Park regime on the Korean Catholic Church (section 3.6.1). Therefore, the Catholic defiance against the Yushin regime began in earnest after Bishop Chi's incident in 1974. Then the emergence of Myeongdong Cathedral as a representative contentious sanctuary for the democracy movement was solidified through following Catholic resistance mainly through the tactic of prayer-protests across the country after the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun.

The other main analysis is on how Myeongdong Catholic Church had become accredited as contentious sanctuary of dissident voice through the event of the 1976 March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation (MFD: 3.1 Minju Guguk Seoneon; also called as the Myeongdong Incident) and its consequences. The effect of the 1976 MFD as a prayer-protest event held at Myeongdong Cathedral, where emerged as a contentious sanctuary for the democracy movement after the incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun in 1974, went beyond the spatial boundary of the cathedral. This chapter analyses the significance of the 1976 MFD that the event provided both domestic and international democracy movement camps with new opportunities for intensifying dissidence and developing solidarity to challenge the autocratic rule of the Park Chung Hee regime. The chapter explicates how the Myeongdong Incident expanded the scale of the 1970s democracy movement from national to international level overcoming latent constraints that opposition could be confined to Myeongdong Cathedral and other few oft-used sites of protest (cf. Brenner 2013). To better situate these two incidents within the socio-political

context of the time analytically, the following two sections elaborate more on the spatial approach adopted by this study and political landscapes of religions in the Yushin period.

### **3.2 Space and the Study of Religion**

Philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre's work *The Production of Space* (1991) on the social and political dynamics of space in capitalist societies offers some useful ideas that are applicable to formulate conceptual frameworks for elaborating the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral in contentious politics of the South Korean democracy movements in the 1970s and 1980s.

For Lefebvre, to properly analyse the dynamics of social relations calls for paying adequate and necessary attention to spatial frameworks since the idea of social relations is itself an abstract concept and it comes to be fundamentally presented in reality only through space, which is sensible and physical entity (Lefebvre 1991, 404). In this context, he writes:

“It is in space, on a worldwide scale, that each idea of ‘value’ acquires or loses its distinctiveness through confrontation with the other values and ideas that it encounters there. [...] Ideas, representations or values which do not succeed in making their mark on space, and thus generating (or producing) an appropriate morphology, will lose all pith and become mere signs, resolve themselves into abstract descriptions” (Lefebvre 1991, 416-17).

Taking an example from a religious ideology, Lefebvre asks how would Christian ideology have endured the time and remain as a religion without the spaces—in this case altars, sanctuaries, and churches—that convey the Christian thought and mediate communications with its adherents (Lefebvre 1991, 44).

In particular, Lefebvre's account on spaces of representation (1991, 33; 39) offers some utility to further discussions of this study on how Myeongdong Cathedral was framed as contentious sanctuary through dissident movements in

the Yushin period (Chapter 3) and represented the longing of the people for democratisation after the Gwangju Uprising in the 1980s (Chapter 4). In the account of Lefebvre, spaces of representation are the “space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’”. It is the space “which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects.” (Lefebvre 1991, 39 emphasis original) Thus Lefebvre’s explication of spaces of representation embodies the implications that space can be a valid arena of social change involving and influenced by human agency (Lefebvre 1991, 410; cf. Knott 2005b, 161-62; 165).

Although *The Production of Space* reveals some weaknesses and limitations since Lefebvre concentrates more on theoretical and conceptual discussions on space rather than empirical examples supporting the argument, the English translation of the book received some enthusiastic academic attention from fields of humanities and social sciences. By and large, through this work Lefebvre attempts to incorporate spatiality into social studies together with history and temporality (Elden 2007, 109). Since the English translation of the book appeared in 1991, it has received broad-ranging enthusiastic scholarly interests crossing disciplinary boundaries from history, geography, sociology, and political economy among others (Henry 2014; Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013; Brenner and Elden 2009; Elden 2007; Soja 1989) to religious studies (Owen 2010; Knott 2005a/b; 2008).

Using Lefebvre’s schema of space, religious studies scholar Kim Knott has explored spatial methods in the study of religion (see among others Knott 2005a/b; 2008). As Lefebvre claims above that ideologies of Christianity comes to be conveyed and maintained through Christian spaces and buildings in societies, Knott also views that religious beliefs attains its “material presence” through spatial mediation (Knott 2005b, 162; see Chapter 3). Moreover, places for religious organisations and communities can be powerful sites of opposition through “imaginative and symbolic use of physical space” to challenge the established authorities (Knott 2005b, 165; Chapter 4).

Adopting these approaches that notes the possible dynamics of religious space in social relations when it is working together with human endeavor (see also section 3.3), this study will account for the spatialities of the South Korean Democracy Movement of the 1970s and 1980s through utilising Myeongdong Cathedral as a lens of examination that can illuminate previously neglected connections among actors the movement and the spatial dynamics of democratic transition in South Korea.

### **3.3 Inquiries into Sacred Space**

Scholars of religion have examined the nature and characteristics of sacred space largely in two directions: the substantial and situational perspectives. History of religions scholar Mircea Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane* is a well-known example of the interpretation of the substantial analysis on sacred space (Eliade 1959). The substantial one sees that there is the intrinsic sacred nature religious space. Religious space facilitates the vertical and horizontal orientation of individuals and groups through making a connecting and dividing point between holy and mundane worlds. The substantial perspective concentrates on the presence of the sacred in religious space and differentiates the space from ordinary one as believing that it has the inherent divine essentiality (Kilde 2008, 5). Thus in the substantial definition, there is immanent importance when the sacred is represented as reality in religious space (Chidester and Linenthal 1995, 5). As religious studies scholar Jeanne Halgren Kilde suggests, from native peoples of the world to the peoples in the ancient period and to contemporary Christians, numerous religious circles have had faiths and believe that certain powers or gods "exist or reside" within particular places. (Kilde 2008, 5) "For instance, Roman Catholics, who believe in the real (substantive) presence of the Lord in the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist meal, similarly tend to believe in a real divine presence within their churches." (Kilde 2008, 6)



It has been pointed out, however, that varieties of human actions and efforts that were put into in the making of sacred space are undermined in the substantial perspective (Chidester and Linenthal 1995, 17; Smith 1987; Kilde 2008, 6-10). On the other hand, the situational view emphasises the role of human endeavour and behaviour in the production of sacred space. This view notes the agency of human beings that sacralise religious space through various forms of bodily movements and rituals.

In his book *To Take Place*, scholar of religion Jonathan Smith pays attention to the human making of sacred space by casting questions: “What if spaces were not the recipient but rather the creation of the human project? What if place were an active product of intellection rather than its passive receptacle?” (Smith 1987, 26) In this rationale of the situational view, the production of sacred space is the human enterprize. For Smith, what is important in sacralising the place is its “relationship to the human body, and our experience of it, that orients us in space, that confers meaning to place. Human beings are not placed, they bring place into being.” (1987, 28)

Thus the situational perspective opposes with the substantial view that argues there is inherent sacredness in religious space (Kilde 2008, 8). Historians David Chidester and Edward Linenthal also argue that sacred space is the “contested” space. It is contested because religious space entails the constantly dynamic process of making and remaking, including and excluding the boundaries of the sacred in it (Chidester and Linenthal 1995, 17-18).

In particular, Chidester and Linenthal suggest two reasons why sacred space is in its nature contested one. First, it is because space itself is contested. Spatiality inevitably includes conflictive and competing characteristics. There is “competition over scarce resources in a human ecology, or as relations of domination and resistance in class struggle,” collision is a basic element of the dynamics of spatial relations (Chidester and Linenthal 1995, 18). Second, there is “conflict” in the formation of sacred space since it is dependent on the matter of “interpretation”. The divine significance of a space is upon how actors participating in the interpretive work on the production of sacred space are

appropriating, excluding, inverting, and hybridising the meaning of the sacred in a space (Chidester and Linenthal 1995, 18-19).

Noting that the substantial view can be restricted to explicate the multi-faceted human relational dimensions of sacred space (Kilde 2008, 6), this study mainly adopts the situational analysis to explore the historical, contentious, symbolic, and political spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral, while maintaining deliberate attention to utility of the substantial perspective.

Chapter 2 has explored how the spatial centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral was historically shaped by the conditions of tempestuous local politics of Korea and international power relations of the Cold War. During the Korean War period, moreover, it was mainly situational factors (with some substantial elements such as bell rings of the cathedral) of the unprecedented human disaster that made Myeongdong Cathedral becoming a salient, sacralised place of the shelter for the lost and dispossessed.

The present Chapter 3 will show how Myeongdong Cathedral emerged as contentious sanctuary through the politics of Catholic defiance responding to external factors of state repression in the Yushin period. This situational and spatial framework provides a useful analytical tool to examine how Myeongdong Cathedral emerged as contentious sanctuary over the history of the political engagement of Korean Catholicism in the 1970s. Through the salient activities of the dissident Catholics in the democracy movement of the 1970s, there had been dynamic processes of production, contestation, and reproduction of Myeongdong Cathedral as contentious sanctuary for the democratisation movement (cf. Knott 2008, 1108). In particular, combined with the influential religious and moral authority of Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan as nationally respected Catholic leader for dissenting from the autocratic rule of the Yushin government, Myeongdong Catholic Church was perceived as symbolic centre for the recovery of social justice and contentious sanctuary for democratisation on which riot police and martial law troops could not easily trespass (cf. John Kie-Chiang Oh 1999, 89-90).

Then Chapter 4 examines how Myeongdong Cathedral comes to attain the symbolic status of representing democracy as a sacred platform to speak about

democracy, and exchange knowledge on the 1980 Gwangju Uprising and other dissident movements against the Chun Doo Hwan regime. Chapter 5 explores the spatial politics of resistance in and around Myeongdong Cathedral in the period of the 1987 June Uprising showing the contested aspects of the cathedral both as sacred space and political site of opposition.

### **3.4 Spatialities as a Constituent of Social Movements**

Religious space is a historical and social product (Lefebvre 1991, 26; 44). Mere sites and physical buildings are not able to stand alone as religious space with sacredness without human endeavour. It requires cognitive efforts of human beings to experience, perceive, and imagine that space as a sacred religious one. Thus a site comes to *be produced* as a religious space when human beings attach sacred significance to it within the historical and social context where the people are situated. Over time, through personal experience and individual efforts, or collective rituals and social activities, religious space has been consistently established, experienced, imagined, transformed, and reconstructed by human action in the given historical and social circumstances. This is the main framework of analysis that is applied to the present Chapter and two other main Chapters 4 and 5 as well. The thesis overall takes the notion of social production of space as an effective and valid tool of examining the spatial politics of Myeongdong Cathedral in the South Korean democracy movement during the 1970s and 1980s.

The mainstream analytical framework of church-state relations in the sociology of religion has limitations to fully excavate the dynamic role of religion in social and political change. The spatial framework of this study can further explain possible factors that facilitated the vitality and relative salience of the Catholic defiance in the Korean Democracy movement. Using Myeongdong Cathedral as a lens of exploring the role of Catholicism in South Korean social movements in the 1970s and 1980s, the following chapters will uncover more

various actors, conditions, and elements that interacted with the spatiality of the cathedral in diverse phases of the movement than the linear church-state relations framework of analysis. This is the aim of this study that adding a new and crucial dimension to our understanding of a salient role of Catholicism in the South Korean democratisation movement. Next section explores in earnest how Myeongdong Catholic Church was perceived as contentious sanctuary after the incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun.

### **3.5 Religions in the Yushin Period**

The religious geography of South Korea under the Park Chung Hee government in the 1970s presented two characteristics: the emergence of dissident religious movements (which were mainly Christian) against the government and the conspicuity of three dominant religions, which were Buddhism, Protestantism, and Catholicism (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 64-65). However, not all the Christian groups were in opposition against the authoritarian Park regime. As shown from the support of sending Korean troops to the America's Vietnam War (Ryu Dae-young 2009, 263-300), the mainstream conservative Korean Protestant churches were in vigorous advocacy of the policies of the Park Chung Hee government. One particular channel that these Protestant groups maintained a close relationship with the Park regime was Daetongryeong jochan gidohoe (Presidential Prayer Breakfast). This Presidential Prayer Breakfast began in May 1968 until 1974. From 1976, the title changed into Gukga jochan gidohoe (National Prayer Breakfast). These Prayer Breakfast meetings were organised under the leadership of Protestant minister Kim Joon Gon, who was the founder of Korea Campus Crusade for Christ. These Prayer Breakfast meetings acted as a tool for endorsing the authoritarian rule of the Park Chung Hee government (Kim Myeong-bae 2009, 195). Meeting the needs of each other, these Presidential Breakfast meetings were reciprocal both for the conservative Evangelical Korean Protestant churches and the Park regime (Jang Suk-gyeong 2013, 150). The Park

government could use this event as a propaganda channel to justify their oppressive rule, for instance legitimising their violence against democracy movement as a fight against communism (Kim Myeong-bae 2009, 196). This close tie with the leadership of Korean Evangelical Christianity such as Kim Jun Gon and Han Kyung-Chik was strengthened through larger scale assemblies for evangelisation (Jang Suk-gyeong 2013, 160-61). Held under the umbrella of the Park regime, these massive congregational evangelistic conferences in the 1970s partly contributed to Korean Protestant Christianity seeing a rapid numerical growth during this period (Kim Myeong-bae 2009, 196).

During the 1940s and 1950s, as examined in Chapter 2, there existed obvious favourable arrangements of the South Korean government towards Christianity. In consequence, one comes to find it difficult to observe the salient role of Korean Buddhism in the social and political spheres of South Korea from the 1950s to 1960s (Park Su-ho 2010, 112-14). To reduce this tangible discrimination towards Buddhism, and thus to prevent the possible resistance from progressive Buddhists, the Park Chung Hee regime provided new arrangements for Korean Buddhism since the 1970s.<sup>1</sup> Two notable ones were the introduction of Buddhist religion to the Military Religious Affairs Division and

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<sup>1</sup> It is not known precisely whether Park Chung Hee had an official religion of his own. In his teens, however, Park attended Sangmo Church in Gumi, Gyeongbuk Province and later while he was in office in 1967, he provided an offering for the renovation of Sangmo Church. Observers also comment that Park might take pro-Buddhist steps because the religion of his wife Yuk Young-soo was Buddhism. For the relationship between Park Chung Hee and Sangmo Church, see “Park Chung Hee jeon daetongryeong, hanttaeneun ‘yeolseongjeok sinangin’ [Former President Park Chung Hee used to be a devout believer].” *Hankyoreh Sinmun*, 14 September, 2006, accessed 17 July, 2015, <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/religious/157138.html>. For a commentary on the religions of former Presidents of South Korea since Syngman Rhee, see “Yeokdae daetongryeong gwa jonggyo [Former Presidents and religion].” *Seoul Sinmun*, 28 August, 2008, accessed 6 August, 2015, <http://www.seoul.co.kr/news/newsView.php?id=20080828004008>

the designation of Buddha's birthday as a national holiday (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 67).

Within the military, a landmark initiative was launched for the three main religions, known as Jeongun sinjahwa undong (The Evangelisation Movement for the Whole Armed Forces), which developed from 1971 to 1974 (Jang Suk-gyeong 2013, 156-57). For the case of the South Korean Army, during this movement period there were 6,276 new adherents of Buddhism from the military, and both Korean Catholic and Protestant Christianity made a quantum leap in numerical growth (in total 139,542 people) through this movement (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 68).

The 1970s saw the rise of Korean Protestantism and Catholicism and the emergence of Buddhism as the other major religion. One can see that the numerical growth of both Korean Catholicism and Protestantism during this period provided a stable infrastructure for these Christian denominations to formulate and develop their political dissidence against the Park government. In fact, the cooperation between these two Christian denominations in the 1970s democracy movement is a distinctive feature in the South Korean social movement history (Hanson 1980, 105). Although this ecumenical alliance of the Korean Catholics and Protestants builds an important contextual background in the political participation of the Korean Christian groups in the 1970s, it also cast one important question. As pointed out in Chapter 1, the public perception of the Korean people with regard to the contribution of religious organisations towards the Korean Democratisation, Korean Catholicism recorded higher percentage and thus turned out having better respect in terms of its social contribution (Shin Dong-young 1994). And this is the point where the contribution of this study takes place. Through main chapters, from Chapter 3 to 5, the thesis will show that Myeongdong Catholic Church worked as a religious spatial mechanism that not only made the democracy movement of the Korean Catholics more effective and salient compared to the Protestants, but also helped facilitating the opposition of other dissident groups of people and politicians. Thus this study will offer a new lens, that is, a religious spatial framework, in exploring the history of political

participation of Korean Catholicism during the 1970s and 1980s and argue that Myeongdong Cathedral was a pivotal space of opposition against the military authoritarian regimes in critical junctures between the 1970s and 1980s, both symbolically and practically.

### **3.6 The Incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun**

This section is organised into three parts. First, it will show that the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun in 1974 was a triggering event for the Korean Catholic Church to develop its salient dissidence against the authoritarian Yushin regime (section 3.6.1). Thus it is plausible to assess that the Catholic defiance in the context of the Korean democracy movement of the 1970s and 1980s began in 1974. Then section 3.6.2 accounts for in detail how the Korean Catholic Church participated in the 1970s dissident movement mainly by tactics of prayer-protest events. Lastly, it examines the role of the media for transmitting the perception of Myeongdong Cathedral as a sacred and contentious spatial centre for the anti-Yushin democracy movement in the 1970s.

On 6 July 1974, Bishop Chi Hak-sun of the Wonju Diocese was forcibly detained at Seoul's Gimpo Airport. Bishop Chi was on his way back to Korea from Bishops' conference in Taiwan and a visit to Europe. It was found next day that Bishop Chi was secretly taken to the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) in Namsan and had been under interrogation of continuous thirty hours (Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984, 114). On 8 July, Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan went to Namsan to meet Bishop Chi Hak-sun. In their meeting, Bishop Chi asserted that "I have financially supported Catholic poet, Kim Chi-ha for helping student dissident groups to restore democracy in Korea, but this has nothing to do with communist organisation. My support for the students has never been related to communism." (Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984, 115)

In the evening of 10 July 1974, masses and prayer services for justice and peace, and for Bishop Chi Hak-sun were held throughout the country. On the

same day, President Park Chung Hee wanted to meet and talk to Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan (Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984, 115). On the night of 10 July, after the meeting with President Park, Cardinal Kim went to KCIA in person and brought Bishop Chi Hak-sun back out. Since then, however, Bishop Chi had been detained in a convent in Myeongdong. After five days, Bishop Chi Hak-sun was hospitalised due to his severely bad health from prolonged detention. When discharged from the hospital on 15 July, 1974, Bishop Chi distributed the statement of his political stance to foreign reporters who gathered around to see him, criticising the dictatorship of Park Chung Hee (Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984, 117-18).

From 16 July, 1974, Bishop Chi Hak-sun was hospitalised again and came to be detained by two KCIA agents. On the same day, a written prosecution was delivered to Bishop Chi accusing him of attempting to overthrow the government. Then on 23 July, Bishop Chi Hak-sun held a press conference and announced the Declaration of Conscience to his companions. Cardinal Kim was present at the place of the announcement and supported Bishop Chi. The people who gathered at the site went to Myeongdong Cathedral and held a mass, led by Archbishop Youn Kong-hi and Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan. In the sermon, the gist of Bishop Chi Hak-sun's Declaration of Conscience was presented, inculcating a firm determination in adherents. Bishop Chi was taken to the KCIA after announcing the declaration (Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984, 118-19).

Facing the incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun, Korean Catholicism made use of its organised church structure to initiate protests. Masses and prayer services for the release of Bishop Chi and democratisation held nationwide and gained a gradual support from the people (Sohn Hak-Kyu 1989, 74). First and foremost, the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun provided impetus for the establishment of the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ: Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan). With regard to the relationship between Korean Catholicism and the social movements of the 1970s, an important change caused by the incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun was the formation of the CPAJ. After the emergence of the CPAJ, its activities in the social movements for democracy and



human rights in the 1970s were examples that demonstrated the role of religious intellectuals, educated by a new theology of social teaching from the Second Vatican Council, who protested against the oppressive political system for the recovery of social justice (cf. Billings 1990). It is significant to note that the incident of Bishop Chi caused the establishment of the CPAJ and the association organised many prayer-protest events across the country to free Bishop Chi and for the democratisation of Korean politics in the 1970s. As Henri Lefebvre notes, social space begins from the bodily existence of humans (1991, 405). Social space can come into existence and be produced when it has the body of the people in it. Another study on the role of contested human experience for the making of sacred space also suggests that by “all its gestures and motions, its rhythms and workings, the body is necessarily an integral part of the ritual production of sacred space.” (Chidester and Linenthal 1995, 12) Prayer-protest events on the state of affairs (siguk gidohoe) held with a large number of people in and around Myeongdong Cathedral were an effective instrument that made the cathedral to be perceived as a contentious sanctuary for the struggle to recover democracy.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the eruption of rituals of resistance led by the CPAJ and other dissident Catholics de facto attached Myeongdong Catholic Church the spatial centrality for the democracy movement in the Yushin period. The following sections explore this development of the cathedral turning into a significant contentious sanctuary in the later period of the Park Chung Hee government.

### **3.6.1 Catalyst for Opposition**

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<sup>2</sup> Lawyer Ha Gyeong-cheol who participated in the Korean democratisation movement testifies that prayer services by the Catholic Church during the 1970s were more than routine, religious services. The prayer services were a platform where “opinions of the Catholic Church on the state of affairs were expressed” and “the authoritarian regime was criticised” (Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998, 104-106).

The arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun became a watershed of the social participation of the Korean Catholic Church in the 1970s. However, it has been pointed out that the active engagement of Korean Catholicism in a socio-political arena after the incident of Bishop Chi was because the organisational interests of the Korean Catholic Church were intimidated (Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 46-47; Kim Nyung 1996, 263). In their report of the assessment of the social participation in the 1970s, the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) writes:

Not only externally but practically, our church has discovered a new self because of the incident of Bishop Chi in 1974. We gave our support because he was a Bishop. When laity and poet Kim Chi-ha (Francisco) was arrested in April, the church paid scant attention. And before that, the then presidential candidate of the New Democratic Party [Sinmindang], Kim Dae Jung was abducted in Tokyo, Japan. When Kim Dae Jung returned alive, there was not a single statement of concern from the church. But in the case of Bishop Chi, the church was concerned from the beginning because of his role as Bishop (Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 47).

The CPAJ states that they came to pay their attention to the incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun because it was a Catholic Bishop who was under duress. In other words, the Korean Catholic priests of the 1970s started their dissident movement only after their institutional interests were intimidated. Sociologist Jeffrey Hadden notes that one of the main interests of religious institutions is their concern for the "survival". As religious organisations face a "threat" to their institutional interests, they make organisational efforts to overcome that obstacle (Hadden 1983, 23; see also Westhues 1973, 109).

The CPAJ themselves mentions that the social and political participation and human rights movements of the Korean Catholic Church during the 1970s only began when there were incidents "related" to the institutional interests of the church (Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 61-62). This is what their report says:

Even though the Korean Catholic Church was active in the 1970s in fighting for justice and human rights, it is difficult to categorically confirm the consistency of its actions. [...] [W]e cannot deny that the Church only reacted to incidents that were of direct concerns to the Church or when political power intimidates the Church directly. That is to say, the Korean Catholic Church when promoting justice and human rights, have kept pace with incidents concerning the institutional interests of Catholicism. The Church has responded robustly whenever incidents that took place were directly connected to the Church (Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 62).

Hence a key factor which sparked the initiative of the Korean Catholic Church for the justice and human rights movement in the 1970s was the matter of their institutional interests related to the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun in 1974.

### **3.6.2 Catholic Defiance**

After the incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun, many Catholic dissident movements as prayer services and declarations were staged at Myeongdong Cathedral and spread across the country (Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985). In the 1970s, these collective rituals of resistance developed by the CPAJ after the incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun were at the fore of opposition against the autocratic Yushin system. In terms of its size and impact, these large-scale Myeongdong Cathedral prayer-protest events which included not only dissident Catholics but non-believers and the general public alike were the crucial evidence that dissenting voice was existent in the time of Park Chung Hee's harsh emergency decrees (1974-1979) and a hallmark of the democracy movement in the 1970s. It is important to note that this Catholic defiance against authoritarianism was set in and developed through Myeongdong Catholic Church and its ripple effects reached well beyond the boundary of the cathedral and influenced the dissidence movement of the 1970s. Through the leading role of the CPAJ and prayer-protests as a salient and effective tactic of struggle against the

autocratic Park government (section 3.4.3), Myeongdong Cathedral was widely perceived as contentious sanctuary for the democracy movement among dissidents and the general public (Ham Se-woong 1988, 278; Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 33).

After two days since the arrest of Bishop Chi, a Bishop's meeting was held. In that evening of 25 July, 1974, a mass was dedicated at Myeongdong Catholic Church for Bishop Chi and those righteous people who were in suffering. For this mass, about 150 priests and the laity of 600 people attended from across the country. The fact the Belgian and French ambassadors to South Korea also attended this mass implies that it could also draw international attention. In Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan's sermon for this mass, there is tension of the time between the Korean Catholic Church and the outside of the Church:

[T]he reason for the mass today is not to show off the [church's] power as some may presume. It is because the country we live in and the church to which we belong are in a difficult situation. [...] we as colleagues, brothers, and as a community should not ignore the situation of Bishop Chi. [...] The incident of Bishop Chi is an important opportunity for the church to exercise self-scrutiny for the reform of our church today (Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984, 120-21).

In the evening of 11 August 1974, a prayer service for the "nation, recovery of justice and democracy, and Bishop Chi Hak-sun in prison and everyone in suffering" was held at Myeongdong Catholic Church. In this meeting, about 2,000 people attended including two hundred priests and 1,500 adherents. During the service, the message of Bishop Chi Hak-sun from prison was read, "My hope is for a people-centred political climate, which also respects the basic rights of human beings to be fostered as soon as possible on Korean soil". As the second order of this service, participants assembled in front of St. Mary's Hospital with candles in their hands singing hymns. Next day, on 12 August, another special mass and vigil for Bishop Chi was celebrated at the cathedral with 130 priests and 2,000 adherents (Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984, 122-23).

There was also ecumenical cooperation of opposition. On 2 September 1974, a joint prayer meeting of Catholics and Protestants for the “realisation of justice and arrested people” was held at Myeongdong Catholic Church with about 1,500 people. This service was notable since “the event was a joint gathering between laity organisations within the Catholic Church and Protestant organisations.” In this meeting, the promulgated resolution states that they would launch the Committee of the Korean Church for Realisation of Social Justice which “testifies the fact that laity groups attempted to form a united organisation of the Catholic Church and Protestant churches before the official establishment of the CPAJ” (Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 126-27).

There was an incident that an official event of the Korean Catholic Church turned into a large-scale protest against the government. The national conference for the Holy Year was held on the campus of the Catholic University of Korea in Seoul on 9 October 1974. In this convention, which about 30,000 people of the episcopate, parish priests, and lay people attended, Bishop Kim Jae-deok of the Jeonju Diocese announced “the attitude of the Catholic Church” by demanding the restoration of democratic constitutional government and the release of all patriotic dissidents. After the convention, about 5,000 people consisting of Bishops, priests and Catholic monks and nuns took to the streets to demonstrate (Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 128).

Unlike Protestant Christianity, it is an organisational advantage of Catholicism having a comparatively unified system of information transmission and communication, which means that it is easy for the Catholic Church to mobilise its adherents and to develop collective actions. The prayer services organised by the CPAJ after the incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun were held at the cathedral of each diocese, including Myeongdong Cathedral. Also, “different measures were taken” that simultaneous prayer services were held across the country, where declarations on the state of affairs and on social justice were pronounced and distributed at multiple dioceses and places. On the days of 11 November and 20 November 1974, national-scale prayer services were staged at

twelve dioceses across the country. The most active dioceses for these gatherings were Wonju, Jeonju, Incheon, and Andong (Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 129).

The imprisonment of Bishop Chi Hak-sun bound the Korean Catholics (Hanson 1980, 104). This unity (at least superficially) of Korean Catholicism later spread to the national-scale Catholic rallies and protests against the arrest of Bishop Chi. Myeongdong Cathedral gradually became the “centre” of the dissident movement of the 1970s against the military regime after the 1974 incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun (Chi Myong-kwan 2008, 42; Kim Jeong-nam 2005, 59-61). Throughout the 1970s, Myeongdong Cathedral was not just an ordinary church building only for religious services. It had attained the status as contentious sanctuary that had the significance of struggle against social injustice and political oppression.

In the context of the 1970s democracy movement, the impact of the defiant activities of the CPAJ and other Catholics were beyond the boundary of the Korean Catholic Church and far-reaching to other realms of opposition (Kim Nyung 1996, 261). For instance, the CPAJ played a significant role in the movement for the Declaration of Action for the Freedom of Media (jaju eonron silcheon seoneon), for the support of the Dong-A Ilbo Advertisement Repression (Donga-ilbo gwanggo tanap satae), and for the formation of the National Council for Recovery of Democracy (minju hoebok gukmin hoeui) (Ham Se-woong 1988, 278). The status of the CPAJ in the 1970s South Korean social movements was situated in the pivotal channelling point where a variety of other dissident activities intersected (Kang In-Cheol 1997, 547-48).<sup>3</sup> Represented by the role of the CPAJ, in the Yushin period, the Catholic defiance made a stark increase than the 1960s and Myeongdong Cathedral was a strongpoint for dissidence (Ham Se-woong 1988, 278).

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<sup>3</sup> For the important role of other Catholic organisations such as Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (JOC: gatollik nodong cheongnyeonhae) and the Catholic Farmers' Association (CFA: gatollik nongminhoe) in the 1970s labour movement, see Koo Hagen (2001, 69-99) and Chang Yun-shik (1998).

The 1974 Declaration of Conscience by Bishop Chi Hak-sun and the 1976 March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation (which will be examined in section 3.5) were outstanding examples of the public declarations in the 1970s democracy movement (Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 33). And these major democracy declarations promulgated at the cathedral, through drawing serious attention from the people, also contributed to the formation of Myeongdong Catholic Church as a strategic public space for the anti-Yushin movement, together with the effect of prayer services as strategic demonstrations and rallies that promoted the spatial salience of the cathedral.

Benefited by the Chun Doo Hwan regime's partial deregulation in society since 1983, the 1980s saw the emergence of more diverse kinds of civil society groups in the Korean democracy movement. Armed with ideologies of Marx and Lenin, these secular dissidents in the 1980s envisaged more radical polities than just aiming for anti-authoritarianism and gaining liberal democracy as most Christian activists thought. In addition to this, by the help of Christians and students in the 1960s and 1970s, labourers came to be equipped with the capacity of developing more organised protests and became a major force of opposition in the late 1980s (Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 24-26; Kang In-Cheol 1997, 553). Although this change and dynamics (i.e. the rise of new protest groups and labourers) in the constituents of the democracy movement made the status of Christians' participation in the movement seemingly less influential than the 1970s (cf. Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 25-26), the intensity of the Catholic defiance continued in the 1980s and culminated in the June Uprising in 1987 (Kang In-Cheol 2008, 228; Im Hyug-baeg 2006, 143). In this march for democracy in the 1970s and 1980s, the impact of Myeongdong Cathedral as religious spatial mechanism that facilitated the efficiency of the Korean democracy movement had been conclusively demonstrated. The present chapter delves into how Myeongdong Cathedral consolidated its sacred and contentious spatiality for the democracy movement during the Yushin period after the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun. Since the 1980 Gwangju Uprising to the mid-1980s when the overall democracy movement was in decline, Myeongdong Cathedral symbolically

represented the longing of the people for democracy (see Chapter 4). In the background of this accumulated social spatiality and symbolic centrality for democratisation throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Myeongdong Cathedral worked as a powerful religious spatial mechanism in the 1987 June Uprising (see Chapter 5).

### **3.6.3 Contentious Sanctuary**

This section analyses the newspaper as an important venue for transmitting the perception of a sacred and social spatiality of Myeongdong Cathedral for the democracy movement after the incident of Bishop Chi Hak-sun. Newspapers were one of the most crucial and effective location where contributed to this process of making Myeongdong Cathedral as a contentious sanctuary for democratisation in the 1970s and 1980s. In his study on the spread of nationalism, Benedict Anderson argued about the role of the newspaper for generating invisible common perception among the people who read newspapers together in numerous different places without knowing each other (Anderson 2006, 44). As this chapter and the following chapters 4 and 5 will show, this established common knowledge of the spatial attention to Myeongdong Cathedral had contributed to shaping and directing public rituals of resistance as prayer services and mass demonstrations against the authoritarian regimes in the 1970s and 1980s (cf. Chwe 2001, 3-4).

Major newspapers in the 1970s such as *Dong-A Ilbo* and *Kyunghyang Sinmun* published articles on the large-scale prayer services related to the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun held at Myeongdong Cathedral. Articles were titled as “Prayers offered for the oppressed, Catholic Myeongdong Cathedral”<sup>4</sup> and “About thousand people including Catholic priests held a prayer meeting, some took to the street demonstration”<sup>5</sup>, among others.

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<sup>4</sup> *Dong-A Ilbo*, 12 September, 1974.

<sup>5</sup> *Kyunghyang Sinmun*, 27 September, 1974.



On the first page of the newspaper on 10 January 1975, the *Dong-A Ilbo* published an article on the prayer service organised by the CPAJ held at Myeongdong Cathedral. This article was published with a good size of the picture of the prayer service with 2,000 participants. The piece reported the demands of the CPAJ, asking for the release of Bishop Chi Hak-sun and the resignation of the Park Chung Hee government. Notable here is the fact that this article was published in the beginning of the year 1974 when the repressive Presidential Emergency Decrees of President Park began. Publicising the main site of which this strong dissident voice was incubated and developed in the time of autocratic rule would give the distinct spatial centrality to Myeongdong Cathedral as a contentious sanctuary for the democracy movement, since it is one of the important roles of the newspaper as a public media that creates social consciousness and enhances moral sensitivity on the state of the affairs of the time. Another article from the *Dong-A Ilbo* on 7 February 1975 also offered a detailed account on the declaration promulgated by the CPAJ in a prayer service at Myeongdong Cathedral, that included the support for Bishop Chi Hak-sun's statement of conscience and the systematic criticisms towards undemocratic measures of the Park Chung Hee government.<sup>6</sup>

When Bishop Chi was released on 17 February 1975, newspapers covered this news and thoroughly reported the atmosphere and details of the Seoul Detention Centre. In an article titled “Mansewa gido, cheolmuneun dathigo [Shouts and prayers, the iron gate closed]”, *Chosun Ilbo* lively depicted the scene of the release of Bishop Chi in detail with a large photograph of Bishop Chi and Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan entering together into Myeongdong Cathedral after leaving from the detention centre.<sup>7</sup> One comes to measure the gravity of social

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<sup>6</sup> “Cheonjugyo sajedan je 3 sigukseoneon: ingwon ingan minjuhoebok yogu [Catholic priests 3rd declaration of the state of affairs, asking for human rights, human beings, and the recovery of democracy].” *Dong-A Ilbo*, 7 February, 1975. This article also mentioned that about 4,000 people attended for this prayer service at Myeongdong Cathedral.

<sup>7</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, 18 February, 1975. The article also included a large subtitle that said there was an exceptional bell ringing in Myeongdong Cathedral to celebrate the release of

attention towards the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun when observing daily newspapers of the time covered the release of Bishop Chi with large headlines and substantial content. In these reports, Myeongdong Cathedral had normally been mentioned as a central space of sacred and social significance.

Then on 19 February 1975, *Kyunghyang Shinmun* and *Chosun Ilbo* reported a large-scale prayer service with 3,000 participants for the recovery of human rights held at Myeongdong Cathedral that was led by Bishop Chi Hak-sun. *Dong-A Ilbo* also reported about this prayer meeting in detail introducing the content of Bishop Chi's sermon.<sup>8</sup> Remarkable is that after reading this article in *Dong-A Ilbo*, the general people would come to know that public figures such as then politician Kim Dae Jung (later the President of South Korea during 1998-2003), lawyer (later politician) Kang Sin-ok, eminent Protestant minister Park Hyeong-gyu, and other Catholic leaders also attended this service. Perceiving the presence of these well-known social and religious figures in a prayer service for the sublime cause at Myeongdong Cathedral, the general public could naturally connect sacred and public significance to Myeongdong Catholic Church. In these newspaper articles on the prayer services at Myeongdong Cathedral<sup>9</sup>, one salient effect that emerged was the claiming of discursive authority based on the moral superiority of the CPAJ and the dissident Catholics (cf. Kim Nyung 1996, 263-64). This moral superiority could be constructed through the discourses that were the

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Bishop Chi. On the same day, *Dong-A Ilbo* also published a substantial article on the release of dissident people including Bishop Chi mentioning Myeongdong Cathedral.

<sup>8</sup> See "Chi Hak-sun jugyo seokbang hwanyeong misa, 7gaewol manui misagangron [A welcoming mass for the release of Bishop Chi Hak-sun, his first sermon in 7 months]." *Dong-A Ilbo*, 19 February, 1975. It appears exceptional that *Dong-A Ilbo* published two more other articles regarding this mass in the edition of 19 February. One published the sermon of Bishop Chi in a different section. And another article included a photograph of Kim Dae Jung and Bishop Chi Hak-sun greeting each other in gladness.

<sup>9</sup> See for instance, "Sungyo gagohan bijanghan gyeoruiro sahoejeongui guhyeon noryeong [For the realisation of social justice, with the resolute determination prepared for martyrdom]." *Dong-A Ilbo*, 11 March, 1975.

content of the public statements of the CPAJ and the sublime causes of the prayer services that were the recovery of human rights and democracy. And this discursive authority of the CPAJ and other eminent dissident figures generated an important factor that formed the public consciousness of Myeongdong Cathedral as a sacred as well as social space.

Kim Jeong-nam, who is widely regarded as one of the most notable dissident figures in the South Korean democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s and former senior secretary for education culture in the Kim Young Sam government (1993-1998), testifies about the impact and significance of the prayer services held at Myeongdong Cathedral as follows:

[Those prayer services] were like 'storms of the Word'. The military government did not dare to impede these solemn ceremonies. The Yushin regime was overwhelmed by the huge turnout of these prayer services at Myeongdong Cathedral; with no less than 3,000 people attending at any one time. Not to mention that similar services were held simultaneously across the country. [...] Myeongdong Cathedral was a haven that embraced and took care of those [oppressed people...] [D]ismissed journalists also came to Myeongdong Cathedral to appeal for justice. Myeongdong Cathedral similarly, stood for the women workers who were harassed, tormented with excrement and tortured before being abandoned in remote garbage dumps. Also for the urban dispossessed who were evicted from their shanty towns. For every uprooted people, Myeongdong Cathedral was their last resort. And the priests from CPAJ would take care of them (Kim Jeong-nam 2005, 57-59).

Confined to students and some intellectuals, the challenge of dissident groups against the Park Chung Hee regime was limited and not influential in the 1960s. However, 1970s saw the emergence of labour, church, and students as a major force to wage the democratic movement against the Park government (Kim Sun-hyuk 2000, 52; 75). Thus the 1970s was when the opposition movement of Christian churches was being developed in earnest through especially its well-organised networks and social participant theological foundations of Catholic liberation theology and the Korean Protestant minjung theology (Park Myung-

Lim 2011). In this context of the 1970s social movements, as Kim Jeong-nam states above, Myeongdong Cathedral was formed and perceived as a social space through being a crucial point of holding collective religious ceremonies and political resistance against injustice and authoritarianism, and through embracing and assimilating these suppressed workers and the urban poor of the time.

Ignited by the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun, the Catholic defiance of the 1970s was embodied through the establishment of the CPAJ in 1974. Following prayer services of resistance for the release of Bishop Chi Hak-sun, democracy and human rights organised by the CPAJ and dissident Catholics were instrumental enough to challenge the legitimacy of the authoritarian Park Chung Hee regime (Kim Jeong-nam 2005, 58). Moreover, as shown in this section, the role of the newspaper as a media was significant to facilitate the public conception of Myeongdong Cathedral as a sacred religious sanctuary as well as contentious political space of the struggle for democratisation. During the 1970s, Myeongdong Cathedral began to emerge as a social and political mechanism that could work as an important leverage to impact the democracy movement against the Yushin system. Next section explores the 1976 March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation, another crucial event that consolidated the production of Myeongdong Cathedral as contentious sanctuary for the democracy movement in the 1970s.

### **3.7 The March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation**

Although the establishment of the autocratic Yushin regime in 1972 caused the temporary decrease of political dissent, the anti-Yushin democracy movement revived from 1973 and onwards. Against this backlash of the student and chaeya movement organisations, the Park Chung Hee government responded with the promulgation of Presidential Emergency Decrees (gingeup jochi) since 1974. By the time of May 1975 when the Park regime enforced Presidential Emergency

Decree 9, state repression of opposing the Yushin system reached its height (KDF Research Centre 2009, 23-25). In the time of the Emergency Decree 9, many university professors were expelled for their dissenting activities. These repressive measures towards the democratisation movement also included the arrest of many dissident journalists, politicians, workers, and students (KDF Research Centre 2009, 207-218; Cho Hui-yeon 2007, 185; P. Chang 2015). This was the context where the event to promulgate the March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation (MFD: 3.1 Minju Guguk Seoneon, also called as the Myeongdong Incident) was being prepared to be held at Myeongdong Cathedral on 1 March 1976, in commemoration of the 1919 March First Movement against Japanese colonial rule. For the anti-Yushin movement camps, historian Kang Man-gil noted, 1976 was the time when another breakthrough was needed to bring the democracy movement to the next level (Kang Man-gil 1998, 25; see also Chi Myong-kwan 2008, 298).

As direct opposition against the authoritarian Yushin regime, the impact of the MFD was crucial to other strands of the democracy movement under the repressive Emergency Decree 9. The members who joined in the Declaration—prominent politicians, intellectuals, and Christian leaders, later became vital figures for the dissident movement after the event. The MFD incident also facilitated further anti-Yushin protests and offered the discursive progress in terms of democracy and human rights issues in the 1970s democracy movement (Sohn Hak-kyu 1989, 95-96).

The 1976 MFD promulgated at Myeongdong Cathedral is also significant in terms of protest tactics in the overall context of the Korean democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s. In the dictatorial ruling period of Park Chung Hee during the 1960s and 1970s, the possibility and probability of successful democracy movements were much limited by the regime's legal and political repression (Han Gi-deok 2012, 1077-1078; KDF Research Centre 2009; P. Chang 2006; 2015). Under the conditions where dissident activities of other civil society movement organisations were vastly restricted, relatively better organised and internationally networked Christian groups played a salient role in the 1970s

Korean democracy movement (Park Myung-Lim 2011; Im Hyug-Baeg 2006; Koo Hagen 2001, 69-99; Chang Yun-Shik 1998). Especially from 1975 to 1978, according to the research by the Stanford University Korean Studies Program with the collaboration of the Korean Democracy Foundation in South Korea, Christians waged the most frequent protests than any other movement groups (Stanford Korea Democracy Project Report 2007, 34)<sup>10</sup>. In this wave of Christian protests in the 1970s, the 1976 MFD at Myeongdong Cathedral stands as the representative and influential case beyond the boundary of churches. In fact, since the March First Movement in 1919 under Japanese colonial rule, promulgation of public declarations has been a historically conspicuous and effective tactic used by Korean dissident groups (Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 33; Han Gi-deok 2012, 1077-1079). Next to demonstrations or rallies, declarations were used more than any other protest tactics in the Korean democracy movement from 1970 to 1992 (Stanford Korea Democracy Project Report 2007, 64). As a peaceful and non-disruptive protest tactic under the repressive Yushin system, declarations worked as an immensely crucial and effective tactic to challenge the legitimacy of the autocratic rule of Park Chung Hee in the 1970s. And two of the most important and widely influential cases in promulgation of declarations were Bishop Chi Hak-sun's Declaration of Conscience in 1974 and the March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation in 1976. After the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, the protest tactics of democracy movement participants became much more disruptive and violent corresponding to the radicalisation of students and labour groups in the 1980s (Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 32-35; Han Gi-deok 2012, 1077-1079).

### **3.7.1 The Myeongdong Incident**

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<sup>10</sup> This report is available online at project website:

[http://aparc.fsi.stanford.edu/research/stanford\\_korea\\_democracy\\_project](http://aparc.fsi.stanford.edu/research/stanford_korea_democracy_project) (accessed 10 February, 2016)

On 1 March 1976, the memorial mass for the 1919 March First Movement was held at Myeongdong Cathedral with attendance of 700 Catholic and Protestant adherents. In the sermon, priest Kim Seung-hun reflected on the significance of the 1919 March First Movement and pointed out problems of the Korean society such as the repressive Yushin constitution and economic affairs in view of the spirit of the 1919 March First Movement. After the memorial service, participants had a joint prayer meeting of both Catholics and Protestants. In a time for prayer during the meeting, Protestant pastor and former professor at Seoul Women's University Yi U-jeong read the statement entitled "The March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation" (NCKK Archive Vol. 2, 684-85; Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998).

This prayer service on 1 March at Myeongdong Cathedral was not a particularly large-scale event. The gathering was not much distinct from previous prayer services held at Korean Christian churches since 1974. Rather the service on 1 March 1976 was a relatively "calm and quiet" one. The reason why it became significant was due to the promulgation of one statement, the March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation (MFD). It was in fact the authorities, not organisers and participants of this event, who accorded serious gravity to the MFD (NCKK Archive Vol. 2, 688). The delivery of the MFD aroused extensive national and international media attention, and received considerable support through Christian networks and international organisations (Kim Jeong-nam 2005, 158-59; Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998, 309-353).

Through the report on the promulgation of the MFD by the director of the Seoul District Prosecutor's Office Seo Jeong-gak on 10 March 1976, the Yushin authorities themselves caused wide-ranging attention from the press and the wider public to the March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation delivered at Myeongdong Cathedral. The public announcement of charging participants of the MFD, as an attempt to overthrow the government made other dissenters of the autocratic rule realise their claims about social injustice and political repression of the Yushin system were actually shared and supported by the participants of the MFD, who were prominent politicians, Christian leaders,

and dissident intellectuals including the late President of South Korea Kim Dae Jung, Mun Ik-hwan, and Ham Sok-hon (Kim Jeong-nam 2005, 152-54; Kang Man-gil 1998, 28-29; NCKK Archive Vol. 2, 688; cf. Chwe 2001, 24).

### **3.7.2 Reinforcement of Dissidence**

From the moment when the Myeongdong Incident was first publicised by the authorities, it was defined as a case of subversive activities (Dong-A Ilbo 11 March, 1976). By declaring who were the dissidents and how were they struggling for realisation of democracy to the general public, the Park Chung Hee government and the news media came to let other protest groups be informed of the trend of opposition and possible discursive protest against the authoritarian Park regime (Kim Jeong-nam 2005, 152; Kang Man-gil 1998, 28-30).

The announcement of indicting the participants of the MFD publicly linked possible connections of the Christian religious activities such as prayer services, retreats, and assemblies with attempts of overthrowing the Park Chung Hee government (Dong-A Ilbo 11 March, 1976). This aspect reveals an epistemological perspective of the Park regime that they seriously regarded this religious-spatial activism of the Catholic and Protestant churches problematic. Through openly labelling the previous dissident Christian activities and the MFD as subversive incidents, the authorities conversely framed these Christian churches as places of resistance and struggle. This is particularly a convincing explanation for Myeongdong Cathedral as observed from the case where the cathedral was described as the “political stage” by a newspaper editorial (Kyunghyang Sinmun, 13 March 1976). The fact that eminent religious and political leaders and intellectuals organised and were involved in the MFD at Myeongdong Cathedral raised the political and social spatiality of the cathedral and solidified the place frame of Myeongdong Cathedral as an emerging



contentious sanctuary of the fight for democracy in the 1970s (Sohn Hak-kyu 1989, 95-96; Kim Jeong-nam 2005, 153).<sup>11</sup>

The Myeongdong Incident was the opening protest against the Yushin regime under the time of repressive Presidential Emergency Decree 9 (promulgated in 1975). In the situation where general democratic rights of the people (e.g. freedom of speech, expression, assembly, etc.) were severely restricted under the Presidential Emergency Decrees (1974-1979), the MFD was a representative campaign against the autocratic rule of Park Chung Hee (Kang Won-taek 2015, 133-37; Kang Man-gil 1998, 25; Sohn Hak-kyu 1989, 95). The event is significant since resulted in facilitating further dissident movements and playing the role of uniting anti-Yushin struggles of the time.

In the circumstances where channels of organising dissident voices were blocked by the regime, prayer services and masses on the state of affairs held at the Catholic and Protestant churches over the country were a crucial and salient tactic of protest against the authoritarianism of the Park Chung Hee government (Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998, 103).

During the Yushin period of state repression, when activities of other social movement organisations were not able to be sufficiently effective (P. Chang 2015), benefited by its relative autonomy as a religious institution with international support (Maduro 1982), the Korean Catholic churches opposed to and resist against the autocratic rule of the Park regime through collective actions as the masses and prayer services (Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984, 353-412; Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 165). And Myeongdong Catholic Church was in the centre of this Catholic defiance during the Yushin and Emergency Decrees periods.

On 9 August 1976, at the special prayer service for the arrested priests at Myeongdong Cathedral, Bishop Chi Hak-sun delivered a sermon titled “The Crisis of the Korean Church and Its Overcoming.” In this sermon, Bishop Chi noted a crucial role of Myeongdong Catholic Church as a platform to testify conscience,

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<sup>11</sup> For a theoretical discussion on “place frames” in social movements, see Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont (2013, 5).

stating that “since 1974, Myeongdong Cathedral has been the candle to illuminate the convictions of faith and conscience of young priests, and become the mother church of testimonies of conscience in this country.” (Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984, 360-61) Here Bishop Chi publicly affirms the spatial centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral as a contentious sanctuary for democratisation to raise dissident voices against the repression of the Park Chung Hee government in the 1970s. In social movements, spatial centre contributes to producing close ties among movement participants and thus mobilising distant actors and resources to their organised collective aim (Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013, 4-5). In the 1970s democracy movement, Myeongdong Cathedral had become a hub for waging discursive struggles for social justice and human rights through promulgation of declarations and diffusing campaigns further to local parish churches and other movement organisations (Kim Nyung 2001; Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998, 103; Myeongdong Cheonju Gyohoe 1984; Sohn Hak-Kyu 1989, 95-96).

### **3.7.3 Development of Solidarity**

Furthermore, the 1976 MFD was a crucial religious service-protest event in the 1970s democracy movement in the sense that it produced the wide-ranging international support of solidarity for the movement. In other words, the MFD transformed the scale of the South Korean democracy movement from national to international one. There are mainly two reasons for this rescaling of the power of the South Korean democracy movement to the international level was possible. First, it was the role of foreign journalists and international news media that promoted the development of international solidarity. After the incident, foreign journalists attended court trials for the accused participants of the MFD. These journalists reported the contents and progress of trials for the MFD and published these in their newspapers and magazines (Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998, 332-33). Edward W. Poitras, who resided in South Korea from

1969 to 1989 and was former professor at Methodist Theological University in Seoul, recalled his experience of helping these foreign journalists through interpretation and translation on the contents and progress of the trials for the MFD as following:

The long series of trials followed [after the MFD], and it was important to monitor them and get the news of developments out to the world. [...] Each day I would sit between two foreign journalists writing a non-stop translation of the trial, which they would watch and copy for their stories. There were many times when we expected the courtroom guards to force us to leave, but that occurred only a few times, so we were able to provide rather detailed coverage of the trials.

I remember writing in a letter to the United States that these were rigged trials, a form of political “kangaroo trials,” which left no room for justice to be done. Not long afterward I was told by an angry KCIA agent, questioning me about another matter, that I should not use that kind of language in describing Korean justice! (Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998, 322)

The statement of Poitras delivers well the atmosphere and the process of how the proceedings of the trials for the MFD were sent out to the international media in the late 1970s. As mentioned, since figures such as the former President Yun Po Sun (in office 1960-1962) and then presidential candidate Kim Dae Jung and other prominent religious leaders and intellectuals were involved in the 1976 Myeongdong Incident, the developments of the trials attracted much attention from both national and international news media of the time (Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998, 100). The work of these foreign journalists sending out the reports on the trials of the MFD came to open up new opportunities for the Korean democratisation movement on the international scale (cf. Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013, 9; Tarrow 2011, 157-180), when the domestic press and nationwide democracy movement were under harsh repression of the Yushin system.

In Germany, due to the fact that one of the main participants of the MFD was Minjung theologian Ahn Byung-Mu, who received his doctorate in theology from Heidelberg University in 1965, the faculty members and students of the

Divinity School of Heidelberg University came to know that Dr Ahn Byung-Mu was arrested for his participation in the 1976 MFD. The members of Heidelberg University and other German Christian churches made efforts to support the movement for releasing Dr Ahn Byung-Mu and democratisation of South Korea through ways of making a petition and spreading the news utilising their organisational resources and organisational networks. The 1976 MFD was the decisive event that made the German Christian churches be informed of state repression of the Park Chung Hee regime and enthusiastically support the Korean democracy movement between the 1970s and 1990s (Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998, 347-53). The MFD incident also ignited the ardent support of the overseas Korean communities in Canada and the United States for release of the accused and the democracy movement in their homeland. The Koreans in Canada made use of media, contacted the Korean embassy, and waged demonstrations to appeal for release of the accused for the democracy movement (Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998, 340-41). In May 1976, Koreans in the US organised the first large-scale demonstration to support the MFD, assembling 250 people in Washington D.C. The protesters marched to the White House, Korean and Japanese embassies and delivered a translated version of the March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation to US President and Secretary of State. US news media such as New York Times, National Magazine, and Christian Science Monitor among others reported about the Korean democracy movement of the 1970s and the Myeongdong Incident (Sources of the Myeongdong Incident 1998, 331-34).

Furthermore, there was support from Japan. The Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace cooperated with the Korean Catholics through publishing an English translation of proceedings of trials for the 1976 MFD.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, in the situation where Korean national mass media was under harsh repression and control by the Yushin regime, Japanese news media such as the

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<sup>12</sup> The English translation of the proceedings by Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace can be found at the Open Archive of the Korean Democracy Foundation: <http://archives.kdemo.or.kr/isad/view/00488027> (accessed 10 February, 2016)

Asahi News (Asahi Shimbun) objectively reported the 1976 MFD and pointed out the event's significance in the context of South Korea's democracy movement in the 1970s. By introducing how the dictatorial rule of Park Chung Hee was also negatively interpreted in US media such as the Washington Post, the Asahi News emphasised the need of recovery of human rights and democratisation in South Korea (Chi Myong-kwan 2008, 298-302).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter first offered a descriptive account on how the Catholic defiance of the 1970s was ignited by the incident of the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun. And how Bishop Chi Hak-sun's arrest and the following wave of Catholic resistance was embodied through the formation of one of the most important and influential contemporary South Korean social movement organisations, the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) in 1974 (Kim Jeong-nam 2005; Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007). Chapter 3 then analysed a significant protest event in the 1970s Korean democracy movement which was the promulgation of the March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation (MFD) at Myeongdong Cathedral in March 1976. After examining a multi-layered significance of the MFD in the movement context of the 1970s (section 3.7), the chapter showed how the event of the MFD particularly became a new momentum for both national and international democracy movement camps with regard to solidifying dissidence and augmenting solidarity to challenge the autocratic rule of the Yushin system.

Prayer services and rallies held after the 1974 incident of the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun and the March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation (MFD) in 1976 were crucially instrumental establishing Myeongdong Cathedral as a contentious sanctuary for the democracy movement of the time. Chapter 3 has accounted for these processes of Myeongdong Cathedral attaining the status of the contentious sanctuary for democratisation in the larger context

of the South Korean dissident movement of the 1970s. This constructed spatiality of Myeongdong Cathedral as a holy place for democracy contributed investing the political participation of dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations such as the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) in the 1970s with a moral and social authority. Myeongdong Cathedral was a strategic foothold of the anti-Yushin movement in the 1970s by being an arena for the discursive battle through declarations and collective actions through prayer-protests and following street marches.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **The Symbolic and Beyond: Sustaining the Movement**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the spatial politics of Myeongdong Cathedral that represented the need of democratisation and contributed to sustaining the collective social memory pertaining to the Gwangju Uprising in the context of the 1980s democracy movement. Chapter 4 argues that during the 1980s before the 1987 June Uprising, the Korean Catholic Church and the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral played a role of sustaining the vitality of the dissident movement through mediating the need of democratisation and representing the longing of the people for realisation of social justice especially when the democracy movement was often in stagnation after the brutal suppression of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising. The following sections show Myeongdong Cathedral was a mediating religious space of a rare combination that had aspects of both sacred resonance and political impact when the South Korean democracy movement was restricted in the early- and mid-1980s until June 1987.

The formative event for the 1980s South Korean social movements was the 1980 Gwangju Uprising (Lee Jae-eui 1999; Lewis 2002; Shin and Hwang 2003; Lee Nam-hee 2007; see also Clark et al. 1988; Scott-Stokes and Lee 2000). The uprising infused lingering contentious spirits and democratic aspirations into the dissident movement throughout the 1980s and onwards. After the Gwangju Uprising in May 1980, due to the continued strong coercion by the regime, dissident movements against the autocratic rule of Chun Doo Hwan were hard to avoid being restricted in the early 1980s (Kim Ho-Ki and Jung Hae-Gu 2009, 10; KDF Research Centre 2010, 28; Jung Hae-Gu 2011). Atrocities were done through state apparatuses such as Samcheong Education Troops (Samcheong Gyo yukdae) where the authorities forcibly took more than 40,000 people to the

military unit (Kang Jun-man 2003, 249) and tortured them for the purpose of the “purification education”. As such, an extreme level of coercion and socio-political control were imposed on Korean society and people during the early 1980s of the Chun Doo Hwan era after the Gwangju Uprising. Nonetheless, the Korean democracy movement was not extinct in this time of considerable state repression. One of the most notable dissident incidents in the early 1980s was the arson by a few university students at the US Cultural Centre in Busan in 1982. The rationale behind this arson incident was the anti-American sentiment recognising that the United States supported the Chun Doo Hwan regime to dispatch armed military forces to quell the popular uprising in Gwangju in May 1980 and thus aided the massacre of the Gwangju citizens by the armed military forces.<sup>1</sup> The burning of the US Cultural Centre in Busan was significant since it was the first influential incident that publicised the involvement and responsibility of the US on the state violence in the Gwangju Uprising and the legitimacy of the Chun Doo Hwan government (KDF Research Centre 2010, 202-203). The fact that the arson attack took place at Busan was also important because dissident movements in the city of Busan (such as the April Revolution in 1960 and the Busan-Masan protests in 1979) had been a “litmus test” for gauging the outcome and directions of opposition against previous authoritarian regimes of Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee in the 1960s and 1970s (Scott-Stokes 1982; see also KDF Research Centre 2008, 33-171).

Furthermore, the 1982 Busan arson incident was also crucial in terms of the Korean Catholic Church’s engagement with it. After the incident, the leaders of the arson were put on the wanted list throughout the country. Mun Bu-sik who led the arson and another student Kim Eun-suk who participated in the incident went to priest Choi Gi-sik of the Wonju diocese asking for help. As it will be examined in this chapter, priest Choi Gi-sik’s support for these students became the root of the Korean Catholic Church’s open conflict with the Chun Doo Hwan

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance a report on the incident “Anti-US Sentiment is Seen in Korea” by Henry Scott-Stokes in 1982 at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/1982/03/28/world/anti-us-sentiment-is-seen-in-korea.html>



regime in the early 1980s. When the Chun regime arrested priest Choi Gi-sik charging him of offering a hideout for Mun Bu-sik and Kim Eun-suk, Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan, the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice, and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea defended priest Choi Gi-sik's position as a clergy to help the people in need (KDF Research Centre 2010, 201-202; NCKK Archive Vol. 8, 897-98).

Even under the conditions where social movements were considerably constrained under the state repression of the early 1980s, the Korean Catholic Church did not cease to voice political dissent in the early period of the Chun Doo Hwan regime after the Gwangju Uprising, as noted in the case of the Catholic engagement with the 1982 arson incident in Busan. Myeongdong Catholic Church was one of important starting points that provided publicity of the Gwangju Uprising and was also the last assembly place of protests in Seoul since the early 1980s.<sup>2</sup>

By 1983, the Chun Doo Hwan government implemented the Appeasement Policy (*yuhwa jochi*). The policy was to decrease the level of state control over the people after assessing the domestic situation and thinking that their rule had acquired the political stability through prolonged repression against the democracy movement especially after the Gwangju Uprising. Besides the domestic situation, the Chun Doo Hwan government also paid attention to the international reputation of South Korea during the time since they were preparing for holding large-scale international sports events as the 1986 Seoul Asian Games and the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games (Kim Ho-Ki and Jung Hae-Gu 2009, 10). Ironically though, the Appeasement Policy provided the dissident movement organisations with a critical new momentum for revitalisation, since the policy allowed previously oppressed terrains of the democracy movement rooms and opportunities to be active again (KDF Research Centre 2010, 28-29).

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<sup>2</sup> As will be examined in Chapter 5, Myeongdong Cathedral was also a final assembly point after the June 10 Demonstration in 1987 and was a strategically crucial site to sustain and diffuse the ripple effects of the nationwide June Uprising of 1987 (Won Si-rim 2003, 15).

The next section 4.2 gives an overview of the democratisation movement in the 1980s describing how other movement sectors such as students and labour engaged with protests, paying particular attention to the development of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising; and examining the relationship between the Chun Doo Hwan regime and major religious organisations of the time. Then section 4.3 delves into the role of the Korean Catholic Church for the development of the Gwangju Uprising, noting an instrumental role of the church's organisational resources for its effective engagement with the Gwangju Uprising before, during, and after the incident.

Section 4.4 investigates the significance of the 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan as the Korean Catholic Church's opportunity to rebuild its contentious dissident identity as a religious organisation which endured a long history of persecution by the Korean governments since its introduction to the Korea peninsula in 1784. The collision between the Korean Catholic Church and the Chun Doo Hwan government through the 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan became a momentum for the Korean Catholic Church and the wider democracy movement sectors to sustain their opposition against the autocratic rule of the Chun regime in the time of the movement stagnation after the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, especially between 1980 and 1983 until the regime's Appeasement Policy (yuhwa jochi).

The final section 4.5 explores the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral as a place of symbolic resonance which kept representing the need of democratisation in the mid-1980s, especially between 1985 and 1986 after the Chun Doo Hwan regime reintensified coercion against the revitalisation of the democracy movement after the Appeasement Policy in 1983. As the two main mechanisms of in the religious spatial dynamics of the Myeongdong Cathedral that facilitated the role of sustaining the movement through its symbolic social influence were the commemoration ceremonies and media representations of the Gwangju Uprising. Under severe repression of the Chun Doo Hwan military regime between 1985 and 1986, when the languages of democracy and human rights were hardly spoken in public (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1966, 54-55; Hall

2013a/b), the Gwangju people's struggle for democratisation were effectively represented and remembered through the media such as photograph exhibitions and video screenings of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising in and around Myeongdong Cathedral as oppositional activities for democratisation by the progressive Korean Catholics and other dissident groups. Through commemorative events and media representations of the Gwangju Uprising, the spatial politics of Myeongdong Catholic Church in the early- and mid-1980s (particularly between 1980-1983, and 1985-1986) democracy movement period worked for symbolically articulating and publicising the forbidden languages of democracy and human rights that were secretly and scarcely spoken or nearly be absent in public places and, thus, it contributed to sustaining the vitality of the democracy movement in the early- and mid-1980s until the June Uprising in 1987. Hence Chapter 4 shows that how the participation of the Korean Catholic Church and the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral constituted crucial junctures of the 1980s democracy movement so that opposition against the authoritarian military rule of the Chun Doo Hwan regime could be sustained and developed further to the June Uprising in 1987.

#### **4.2 Democratisation Movement in the 1980s**

The autocratic rule of Park Chung Hee came to an end when Park was assassinated by his close aide Kim Jae-gyu who was the director of the KCIA. This period between the end of Park Chung Hee's rule and the 1980 Gwangju Uprising is referred to as the Seoul Spring, named after the Prague Spring of Czechoslovakia in 1968 since "expectations for democratisation were higher than ever" in the democratisation movement camps of South Korea (Kim Ho-Ki and Jung Hae-Gu 2009, 9).

But the assassination of Park Chung Hee in 1979 did not necessarily mean the end of the autocratic military rule in South Korea. After the death of Park, the New Military (singunbu) led by General Chun Doo Hwan came to new, practical

power of the military force through the December 12 military coup in 1979 (12.12 gunsa banran). The New Military's coup was possible since it was executed through a private group within the military called as the Group of One (hanahoe) that had supported President Park Chung Hee during his presidency (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 30-34; KDF Research Centre 2010, 42-44).

Although the December 12 military coup in 1979 was threatening for South Korea's path to democratisation because the prospects of further coup by the newly established military order to take over the political control in the power vacuum period was loomed large, the dissident movements spread across the country in the period of the Seoul Spring (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 34-39).

The students and intellectuals joined this opposition. In April 1980, about three hundred university professors in Seoul staged a campaign for the democracy in academic circles. On 16 May 1980, about 100,000 university students gathered in front of Seoul Train Station demanding the abolition of martial law. On the same day, the "declaration of 134 intellectuals for democratisation" was also published against the military rule (Kang Man-gil 2005, 250). The student movement leaders in the Seoul-Incheon area made a decision on 16 May to cease street demonstrations for not providing the New Military with a reason to augment martial law across the country (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 47).

Labour movements exploded during the time of the Seoul Spring. Between January and May 1980, nine hundred protests were waged, especially by miners, machinists, textile and pharmaceutical workers (Katsiaticas 2012, 156). The protest at Sabuk coal mine in Gangwon province in April 1980 was notable since it was a large scale struggle by miners and their families colliding with the authorities of the region. After the Sabuk protest the workers' struggle continued in the companies such as the Donguk Steel and spread nationwide in May 1980 before the New Military's May 17 military coup. The labour movement in the Seoul Spring period was in its nature the protests to preserve the right to live (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 38-39; KDF Research Centre 2010, 63-66).

Opposition politicians had focused on the “seizure of power and regime change” in the vacuum period after the assassination of Park Chung Hee (KDF Research Centre 2010, 61). The New Democratic Party (Sinmindang), a leading opposition party of the time, was divided inside, not playing an appropriate role for a stable transition to the democratic power. On 8 December 1979, Kim Dae Jung was freed from house arrest. But after release, Kim Dae Jung was in collision with another prominent opposition politician Kim Young Sam for the matter of forming a united line for electing a Presidential candidate between themselves. Some observers assess that the opposition politicians during the Seoul Spring period were politically naïve and “overly optimistic” about the development of the New Military (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 37; KDF Research Centre 2010, 59-61; Kim Ho-Ki and Jung Hae-Gu 2009, 9).

Although the New Military did not reveal its intention to take over the political power in the beginning, they meticulously prepared another coup in advance. First, from February 1980, the New Military started conducting large-scale counter-insurgency training (including the best special troops) in secret to quell possible future dissident movements. Second, the New Military also manipulated the mass media according to their political interests. In this rationale, for instance, they attempted to accuse dissident movements for democratisation as social unrest (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 39-43).

#### **4.2.1 The Gwangju Uprising**

The 1980 Gwangju Uprising was one of the most critical junctures in the South Korean democracy movement of the 1980s. Until June 1987 when South Korea achieved a basic democratic reform, the people’s struggle and resistance against the inhuman state violence of the Chun Doo Hwan regime during the Gwangju Uprising played the role of significant inspiration for the participants of the Korean democracy movement in the 1980s and onwards (Lewis 2002, xvi; Shin Gi-Wook 2003, xi).

On the 18th of May in 1980, students of Chonnam National University found out that they are not allowed to enter into their own school campus. It was because Chun Doo Hwan's New Military proclaimed martial law throughout the country that included closure of the university campuses to prevent possible nationwide student demonstrations. At the entrance of Chonnam National University, what the students encountered was deployed military troops. When the students refused to draw back, the armed forces started to attack them. As the collision between the military and students got fierce, armed forces were reinforced even in the streets of Gwangju city. This was the beginning of the 1980 uprising in Gwangju.

In general, the Gwangju Uprising refers to ten days of the protests from 18 to 27 May by students and civilians in the city of Gwangju against the military forces' brutal repression and violence to silence dissent against authoritarianism. During the uprising, Gwangju citizens tirelessly fought back and even turned the tables against ruthless suppression of the armed forces and ruled the city by themselves that are assessed as the realisation of "direct democracy" (Choi Jung-woon 2006; Lewis 2002; see also Lee Jae-Eui 1999; Scott-Stokes and Lee 2000; Clark et al. 1988)<sup>3</sup>. But as historian Kyung Moon Hwang proposes (2003, 137), the Gwangju Uprising also manifested how Korean societal and political realms worked following the imperatives of the "regimentation and militarisation of society" under the authoritarian military governments during the

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<sup>3</sup> Lee Jae-Eui's *Kwangju Diary: Beyond Death, Beyond the Darkness of the Age* (1999) is a first-hand investigated account of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising. This book is a translated and edited version from the original book written and published in Korean in 1985. Henry Scott-Stokes and Lee Jae-Eui's edited book *The Kwangju Uprising* (2000) includes reports on the uprising by Western and Korean journalists. Linda Lewis's work *Laying Claim to the Memory of May* (2002) is participant-ethnographic study on the Gwangju Uprising with a reflective point of view.

industrialisation period, together with reliance on the militarism of the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Even though this ten day struggle from 18 May to 27 May 1980 seems finished with the defeat of the civic resistance for democracy quelled by the military force, the Gwangju Uprising provided unfailing spirits of struggle for the realisation of democracy to the Korean social movements afterward (Shin Gi-Wook 2003, xi; Choi Jang-Jip 2012, 104-105). Furthermore, the historical significance and practical effects of the South Korean democratisation movement to other countries that were in transition to democratic politics have recently begun to be internationally recognised, for instance by the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) that the documentary records related to the 1980 Gwangju Uprising was registered as the UNESCO Memory of the World in 2011.<sup>5</sup>

After the death of President Park Chung Hee, the camp of opposition politicians was not fully aware of the stratagem of the New Military and its leader Chun Doo Hwan to take the political power in their control. Kim Dae Jung was arrested in March 1976 for his participation in the March First Declaration and released in December 1978. Since President Park's death seemingly yielded a power vacuum, opposition politicians paid more attention to come to power rather than thoroughly scrutinise the movement of the New Military and

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<sup>4</sup> From a historical-comparative perspective, South Korea achieved the economic development while experiencing the military authoritarianisms as often found in other third-world developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s (Cumings 1989). For comparative analyses/perspectives of South Korea's democratisation with other countries such as in Latin America, see Choi Jang-Jip (2012, 82), Cumings (1989), and also Kim Nyung (1996, 25-28).

<sup>5</sup> For detailed introduction, see the web page of the UNESCO Memory of the World: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-4/human-rights-documentary-heritage-1980-archives-for-the-may-18th-democratic-uprising-against-military-regime-in-gwangju-republic-of-korea/>

consolidate a democratic transition from the authoritarian regime. In the meantime, Chun Doo Hwan became an acting director of the KCIA (Korean Central Intelligence Agency) in April 1980. Since then, the New Military pushed forward an enterprise of seizing power of the government by determining to repress political ferment and democratic protests from major dissident groups such as workers, students, and opposition politicians (KDF Research Centre 2010, 61-62; Jung Hae-Gu 2011). On 17 May 1980, a day before the Gwangju Uprising, the New Military arrested Kim Dae Jung on alleged charges of subverting the government and instigating the public and later sentenced to death in September 1980. After release by a stay of execution in December 1982, he went to the United States for treatment and worked for the recovery of South Korean democracy there until February 1985.<sup>6</sup>

Although the Chun Doo Hwan regime developed the Appeasement Policy from 1983, activities of major dissident politicians were suppressed. Against the Chun government's repression, another prominent political leader Kim Young Sam waged an indefinite hunger strike for democratisation on 18 May 1983, the third anniversary of the Gwangju Uprising. Kim Young Sam's hunger strike received international media attention and also became an opportunity to form a united front of dissenting politicians. In the US, Kim Dae Jung also supported this and expressed solidarity with Kim Young Sam's protest (KDF Research Centre 2010, 214-15).

#### **4.2.2 Generating Opportunities, Sustaining the Movement**

Based on this historical background of the early 1980s explained thus far, this section examines how the Chun Doo Hwan government had coped with religious organisations during the 1980s. The next section (4.3) looks at the relationship

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<sup>6</sup> Life Chronology of President Kim Dae Jung, from the website of Kim Dae Jung Presidential Library and Museum, Yonsei University (accessed 22 April 2016):

<http://www.kdjlibrary.org/President/yearbook>



between the Gwangju Uprising and the activities of the Korean Catholic Church and the ways with which Korean Catholicism engaged and responded to the phase of societal and political change after May 1980. Then the chapter examines the incident of the 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan, which is one of the most critical junctures in the context of the early 1980s Korean democracy movement. Explicating the significance of this incident is necessary since through this opportunity the Korean Catholic Church came to rebuild its collective-dissident identity opposing with the authoritarian Chun Doo Hwan regime for Catholic priest Choi Gi-sik was arrested for providing a hideout for the arsonists in Busan after the incident. After the arson and the arrest of priest Choi, the Korean Catholic Church came to make a unified dissenting voice again for the Chun regime's autocratic measure for the incident and the denouncement of the Catholic Church's engagement with the arson violating the positive law. It is important that the opposition of the Korean Catholic Church with the Chun government's undemocratic rule related with the arson incident was made from existing dissident Catholic sectors such as the CPAJ to the top hierarchy of the Church such as the Permanent Council of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Korea (CBCCK). Through this opportunity, the Korean Catholic Church could establish an important momentum to continue and sustain their dissident movement in the context where the Korean democracy movement after the 1980 Gwangju Uprising was in relative stagnation. After examining the 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan, the chapter (section 4.5) moves on to explore how Myeongdong Cathedral commemorated the Gwangju Uprising and symbolised the longing of the people for democratisation in the context of the 1980s democracy movement.

Sociologist Kang In-Cheol (2013b) characterised of the policy of the Chun Doo Hwan regime for the three main religions: Buddhism, Catholicism and Protestantism as ambivalent, combining benefits and suppressions. Since 1981, the state began to financially support high schools established by religious foundations. The income tax deduction system for donations to religious organisations was also first introduced in the same year. In 1982, the Chun Doo

Hwan government also started to entrust the management of public social welfare organisations to religious institutions. A temporary legislative body, the Legislative Council for National Preservation and Defence (Gukga Bowi Ipbeop Hoeui), which was established in October 1980, had eight members from religious circles. The number of religious figures is notable since it was the same with the number of people from judicial circles. Five out of eight members from religious circles were from Christianity; three from Protestantism and two from Catholicism (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 72-82). With regard to Korean Catholicism, the 1980s was the period when some major celebrations in the history of Korean Catholicism were held, which included the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of the Joseon diocese in 1981, the canonisation of 103 Korean Martyr Saints with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of church establishment in 1984, and the 44<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress in Seoul, 1989. The Chun Doo Hwan regime “actively supported” these major Catholic events to have a good relationship with the hierarchy of the Korean Catholic Church so that the episcopate would not stand in the side of opposition against the regime (Kim Nyung 1997, 697).

On the other hand, the Chun regime amplified oppressive measures to control these these major religious organisations. For instance, the government intervened in the internal conflict of the Korean Buddhist Jogye Order in 1980. In this process, the authorities arrested about 2,000 Buddhist monks and beat, tortured them to redeem the illegitimacy of the regime’s military authoritarianism. With regard to Christianity, 149 unlicensed Protestant theological seminaries were closed down in the 1980s (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 75-76) and there was a serious threat and attack on prominent dissident Protestant leader Reverend Park Hyeong-gyu (Shin Hong-beom 2010, 421-24).

Considering the aftermath of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, the ambivalent attitude of the Chun Doo Hwan regime on religious organisations might have caused from a reason that the authoritarian government would not want to damage the legitimacy of their seising power any more. In particular, the Chun regime’s cautious alliance with Korean Catholicism above might well be attributed to the salient activism of dissident Catholics dating back from the

1970s of the Yushin period (e.g. Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 34-35). In the early 1980s, under the situation where any dissenting voice was severely suppressed and silenced by the autocratic rule of the Chun Doo Hwan after the Gwangju Uprising (KDF Research Centre 2010, 27), the Korean Catholic Church could continue to build and sustain its dissident identities and interests for the democracy movement particularly through its engagement with the following measures of the 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan (section 4.4). It appears plausible that the Catholic engagement for the arson incident was caused from the fact that a Catholic Bishop was (as similarly observed in the case of Bishop Chi Hak-sun in Chapter 3) involved and arrested for helping the arsonists. However, the Korean Catholic Church's opposition against authoritarianism of the Chun Doo Hwan regime in the early 1980s should not be underestimated in the context of the Korean democracy movement of the time.

As Paul Chang highlights, “movements can progress in a highly repressive context.” The obvious strong coercion and repression by the authoritarian state does not always guarantee the successful control of the dissident movement against it. The democracy movement can evolve even in the midst of intense suppression by the authoritarian government (P. Chang 2015, 199). When the democracy movement organisations in general were in stagnation for the shock and ripple effects of the Gwangju Uprising and subsequent repression by the Chun government, the Korean Catholic Church was a rare movement organisation that could remain and function as an effective organised dissenting voice in the early 1980s. Focusing on the role of few actors—mainly students and workers (e.g. Lee Nam-hee 2007 and Koo Hagen 2001), many studies on the Korean democracy movement have missed to note the roles of diverse movement actors such as a religious sector that facilitated the evolution and progress of the overall democracy movement, which is crucial to discern significant mechanisms that moved the democratisation project of South Korea in the 1970s and 1980s (Kim Byung-Kook 2011, 5). The significance of the role played by the Korean Catholic Church in the early- and mid-1980s was being the “durable relational base” (Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013, 10) that adjusted the scale of the

democracy movement through generating and sustaining opportunities for further protest events in the time when overall dissident movement against the Chun Doo Hwan regime was in stagnation.

In this scheme, following sections mainly explore the Korean Catholic Church's confrontation with the Chun government regarding the 1982 arson at the US Cultural in Busan and the mediating role of the events developed in and around Myeongdong Cathedral in the mid-1980s that represented and propagated the need of democratisation. As a result, this chapter argues that this continuum of dissidence by the Korean Catholic Church in the early- and mid-1980s was a critical driving force that brought the evolution of the Korean democracy movement in the 1980s that came to culminate in the June Uprising of 1987 (Chapter 5).

A significant spatiality that emerges from the investigations of Chapter 4 is a scale of the Korean democracy movement that is related to areas, boundaries, and phases of the movement development (Jessop et al. 2008; Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013; Park Bae-Gyoon 2012). What this chapter shows is that through the role of the Korean Catholic Church related to the incident of the 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan and the media-protest events held in and around Myeongdong Catholic Church in the mid-1980s—such as video screenings of the Gwangju Uprising, facilitated scales of further movement developments to be created and diffused so that the potentiality and vitality of the 1980s social movements could be sustained in the time of movement stagnation after the 1980 Gwangju Uprising.

The contribution of this study thus points to the findings from this spatial constitution of the South Korean democracy movement. Even though the early- and mid-1980s period (specifically during 1980-1982 and 1985-1986) may seem as the period of movement stagnation from the actor-oriented analytical viewpoint, moving beyond this approach to a spatial examination allows scholars be able to observe the overlooked evolution of the democratisation movement (Kim Byung-Kook 2011) that shaped by the spatial dynamics developed in and around Myeongdong Cathedral. The spatial examination of the Korean

democracy movement through a lens of Myeongdong Catholic Church enables researchers to observe the Korean case of democratisation from the perspective of key factors and mechanisms for the emergence and development of social movements—mobilisation (Chapter 3); building collective identities, interests, and resources (Chapter 4); and networking, diffusing the movement (Chapter 5). Thus this research aims to bring an epistemological turn of analytic perspective to investigate the Korean democracy movement to a spatial framework. Then as a corollary, this spatial perspective will account for developments of collective resistance (Chapter 3), processes of the evolution of the movement (Chapter 4), and connections and disconnections between movement actors/participants (Chapter 5) in the case of the South Korean democracy movement. As a result, this study contributes to the growing literature that problematises the critical constituting role of space that shapes contentious politics and social movements (Miller et al. 2013; Jessop et al. 2008). Therefore, moving beyond the actor-oriented framework, the chapters of this study will explain the “relational interdependencies” of important powers, components, and intersecting elements of the Korean democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s (Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013, 5).

### **4.3 Korean Catholicism and the Gwangju Uprising**

This part explores the role of the Korean Catholic Church responding to the Gwangju Uprising in May 1980. Through comparing and contrasting the activities of Korean Catholicism in the periods of before, during, and after the uprising, it is expected that an instrumental role of the Korean Catholic Church contributing to support and sustain the democracy movement of the 1980s would emerge more clearly. The section investigates the response of the Catholic Church to the Gwangju Uprising in three parts: the role of the pre-existing movement organisations, different opinions between the hierarchy and progressive groups

in the Korean Catholic Church, and some patterns of the follow-up measures after the uprising.

#### **4.3.1 Pre-Existing Movement Organisations**

The progressive Christian groups had already constituted a crucial membership in the democratisation movement organisations in the Gwangju region early from the 1970s (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 221; Hanguk Gatollik Nodong Cheongnyeonhoe 2009, 123-28). The social participant Korean Catholic organisations were also a notable part of this Christian movement sector. The Committee for Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of Gwangju, which was a crucial linking point that connected the progressive laity and priests, was founded back in May 1976. For the Protestant side, the Gwangju branch of the National Council of Churches in Korea (Gwangju Gidokgyo Yeonhaphoe) was established in June 1974. The Council of Social Mission (Sahoe Seongyo Hyeobuihoe) founded in April 1980, was an organisation that played a role of uniting the people in Gwangju's progressive Catholic and Protestant groups. The Catholic membership of this council included the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of Gwangju, the Catholic Farmers Association (CFA), and the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (JOC), with three other Protestant groups. Furthermore, the Gwangju branch of Amnesty International Korea (founded in December 1977) also played a role of bringing together the movement groups of the Protestants, Catholics, and chaeya dissidents in Gwangju. Until December 1979, the executive team of the Gwangju branch of Amnesty International Korea included three Catholic priests out of fifteen team members (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 221-24; GSPI Archive Vol. 4, 55).

Prior to the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, the Gwangju JOC had done the significant work of organising democratic labour unions in local companies of the region (Hanguk Gatollik Nodong Cheongnyeonhoe 2009, 168). The activities of

the Gwangju JOC during the uprising were also crucial. The Korean joc writes about their work during the Gwangju Uprising as below:

The Gwangju JOC was doing an important task of reporting the truth about the Gwangju incident from the inception of the resistance. Because businesses closed from 19th May onwards, the JOC members were responsible for printing materials and it helped wherever it was needed. After the Gwangju Catholic Centre was shut down, Gwangju YWCA became the office of the measure committee instead. In this office, many Gwangju JOC members produced hand-written posters, distributed flyers, and made black ribbons with fabrics.

In his log on 25th May, priest Kim Seong-yong described the role of “ladies he knows well” whom he met in the Provincial Hall during the resistance. Most of them were champions of the Gwangju JOC. Upon the request of Kim, they namely, Jeong Hyang-ja, Kim Seong-ae, Yun Cheong-ja, Shin Yang-hui, and Kim Sun-hui, cooked for the resistance stationed at the Provincial Hall. [...] Jeong Suk-gyeong (Benedicta) worked with a nursing team from Chonnam National University Hospital to organise blood donation, perform first aid and emergency treatment whilst victims with severe injuries were sent to the hospital. Nurse Jeong Suk-gyeong and leader of the nursing team Jo Su-ja, quietly cared for the wounded like the “hand and foot of Jesus Christ” without attracting attention to themselves.

Other JOC members like, Hong Sun-gwon (Pius) was killed by government troops when defending the Provincial Hall, as a member of the citizen militia. Hong Sun-gwon joined the North-east section of the Gwangju JOC while working at a car wash, upon graduation from Gwangju Jeil High School in 1979. Even though he suffered slight handicap; with one arm shorter than the other due to an accident, Hong was remembered by many as a meek, diligent, and selfless person. He was part of the resistance in Gwangju Uprising from its early stage, accomplishing demanding and difficult tasks including, taking care of dead bodies. Jeong Hyang-ja compared Hong to a “living Jesus,” “while cleaning and dressing the decomposed bodies, I soon suffered from a splitting headache in 10 or 20 minutes but Hong Sun-gwon did the same job silently for an hour or two.” Hong “joined in the uprising working for cooking, blood transfusion, and so on in the Provincial Hall” together with other JOC members. He “was shot by the

martial law troops at Sangmugwan, in front of the Provincial Hall on 27 May, 1980.” (Hanguk Gatollik Nodong Cheongnyeonhae 2009, 170-72)

As indicated above, the members of the Gwangju JOC were crucial organisational resources from the beginning stage of the Gwangju Uprising to development to the end of the protest on 27 May 1980. These pre-existing Christian movement organisations including the Gwangju JOC and other Catholic figures culminated in the establishment of the Namdong Catholic Church Settlement Committee (NCCSC: Namdong Seongdang-pa Suseup Daechaek Wiwonhoe) on 22 May. The NCCSC was also significant for establishing the Dissident Figures Settlement Committee (DFSC: Jaeya Insa Suseup Wiwonhoe) on 25 May (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 228-31). The DFSC was the one with which merged the citizen’s Settlement Committee with students, intellectuals, and chaeya figures (Choi Jung-Gie 2004, 8; see also NCCCK Archive Vol. 6, 172-73; Lewis 2002, 45). Between 25-26 May, the DFSC stayed together with the leadership of the uprising (Hangjaeng Jidobu) in the Provincial Hall where the final struggle of the Gwangju Uprising against the martial law military was fought. Nineteen out of twenty five members of the Dissident Figures Settlement Committee (DFSC) were the people from Namdong Catholic Church. The chairman and spokesperson (priest Kim Seong-yong) of the DFSC were also from Namdong Catholic Church (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 228-33; see also Lewis 2002, 28-29). On 25 May, the DFSC promulgated a statement to then President Choi Gyu-ha, demanding the apology and compensation of the government for the state violence in Gwangju (NCCCK Archive Vol. 6, 172-73). In the morning of 26 May, seventeen protesters staying in the Provincial Hall carried out the so called death march (jugeum-ui haengjin), walking unarmed towards the front where confronting with the armed martial law troops (Na Khan-chaeh 2013, 45-47).

The Archdiocese of Gwangju was a pivotal part of the pre-existing Catholic organisation which helped civilians in the uprising. The office of the Archdiocese of Gwangju was located in the Catholic Centre in front of Geumnam Avenue, which became a ferocious battlefield during the Gwangju Uprising. On 30 June 1980, the priests of the Archdiocese of Gwangju promulgated a report on the



truths and reality of the Gwangju Uprising. Then the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) presented the statement supporting the report of the Archdiocese of Gwangju and pointing out the brutal violence of the government and the martial law troops during the uprising (GSPI Archive Vol. 4, 67). A neighbouring Jeonju diocese also worked to help civilians in Gwangju during the uprising and the Archdiocese of Gwangju (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 241-43; GSPI Archive Vol. 4, 59-61).

The related Catholic priests to the Gwangju Uprising started to be arrested after the incident. Nine priests from the Archdiocese of Gwangju were arrested (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 14). The priests of the Archdiocese of Seoul: Oh Tae-sun, Yang Hong, Kim Taek-am, An Chung-seok, Jang Deok-pil and nun Jeong Yang-suk who endeavoured to publicise the truths of the uprising both nationally and internationally were charged with disseminating "false" news and arrested by the New Militray. Priest Kim Seong-yong of Namdong Catholic Church in Gwangju, who was a main figure in the Namdong Catholic Church Settlement Committee (Namdong Seongdang-pa Suseup Daechaek Wiwonhoe) and the Dissident Figures Settlement Committee (Jaeya Insa Suseup Wiwonhoe) during the uprising<sup>7</sup> was sentenced to fifteen years and put in solitary confinement (Yoon Seon-Ja 2002, 248-49; NCCCK Archive Vol. 8, 832; see also Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 244-45).

There was support from overseas Catholic organisations as well to spread the news of the Gwangju Uprising. On 6 June 1980, the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Japanese Catholic Church translated and circulated "The Torn Flag" (Chijeojin Gitpok), the news material on the Gwangju Uprising (Seo Joong-Seok 2012, 201; see also NCCCK Archive Vol. 6, 322-32). On 10 June 1980, the Korean Catholic clergy, nuns and monks based in Rome sent a statement of support to the Archdiocese of Gwangju. On 16 June of the same year, the American Catholic Church sent a letter in the name of the President (John R. Quinn) of the United States Catholic Conference and National Conference of

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<sup>7</sup> For memoir of the Gwangju Uprising by priest Kim Seong-yong, see Youn Kong-hi et al. (1989, 45-66).

Catholic Bishops to Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan and Archbishop Youn Kong-hi, mentioning the support of the American Catholic Church for the protection of human rights of the Korean Catholic Church (GSPI Archive Vol. 4, 63).

Historian Yoon Seon-Ja viewed that the active participation of the Archdiocese of Gwangju during and after the uprising was rather an isolated one. In Yoon's assessment, responses and measures from Catholic organisations and dioceses other than the Archdiocese of Gwangju and the Jeonju diocese were inactive or insignificant (2002, 236-39). In the account of Yoon Seon-Ja, these different responses of the Korean Catholic Church towards the Gwangju Uprising can be explained as caused by the structural characteristics of Korean Catholicism. As Yoon put it "the political orientations of parishes can be different according to the attitudes of prelates, and even in the same parish, the political tendencies can change in different periods" (Yoon Seon-Ja 2002, 240). It is right that some Catholic priests joined in the supporting camp of Chun Doo Hwan's New Military. Two priests from the Archdiocese of Daegu: Lee Jong-heung and Jeon Dal-chul joined in the New Military's Legislative Council for National Preservation and Defence (Gukga Bowi Ipbeop Hoeui), which was established in October 1980 (GSPI Archive Vol. 4, 27).

Still however, when assessing the role of the Korean Catholic Church in the early 1980s democracy movement, the social and political context of the periods during the Gwangju Uprising and the consecutive harsh repression of the Chun Doo Hwan regime on dissidence in the early 1980s (KDF Research Centre 2010, 26-27; Cumings 2005, 382-85) must be considered. Under this nearly unprecedented strong coercion by the authoritarian regime in the post-1945 period, the networked, organisational collective efforts by the Archdiocese of Gwangju, the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Korean Catholic Church (CJP), the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ), the Archdiocese of Seoul, and other Catholic parish churches (GSPI Archive Vol. 4, 59-70; 360-70; Gwangju Gwangyeoksi 5-18 Saryo Pyeonchan Wiwonhoe 2009) were vital to sustain the democracy movement in the early 1980s period after the Gwangju Uprising. In this period, even since South Korean lawyers were reluctant to

defend the cases of the people related to the Gwangju Uprising, the Korean Catholic Church sought ways to support the arrested people related to the Gwangju incident (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 16).

Organisational resources play a key role in sustaining the durability of social movements in contentious politics (Goodwin and Jasper 2015, 155-58). The role of the Korean Catholic Church that contributed to maintaining the dissident movement in the early- and mid-1980s against the autocratic rule of the Chun Doo Hwan regime when the overall democracy movement was in serious stagnation after brutally quelling the Gwangju Uprising needs to be understood in the continuum of resistance before and during the events in Gwangju 1980. The present Chapter 4 is showing and will demonstrate in further sections that the role of the Korean Catholic Church in and the impact of the religious spatial politics of Myeongdong Cathedral on the early- and mid-1980s democracy movement were to sustain the vitality of opposition against the authoritarianism of the Chun government and to continuously mediating and disseminating the aspirations of the people towards democratisation. Although Chapter 4 mainly explains the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral after the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, the investigation on the relational dynamics between the Korean Catholic Church and Gwangju Uprising provides a link to understand how Korean Catholicism could play a role of sustaining the democracy movement in the early 1980s, especially after the 1980 Gwangju Uprising until the Appeasement Policy of the Chun Doo Hwan regime in 1983 (Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 36).

As explored in the beginning of this section (4.3.1), one of the main factors that enabled the Korean Catholic Church continue to engage with the dissident movement before, during and after the Gwangju Uprising was its well-structured organisational resources compared to other movement sectors. The pre-existence of the Gwangju JOC, the Archdiocese of Gwangju, and the systematic network of local parish churches was decisive that made the role of the Korean Catholic Church in the Gwangju Uprising effective and facilitated sustaining the democracy movement in the early 1980s after the uprising (KDF Research Centre 2010, 494-96; Youn Kong-hi et al. 1989; Jung Ho-Gi 2013). The fact that the

inaugural president of the May 18 Memorial Foundation (5·18 Ginyeom Jaedan, established in 1994) was Catholic priest Pius Cho Cheol-hyun reflects the significant role of Korean Catholicism in the Gwangju Uprising and the 1980s Korean democracy movement.<sup>8</sup> Benefited by these organisational resources, the Korean Catholic Church could have become an exclusively crucial movement sector in the opposition against the Chun Doo Hwan regime's authoritarianism (specifically between 1980 and 1982, until the Appeasement Policy in 1983) in the Cheonam region during the Gwangju Uprising and beyond Gwangju after the uprising (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 9; Gwangju Gwangyeoksi 5·18 Saryo Pyeonchan Wiwonhoe 2009).

#### **4.4 The Arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan**

The Chun Doo Hwan regime's severe repression of the popular uprising in Gwangju and coercion through an apparatus such as Samcheong Education Troops for the nominal reason of eradicating the "social evil" caused stagnation of the democracy movement between 1980 and 1983 (Kim Ho-Ki and Jung Hae-Gu 2009, 9-10; KDF Research Centre 2010, 28; Jung Hae-Gu 2011).

Although the Korean Catholic Church was also influenced by this strong repression by the Chun regime, its dissident voice was not totally silenced in the early 1980s as examined in the previous section (4.3). Before the Gwangju Uprising in May, the Korean college of Bishops promulgated a statement on the current state of affairs asking for a democratic change of the power of the New Military. Right after the uprising on 18 May, the Permanent Council of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea disseminated correspondence asking for special prayers for Gwangju. Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan, priests of the Gwangju Archdiocese, and the CPAJ also jointed in the movement to publicise the facts

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<sup>8</sup> See website of May 18 Memorial Foundation in Gwangju:  
<http://www.518mf.org/sub.php?PID=060303> (accessed 24 May 2016)

and truth of the New Military's brutal suppression for the Gwangju Uprising (Kim Nyung 1997, 690-91).

Korean Catholicism, however, was also in the position where it was supposed to pay attention to the newly established military government of Chun Doo Hwan since in the early 1980s notable ecclesiastical events such as the 150th anniversary of establishment of the Joseon Korea diocese in 1981, the canonisation of 103 Korean Martyr Saints with the 200th anniversary of church establishment in 1984, and the first papal visit to Korea in 1984 were scheduled. To successfully hold these major Catholic events, the Korean Catholic Church, especially the "top hierarchy", was not be fully capable of making dissenting voices for democratisation against the Chun Doo Hwan government in the 1980s (KDF Research Centre 2010, 503-504).

#### **4.4.1 Reconstruction of Contention**

It was this dialectical context of protest and cooperation that the Korean Catholic Church was positioned when the 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan took place. After the United States was found as supporting the New Military for quelling the 1980 Gwangju Uprising by authorising the deployment of the military troops that were under the US control, anti-American sentiment became fierce in South Korea (Lee Nam-hee 2007). The 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan was a representative incident that the antagonism against the US intervention on South Korean affairs was evidently expressed.

In the situation where the Korean democracy movement as a whole was in a relative stagnation in the early 1980s, the arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan and the Catholic engagement with it played a role of reconstructing collective identities and interests of the democratisation movement participants that clarified who fought with whom (authoritarian rule) for what (democracy).

On 18 May in 1982, five students of Kosin University, led by Mun Bu-sik and Kim Eun-suk set fire to the American cultural centre in Busan asking for the

independence of Korean politics from the US influence and denouncing the autocratic rule of the Chun Doo Hwan regime. Due to the fire at the centre, one university student visitor was killed and a few others were injured (KDF Research Centre 2010, 199-200; Scott-Stokes 1982).

The burning of the US Cultural Centre became an incident which caused an unintended collision between the Korean Catholic Church and the Chun government. After the incident, the leading figures of the arson Mun Bu-sik and Kim Eun-suk, placed on the wanted list throughout the country, went to priest Choi Gi-sik of the Wonju diocese asking for help. Priest Choi discussed the matter with priest Ham Se-woong. Priest Ham contacted the presidential senior secretary regarding the self-surrender of Mun Bu-sik and Kim Eun-suk. Then Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan had a meeting with President Chun Doo Hwan and received a word from Chun that the authorities would make favourable arrangements for the arsonists. However, after Mun Bu-sik and Kim Eun-suk delivered themselves to the police on 1 April 1982, the authorities brutally tortured the arrested people. The Chun Doo Hwan regime also arrested priest Choi Gi-sik for offering a hideout for the arsonists and strongly condemned the Korean Catholic Church for supporting anti-government agitators to develop subversive activities. The press supported the position of the Chun government denouncing the Korean Catholic Church's engagement with the dissident movement (KDF Research Centre 2010, 200-202; GSPI Archive Vol. 5, 22-23; Han Sang-bong 2010).

The arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan was significant both for the Korean Catholic Church's role in the struggle for democracy and for the wider dissident movement organisations against the Chun Doo Hwan regime. First, the burning of the US Cultural Centre and the Korean Catholic Church's support for the arsonists and following opposition with the Chun government became instrumental to rebuild the dissident identity of the Korean Catholic Church in the context of the early 1980s democratisation movement. As stated before, for Korean Catholicism, early 1980s was an important period in terms of holding its major ecclesiastical events. Before the arson in Busan, between 1981 and 1982,

the Korean Catholic Church did not voice conspicuous dissent against the Chun regime while holding the 150th anniversary of establishment of the Joseon Korea diocese in 1981 and preparing for the 200th anniversary of the Korean Catholic Church establishment in 1984. After priest Choi Gi-sik was arrested for harbouring the arsonists, the Korean Catholic Church criticised with one voice on the measure by the Chun Doo Hwan government. Not just social-participant organisations and priests such as the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) and priests Chi Hak-sun and Ham Se-woong, but the top hierarchy of the Korean Catholic Church such as the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (CBCK) also joined this opposition with the Chun regime (Han Sang-bong 2010; KDF Research Centre 2010, 201-202; GSPI Archive Vol. 5, 49-53).<sup>9</sup>

When the arson incident became controversial inside the Korean Catholic Church, the Permanent Council of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (CBCK) promulgated a statement on the matter of the arrest of priest Choi Gi-sik (GSPI Archive Vol. 5, 113-14; Han Sang-bong 2010). According to the statement from the CBCK, Korean Catholicism perceived the Chun regime's accusation of the Catholic Church as the hotbed of subversive organisations as a threat to the Korean Catholic Church as a whole. The CBCK also pointed out the importance of the law of the Church and conscience, not bringing a charge against the suspects in need of help. In the report, the CBCK urged adherents to follow the law of conscience in one's faith even risking possible sacrifice for that. In this line, the martyrdom history of the early Korean Catholic Church and the people who were punished under the Nazi in Germany for following their law of conscience were mentioned. It is particularly noticeable that the CBCK, highest decision-making organisation of the Korean Catholic Church, was confrontational with the Chun Doo Hwan regime when they even question the legitimacy of the state. They contended one government or regime could not be equal with the nation-state.

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<sup>9</sup> Similarities observed here in the case of the arson in Busan and the 1974 arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun in terms of the Korean Catholic Church came to make a unified dissent against the government's suppression on the priests.

The CBCK also argued that the state was not always necessarily come before the religion (GSPI Archive Vol. 5, 114-15).

This confrontational attitude of the Korean Catholic Church to the Chun Doo Hwan regime provided a critical momentum for the Church to rebuild its contentious stance as a possible and effective dissident organisation armed with discursive weapon of Christian social thought and institutional networks of local churches. Moreover, since the media widely reported on this conflict between the Catholic Church and the Chun government sparked by the arson in Busan (mainly denouncing much the Korean Catholic Church accusing them of promoting communist ideologies), Korean Catholicism again came to the fore of national attention for its engagement with the critical political affairs (GSPI Archive Vol. 5, 23-26; Han Sang-bong 2010; KDF Research Centre 2010, 203).

Second, the arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan played a role of publicising the intervention and responsibility of the United States for brutally quelling the 1980 Gwangju Uprising. Mun Bu-sik, who was sentenced to death for this leading role in the arson, stated the following on US-South Korea relations:

I hope that my death will be turning point in US-South Korea relations, and that the US government will no longer force the Third World countries to maintain the Cold War system, but will support and help her friends to build a democratic society and a unified country. [...] The relationship of both countries should be based on equal friendship, not vertical control (cited in Lee Nam-hee 2007, 116-17).

Although the anti-Americanism emerged after the Gwangju Uprising, that response and perception were rather limited to the direct democracy movement participants and groups. But as the arson incident came to receive national media attention, the responsibility of the US in the Gwangju Uprising in effect began to be critically questioned in the public realms of South Korea. Thus, after the 1982 Busan arson, the agenda of the South Korean democracy movement expanded to problematise the matter of independence from the imperialist powers such as the US (KDF Research Centre 2010, 202-203; GSPI Archive Vol. 5, 23; Lee Nam-hee



2007, 111). In the context of when the dissident movement of the early 1980 was in rather stagnation after the brutal suppression of the Gwangju Uprising, the 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan was a major momentum paving the way for revitalisation of the democracy movement, such as the the reinforcement of the student-worker alliance (nohak yeondae), after Chun Doo Hwan's Appeasement Policy in 1983 (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 99-101). Along this line of the democracy movement development expanded to include anti-Americanism in the early 1980s, the Korean Catholic Church again came to stand in the vanguard of dissenting with the autocratic rule of the Chun government (Kim Nyung 1996, 302-303).

As stated, what was important for Korean Catholicism with regard to the 1982 incident of the arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan was that the Church came to restructure its institutional-collective interests as a religious organisation that has a history of long dissidence, that is, as the Korean Catholic Church itself emphasises, 200-year history of martyrdom since its introduction to the Korean peninsula<sup>10</sup>, against the repressive rule of the Korean government.

On 26 April 1982, the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Korean Catholic Church (CJP) held a special mass at Myeongdong Cathedral for priest Choi Gi-sik charged with offering a hideout for the arsonists. In the mass where priests across the country, Catholic laity, and the general public gathered, Archbishop Youn Kong-hi clarified the arrest of priest Choi could not be approached from a viewpoint of individual. In his sermon, Archbishop Youn stated that the arrest of priest Choi should be dealt as the matter of the Korean Catholic Church as a whole and questioned the intention of the Chun Doo Hwan regime to alienate the Catholic Church from Korean society by denouncing priest Choi as the background of the Busan arson and Korean Catholicism. Then, emphasising again the struggling history of martyrdom of the Korean Catholic Church since its establishment, Archbishop Youn Kong-hi called for the unity and solidarity of the Catholics on the present hardship of the Korean Catholic Church

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<sup>10</sup> For detailed accounts of the martyrdom of the Korean Catholic Church, see Yoon Mingu (2009) and Sebastian Kim and Kirsteen Kim (2015, 49-53).

(GSPI Archive Vol. 5, 54; 130-35). As Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont rightly pointed out, the “existence of trust and shared identities contained in existing relational ties not only facilitates the spread of social movements, it also provides a durable relational base for sustainable mobilisations.” (2013, 10) By interpreting the Chun Doo Hwan regime’s measure on the arsonists in Busan and priest Choi Gi-sik as a confrontation between the government and the Korean Catholic Church, not just limited number of dissenting Catholic figures but the conservative hierarchy of Korean Catholicism also joined in opposition against the undemocratic rule of the Chun government and reconstructed its collective dissident identities and interests as an important movement organisation in the early 1980s democracy movement. In his study on the dialectics of state repression and the countermovement from dissidents in the South Korean democracy movement, sociologist Paul Chang showed that “movements can progress in a highly repressive context.” (P. Chang 2015, 199) As such, the Korean Catholic Church’s dissident voice against the measures of the Chun Doo Hwan regime on the arrested people for the 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan and priest Choi Gi-sik became an important opportunity for Korean Catholicism to continue to work as “a durable relational base” for further possible mobilisations and protests after the severely oppressive period of the early 1980s after the Gwangju Uprising (Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013, 10).

#### **4.5 The Power of Collective Memory**

In his lecture for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000, Kim Dae Jung recalled the time of hardship when he was sentenced to death for an alleged rebellion conspiracy by the military regime just before the Gwangju Uprising in 1980.<sup>11</sup> Kim Dae Jung was released by a stay of execution in December 1982, and in the next year the

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<sup>11</sup> See Kim Dae Jung’s Nobel Lecture from the website of the Nobel Foundation: [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/2000/dae-jung-lecture.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2000/dae-jung-lecture.html)

Chun Doo Hwan government implemented the Appeasement Policy judging that their rule was stabilized and seeing the need of recovering the lack of legitimacy for their seising power. Between 1983 and 1984, the Chun government released hundreds of arrested dissidents, students, and intellectuals related with the democracy movement (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 104; KDF Research Centre 2010, 217-219). One of the most notable features of the democracy movement sectors around the period of the Appeasement Policy in 1983 was the reinforcement of the student-worker alliance. As widely accepted, the obvious alliance between students and labour was observed in the 1970s, especially after the death of worker-activist Jeon Tae-il in 1970 (Lee Nam-hee 2007, 218-21; Koo Hagen 2001). However, since the 1970s labour movement lacked networked organisations that could effectively protest against state repression on workers, the help and support of the Christian organisations such as JOC and Catholic Farmers Association (CFA), and the Urban Industrial Mission were pivotal to facilitate the worker's struggle in the 1970s (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 112-13; Lee Nam-hee 2007, 222-23; Cumings 2005, 376-77; Koo Hagen 2001).

After the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, the democracy movement of students and labour became more radicalised and violent as shown in the case of the 1982 arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan (Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 34-35; see also section 4.4 in this chapter). Furthermore, thinking direct political protests against injustice and violence of the regime would exert only limited impact on the actual change of the political and social system, resulting from their experience in the 1970s; student protesters started to leave university campuses and went to factories to organize the labour movement in actual workplaces. These university student intellectuals came to believe that "the principal agent of social change was the working class, and the most urgent task was to strengthen the labour movement." (Lee Nam-hee 2007, 237; see also Cumings 2005, 385).

After the Appeasement Policy of the Chun Doo Hwan government in 1983, the aforementioned alliance between students and workers, which was strengthened than that of the 1970s, could flourish in the early- and mid-1980s periods. The number of labour unions increased after 1983 and significant labour

protests were waged across the country between 1984 and 1985 (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 114-16; Lee Nam-hee 2007, 251-52). In the wake of a resurgence of the democracy movement which included the rise of a new opposition party, New Korea Democratic Party (Sinhanminjudang) and the return of Kim Dae Jung from the US in February 1985, the Chun regime again intensified repression on anti-government protests.

In terms of the time scale, the following sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 deals with the early-1980s after the Gwangju Uprising. And the section 4.5.3 mainly points to the period of the mid-1980s (especially between 1985-1986), the time which assessed by observers as another weakened period of the democracy movement in the 1980s (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 130-31; KDF Research Centre 2010, 272-73; Kim Ho-Ki and Jung Hae-Gu 2009, 11-12) due to the intensification of state coercion and violence against democratic movements that resurged after the Chun regime's Appeasement Policy.

Adopting the "evolutionary perspective" of social movements (Kim Byung-Kook 2011, 5; see also Koo Hagen 1993, 231-32; P. Chang 2015, 200-201), the present section 4.5 and Chapter 4 as a whole explore the progress of the South Korean democracy movement in the 1980s as a social and political continuum. To this approach, investigating the spatial politics developed around Myeongdong Cathedral in the early- and mid-1980s offers a useful lens to explore how the democracy movement had continued to work and evolve even under the conditions of strong authoritarianism after the Gwangju Uprising and the reintensification of harsh repression of the state between 1985 and 1986 after the Appeasement Policy. The present section 4.5 pays particular attention how commemorative events and media representations of the Gwangju Uprising contributed to sustaining the dissident movement and speaking to the participants and general public in the events about the longing of democratisation under the government's harsh oppression in the early- and mid-1980s.

Before delving into the politics of commemoration and representation on the Gwangju Uprising developed around Myeongdong Cathedral, the next section 4.5.1 examines two stories that manifests well the symbolic centrality of

Myeongdong Cathedral in the early 1980s after the Gwangju Uprising. The intention of exploring these cases is to show that the established status of Myeongdong Cathedral as a contentious sanctuary continued from the 1970s to the period after the Gwangju Uprising. And this historically evolved symbolic centrality as a religious social arena has connections with how the spatial politics of Myeongdong Cathedral in the 1980s by forms of commemoration and media representation could work as a social imaginary that disseminated the need of democratisation and sustained the resistiveness and vitality of the democracy movement in the early- and mid-1980s, that will be explored in sections 4.5.2 and 4.5.3.

#### **4.5.1 Symbolic Centrality**

In its relations to the Gwangju Uprising and democracy movement in the 1980s in general, Myeongdong Catholic Church was one of the symbolic, significant places for the people who were looking for a platform to speak about Gwangju and democracy. After the uprising, the martial law court sentenced the death penalty to five people among the arrested for participating in the incident. The families of the arrested people who were sentenced to death asked Archbishop Youn Kong-hi of the Archdiocese of Gwangju for help. The Committee for Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of Gwangju also made efforts to save the lives of the people who were verdicted of the death penalty. And all the Korean Catholic dioceses joined in campaigning for a petition for the life of the arrested people (Youn Kong-hi et al. 1989, 34).

The decision of the Supreme Court for the arrested related to the Gwangju Uprising was scheduled on 31 March 1981. One day before the Supreme Court's ruling, Archbishop Youn Kong-hi gave a sermon in the mass at Namdong Catholic Church in Gwangju. In his sermon, Archbishop Youn stated that "if anyone would be executed only for political reasons related to the Gwangju Uprising, it would be a grave error which could never be allowed." But the Supreme Court confirmed

the original verdict sentencing five people to death. When Archbishop Youn was leaving the Supreme Court after the decision, he heard the families of the arrested saying “We should go to Myeongdong Cathedral.” (Youn Kong-hi et al. 1989, 34-35) On the day of the verdict, the families of the arrested people went to Myeongdong Cathedral and waged a protest in the basement. As Archbishop Youn Kong-hi met the families the next morning in Myeongdong Cathedral, they were afraid of being taken out of the cathedral by the police. Soon the families went to the office of Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan with their luggage and took their seats. The families mentioned they chose Myeongdong Cathedral since they judged that there was no other definite help anywhere else after the decision of the Supreme Court (Youn Kong-hi et al. 1989, 35).

Archbishop Youn discussed the matter of the arrested who were sentenced to death with Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan. And they reached to conclusion of having a meeting with President Chun Doo Hwan (Youn Kong-hi et al. 1989, 35-37). On 1 April 1981, Archbishop Youn Kong-hi met Chun Doo Hwan. In this meeting, Archbishop Youn “pleaded for” an amnesty of the death-sentenced people. President Chun “did not show an immediate response” with a very stiff expression on his face. Then Chun Doo Hwan answered back with question, “How can we grant an amnesty for the people who killed the police?” Although Archbishop Youn became “pessimistic” about the outcome of the talk, he appealed again in the doorway before leaving, “I wish there would be no capital punishment this time.” Chun Doo Hwan firmly answered “If you were President, Archbishop, it wouldn’t work that way.” The families of the arrested people continued sit-in demonstrations in Myeongdong Cathedral until 3 April 1981. When Archbishop Youn suggested “Let us go back home and wait, since our opinions were delivered through various channels”, the families did not agree saying “We cannot wait any more from now. We must bring the matter to an end here at all rates.” On 3 April, there was an announcement on the radio that the death sentence of the five arrested people was reduced to life imprisonment (Youn Kong-hi et al. 1989, 36).

The fact that the families of the arrested people asked for the help from the Korean Catholic Church first demonstrates the amount of social trust that the general populace of the time had for Korean Catholicism to plea for their cases and the symbolic centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral as a public place to voice dissidence. Indeed, the social and political situation in the early 1980s after oppressing the Gwangju Uprising was sheer severity. The military regime attempted to systematically control and repress the people through state apparatuses such as Samcheong Education Troops, taking civilians and labour organisers into military training camps where these people were tortured and killed for the purpose of “purification” (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 82-86; Lee Nam-hee 2007, 46-47; Cumings 2005, 384). In the early- and mid-1980s, speaking of the Gwangju Uprising in public was something which required exceptional courage and risking one’s safety (Lewis 2002, 75; Lee Nam-hee 2007, 48). Even lawyers were reluctant to defend the people related to the Gwangju Uprising (Youn Kong-hi et al. 1989, 34). After the Gwangju Uprising, Chun Doo Hwan became the President of South Korea through an indirect election and the Fifth Republic (1981-1988) was newly established. Since Chun came to power, his regime started to manipulate various channels to control politics, the media, and labour to consolidate their seising power. Between July and August 1980, the military regime dismissed more than 700 journalists which were nearly 30 per cent of the whole number of South Korean journalists of the time for the purpose of “purge” and “purification”. Moreover, many labour unions were abolished and its organisers had to leave their positions in the early 1980s. The Chun government also banned or pressured activities of hundreds of politicians including eminent oppositional figures such as Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 78-95; Cumings 2005, 384-86; KDF Research Centre 2010, 151-69).

The example that the families of the arrested people related to the Gwangju Uprising appealed for the help of the Korean Catholic Church and chose Myeongdong Cathedral as their site of resistance against the court’s decision for the arrested people under the situation of strong coercion by the authoritarian Chun Doo Hwan government in the early 1980s after quelling the Gwangju

Uprising indicates the credibility of the Korean Catholic Church as a public organisation and the symbolic centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral as a place framed as contentious sanctuary for exoneration. This story also suggests an elastic characteristic of the Korean Catholic Church as a social movement organisation that could develop two-level protest tactics to achieve their goals. One is organising and joining in protests at a popular level; the other is capability of directly negotiating and confronting with the authorities. At a popular level, the Korean JOC and the Catholic Farmers Association (CFA) actively participated in the labour movement since the 1970s. The Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) had been in the vanguard of the Korean democracy movement throughout the 1970s and 1980s and still works as an influential social movement organisation in South Korean in present time. Also related with the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, the Archdiocese of Gwangju and the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Korean Catholic Church (CJP) played a significant role in the development and settlement processes of the uprising.

On the other hand, as observed in the present case, it is notable that the leadership of the Korean Catholic Church, figures such as Archbishop Youn Kong-hi and Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan had and could use available channels of communication for negotiation with the Chun Doo Hwan regime for the treatment of the arrested people for the Gwangju Uprising. As will be examined in the next Chapter 5, Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan and the priests of the Archdiocese of Seoul and Myeondong Cathedral engaged in the processes of the June Uprising in 1987 directly communicating and negotiating with the authorities of the Chun government that later come to influence shaping the developments of the movement.

If the story above explained the symbolic centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral which was externally demonstrated through the general public, the central status of the cathedral that was manifested internally within the Korean Catholic Church, that is, as the holy place for the whole Korean Catholic Church is also observed in the following case that the priests of the Archdiocese of Gwangju



regarded Myeongdong Cathedral as the central platform for freedom of speech and voicing dissidence within the Korean Catholic Church.

From 20 April to 8 May 1981, there was a workshop for all the priests of the Archdiocese of Gwangju. The priests of Gwangju had great discontent with the fact that the Gwangju Uprising was declared as “rebellion” and the Gwangju civilians as the “mob” even by the judicial branch. In this workshop, the priests of the Archdiocese of Gwangju discussed issues related to the Gwangju Uprising. Although the priests of Gwangju wanted to express their discontent in a more conspicuous, strong way, they were not sure about the stance of the diocesan Bishop, Archbishop Youn Kong-hi (Youn Kong-hi et al. 1989, 37). The priests decided to hold a mass for this and went to Myeongdong Cathedral. On 9 May 1981, the priests from Gwangju took their seats in a conference room of the Bishops’ house of the Archdiocese of Seoul in Myeongdong. On the same day, Archbishop Youn Kong-hi also went to Myeongdong for other occasion and met the priests from Gwangju there. Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Seoul, priest Gyeong Gap-ryong was “embarrassed and unpleasant” seeing the priests from Gwangju holding a sit-in demonstration at the diocesan curia of Seoul without consultation in advance (Youn Kong-hi et al. 1989, 37-38).

In the meeting with Archbishop Youn and Auxiliary Bishop Gyeong Gap-ryong, two priests from Gwangju spoke to Bishop Gyeong, “We want to offer a mass at Myeongdong Cathedral.” Bishop Gyeong answered “I would suggest you would take one important mass” and asked Archbishop Youn “Is this also what you want?” The decision was made to hold a noon mass at Myeongdong Cathedral on Sunday, 10 May 1981. Archbishop Youn Kong-hi gave a sermon for this mass. Different from before, in the sermon Archbishop Youn mentioned about the brutal killings of Gwangju civilians by martial law troops during the Gwangju Uprising. Directly speaking about these harsh repression and violence by the military in a sermon was because Archbishop Youn thought that it was necessary to provide more specific, truthful information about the Gwangju Uprising with the people, since the mass was open to all the people who were present and also Catholic adherents, not just confined to the Gwangju region. In

the mass, Archbishop Youn stated that “accusing civilians with false charges and imposing severe penalties on them are nothing but an intolerable national crime.” (Youn Kong-hi et al. 1989, 38)

The fact that the priests of the Archdiocese of Gwangju decided to offer a mass at Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul to appeal their discontent about the military regime’s repression and follow-up measures on the Gwangju Uprising shows the pivotal place of Myeongdong Cathedral inside the church and that the cathedral is regarded as a symbolic, prominent sanctuary of the whole Korean Catholic Church. Indeed, together with the history of martyrdom that has been emphasised as a foundational discourse of Korean Catholicism to endure and overcome both internal and external challenges imposed on the church, the symbolic centrality of Myeongdong Catholic Church has also been a steadfast belief and discourse that has oriented<sup>12</sup> the Korean Catholic Church as a religious organisation of morality (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 284) as well as an influential part of contemporary Korean civil society (cf. Clark 2007, 171-72). The power of this discourse that Myeongdong Cathedral as the centre of Korean Catholicism de facto comes to exert significant influence in terms of shaping the developments of the June Uprising in 1987, especially when Myeongdong Catholic Church emerges as a strategic camp for further protests in the early phase of the June Uprising (see Chapter 5, especially section 5.4). Moreover, considering the contextual background of the time that it was only one year after the Gwangju Uprising meaning strong coercion and control by the regime permeates Korean society, the fact that Archbishop Youn Kong-hi organised a special mass for Gwangju and directly criticised the military regime’s excessive suppression of the uprising through a sermon at Myeongdong Cathedral also indicates the symbolic centrality of the cathedral as a contentious sanctuary for the democracy movement that has been already noted in Chapter 3.

Sociologist Émile Durkheim asserts the pivotal role of symbol for lasting social memory to be powerful:

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<sup>12</sup> See the discussion of sociologist Otto Maduro where he explicates the “subjective dimension” of the “relative autonomy” of religion (Maduro 1982, 87).

Without symbols, moreover, social feelings could have only an unstable existence. Those feelings are very strong so long as men are assembled, mutually influencing one another, but when the gathering is over, they survive only in the form of memories that gradually dim and fade away if left to themselves. [...] But if the movement by which these feelings have been expressed eventually become inscribed on things that are durable, then they too become durable (Durkheim 1995, 232-33).

The present section examined the symbolic centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral as a religious social arena observed in the early 1980s right after the Gwangju Uprising. This symbolic centrality of the cathedral as a crucial platform for dissidence and exoneration, which had been evolved from the 1970 was instrumental for the spatial politics of commemoration and representation that will be explored in the next two sections to be effective for disseminating the need of democratisation and sustaining the vitality of the democracy movement in the early- and mid-1980s, particularly in the time of reintensification of strong state repression after the Appeasement Policy in 1983.

#### **4.5.2 Commemoration as Social Movements**

As anthropologist and first-hand observer of the 1980 uprising in Gwangju Linda Lewis points out, “the very act of commemorating 5.18 [Gwangju Uprising] was a form of protest against the government” during the 1980s while Chun Doo Hwan was in power. On the first anniversary of the uprising in May 1981, Bereaved Family Association for the Gwangju Uprising was prohibited to have commemorative events for the victims by Mangweoldong Cemetery (presently May 18th National Cemetery), and the leader of the Association was confined according to the National Security Law (gukga boanbeop). It is known that the people of Gwangju were allowed to visit Mangweoldong Cemetery by 1985, after five years since the uprising (Lewis 2007, 150; see also Lee Jae-eui 1999, 14-15).

Present section 4.5.2 examines the activities of commemoration of the Gwangju Uprising by the Korean Catholic churches in Gwangju and Seoul's Myeongdong Cathedral. The commemorative ceremonies and masses by these Catholic churches in Gwangju and Myeongdong not only were intimidating to the authorities of the Chun Doo Hwan regime since the commemoration itself was protest against the government but contributed to consolidating the spatial centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral as a site of democratic movements that continued to the next crucial phase of the Korean democracy movement in June 1987 (Chapter 5).

Indeed, after the Gwangju Uprising, the military regime watched the commemorative activities of the Archdiocese of Gwangju for the uprising with keen attention (Cheonjugyo Gwangju Daegyogu Jeongui Pyeonghwa Wiwonhoe 1985, 25-28). Since it was the time of martial law after the uprising, assemblies and rallies of civic groups were utterly banned when the Archdiocese of Gwangju and the Korean Catholic Church attempted and began to have masses for the Gwangju Uprising right after the uprising in May 1980 (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 22). The first mass for the Gwangju Uprising in Gwangju was held at Gyerimdong Catholic Church on 23 June 1980. For holding a special mass for the uprising, a few related priests were arrested. It was Namdong Catholic Church where the second mass by the Archdiocese of Gwangju to commemorate the Gwangju Uprising was scheduled to be held on 30 June 1980. As examined in previous sections, Namdong Catholic Church was one of the crucial sites over the developments of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising (see section 4.3.1). Priest Kim Seong-yong who was deeply involved in the uprising as a figure from the religious circles was also from Namdong Catholic Church (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 22-23). The authorities forcefully tried to inhibit the commemorative mass for the Gwangju Uprising at Namdong Catholic Church. The Chief Commissioner of the South Jeolla Province Police sent an official document to Archbishop Youn Kong-hi warning for holding a special mass for the Gwangju Uprising stating that the mass was against the martial law. The head of a northern branch office of the martial law command of South Jeolla Province sent a notice of warning to the

Archdiocese of Gwangju mentioning that the mass was not a “purely” religious event and has a political characteristic. Two hours before the mass at Namdong Catholic Church on 30 June, 1980, hundreds of the police restrained the adherents and completely blocked the entrance of the church. And due to this confrontation between the authorities and the priests and Catholics of Namdong Catholic Church the scheduled mass was not held on that day (Cheonjugyo Gwangju Daegyogu Jeongui Pyeonghwa Wiwonhoe 1985, 25-28). Even though it was Namdong Catholic Church that had much of significance for its role in the Gwangju Uprising, the fact that the New Military and the authorities kept a close watch on a religious event at a local Catholic Church and put many forces to disrupt the mass, inversely demonstrates well how interfering and intimidating the Korean Catholic Church was to the New Military which was making efforts to stabilise their rule in a transitional period of seising power after the 1980 Gwangju Uprising.

Since this event at in June 1980, the annual commemorative mass for the Gwangju Uprising continued to be held at Namdong Catholic Church until 1997 (Kang In-cheol 2013b, 248-49; Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 24-25). In the evening of 18 May 1981, the mass was celebrated at Namdong Catholic Church for the first anniversary of the Gwangju Uprising. About a thousand people including adherents, civilians, and students attended this memorial mass. There was tight security around the surroundings of the church as well as in various places of the city. In this mass, Archbishop Youn Kong-hi pointed out that it would not be right “to attribute the responsibility of the Gwangju Uprising only to the citizens.” The priests of the Archdiocese of Gwangju began a hunger strike after this memorial mass lamenting the victimisation of the citizens during the Gwangju Uprising and demanding the release of priest Kim Seong-yong and all the arrested people. The hunger strike was staged for four days until 21 May, 1981, and ended under the condition of receiving a response from the authorities (GSPI Archive Vol. 4, 365).

The commemorative masses for the Gwangju Uprising at the Catholic churches in the 1980s tend to be followed by violent conflicts with the police and authorities after the events. At the 1984 memorial mass for the Gwangju Uprising

at Namdong Catholic Church, about 1,000 adherents attended. And another four hundred adherents and the injured from the Gwangju Uprising waiting outside for not being able to enter the church, were dispersed for shooting of tear gas by the police (Gyeonghyang Japji July 1984, 155). In the 1985 mass, priest Ham Se-wong of the Archdiocese of Seoul gave a sermon at Namdong mentioning “we would not always be able to leave Gwangju behind” and “we should correct the historical errors.” (GSPI Archive Vol. 6, 359-60).

Myeongdong Cathedral was a significant place for this wave of commemoration for the Gwangju Uprising among other Korean Catholic churches. On 10 May, 1981, the memorial service for the Gwangju Uprising was held at the cathedral. The sermon was delivered by Archbishop Youn Kong-hi, with about 3,000 people attended. This commemoration at Myeongdong Cathedral is presumed to be the first main commemorative event for the Gwangju Uprising outside Gwangju (Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 248; GSPI Archive Vol. 4, 364).

On 26 April, 1982, the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Korean Catholic Church (CJP) organised a special mass for priest Choi Gi-sik who was arrested for his involvement in the arson at the US Cultural Centre in Busan and for others who were in suffering. This mass was led together with 180 priests from across the country. And about 4,000 people of adherents and the general public attended for this. In his sermon for the mass, Archbishop Youn Kong-hi criticised possible political manipulations of the regime attempting to ignore the basic rights of the people (GSPI Archive Vol. 5, 54; 134). On the same day, the CJP promulgated a statement “Our Views on the Recent Situation” and questioned the “morality of the political authorities and the press.” After this event, when about one thousand people of young people and citizens who attended the mass went into the street and waged a protest, the police indiscriminately battered the protest participants and arrested them (GSPI Archive Vol. 5, 54). Similar conflicts between the Catholic churches and the authorities that developed from Catholic religious rituals of commemoration into the political protests against the Chun Doo Hwan government continued afterward in Namdong Catholic Church in Gwangju and Myeongdong Cathedral

in the mid- and late-1980s (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 24-25; see also Cheonjugyo Gwangju Daegyogu Jeongui Pyeonghwa Wiwonhoe 1985).

If the commemorative protests of the Korean Catholic churches' were through forms of religious rituals, there were other forms of ritualistic protests in other movement sectors at cultural and popular levels in the 1980s. Madanggeuk is a drama that had both elements of Korean folklore and Western dramatic art. Through the efforts of intellectuals and student activists, madanggeuk became popular forms of social protest in the 1970s. The intention of creating and performing madanggeuk included reinventing and appropriating the traditional Korean cultural elements to articulate the social and political situations of the time. Started to be performed in the 1960s, madanggeuk became an influential and popular form of social movement and resistance in the Yushin period of the 1970s (Lee Nam-hee 2007, 187-203). Before Chun Doo Hwan's Appeasement Policy in 1983, madanggeuk was nearly the only opportunity for student activists to be mobilised and voice dissidence and criticism against the Chun regime through indirect ways (Kim Won 2011, 125). In the mid-1980 when the conflict between the Chun Doo Hwan government and democracy movement sectors heightened, madanggeuk practitioners attempted transforming madanggeuk into madanggut that had elements of shamanistic rituals to make the audience more participatory into the event of ritualistic protest (Lee Nam-hee 2007, 203).

Pungmul was another major popular form of ritual for struggles in the democracy movement of the 1980s. A tradition of Korean folk music, pungmul has elements of drumming, singing, and dancing. With its "vibrant soundscape", pungmul was normally used to infuse collective energy and enthusiasm into numerous protests against the autocratic rule of the regime in the 1980s (Howard 2015, 91; see also Kim Won 2011, 129-30).

It is similar that both commemorative religious ceremonies of the Korean Catholic churches and the popular rituals based on Korean folk culture by other dissident groups such as madanggeuk and pungmul accompanied demonstrations after these rituals had taken place. The protests after the rituals of both the Korean Catholic churches and the performance of madanggeuk and

pungmul often developed into violent conflicts between the practitioners of these rituals and the riot police (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 25; Lee Nam-hee 2007, 204-205; 210).

In terms of differences between the Catholic religious rituals of commemoration and the popular rituals of Korean folk culture, performances of rituals such as madanggeuk, madanggut or pungmul had features of improvisation, dispersion, and fitfulness (Lee Nam-hee 2007, 211; see also Kim Won 2011, 130-31). Moreover, although madanggeuk was nearly the only public platform where the practitioners could criticise the autocratic rule of the Chun Doo Hwan government before the Appeasement Policy in 1983, the performances of these popular rituals could do so only in metaphorical, indirect ways (Kim Won 2011, 125). Yet as demonstrated in this section, the Korean Catholic masses for the Gwangju Uprising in the early 1980s as religious ritual protests directly denounced the Chun regime's coercion and maladministration through public sermons, prayer services, and the following street demonstrations.

Distinctive to the case of the commemorative masses of the Korean Catholic churches, however, was that these Catholic rituals of protest had spatial bases such as well-known Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul and Namdong Catholic Church in Gwangju. Unlike the cases of other forms of popular rituals such as madanggeuk and pungmul, the dissenting Korean Catholics could utilise their church spaces as their strategic points to develop organised and sustained protests against the Chun Doo Hwan regime in the 1980s.

Scholar of collective memory Barry Schwartz argues that commemoration and its places sacralise the past. Commemoration invests the past with a characteristic of "commitment" (Schwartz 1997, 470). This point seems valid considering the fact that Namdong Catholic Church in Gwangju was designated as the 25th historic site of the Gwangju Uprising by the Historic Site Preservation Committee of Gwangju City (Gwangjusi Sajeokji Bojeon Wiwonhoe) in 2005.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See website of Gwangju Metropolitan City:

<http://tour.gwangju.go.kr/home/tour/info/history/003.cs?act=view&infoId=237&category=003&searchCondition=&searchKeyword=&pageIndex=5>



The Korean Catholic churches' rituals for commemorating the Gwangju Uprising in the early 1980s (particularly 1980-1983), when the vibrancy of other democracy movement sectors in general was constricted, was salient in terms of sustaining the dissident voice against the Chun Doo Hwan regime which attempted to wield absolute power to oppress its people. Key mechanism that enabled the dissenting Korean Catholics in the Archdiocese of Gwangju and Myeongdong Cathedral to sustain their protests was their spatial bases that provided strategic and immune (both socially and morally) sites to wage these ritualistic movements. The next section explores how the spatial politics of media representation developed at Myeongdong Catholic Church contributed to shaping the vitality and dynamics of the democracy movement in the mid-1980s especially when the dissident protests went through another period of turmoil (1985-1986) by the reintensification of strong state repression against the revitalisation of democratic protests after the Appeasement Policy in 1983.

#### **4.5.3 The Politics of Media Representation**

After the Appeasement Policy of the Chun Doo Hwan regime in 1983, the democracy movement resurged in various opposition groups. As a new oppositional party founded in January 1985, New Korea Democratic Party (Sinhanminjudang) earned a remarkable support from the people (29.26 per cent of the total vote) in the general election on 12 February 1985, with a slogan of the a direct presidential election. Together with Kim Dae Jung's return from his stay in the US just before the general election in February 1985, the rise of a newly established opposition party backed by the people power against the Chun Doo Hwan regime gave a positive momentum to the democracy movement camps in the mid-1980s (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 119-20).

Another notable feature of the democracy movement in the mid-1980s is the formation of the People's Movement Coalition for Democracy and Reunification (PMCDR: Minju Tongil Minjung Undong Yeonhap, Mintongryeon)

in March 1985. The PMCDR was an organisation that merged popular movement groups of young people, farmers, religious figures, and workers for democratisation with an association consist of more renowned dissident figures. Through its standing committee, the PMCDR could cover these multiple submovement sectors recruited individual members through local branch offices across the country. And through this well-developed and comprehensive organisational structure, the PMCDR played a role of the central force of the democracy movement in the mid-1980s that encompassed a wide range of dispersed movement sectors (KDF Research Centre 2010, 244-45; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 121-23).

Facing this reinvigoration of the dissident movement which included the discussion on a constitutional amendment of a direct presidential election, in 1985, the Chun Doo Hwan regime started to reintensify the suppression on this wave of opposition. In September 1985, the Chun government arrested a leading democracy activist and the head of the Democratic Youth Coalition (Minjuhwa Undong Cheongnyeon Yeonhap, Mincheongryeon) Kim Geun-tae. From 4 to 20 September 1985, being forcefully asked to confess that Kim Geun-tae himself was a communist, Kim went though severe water torture, beatings, and electric shock by the authorities under interrogation for more than two weeks. In 1985, the Chun Doo Hwan government attempted to repress the student movement sector through introducing the Campus Stability Law (hagwon anjeongbeop) but failed by the strong opposition from the democracy movement sectors. There was also a serious case of the human rights violation. It was found out that the police did an indescribable sexual torture to a female student-worker activist Kwon In-suk when she was under arrest in June 1986. The student movement sector was also gravely damaged by the Chun Doo Hwan government's unprecedentedly fierce suppression on their protests. On a national rally of student activists at Konkuk University in October 1986, Chun Doo Hwan's regime put more than thousands of police for four days to oppress the rally and arrested more than one thousand student protesters (KDF Research Centre 2010, 242-73; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 128-

31; Kang Won-taek 2015, 181-89; Kim Jeong-nam 2005, 499-503; Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 31).

This section explores how the spatial politics of visual media on the Gwangju Uprising that developed around Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul and other Catholic churches in Gwangju worked to sustain the vitality of dissidence in the evolutionary dynamics of the democracy movement in the 1980s described above, that is: movement (1980) – repression (1980-1983) – countermovement (1984-1985) – repression (1985-1986). Particular attention will be paid to how the efforts of the dissident Korean Catholic churches such as the Archdioceses of Seoul and Gwangju and the spatial politics of media representation at Myeongdong Cathedral were instrumental to articulate the language of justice and democracy and then disseminate it to the general public across the country to cultivate the vitality of dissidence in the periods of the movement decline under state repression (during 1980-1983 and 1985-1986).

The media representation of the Gwangju Uprising was mainly done through video screening events and photograph exhibitions. These media events offered a significant opportunity to the audience since it delivered vivid truths about state violence and cruel infringement of democratic values during the Gwangju Uprising that were different from the “official” report on the uprising from the Chun Doo Hwan regime (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 32). These visual media events on truths of the Gwangju Uprising also assisted the participants to be “framed” for the cause and need of their resistance against authoritarianism of their government, hence could contribute to facilitating social movements afterward (Eyerman 2006, 206-207).

Kim Jeong-pyo and Kim Hyeon-sun, who were members of the Young People’s Association of Myeongdong Cathedral (YPA: Myeongdong Seongdang Cheongnyeon Yeonhaphoe, Myeongcheongyeon) and the Council for the Catholic Cultural Movement (Gatollik Munhwa Undong Hyeobuihoe) in the 1980s, stated that “Myeongdong Cathedral was already the last assembly site of protests from the early 1980s. It was also a crucial starting point to provide publicity of the Gwangju Uprising to the wider general public.” The video screening events on the

Gwangju Uprising, in the account of Kim Jeong-pyo, were held for citizens in Myeongdong Cathedral from 1983. Then from 1985, the screening events “came to be publicised by putting up hand-written posters outside the cathedral.” (Won Si-rim 2003, 15-16)<sup>14</sup> Kim Jeong-pyo explains about the video screenings at the cathedral as below:

The authorities could not suppress the video screenings in Myeongdong Cathedral. Before this, the public would have only heard about the Gwangju Uprising as hearsay. The screenings provided first-hand account of the incident and many had seen it for the first time in the cathedral. It was common to see office workers in their suit and tie queuing to attend the screening during their lunchtime. The queue was so long that it stretched all the way down to the Royal Hotel. German and Japanese versions of the video without subtitles were also shown on the ground floor of the Cultural Centre [Munhwa-gwan] of Myeongdong Cathedral, where 300 people could be accommodated at any one time. To prevent the television sets from getting overheated because of long duration of use, the organisers had to turn them on and off in turns. News of these events was spread by word-of-mouth and people would gather [at Myeongdong Cathedral] every year in May for these events (Won Si-rim 2003, 16).

The statement of Kim Jeong-pyo above shows that the citizens of Seoul had enthusiastic interests in being informed of the reality on the developments of the Gwangju Uprising and the cruel oppression on it by the Chun Doo Hwan regime. The fact that the Chun government was also keen to crack down on the circulation of these videotapes on the Gwangju Uprising during this time means that the authorities were concerned about the ripple effect of these media events to the general public (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 33). Although video screening events on

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<sup>14</sup> Together with putting up hand-written posters outside, Myeongdong Catholic Church also did the audio broadcasting to the general public about the Gwangju Uprising from 1985. According to Na Do-eun, this audio broadcasting was “already familiar to citizens in the vicinity of Myeongdong Cathedral” as part of the video screenings and photograph exhibitions (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 261).

the Gwangju Uprising were not just held in Myeongdong Cathedral but in other sites and university campuses as well, since the cathedral had already attained a spatial centrality recognised as a long-standing sanctuary for democratisation since the 1970s, it was more likely the impact of these media events held at Myeongdong Cathedral would be more powerful and influential on the wider society than other spaces. Moreover, Myeongdong area itself, located in the centre of Seoul, had much geographical advantages and strengths providing easy accessibility to the general public and exerting wider influence to the much floating population around the region, for Myeongdong was one of the foremost business districts in South Korea (Chung Hee-sun 2004, 108). As a popular and thus powerful source for revitalising the spirit of dissidence against the authoritarianism of the Chun regime among the general public, these video screening events on the truths of the Gwangju Uprising can be assessed as significantly contributing to sustain the vitality of the democracy movement at popular level in the times when the movement in general was in stagnation especially during 1985 and 1986 and paved the way for the nationwide June Uprising in 1987 (May 18 Memorial Foundation 2013, 406-407; Jung Keun-Sik 2003, 136).

Another crucial media event to propagate the reality of state violence during the Gwangju Uprising was photograph exhibitions. The first influential photograph exhibition for the Gwangju Uprising was held at Myeongdong Cathedral in May 1986 organised by the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Korean Catholic Church. During this ten-day event, 60 pictures taken during the Gwangju Uprising and 40 pictures of the dissident movement by farmers and workers after Gwangju were displayed. (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 31; GSPI Archive Vol. 7, 66) In 1987, the photograph exhibitions on the Gwangju were extended to be held at a national scale. In May 1987, at the Gwangju Catholic Centre, the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of Gwangju organised a photograph exhibition for commemorating the Gwangju Uprising. The event received extensive attention and support from citizens of Gwangju. Notable was that there was fluidity and cooperation in this event in Gwangju that the citizens were not

just spectators who only watched this exhibition but they also often provided their own films and photographs of the Gwangju Uprising which they owned for the exhibitions. With this participation and contribution from the citizens the photograph exhibitions could become a more vibrant event and spread to other parts of the country such as Incheon, Busan, Daegu, and Jeonju (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 31-32; May 18 Memorial Foundation 2013, 694-96; GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 82-85).

Based on the enthusiastic attention and support from the general public across the country for these visual media events that documented the Gwangju Uprising, the Committee for Justice and Peace (CJP) of the Archdiocese of Gwangju planned to publish a book of photographs on the Gwangju Uprising and make an “official” video of the Gwangju Uprising in June 1987. Since the CJP of the Archdiocese of Gwangju could secure materials to publish the book of photographs from the exhibitions held, they decided to make it known to the wider general public by publishing it as a book. For Catholic institutions and convents in Gwangju were still under surveillance of the authorities, the CJP of Gwangju had to work secretly to make publications of the photographs of the Gwangju Uprising. Succeeding to publish initial 25,000 copies, the CJP of Gwangju sent 10,000 copies of the book to Seoul and 5,000 copies to Busan and simultaneously opened it to the general public after a week since completion. Following these initial copies, many additional books could be made and disseminated afterward (May 18 Memorial Foundation 2013, 696-700; Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 32-33).

The video was another medium which significantly contributed to disseminate the reality of state violence and the Gwangju Uprising to the general public. As previously examined in this section, the video screening events on the Gwangju Uprising were not new to the general public from the mid-1980s. But the videos for these screening events were circulated tacitly from place to place, from people to people. The fact that the videos of the Gwangju Uprising shown at Myeongdong Cathedral in the mid-1980s which were German and Japanese versions had no subtitles also means these videos were part of the ones secretly

circulated and screened across the country by then. However, the video material which the CJP of Gwangju attempted to make was intended for wider distribution than the ones screened tacitly before 1987.

In early 1987, priest Chang Yong-ju of the Archdiocese of Gwangju secretly took in the video of the Gwangju Uprising that was broadcast in Germany. The CJP of Gwangju added the versions of Japanese NHK and British BBC to the German version and edited the film and dubbed it in Korean. The finalised version was made at the Catholic Centre in Gwangju and was circulated across the country in October 1987. Even though it was already after the 1987 June Uprising, South Korean society was still under strong coercion by the state and the distribution of this video on Gwangju created a notable response from the general public on the truths of the Gwangju Uprising and the Gwangju people's struggle for freedom and democracy (Jung Ho-Gi 2013, 33-34; May 18 Memorial Foundation 2013, 700-704; see also GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 103-104). The significance of these media sources (photographs and videos) of the Gwangju Uprising produced by the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of Gwangju was acknowledged by the Korean government later and it was screened at the hearing by the National Assembly for the case of the Gwangju Uprising in November 1988 (May 18 Memorial Foundation 2013, 707-708).

The visual representation of the Gwangju Uprising framed participants of these media events of injustice and brutal violence of the Chun Doo Hwan regime towards its own people in Gwangju 1980. Reinforcing the illegitimacy of Chun's authoritarian government, these media representations contributed to establish the necessary collective memory and knowledge among the participants that acted as a cognitive foundation that drove them to stand together for the struggle of democratisation (cf. Eyerman 2006, 195-96). The "common knowledge" that these media representations of the Gwangju Uprising disseminated would be the need of realisation of justice and democratisation (Chwe 2001). It is assessed that as sites of these media representations of injustice and state violence, Myeongdong Cathedral and other Korean Catholic churches in the 1980s mediated the social and political yearning of Korean society from the "religious

perspective” (Geertz 1973, 112). In particular, Myeongdong Cathedral was the mediating space of rare combination which had both aspects of religious sacredness (thus autonomous against external pressure to some extent) and social influence when the South Korean democracy movement was under stagnation after the 1980 Gwangju Uprising (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 97-131).

Philosopher Charles Taylor suggested the concept of “social imaginary” to describe the emergence of modernity in this age (Taylor 2004). In contrast to social theory, social imaginary is what common people picture their social environments and is often articulated in the vernacular as “images” and “stories”, not as in sophisticated terminologies. Moreover, although social theory often belongs to small groups of people; social imaginary is imagined and communicated by many in society.<sup>15</sup> Social imaginary also implies “common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy.” (Taylor 2004, 23) The discussion on the power of social imaginary is relevant here as sections in Chapter 4 show how the dissidence of the Korean Catholic Church and the related spatial politics of Myeongdong Cathedral of the 1980s provided necessary scales of opportunities that sustained the vitality of the democracy movement. In the context of which the 1980s South Korean democratisation movement was in relative stagnation after the Gwangju Uprising (particularly during 1980-1983 and 1985-1986), the Catholic efforts of opposition examined in this section against the autocratic rule of the Chun Doo Hwan regime, and the spatial dynamics of media events developed at Myeongdong Cathedral, “becoming the principal stake of goal-directed actions and struggles” (Lefebvre 1991, 410), and other Catholic churches played a crucial role of

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<sup>15</sup> For Taylor, the vital element of Western modernity was the formation of the “moral order of society”. This vision of the moral order of society was, as he proposes, once existed as social theory for some limited number of people such as eminent philosophers. Then it became part of the social imaginary of larger groups of people in society and later influenced on the emergence of some “social forms”, in this case in Western societies, such as “the market economy, the public sphere, and the self-governing people” (Taylor 2004, 2).



generating a social imaginary of the emancipation from state violence and repression.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

It was during the 1980s when the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral worked as the symbolic representation of the emancipation from the social and political oppression of the Chun Doo Hwan government. When prospects of further dissident movements were uncertain in the early-1980s and mid-1980s, the spatial resonance of Myeongdong Cathedral became the enduring symbolic representation of the need for recovery of social justice and human rights. During this process of representation, the memory of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising had taken a significant position. In particular, two channels were effective for Myeongdong Cathedral to be a lasting centripetal force, working as an important symbol for the need of democratisation. First, commemorative services and masses for the 1980 Gwangju Uprising held at Myeongdong Cathedral facilitated the space attaining its symbolic centrality as a platform to speak about and remember Gwangju and democracy.

Another important role that was instrumental for Myeongdong Cathedral to attain its symbolic influence was by the workings of visual media. Photograph exhibitions and video screenings of the severe oppression of civilians in the 1980 Gwangju Uprising held at Myeongdong Cathedral and other Catholic churches in Gwangju reinforced the illegitimacy of the Chun Doo Hwan regime among the people who attended these media events. It was these rituals of commemoration and media representation that formulated the collective social memory of the sacrifice of the people for struggles against the brutal state violence in Gwangju 1980. And it was this established collective social memory that worked as a crucial cognitive basis of the general public for the fight for emancipation from social and political oppression. During the 1980s and until 1987 when Chun's regime fell, therefore, the role of the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral

in the South Korean democracy movement was the symbolic representation of democracy. The language which was mediated through the spatial resonance of Myeongdong Cathedral during this period was the need and possibilities for change.

The actor-oriented approach of the literature on the 1980s Korean democracy movement (e.g., Lee Nam-hee 2007, 53-54; Koo Hagen 2001, 107-108; see also Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 101; 130-31; KDF Research Centre 2010, 185-273) lead observers to understand the periods between 1980-1983 and 1985-1986 as the movement was stagnated as the Chun Doo Hwan regime intensified its repression. However, the epistemological turn of examination towards a spatial approach beyond an actor-oriented framework contributes to the evolutionary account of the 1980s Korean democracy movement. The spatial analysis conducted in this chapter through a lens of Myeongdong Cathedral enables the understanding of the 1980s democracy movement that it had been evolved, sustained, and developed from the scales of collective interests and protest opportunities. Examining the politics of space, media representation, and the popular social imaginaries in the movement context yields the explanation of how the movement had been sustained during the 1980s, and thus opens up new trajectories of explicating the evolution of the 1980s Korean democracy movement.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **The Political: Networking the Movement**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In the evolutionary dynamics of repression and dissidence in the 1980s Korean democracy movement, the years 1985 and 1986 was an important juncture in terms of the confrontation and conflict between the Chun Doo Hwan regime and the dissidents. This period was when the issue of the constitutional amendment of Chun's Fifth Republic became contentious in the movement sectors and the discussion of revising the constitution could give fatal influence to the military regime since they could lose the legal foundation for their prolonged autocratic rule after Chun Doo Hwan (KDF Research Centre 2010, 248-273; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 124-28). The debate on constitutional amendment could mobilise much wider attention and support from the general public such as the middle class, for it included the possibility of ending the dictatorship with a direct presidential election (Choi Jang-Jip 1993, 37-38; see also Park Se-gil 2015, 216). This antagonism of the general public against the autocratic rule of Chun Doo Hwan was manifested, for instance, in January 1986 through a movement of boycotting Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) which is the national public broadcasting service in South Korea (KDF Research Centre 2010, 272).

Many studies on the June Uprising of 1987 generally explains the social and political situations and progress of the June Uprising from a temporal perspective, postulating the success of mass mobilisation of the people from all walks of life as crucial in enabling the nationwide protests in June 1987. In these accounts (e.g., Koo Hagen 2001, 154; Kim Sun-hyuk 2007, 57-58; Lee Nam-hee 2007, 265; Park Se-gil 2015, 213-17), the June Uprising could be facilitated through a series of events that had gradually developed beforehand the event: such as the death of a Seoul National University student Park Jong Chul in

January 1987; Chun Doo Hwan's statement of opposition to the constitutional revision on 13 April, 1987, which proclaimed that discussing the constitutional amendment would be postponed until after the 1988 Seoul Olympics, meaning the military would lead the next regime as well after Chun Doo Hwan; and the emergence of a nationwide movement organisation, the National Committee for a Democratic Constitution (NCDC: Minju Heonbeop Jaengchwi Gukmin Undong Bonbu, Gukbon) as the central force to lead a wave of protests in June 1987 across South Korea. Even though it is obvious that these incidents, opportunities, and organisations were decisive for the mass mobilisation of the 1987 June Uprising, these accounts fail to explain how precisely the actors and resources of the June movement were connected and then could possibly be diffused to other parts of the country.

For a more holistic understanding of how connections and solidarity among the actors of the 1987 June Uprising were generated during the movement period, this chapter proposes to examine the spatial politics of Myeongdong Cathedral during the period of the uprising. Chapter 5 argues that it is the effects provided by such a "social movement space" that works through "a network structure that is both internally well structured and open to contacts with multiple others in the vicinity" (Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013, 12) that mobilises, strengthens, revitalises and sustains a movement. The chapter explores how the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral shaped the critical beginning stage of the 1987 June Uprising after the June 10 Demonstration through connecting different actors and resources across the central "social movement space" which was Myeongdong Catholic Church. It pays particular attention to the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest (MCP) developed mainly by students, workers, general public and dissident Catholic figures/organisations from 10 to 15 June, 1987.

In this scheme, Chapter 5 first examines the context of the democracy movement prior to the June Uprising in 1987. Then the role of dissident Korean Catholics for the emergence of the MCP as one of the major protests during the uprising will be investigated. Subsequent sections explore how the MCP

functioned as a networking mechanism in the movement context of the June Uprising.

## **5.2 Movement Context of the 1987 June Uprising**

The news of the death of a Seoul National University student Park Jong Chul on 14 January, 1987, acted as a decisive factor to give a revitalising momentum to the democratisation movement sectors which had been under harsh repression during 1985 and 1986.<sup>1</sup> The press was not silent for the death of a young university student by the authorities. On the next day of the Park Jong Chul incident, newspapers *JoongAng Ilbo* and *Dong-A Ilbo* started to give major coverage to the death of Park during police interrogation and called for the government's thorough investigation for the truth of Park's incident. From mid-January 1987, the previously stagnated student movement began to rise again for opposing police torture that led the death of Park Jong Chul. In January 1987, there were rallies, commemorative ceremonies, wall newspapers at universities of Sogang, Hanyang, Yonsei, Dongguk, Ewha Womans, Seoul National, Sungkyunkwan, and other universities across the country protesting against the obvious cruel violence of the Chun Doo Hwan regime for its own people. The religious circles also joined in this wave of commemorating protests for the death of Park Jong Chul. This time, it was not just progressive dissident Christians who participated in the demonstrations. On 21 and 22 January 1987, young Buddhists and monks held commemorative protests for the death of Park Jong Chul. Conservative and evangelical, yet large Protestant churches such as Saemoonan Presbyterian Church and Youngnak Church in Seoul had commemorative services and promulgated statements for the incident. The Korean Catholic Church stood

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<sup>1</sup> For the reinsensitization of the Chun regime's harsh repression to the democracy movement during 1985 and 1986, see for instance KDF Research Centre (2010, 242-73), Jung Hae-Gu (2011, 128-31), Kang Won-taek (2015, 181-89), Kim Jeong-nam (2005, 499-503), Shin Gi-Wook et al. (2011, 31), and also section 4.5 of Chapter 4.

in the vanguard of protesting against the Chun regime's injustice revealed again through Park's death. The Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ), the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Korean Catholic Church (CJP) held commemorative masses and announced statements for Park Jong Chul's death. Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan, Archbishop Youn Kong-hi, and Bishop Chi Hak-sun also led the commemorative mass for Park. On 26 January 1987, hundreds of Catholics and nuns waged a large-scale silent vigil in Myeongdong area (KDF Research Centre 2010, 279-84; see also Park Se-gil 2015, 213-15; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 135-37). In February 1987, university professors joined in this wave of commemorative protests for Park's death. 54 professors of Hanshin University promulgated a declaration. And on 5 February, about one hundred professors of Seoul National University did not leave from work but stayed in their offices until 9.00 pm for the purpose of commemorating Park Jong Chul (KDF Research Centre 2010, 286). It was not just students, intellectuals and religious circles, workers and citizens of Seoul, Busan, Gwangju, Incheon, and Daegu filled the streets to protest and confronted with riot police (KDF Research Centre 2010, 287-89; Park Se-gil 2015, 214-15; see also Cumings 2005, 392).

Against this wave of protests ignited by the death of a university student, authorities deployed 53,660 police (36,000 in Seoul) out of the whole force of 1,200,000 police across the country to block a nationwide demonstration (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 82). This nationwide strong resistance in February 1987 and in the following national protest on 3 March for peace and democracy were instrumental for an extensive alliance of democratisation movement sectors (NCDC) to be formed and it paved the way for the following nationwide June Uprising (Hwang In-seong 1997, 38).

To solidify a movement for the constitutional revision for a direct presidential election, two leading opposition politicians Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam left the New Korean Democratic Party (Sinhanminjudang) and established a new opposition party Unified Democratic Party (Tongilminjudang) in April 1987 (KDF Research Centre 2010, 292). Since 1986, the protest and discussion for the constitutional amendment became the foremost significant

issue of the democracy movement camps. Civil society groups such as the People's Movement Coalition for Democracy and Reunification (PMCDR) worked together with the opposition party to organise mass demonstrations in 1986 for the constitutional revision in the cities of such as Daegu, Daejeon, Incheon, Masan, and so on. Leading dissident Christian figures such as Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan announced a declaration asking for democratisation of the Korean government and the immediate constitutional amendment. Protestant ministers and also the university professors across the country issued statements for the constitutional revision and criticising the autocratic rule of the Chun Doo Hwan regime (Kim Sun-hyuk 2007, 56-57; see also Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 124-26).

To this national wave of the democratisation movement particularly targeting the constitutional revision for a direct presidential election, Chun Doo Hwan responded with the April 13 Statement (4.13 hoheon jochi) of declaring that there would be no constitutional revision and the next presidential election was to be held as an indirect election based on his Fifth Republic constitution (KDF Research Centre 2010, 292-93; Kim Ho-Ki and Jung Hae-Gu 2009, 12).

The Korean Catholic Church made an immediate criticism to the Chun regime's attempt to impede democratisation. On the next day of the 1987 April 13 Statement, Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan directly denounced Chun's statement in his message for Easter:

We are living in a void where people are without sovereignty. There are newspapers and broadcasts without freedom of speech. There are nominal parliament and political parties having power without politics.

The national desire for democratisation has been manipulated and rendered a mere tool in a political scheme. Also, the dream for constitutional amendment, expected to pave the way for a new era of clean politics, is brutally crushed under trickery, deception and partisan interests. Although we have expected a humble decision from the supreme power right up to the last moment, in other words, the so-called "determination full of anguish," it has sadly disappointed the people. Thus, people with a prudent mind are now full of even greater anguish. Shells of tear gas were ceaselessly thrown onto this land. And because of that, lives of people of this land are filled with miserable tears. [...]

The resurrected Jesus is not one who struts himself with splendour in the midst of trumpet sounds and shouts from the crowd. He is the Lord who reveals himself quietly to the ones who look for him in the desolate graveyard where there is no one. [...]

Therefore, if we are his disciples, the more futile today's reality looks, the more we have to commit ourselves to build a truly worthy life of humanity for our society, land and country. We are human beings in pursuit of truth, in the realisation of justice and more than anything else, a life of love. Only then we would realise that the resurrected Lord is present in this seemingly empty, tomb-like, forlorn land to testify his resurrection to everyone on this land with strength (GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 142-45).

Linking the resurrection of Jesus with the hope for realisation of justice in the context of South Korea, Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan requested actions of commitment for this purpose.<sup>2</sup> Starting with Cardinal Kim, criticisms on the April 13 Statement and nationwide activities for democratisation among religious and other opposition groups became invigorated (KDF Research Centre 2010, 295-97). In the Christian sector, especially, 12 priests of the Gwangju Archdiocese started the protest of fasting to denounce the April 13 Statement. Among Protestants, representatives of a commission on human rights of the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK: Hanguk Gidokgyo Gyohoe Hyeobuihoe) proclaimed the first week of May 1987 as the week of prayer for Korea and developed the signature collection campaign for constitutional amendment for a direct election of the President (Hwang In-seong 1997, 39). Not just students, intellectuals, and religious circles, but also school teachers, artists, and medical doctors joined in the democracy movement after Chun's statement. Therefore as the countermovement against the April 13 Statement, nearly all walks of life in South Korea joined in the protest asking for the constitutional revision after April 1987 (KDF Research Centre 2010, 297).

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<sup>2</sup> His sermon for Easter was later cited by *Dong-A Ilbo* as a salient critical voice for the April 13 Statement, under the articles titled as "Democratisation or Retrogression" on 20 April and "Although the Sun is Covered with Clouds" on 25 April 1987.



For the seventh anniversary of the Gwangju Uprising, there were student commemorations and protests for democratisation in more than 90 universities across the country during 17 and 18 May 1987. This was the largest-scale protest event in 1987 since estimated more than 30,000 students joined in these demonstrations (KDF Research Centre 2010, 299).

In this national atmosphere which the 1987 democracy movement came to be reinforced with collective actions of not just existing movement groups such as students, religious circles, and workers, but the wider dissident groups and general public, another foremost significant incident as a background to the June Uprising took place.

On 18 May 1987, seventh memorial mass for the 1980 Gwangju Uprising was held at Myeongdong Cathedral led by Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan. After Cardinal Kim's sermon and the mass, the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) announced that the government report on the death of a Seoul National University student Park Jong Chul during the police interrogation was reduced and fabricated.<sup>3</sup> The CPAJ announced that there were three more policemen, not just two as originally publicised, who participated in the torture of Park Jong Chul and the fabrication of Park's incident was determined at a meeting of police chiefs (KDF Research Centre 2010, 299-300). The statement also mentioned that

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<sup>3</sup> According to Kim Jeong-nam who reported the fabrication of the Chun regime to the CPAJ, the mass on 18 May was for commemorating the May 18 Uprising, but at the same time, it was planned by the CPAJ particularly for announcing the suppression of the government on the death of Park Jong Chul. Before the announcement, priest Kim Seung-hun, who read an announcement, prepared himself in case to be placed under arrest by the regime (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 146-48). Kim Jeong-nam also stated that he once attempted to reveal the fact by opposition lawmakers in a provisional session of the National Assembly. But he later decided not to do so considering the reign of terror by the Chun Doo Hwan regime. Kim Jeong-nam mentioned he made his last hope to the CPAJ that had been always a shield for the entire democracy movement camp. Kim Jeong-nam stated "it was only the CPAJ which could accomplish this task." (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 156-57)

“the morality of the government was on the verge of verdict through this manipulative deception” and the “transparent and fair reinvestigation would only guarantee the recovery of humanistic and democratic Korean society.” (GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 206)

The CPAJ’s announcement on 18 May 1987 was instrumental to vitalise various democracy movement sectors. On 22 May, thousands of students waged demonstrations denouncing the Chun Doo Hwan regime’s April 13 Statement and fabrication of the Park Jong Chul incident (KDF Research Centre 2010, 300). The chaeya and opposition party also reinvigorated their democratisation protests. On 25 May, the new opposition party of Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam, Unified Democratic Party (Tongilminjudang), asked for the Chun Doo Hwan government’s resignation taking responsibility for the Park Jong Chul incident. The disclosure of fabrication of the Park incident gave a devastating blow to the morality of the Chun regime and altered its “topography of power”. On 26 May, the Chun government carried out a general reshuffle of the cabinet and Chun’s close allies stepped down from their posts (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 160).

Eminent pro-democracy activist in the 1970s and 1980s and former senior secretary for education culture in the Kim Young Sam government (1993-1998) Kim Jeong-nam evaluates the statement on the fabrication of Park Jong Chul’s death as below:

[The CPAJ’s announcement] provided an opportunity to change the existing passive, dispersive movements for democratisation and the constitutional revision after the April 13 Statement into the nationwide active, integrated protests. Day after day since the announcement on 18 May, the Korean press dealt the progress of the Park Jong Chul incident in headline news. Also public indignation surged among the Korean people. It was this atmosphere of national resentment that culminated into the June Uprising (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 160).

The announcement of fabrication of the Park Jong Chul incident on 18 May 1987 exerted critical impact on infuriating the general public, not just existing

dissident movement sectors, for the injustice and violence of the Chun Doo Hwan regime and hence became a significant impetus to bring the 1987 democracy movement to the next stage (Kang Won-taek 2015, 195).

Under the aforementioned movement context until May 1987, major dissident groups such as students, opposition politicians, and religious circles came to build stronger ties and agreed upon the need of a comprehensive movement organisation which could intergrate and maximise the capability of the nationwide democratisation movement (cf. Tarrow 2011, 190). Through this process, the central, united organisation the National Committee for a Democratic Constitution (NCDC: Minju Heonbeop Jaengchwi Gukmin Undong Bonbu, Gukbon) emerged aiming for furthering the power of existing movements for the constitutional revision of a direct presidential election and democratisation (Hwang In-seong 1997, 40; KDF Research Centre 2010, 301-302; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 138-39).

The role of the dissident Korean Catholics and other religious groups was also salient in the establishment of the NCDC. As seen from the table 5.1 below, the Catholics, together with the Protestants, took up 23 per cent of the whole initiators of the NCDC and the religious sector as a whole took up 30 per cent, which was more than the sum of regional representatives and politicians, 25 per cent. The NCDC was de facto the organisation of an extensive united front including not only the religious groups and chaeya but the political powers. In the words of a former member of the NCDC Hwang In-seong, the organisation emerged based “on the achievements of solidarity protest for democracy since the 1980s and became the symbolic centre for the nationwide democratic movement out of trust and authority from the people.” (1997, 46)

Table 5.1 *Distribution Chart for the NCDC's Initiators*

Regional Representatives	Religious Groups	Various Departments	Politicians
Kangwon 73	Catholics 253 Protestants 270 Buddhists 160	Farmers 171	Politicians 213
Gyeonggi 11		Workers 39	
Chungnam 29		The Urban Poor 18	
Jeonbuk 54		Education 55	
Jeonnam 40		Females 162	
Busan 56		Family Groups 308	
Gyeongbuk 89		Culture and Art 66	
		Writers 34	
		Media and Press 43	
	Youths 12		
	Law 73		
	Et cetera 35		
352	683	1016	213
Total Initiators 2,264			

Source: Adapted from Hwang In-seong 1997. p.25

However, even though it is right that an extensive united movement organisation such as the NCDC played a leading role to accelerate the democracy movement of June 1987. In examining the development of the 1987 June Uprising of South Korea, scholars have mostly credited the role of large-scale movement organisations such as the NCDC and chaeya dissident groups to shape the critical junctures of the uprising and facilitate further protests. Although these organisation-based observations of the June Uprising are well-established and widely accepted interpretations for the dynamics of the 1987 June Uprising (Shin Gi-Wook et al. 2011, 22; Koo Hagen 2001, 154-56; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 134-40), what these organisation-based accounts are missing is the specific mechanisms and opportunities that drove these major movement organisations such as the

NCDC and other intermediate and minor actors to cooperate to achieve their collective goals. As one of the most significant stages of the 1987 June Uprising, a thorough investigation of the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 254) renders important findings to understand the mechanisms and opportunities that connected various actors and resources across the social movement space (Myeongdong Cathedral) so that the June Uprising could be instrumental and durable during June 1987.<sup>4</sup> Next section investigates the significance of the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest in the context of the 1987 June Uprising.

### **5.3 The Myeongdong Cathedral Protest**

After being established, the NCDC started to prepare the first major movement of the 1987 June Uprising, which was the June 10 Demonstration. This demonstration mainly aimed at denouncing the government's fabrication of the Park Jong Chul incident and Chun Doo Hwan's April 13 Statement of attempting to block the debate of the constitutional revision. The June 10 Demonstration was the first major protest event in the context of the June Uprising and showed the diversity in terms of its participants since various dissident groups of politicians, students, civilians, and other opposition organisations joined altogether in the demonstration across the country.<sup>5</sup> Although statistics vary for the number of the

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<sup>4</sup> More specifically, one could name it as the Myeongdong Protest in the sense that the demonstrations occurred not just in the bound of the cathedral but in a wider Myeongdong region. But still, it is right that Myeongdong Cathedral was the very focal point of the whole Myeongdong Protest.

<sup>5</sup> It is noteworthy that the guidelines of the June 10 Demonstration, released by the NCDC, were recommended religious behaviours and suggested churches, cathedrals and temples as an alternative place for sit-in demonstrations to the participants. In the fourth and fifth article out of the whole nine guidelines, it states as below:

whole participants in the demonstration, it is estimated from about 200,000 to 400,000 people in more than 20 regions joined in the June 10 Demonstration (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 307). The demonstration became a prelude to the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest (MCP), which developed from 10 June to 15 June 1987.

Prior to the June 10 Demonstration planned by the NCDC, student protests for democratisation erupted again at university campuses across the country (KDF Research Centre 2010, 303-305). In this resurgence of student protests in May and June 1987, there was another significant incident that caused national resentment for the violence of the Chun Doo Hwan regime and infused contentious spirits for demonstrations developed and continued in June 1987. On 9 June 1987, during the confrontation with the riot police in a demonstration, a Yonsei University student Lee Han Yeol was hit by a tear-gas canister and went into a critical condition. This victimisation of another student activist by the ruthless state violence again seriously infuriated the general public after Park Jong Chul's death in January 1987. Lee Han Yeol's serious injury (and later death in July 1987) has soon become a public issue that has framed the dissidents and general public of the violence and injustice of the Chun government. And throughout the June Uprising period, Lee Han Yeol's critical condition provided protest groups with the legitimacy of what these dissidents are struggling for, that is the recovery of democracy and human rights (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 155; Choi Chung-moo 1995, 109-110; KDF Research Centre 2010, 305-306).

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4. Everyone should turn off the lights for ten minutes at 9 p.m. and refuse to watch KBS and MBC news [...] but pray, meditate and chant the Buddhist scripture to express our determination for democracy.

5. If the demonstrators should encounter police violence, every organisation should stage hunger strikes in churches, cathedrals, temples and other convenient places until 6 a.m. the next day (Hwang In-seong 1997, 47).

These instructions are understandable, considering the fact that key figures of the NCDC were religious leaders (30%), as shown from the table 5.1.

The Myeongdong Cathedral Protest (MCP) was prompted and developed through the chance retreat of the participants of the nationwide June 10 Demonstration to Myeongdong Cathedral. On 10 June, the protesters who engaged in a fierce battle with the police in a wider Myeongdong area naturally retreated to Myeongdong Cathedral. It was natural to fall back on Myeongdong Cathedral because the cathedral was located in front of the main battlefields, Euljiro and Myeongdong where were in the vicinity of Seoul City Hall and ones of the most vibrant cultural and commercial districts in Seoul. By then, in the compound of Myeongdong Cathedral, there were already about two hundred people from Sanggyedong dwelling in tents who were dispossessed of their houses due to the oppressive residential measure by the Chun Doo Hwan regime. For the nominal reason of better preparing the 1988 Seoul Olympics, meaning not showing slum areas of Seoul to foreign visitors, the Chun government enforced the suppressive redevelopment policy in these slum areas. The residents of an underprivileged Sanggyedong area were violently threatened to leave their houses under the pressure of the Chun regime but struggled against this repression.<sup>6</sup> Then in the course of this conflict, Sanggyedong people came to find a temporary place of stay in Myeongdong Cathedral in April 1987. Paradoxically, however, these Sanggyedong people became one of the foremost supporters for the movement participants at Myeongdong Cathedral.

Although the MCP began through the aforementioned accidental opportunity, bringing support from various groups of people in Myeongdong region: middle-class, white-collar office workers, local traders, and ordinary citizens, the MCP turned out to be the struggle which became the integral momentum and provided the centripetal force for furthering the later June Uprising across the country in 1987 (KDF Research Centre 2010, 316-23; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 143; Park Se-gil 2015, 219; Park Chan-seung et al. 2010, 412-13).

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<sup>6</sup> This story of Sanggyedong people was made into a documentary film, “The Sanggyedong Olympics” (1988) by director Kim Dong-won. The film is partially available to watch online at: <http://www.mgoon.com/ch/jesong21/v/784407> (accessed 24 July 2016).

The purpose of the MCP was surely to demand the democratic government. And the protest was situated in the movement context of the national resentment for and resistance against Chun Doo Hwan's April 13 Statement and the fabrication of Park Jong Chul's death in early 1987. In respect to tactics of the protest, although there were both offensive and defensive struggles with the police, the demonstrations after 12 June changed into a non-disruptive protest developed mainly as open debates on the current state of affairs, public broadcasting, masses and prayer services, and the street peace parades with the general public (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 267).<sup>7</sup>

Following sections first explore the stages of the MCP of how it was developed and evolved as a key movement in the context of the 1987 June Uprising. This spatial politics of the MCP in connection with the roles of dissident Catholic figures and organisations is examined into three parts: framing the movement, mediating communication, and building collective identities. After discussing these aspects, the chapter moves on to further investigate the significance of the MCP as a pivotal mechanism of mobilising and networking movement actors and resources across the social movement space, that is, Myeongdong Catholic Church in the wider context of the June Uprising in 1987.

### **5.3.1 Framing the Movement**

The concept of “framing” originally came from the work of sociologist Erving Goffman (1974). Although Goffman used the term framing to explicate “how an *individual* constructs reality,” social movement scholars applied this to “how *movements* frame specific grievances with collective action frames that dignify

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<sup>7</sup> The CBS news of the US reported this protest on 13 June 1987. The news clip is available online at:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1XfN96s9HY&list=UUxMFGlCF\\_586aA7bK-LCkaA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1XfN96s9HY&list=UUxMFGlCF_586aA7bK-LCkaA)  
(accessed 10 February, 2016).



claims, connect them to others, and help to produce a collective identity.” (Tarrow 2011, 144 emphasizes original) According to Robert Benford and David Snow (2000), the framing is

[A]n active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction. It is active in the sense that something is being done, and processual in the sense of a dynamic, evolving process. It entails agency in the sense that what is evolving is the work of social movement organisations or movement activists. And it is contentious in the sense that it involves the generation of interpretive frames that not only differ from existing ones but that may also challenge them. The resultant products of this framing activity are referred to as “collective action frames.” (Benford and Snow 2000, 614)

Therefore, these collective action frames come to play the role as “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimatise the activities and campaigns of a social movement organisation” (Benford and Snow 2000, 614).

Following the categorisation of Benford and Snow (2000, 615), three main functions, or “core” tasks of framing, which are *diagonostic*, *prognostic*, and *motivational* can be charted. Diagnostic framing refers to the function of frame as “a mode of interpretation—prefatory to collective noncompliance, protest, and/or rebellion—generated and adopted by those who come to define the actions of an authority as unjust.” (Benford and Snow 2000, 615) Prognostic framing includes the “articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan.” Therefore this articulates the “question of what is to be done, as well as the problems of consensus and action mobilisation.” (Benford and Snow 2000, 616) Motivational framing offers “a call to arms’ or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the constrtuction of appropriate vocabularies of motive.” (Benford and Snow 2000, 617)

While performing these three “core framing tasks,” frames are “developed, generated, and elaborated” primarily by “discursive processes.” Discursive processes of framing generally involves “the talk and conversations—the speech acts—and written communications of movement members that occur primarily in

the context of, or in relation to, movement activities.” (Benford and Snow 2000, 623) Through these discursive processes, framing comes to make the “connection and alignment of events and experiences so that they hang together in a relatively unified and compelling fashion.” Also, the discursive processes perform the job of “accenting and highlighting some issues, events, or beliefs as being more salient than others.” These accented “issues, beliefs, and events may function much like synecdoche, bringing into sharp relief and symbolising the larger frame or movement of which is a part.” (Benford and Snow 2000, 623)<sup>8</sup>

Under this theoretical basis of framing, this section explores how the dissident Korean Catholics framed protests developed in and around Myeongdong Cathedral. Focus here is on how these dissident Catholics engaged in the protests through a manner of the discursive processes of framing, attending to aforementioned three main framing tasks. There were two salient types of framing which the protest participating Catholics waged during the MCP: the direct intervention of the priests and the official statements announced to the general public during the MCP period.

The priests’ intervention significantly framed the MCP. In the morning of 11 June 1987, the demonstrators at Myeongdong Cathedral burned the effigies of Chun Doo Hwan, Roh Tae Woo, and the US President Ronald Reagan in front of the cathedral.<sup>9</sup> Provoked by the burning ceremony, the police started to develop a strong counteroffensive against the protesters and eventually entered into the inside the cathedral, blindly firing tear gas. This was the first incident which the police entered the cathedral during the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest. After the entry of the police, the cathedral soon became a place of pandemonium due to the thick tear gas and the cries of the people suffering injuries one after the other (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 262). Outraged by the situation,

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<sup>8</sup> For example, Benford and Snow named movement slogans like “Liberte, Fraternite, Egalilte,” “Power to the People,” and “Homeless, Not Helpless” demonstrating this function (2000, 623).

<sup>9</sup> For an account on the tradition of symbolic funeral rituals in South Korean protests, see Choi Chung-moo (1995, especially 109-10).

the provost of Myeongdong Cathedral, priest Kim Byeong-do took up the microphone of the demonstrators and strongly declared to the police:

Cease firing tear gas into Myeongdong Cathedral. You are pointing a gun to Jesus by shooting tear gas into Myeongdong Cathedral. The officer in charge should instruct the unit to stop firing tear gas. If you continue shooting tear gas, it would be regarded as that the Chun Doo Hwan regime intimidates the Catholic Church. Are you declaring war against us? If so, we are ready (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 262).

The priest Kim Byeong-do's remarks can be categorised as diagnostic frame. This diagnostic frame pays attention to how "movements identify the 'victims' of a given injustice and amplify their victimisation" (Benford and Snow 2000, 615). Because social movements strive to "remedy or alter some problematic situation or issue, it follows that directed action is contingent on identification of the source(s) of casualty, blame, and/or culpable agents. This attributional component of diagnostic framing attends to this function by focusing blame or responsibility." (Benford and Snow 2000, 616) The priest Kim Byeong-do directly blamed the police's shooting of tear gas inside the cathedral. More concretely, the provost Kim pointed out the Chun Doo Hwan regime as a target of criticism. The provost Kim Byeong-do even implied that the strong suppression by the police could be interpreted as a challenge of the Chun regime to the Korean Catholic Church. Surprised by the provost Kim Byeong-do's unexpected strong resistance, the police temporarily withdrew from the cathedral. The provost Kim's diagnostic framing acted as an instrument of letting the protest develop into a new phase (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 262-63). The strong confrontation between the police and the demonstrators ceased momentarily. Moreover, encouraged by the provost Kim Byeong-do's intervention, the protesters had debates on the issue of continuing the protest and decided to carry on. Also, this lull in the fighting gave the protesters a chance to reorganise the camp, forming a medical team and cleaning the inside of the cathedral (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 263).

As mentioned earlier, the MCP was not a planned demonstration. Therefore there had been continuous debates and arguments on whether or not to continue the protest. There had been discussions on the matter of continuing the protest in every critical stage of the MCP during five days and six nights. And it eventually influenced the whole conditions of the later June Uprising across the country (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 315; see also KDF Research Centre 2010, 316-23; Park Se-gil 2015, 219-22; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 142-43; Park Chan-seung et al. 2010, 412-13). In fact, even from the very beginning of the MCP, in the night of 10 June, opinions on whether to continue the protest were divided into pros and cons (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 260).<sup>10</sup> The Catholic side endeavoured to finish the protest peacefully while sustaining the spirit of opposition to the authoritarian government at Myeongdong Cathedral (Seo

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<sup>10</sup> Those who agree to demobilise:

- The principle of non-violence and peaceful protest of the June 10th Demonstration is proven right because of the supportive responses from many citizens. We have accomplished our intended goal.

- The relationship with the Catholic Church would be delicate if we unilaterally extend the protest without their consent.

Those for continuing the protest:

- History does not progress according to our predictions. Although this protest was un-planned, the MCP should be the centripetal point of the new opposition after the June 10th Demonstration.

- It is impossible for the police to attack Myeongdong Cathedral since it is the sacred place of Korean Catholicism. Moreover, it is a perfect place for protest being located at the very heart of Seoul.

Those who seek a compromise:

- Demobilising is tantamount to surrendering to the military dictatorship
- By demonstrating that we are a unified force, we can buy time and observe how the situation will develop from this point on.

(Abbreviated from Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 258-59)

Joong-Seok 2011, 333). On 13 June, the police announced that they would not take protesters forcibly to the police station. On the same day, the Chun Doo Hwan regime requested the Catholic priests to arbitrate between the protesters and authorities. The Korean Catholic Church also wanted the situation come to an end at a certain line, since they did not expect a prolonged protest (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 341; see also KDF Research Centre 2010, 322; Kim Won 2009, 165-69). At midnight of 13 June, the whole protesters had a debate on the matter of continuing the protest. And there had been many comments criticising the leadership of the protest (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 281). Overall, the whole protesters had become heavily exhausted at this stage. Also, as the protest headed to its fourth day, the hold of the leadership of the protest had decreased while the tension of the fight had loosened (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 342). Undecided on whether to continue the protest, on 14 June, the authorities and the Catholic figures such as priest Ham Se-woong had met regularly to discuss the state of the demonstrators and the government's measure for the MCP (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 283). In this context, the provost of Myeongdong Cathedral Kim Byeong-do announced the statement titled, "To Students, Youths, and Citizens Who Are Being Together in Myeongdong Cathedral." This statement explicitly shows the response and stance of Korean Catholicism about the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest:

[The Korean Catholic Church] gives you vigorous support for your effort of democratisation, while denouncing the government's attempt to protect the constitution of the Fifth Republic and the fabrication of the cause of Park Jong Chul's death. [...]

The forty priests who are gathered here affirm the objectives of the protest. Also, most Catholic churches in Seoul have offered prayers in support of democratisation and the protesters. This is the reason why we are embracing you all despite all the work of Myeongdong Cathedral, which is the representative symbol of the Korean Catholic Church, has been suspended. [...]

However, the Korean Catholic Church has limitations that we are not able to support everything according to your requests, since the Church undoubtedly has its own mission. [...]

[Therefore,] I as provost of Myeongdong Cathedral would like to explain and recommend to you the following: [...]

2. The Church cannot be together with you in every aspect [of the protest]. Furthermore, it should not be blindly asked or encouraged to abandon the true mission of the Church. Therefore, I advise you to return to your workplaces, schools, and homes within a given time but continue to fight against injustice, inhumanity and for democracy.

3. Myeongdong Cathedral should not be destroyed or damaged by violence for this sanctuary is the spiritual and moral symbol of the Korean Catholic Church for the last 200 years. Thus we appeal to all the people in the cathedral for active and voluntary participation for helping to preserve the sanctuary.

4. We, the priests, know your true will and will suggest alternatives for democratisation, but we also strongly oppose any measure, organisation, or social system that infringe upon basic rights of human who are in God's shape in accordance to the true mission of the Church. [...]

In this respect, we urge you to accept our proposal, which will secure your safe return and in so doing, enable the Church to accomplish its true mission [...]  
(Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 283-85).

What is notable here is that the later part of the statement containing advices to the protesters functions as prognostic framing. The prognostic framing elaborates the “question of what is to be done, as well as the problems of consensus and action mobilisation.” (Benford and Snow 2000, 616) Here the provost Kim Byeong-do stated that the Church has limitations that they were not able to cooperate blindly with all the protesters. He also suggested the protesters to return to places of one's own life within a certain time limit and continue to oppose from there, since the Church must not abandon its own mission. Provost Kim Byeong-do also urged protesters the change of action through demobilising the MCP, while clarifying that the Catholic Church would continue to join in the struggle providing alternatives for democratisation after the protest.

Together with this indication of the Korean Catholic Church's stance, the Chun Doo Hwan regime conveyed the message that they would guarantee the

safety of the protesters when the MCP was to be demobilised. Under these circumstances, the leadership of the MCP had a four-hour long meeting on the matter of demobilisation in the evening of 14 June. But the leadership decided to make a final decision in a plenary session of the protesters (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 285). The Catholics of Myeongdong Catholic Church also intervened in this discussion. Aiming to promote demobilisation, the advisory priest of Myeongdong Cathedral Yang Gwon-sik made a keynote statement on the major effects accomplished by the MCP, while explicating the “limits of capability” at the same time, to continue the protest before the second round discussion (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 289). The ones who asserted to demobilise the protest argued that “the movement should render a wider solidarity with the National Committee for a Democratic Constitution and the Catholic Church through demobilisation.” (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 348) The ones who contended to sustain the protest argued that “there could not be a compromise with the military dictatorial regime in principle,” and if there is compromise it is not about securing the safe return but the abolition of the April 13 Statement and the release of activist prisoners. Also, they emphasised that the demobilisation of the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest is losing the centripetal force of the opposition for democratisation (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 348-49; see also Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 286-87).

After the discussion, the protesters decided to conclude by a show of hand of the whole protesters. In the first vote, decision to continue the protest outnumbered. But due to the number of votes lacked a majority, it was agreed to have another vote. At these significant crossroads, the input from the Korean Catholic Church was significant. After hearing the atmosphere of discussion and the result of the vote, an eminent dissident Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Seoul Ham Se-woong who actively participated in the movement for democratisation since the 1970s gave an impassioned speech to the protesters.

You need to respect the limitations and the place of the Church. If you drag us down, we cannot go further. When you let us free, when you do not tie us here, when you support the Church to do things what we can do and even more, either

the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Korean Catholic Church or the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice can set to work (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 290).

The intervention of priest Ham Se-woong can be interpreted as functioned the task of prognostic framing in terms of illustrating actions to be done. Especially, it appears that the statement could give a more influential “resonance” to the protesters considering the fact that the statement was made by Ham Se-woong who was taking a lead of the social participation of the Korean Catholic Church experiencing several imprisonments during the democratisation movement period. Here, the notion of “resonance is relevant to the issue of effectiveness” of proffered framings. And this effectiveness is, according to Benford and Snow, primarily related with the “credibility” of framings (2000, 619). It is widely recognised in the “social psychology of communication that speakers who are regarded as more credible are generally more persuasive” (Benford and Snow 2000, 620-21). Moreover, it has been found that “the greater the status and/or perceived expertise of the frame articulator and/or the organisation they represent from the vantage point of potential adherents and constituents, the more plausible and resonant the framings or claims.” (Benford and Snow 2000, 621) In the second vote for demobilisation, after priest Ham Se-woong’s speech, the votes for agreeing to demobilise outnumbered. But there was an objection again this time regarding the method of tallying up the voting. So the protesters came to a final conclusion to demobilise on the third vote.

Statements from the Catholic organisations such as the CPAJ also contributed to forming collective action frames. In the morning of 12 June when the protest was being developed in earnest, the CPAJ announced the statement “Our Hope and Accusation” which illuminated the “steadfast policy of opposition” over the intercom of Myeongdong Cathedral (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 325). In this statement, the CPAJ pronounced they advocate the MCP “because it was believed that the protest of the students at Myeongdong Cathedral since 10 June was a righteous action expressing the desire for democratisation.” Furthermore, the CPAJ mentioned that they would “continue to protect the students until the end



on priests' conscience" and asked "students to contain the use of violence" (GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 211). They also added that they "wished the struggles of young people unfolding in Myeongdong Cathedral would be an opportunity of making a major step towards democratisation of this country." (GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 211-12) This part can be part of a prognostic framing which the CPAJ proclaimed to officially support the MCP through expressing their policy of action clearly.

In the same statement, the CPAJ stated that they would have the "prayer meeting to protest the invasion of the sanctuary" on the same day (12 June) and continue to offer prayers remaining in Myeongdong Cathedral until 15 June. Also by appealing to people to join in the nationwide prayer meeting planned in the evening of 18 June, they formed a motivational framing of urging mobilisation at a national level (GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 212). Inspired by this official support for the MCP from the CPAJ, the protesters resolved to lead the protest in cooperation with the Catholic side and decided to abnegate a violent protest accommodating the CPAJ's opinion (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 325).

Considering the fact that the members of the Young People's Association of Myeongdong Cathedral were included in the leadership of the MCP (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 271), the statements in the name of the protesters can be seen as reflecting a Catholic orientation. The statement from the protesters announced on 13 June demonstrated various forms of framings such as diagnostic (injustice), prognostic, and motivational framing. As a diagnostic framing, the protesters first pointed out that the fundamental cause of the MCP lied in the "violence of the government." (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 277-78) Secondly, as a prognostic framing, the protesters proclaimed that they would continue the protest until the arrested people who were the officials of the National Committee for a Democratic Constitution (NCDC), innocent citizens, and students were released. This statement also included the motivational framing, which urged people to form the united front with the protests in a wider area of Myeongdong and with the MCP for realisation of the "permanent end of the dictatorship and the abolition of attempts to protect the constitution of the Fifth Republic." (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 278) Furthermore,

it is also notable that the statement verifies the solidarity between the protesters and the supporting Catholics in the later part which mentions about the “sincere gratitude and respect for the priests of the Archdiocese of Seoul who are sharing indignation and pain through all-night vigils and masses” (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 278). This solidarity between the Archdiocese of Seoul and the protesters appears to have had continued until the end of the MCP. The sense of solidarity is indicated in the last official statement from the protesters which titled “Ending the Myeongdong Protest.” In this statement, the participants of the protest state:

[The Chun Doo Hwan regime’s] conspicuous political manoeuvre has attempted to manipulate and disunite the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest. Their manipulation, which began with political rhetorics like ‘mob,’ ‘pro-communists,’ and ‘leftists’ even attempted to divide the strong solidarity between the priests and us. But we have fully confirmed the solidarity with the group of the priests once again and resolve a united struggle for democratization of our country in the future (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 292-93).

As examined in detail, the discursive processes of framing for collective action have been made consistently by the dissident Catholic figures and organisations such as priest Ham Se-woong and the CPAJ during the MCP. Furthermore, through many debates for democracy, denouncements for the government, rallies, statements, prayer services, masses by students, citizens, local traders and the Catholics, Myeongdong Cathedral had become the epicentre of waging the discursive battle against the Chun Doo Hwan regime in protests held in the wider Myeongdong area.

### **5.3.2 Mediating Communication**

With regard to the effects of organisations in making social movements to become a force for change, social movement scholar Sidney Tarrow noted the role

of the “*connective structures or interpersonal networks* that link leaders and followers, centres and peripheries, and different parts of a movement organisation with one another, permitting coordination and aggregation, and allowing movements to persist even when formal organisation is lacking.” (Tarrow 2011, 123-24 emphasis original)

This section explores how the dissident Korean Catholic organisations managed an organised response as a channel of communication since the beginning of the MCP on 10 June. When the protesters who were joining in the June 10 Demonstration in the locality of Myeongdong surged into Myeongdong Cathedral, provost Kim Byeong-do asked the assistance priest to prepare a plan of action while arranging the “close channel of communication” with the National Committee for a Democratic Constitution (NCDC) regarding the entry of the protesters into the cathedral (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 256). In particular, the Young People’s Association of Myeongdong Cathedral provided their office as a temporary control room when there were signs that the protest would be protracted. They also “secured” a place for protest from the cathedral while constituting the emergency centre bridging the protesters, the NCDC, and the Catholic Church (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 258).

Moreover, in the night of 11 June, the members of the executive committee of the CPAJ held a meeting with some representatives of the chaeya opposition groups. The participants of this meeting agreed on that “because the protest in Myeongdong Cathedral is the protest of the whole Korean people developing within the church, the Korean Catholic Church supports and protects the fight, and at the same time the protesters should guarantee that the protest would continue as the non-violent peace protest based on the mutual understanding between the Catholic Church and citizens.” (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 265) As the “interpersonal” networks, the Young People’s Association of Myeongdong Cathedral and the CPAJ played a role of being the “sites for the normative pressures and solidarity incentives out of which movements emerge and are sustained.” (Tarrow 2011, 124)

This conciliatory role by the Korean Catholic Church was also manifest on 12 June. In the afternoon when the member of the National Assembly Yu Hak-seong of the ruling party came to Myeongdong Cathedral to meet the provost Kim Byeong-do and the director in public relations of the Archdiocese of Seoul Ham Se-woong, asking to settle the MCP, provost Kim and priest Ham “delivered the claims of the protesting priests asking for the revision of the Fifth Republic’s constitution, and requested the apology for firing tear gas into Myeongdong Cathedral, the prevention of the recurrence of the incident, and to secure the safe return of the protesters.” (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 268)

Furthermore, at five in the afternoon of 12 June, the chief in public order of the Seoul Metropolitan Police Cho Jong-seok and the deputy head of the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP: Gukga Anjeon Gihoekbu, Angibu) Yi Sang-yeon visited Myeongdong Cathedral and attempted a negotiation with the provost Kim Byeong-do. In this meeting, where priests Ham Se-woong and Lee Gi-jeong attended, not the provost Kim, the police demanded to return the protesting students to their own institutions and to delegate the authority of imprisonment to the police later. But since the priests already knew eleven students were arrested while returning home, they responded that it was the “pastoral duty of the church to protect the students facing the danger by the authorities” and asked the safe return of the students without arresting them (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 272). On that day, the chief in public order of the Seoul Metropolitan Police Cho Jong-seok announced a statement below:

We define the mass public disorder at Myeongdong Cathedral as sabotaging the foundation of our nation; to subvert the established order, which is completely different in its nature from the violent, illegal June 10 Demonstration. [...] These disturbances are orchestrated by a major force of leftist activists who have been involved in other violent protests. They regarded the Myeongdong Cathedral as a “sacred zone”; a haven for leftist revolution of communism. They resisted police order to stop the illegal occupation of the cathedral and also, violence and disorder. To protect public order and civic life, the police intend to deal with the

situation firmly as soon as possible (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 273-74).

As seen above, although the police revealed a will to negotiate, their basic stance of oppressive measure has not changed. At midnight of 12 June, the chief in public order of the Seoul Metropolitan Police Cho Jong-seok and the deputy head of the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP) Yi Sang-yeon visited Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan again and exerted pressure saying “we cannot guarantee the level of oppressive measures that could be made when the church would not let the students out. Moreover, regardless of the will of the church, the authorities will come soon to arrest the students.” (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 274) Then Cardinal Kim discussed this matter with priests Kim Byeong-do and Ham Se-woong, and expressed the pastoral position of the church to protect the protesters to the authorities:

How can the church eject the students who eventually came into the cathedral while fighting and protesting to establish democracy on this land? How can they be called as wrongdoers? The church has a duty to protect them. [...] The authorities may exercise governmental power on Myeongdong Cathedral. But if you are going to come inside the cathedral and take the students, step on me and pass! Then you will encounter a new phase where priests across the country would gather in Myeongdong Cathedral and oppose you, anticipating their arrests. Go tell my words to the person who gave this order (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 275).

Looking back on the time, priest Ham Se-woong testified that Cardinal KimSou-hwan’s strong reaction gave a critical influence to the authorities to hesitate the suppression of the inside of the cathedral (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 275). This role of the leadership of the Archdiocese of Seoul including Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan, as a channeling organisation, contributed to enabling the MCP “to persist” under the situaion where an official organisation representing the protesters was absent (Tarrow 2011, 124).

Since the obvious clue to resolve the MCP had not been sought, in the afternoon of 14 June, the government let the “mandator with full powers” contact the priest Ham Se-woong. The authorities delivered the final pledge that “if the protest were demobilised until noon of 15 June, the government would secure the safe return of the whole protesters and would not take legal measures.” Priest Ham Se-woong sent this message to the leadership of the MCP and asked them to reach a conclusion (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 283). In this way, the Catholic side played a role as the “connective structure” (Tarrow 2011, 124), linking the government which had been bearing a close watch on the development of the MCP, and the protesters who had been ruminating on the path of the struggle over the course of MCP.

### **5.3.3 Building Collective Identities**

In social movements, the formation of collective, political identities is crucial since “the answer to the question of identity affects the very explanation of contentious political processes in general.” (McAdam et al. 2001, 56) This section examines how the CPAJ and dissident Catholics contributed to building collective identities among the protesters of the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest. The Catholic engagement in the making of collective identities during the MCP was mainly done by religious ceremonies such as prayer services, masses and peace marches (cf. Durkheim 1995).

On 12 June, the CPAJ of the Archdiocese of Seoul appealed for a nationwide participation from adherents and citizens in their “Prayer Meeting for the Protest Against the Infringement of the Sacred Place and Democratisation,” which aimed to remonstrate about “the violent suppression of the police and the indiscriminate firing of tear gas” towards the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 266-67). Along with this, forty priests of the Archdiocese of Seoul began the sit-in demonstration for a definite period in agreement for denouncing the firing of tear gas inside Myeongdong

Cathedral (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 267). As the media attention about the MCP followed since this day, the area of Myeongdong Cathedral, surrounded by thousands of riot police, rapidly rose as “the sacred place for democratisation after Gwangju of May 1980.” (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 267)

About two o'clock in the afternoon of 12 June, the number of approximate two hundred nuns, then at about three o'clock, a hundred priests of the CPAJ made their ways into the cathedral breaking through the police line. These nuns and priests received an enthusiastic welcome from the protesters and the citizens who had already been in the cathedral. The nuns and priests staged a silent vigil at the entrance of Myeongdong Cathedral “to support the protest, and demand free access of citizens and adherents to the cathedral and ask to stop using tear gas.” (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 271) When the robed priests and nuns held a non-violent, silent protest for democratisation against the cathedral behind them at the very heart of Myeongdong which is the centre of Seoul city, surprisingly, citizens after work continued to join in this silent protest. The entrance area of Myeongdong Cathedral naturally became the place for a large-scale discussion on the state of affairs with over ten thousand people gathered. Then the street peace march tends to follow after the discussion (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 271-72).

At eight in the evening of 12 June, the CPAJ held the “Special Mass for the Nation” attended by about three hundred nuns and priests and one thousand people of students, citizens and the poor (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 272). After the mass, the Catholic priests of Myeongdong Cathedral announced that they would hold a daily regular mass for democratisation apart from the MCP. The priests participating in the protest organised a prayer meeting after the special mass at the entrance of Myeongdong Cathedral. In this meeting, they adopted the resolution of four statements: “to refuse the attempt of the military to have long-term seizure of power by succession, to actively participate in realisation of democracy, to stand alongside the students who long for democracy and to support the safe return of the students who entered the

cathedral until the end.” Then the participants of the MCP staged the peace march with the cross and the three large national flags at the head. After the march, the priests had a separate sit-in prayer meeting (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 272).

In this process, the Korean Catholic Church started to support the MCP in earnest from 12 June. The effort of the Catholics during this day illustrates the pattern of the social participation of the church, which the religious organisation with an image of the sacred and a non-violent identity attempted to achieve the political cause of democratisation by activities such as mass and prayer services. Since the protesters and Myeongdong Cathedral settled “the strained relations,” and formed “the mutual relationship based on full trust” through these activities (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 273), it can be said that the Catholics provided the sense of unity and solidarity which were elevated to the religious level to the protesters of MCP.

It was the last day of the MCP (15 June) when the Catholic side made a decisive contribution for building collective identities among the participants of the MCP in the cathedral and in the whole Myeongdong region. Although the protest focused on the cathedral was officially finished this day, the special mass and the peace march led by the CPAJ, Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan and other dissident Catholics mobilised over ten thousand people in and around the cathedral and Myeongdong area (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 294). This collective action was de facto the symbolic ritual which heralded the following nationwide protests of June 1987 spread all over the country after the MCP (KDF Research Centre 2010, 316-23; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 143; Park Se-gil 2015, 219; Park Chan-seung et al. 2010, 412-13).

At eight in the evening of 15 June, the CPAJ held the “Special Mass for Democratisation of Korea.” Celebrated by Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan, the mass was attended by about three thousand people inside the cathedral and about eighteen thousand people outside filling the streets of Myeongdong (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 294). In this mass, Cardinal Kim stated that when the cathedral was attacked during the MCP by tear gas from the police, he felt as if



the “dignity and pride of the nation was collapsed,” and added that “when this holy sanctuary established by the martyrdom of our ancestors falls down, the bastion of the national conscience falls down.” (GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 212-13) He also urged the action of people saying that “our sacrifice is required not only for evangelisation but also for democratisation of this country.” (GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 216)

After the special mass, about five thousand adherents, priests and nuns carrying candles started a prayer meeting at the entrance of Myeongdong Cathedral. Later, about fifteen thousand adherents and citizens in and around the cathedral changed their directions to downtown Myeongdong and waged a peace march (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 294). The CPAJ of the Archdiocese of Seoul announced after the peace march that “We should not just wait until the regime changes itself. We believe that minjung [the people] who are principal agents of revolution should plan and realise [a democratic society].” (GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 217-18) In the same statement, they evaluated the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest as follows.

We already mentioned that the sit-in protest of students and citizens at Myeongdong Cathedral, which emerged from 10 June, is a just action. We must give the words of support and consolation to the fact that these participants of the protest expressed their intention in a peaceful way until the end and that they voluntarily ended the protest. [...] We sternly reject the denunciation saying that they violently occupied Myeongdong Cathedral or their arguments are procommunist. Rather, treading in their innocent footsteps, we should make this an opportunity to diffuse the democratisation movement (GSPI Archive Vol. 8, 218).

Through this statement, the CPAJ reaffirmed their support for the MCP and exhorted to make the MCP as the “opportunity” to expand the democracy movement across the country.

## 5.4 MCP as Campaign

This section examines how the MCP, which had become consolidated through the aforementioned role of the dissident Catholic priests and organisations, acted as a practical mechanism for mobilising and networking actors and resources in the wider context of the 1987 June Uprising.

As Tarrow puts it, “[m]obilisation is perhaps the most basic process in the study of social movements; without it, no collective action would take place.” (Tarrow 2011, 188) The process of mobilisation develops through two primary mechanisms, which are a “campaign” and “coalition formation” (Tarrow 2011, 190). Then what is campaign? Tarrow defines it as follows:

A campaign is a sustained, organised public effort making collective claims on targeted authorities. It can constitute new actors, a recognizable set of people who carry on collective action, making and/or receiving collective claims. But it can also activate coalitions of different actors who come together instrumentally around collective claims and disperse when the campaign is over. In contrast to a one-time petition, declaration, or mass meeting, campaigns extend beyond any single event. [...]

Campaigns often grow out of single protest events and take their shape around the initial conflict in those events and their organisation (Tarrow 2011, 191).

Firstly, the MCP was the “sustained, organised public effort” (Tarrow 2011, 191). The protest lasted nearly all night from 10 June to 15 June. And during the protest, the participants who were students, civilians, and the Catholic priests strived for an organised movement by forming the leadership autonomously (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 271). In these efforts for organising the MCP, the Catholic side played a salient role. Na Do-eun, who joined in the MCP as a participant stated how the Young People’s Association of Myeongdong Cathedral (YPA) responded to a prolonged protest in a systematic way:

As the extension of the protest was becoming a reality, the YPA divided its members into three shifts who could wage all night sit-ins, also including the ones

who could join the protest after work. Then the YPA assigned some members to the watch office of Myeongdong Cathedral, in the office of the YPA, in main areas of the cathedral, and in the sit-in site. Also, according to the deployment plan of the provisional executive branch of the protest, the YPA dispatched some members to units of alarm, patrol, medical treatment and so forth (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 265).

Moreover, the leadership of the YPA “mediated” between the inside of the MCP and external organisations such as the NCDC, and “established the close system of cooperation and support between the nationwide democratisation movement and the sit-in site.” (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 265) In addition to this role of the YPA, Na Do-eun also points out the active engagement of the CPAJ and other social participatory Catholics from Myeongdong Cathedral as one of the reasons that the protest after the June 10 Demonstration could have been started at Myeongdong Cathedral and “sustained in the ardent favour and support from the public” (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 261). Na Do-eun viewed this support from the public was possible since these Catholic organisations such as the YPA and CPAJ had already built the “goodwill and trust” with the citizens in the vicinity of Myeongdong Cathedral—through various activities such as the summer volunteer work for farming villages, conferences for young people, and the video and photograph exhibition for the May 18 Gwangju Uprising—about the social role of the Korean Catholic Church even before the MCP (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 261).

The landscape of how the general public around Myeongdong Cathedral supported the MCP is described well in the portrayal of Na Do-eun on the protesters’ street peace march on 12 June:

Walking in single file, the protesters entered the road in front of Myeongdong Cathedral. [...] [T]he street immediately turned into a place of great festivities. People came out into the streets, clapping and cheering. They sang the national anthem with the protesters and the procession filled the streets [...] Besides those who had crowded into the Myeongdong streets, the people in buildings neighbouring the cathedral waved, tore up waste papers and threw them into the

streets. Others opened their windows, climbed onto rooftops and even stood on the roofs of cars. In a flash, the whole world was covered in white (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 268).

## **5.5 MCP as Coalition Formation**

The “coalition formation” is another primary process for mobilisation (Tarrow 2011, 190). Then what are motives for coalition formation? Tarrow explicates:

Many factors can produce the desire to form a coalition, including ideological proximity, the desire to pool resources, the need to combine against a common threat, the urge to produce solidarity among the members of neighboring categories, and, in institutionally structured environments, the desire to put together a minimum-winning coalition. The most important incentive to forming a coalition involves helping a group gain in numbers, unity, legitimacy, and political influence against more powerful enemies.

Campaigns are mounted and coalition formed almost always when weak actors challenge stronger ones or elites or authorities (Tarrow 2011, 191).

The most crucial “incentive” to form a coalition throughout the MCP can be also interpreted as to “gain in numbers, unity, legitimacy, and political influence against more powerful enemies.” (Tarrow 2011, 191) The most representative case of “coalition formation” achieved by the MCP would be the emergence of the “necktie troops” (nektai budae, symbolically representing middle-class, white-collar office workers with neckties), which were groups of office workers in Myeongdong area where business enterprises and commercial institutions were concentrated. Supporting the MCP during lunch times and after work, these office workers (or necktie troops) presented themselves and filled the streets in Myeongdong. The demonstration of the necktie troops was in fact the by-product of the MCP and was also the “peak” in the whole 1987 June Uprising in deed as well as in name (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 272; Seo Joong-

Seok 2011, 352-53; cf. Kim Won 2009, 166-67). Na Do-eun describes the appearance of the “necktie troops” on 13 June:

When the protesters, with tanned faces and ragged appearances, climbed the hill of Myeongdong Cathedral, the windows of nearby office buildings opened and people burst out in cheers and applause. [...] rolls of paper towels were thrown or rolled down from the buildings into the streets by these office workers in support of the demonstration. The protest had become a sort of daily life without the usual restraints for the citizens. Some “necktie troops” returning to their offices after their lunch break even chanted slogans together with protesters in front of the cathedral. [...] [Finally] “the silent majority” had revealed their political stance. These necktie troops [...] symbolised the stepping of the middle class into the front of Korea’s democratisation history. Their actions were historical as they were transformed into an important agent of change, thereby effectively changing the course of history. They became one of the key forces that guided the June Uprising later on (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 277).

The participation of common citizens, including the “necktie troops”, in the protest which prompted by the MCP had the ripple effect such as to impose strains to the statesmanship of the Chun Doo Hwan government. On 13 June, in a ministerial meeting to discuss the situation of the MCP, then Home Secretary Goh Kun reported to Chun Doo Hwan that “the alignment and engagement, or stimulation of some civilians for the protest now is the serious situation.” (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 335) The minister Goh Kun added that “Seoul is intense” with the prospect that protests would continue to occur across the country (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 335-36). As Chun Doo Hwan stated, “Let’s show patience for the situation of Myeongdong Cathedral,” it was implied that the regime found it difficult to bring a simple solution to the MCP, such as the use of armed force as in Gwangju, 1980 (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 337).

Then how did these potent necktie troops emerge and formed a coalition with the protesters in Myeongdong area? Tarrow lucidly explained the process of coalition formation as follows.

As opportunities widen and information spreads about the susceptibility of a political system to challenge, not only activists, but also ordinary people, begin to test the limits of social control. Clashes between early challengers and authorities reveal the weak points of the latter and the strengths of the former, inviting even timid social actors to align themselves on one side or another. Once triggered by a situation of generally widening opportunities, information cascades outward and political learning accelerates. [...] Alliances are formed — often across the shifting boundary between challengers and members of the polity. New forms of contention are experimented with and diffused (Tarrow 2011, 189-190).

As Tarrow points out, the spread of information through continuing media attention made the protest at Myeongdong Cathedral as a matter of national concern. And as the legitimacy of the MCP had gained wide-ranging empathy, in other words, since the “strengths” of challengers were revealed, it provided an opportunity for the former passive middle class to actively participate in the June Uprising.

Furthermore, an account of sociologist Ron Eyerman on how social movements “move” is suggestive to make sense of the emergence of the middle-class necktie troops from another angle. Social movements can be, according to Eyerman, stimulated to emerge through “cognitively framed emotions, anger, frustration, shame, guilt, which move individuals and groups to protest, to publicly express and display discontent” (Eyerman 2006, 194-95). Eyerman continues to explain on the role of “identity and emotion” in social movements that can be relevant to the formation of the middle-class necktie troops in the 1987 June Uprising:

If sufficient numbers turn out, one may call this a “protest event.” Such an occurrence may contain and collect enough energy and coherence to generate similar events in the future, as well as recall the memory of those in the past. This sequence of events can set in motion a process of collective will formation whereby individual identities and biographies are fused into a collective characterised by feelings of group belongingness, solidarity, common purpose, and shared memory, a “movement” in other words. Once in motion, this process

has both situational (manifest) and long-lasting (latent) effects, a sense of moving together, of changing and being changed through participating in a large social force. This sense can emerge in context, through participation in collective actions (Eyerman 2006, 195).

The appearance of necktie troops was indeed a manifestation of “collective energy” of middle-class office workers in Myeongdong area. And it seems that necktie troops would come to gain more accelerating momentum and exert stimulating influence to other dissenting voices of the region as it succeeded to continue developing senses of “group belongingness” and “solidarity”, as well as common goal among its participants.

The effect of the MCP, which networked different movement actors such as the NCDC, student protesters, the Sanggyedong people, and the middle-class office workers across a hub of the developing social movement, Myeongdong Cathedral, later diffused to other parts of the country (see KDF Research Centre 2010, 316-23; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 143; Park Se-gil 2015, 219; Park Chan-seung et al. 2010, 412-13). From 15 June, immediately after the MCP was finished, the protests of students and civilians asking for democratisation became intensified nationwide. The police reported that “[On 15 June] the number of participants who joined in the protests set the highest record of this year. The number of 90,200 students at fifty nine universities across the country waged protests. And the number of about 104,000 people in 140 places nationwide took part in the protests.” (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 362-63)

Tarrow examined the processes of how the mobilised movement comes to be diffused as follows:

The process of diffusion results from people’s decisions to take advantage of opportunities that have been demonstrated by other groups’ actions. It occurs when groups make gains that invite others to seek similar outcomes; [...] and when the predominance of an organisation or institution is threatened, and it responds by adopting collective action. [...]

Diffusion occurs in all major episodes of contentious politics, but during cycles of contention, when existing relationships are destabilised, newly mobilised actors

are especially attentive to what others are doing and are less constrained than they might have been to behave in expected ways (Tarrow 2011, 192).

The diffusion of the democracy movement in June 1987 across the country can be analysed as that the Korean people who were encouraged by the possibility of fight for democratisation, which had been “demonstrated by” the MCP, mounted collective actions for the “similar outcomes” which was a political change of the constitutional revision and democratisation (cf. Tarrow 2011, 192). On 15 June when the MCP was demobilised, the city of Daejeon was nearly paralysed due to the protest. The opposition in Busan on the same day became fierce in that the number of 4,000 students from six universities held demonstrations in the centre of the city (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 356-59). Moreover, together with Daejeon, Jinju city, where there had not been many protests before, turned out to be “the most ferocious battlefield” where civilians, workers, and students became the “newly mobilised actors” (Tarrow 2011, 192) and developed powerful protests neutralising the police (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 359-60; see also KDF Research Centre 2010, 323-24; Cumings 2005, 392).

## **5.6 Further Reflections on the MCP**

This section attempts to elaborate further on the background which the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest (MCP) could work as a mechanism of networking the actors and resources in the critical early stage of the 1987 June Uprising after the June 10 Demonstration, and generate the enthusiasm and support for nationwide collective actions that would unfold in the subsequent protests after the MCP.

Present section is to answer two questions: first, how was the role of the dissident Catholic figures as Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan, the provost Kim Byeong-do, and priest Ham Se-woong, and organisations as the CPAJ and YPA instrumental to facilitate the MCP? Second, what were religious geographical factors that



influenced Myeongdong Cathedral to become an effective social movement space for the MCP?

### 5.6.1 The Relative Autonomy of Religion

The notion of the “relative autonomy” of religion provides utility to analyse the background which made the role of the dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations facilitating in the development of the MCP. In the account of sociologist Otto Maduro, the “relative autonomy” of religion means that religion is “*neither absolutely independent* with respect to social structures, conflicts, and transformations [...] *nor totally determined* by these structures, conflicts, and transformations.” In other words, the “religious field” is “relatively autonomous” since it is “*partially conditioned* by social structures, conflicts, and transformations, but is also *partially independent* in their regard” (Maduro 1982, 87 emphasis original).

Maduro presents three sociological aspects of the “relative autonomy” of religion. Firstly, the relative autonomy of religion has a “subjective dimension”:

Every religious system has a subjective dimension. After all, a religious system entails a *worldview* capable of satisfactorily orientating a community or social group in its socio-natural milieu. In this sense every socially shared religious system becomes an interiorised, introjected system for the believers within it.

This internalisation or introjections of a religious system on the part of a social group offers this religious system a certain autonomy and continuity—a certain *psycho-social* consistency—that will render the group resistant to sudden and repeated transformations. It thereby generates a tendency to perpetuate the religious system. Thus we can speak of a certain subjective *psycho-social* basis for the (relative) autonomy of any religion (Maduro 1982, 87 emphasis original).

In the case of dissident Catholic figures and organisations, the “subjective dimension” of the relative autonomy, in other words the “psycho-social” basis which rendered to sustain the MCP was the firm belief that Myeongdong

Cathedral is the “sanctuary” and the “spiritual and moral symbol” of the Korean Catholic Church. As provost Kim Byeong-do of Myeongdong Cathedral declared in his June 14 statement, since Myeongdong Cathedral was the sanctuary, it was the place that “should not be destroyed or damaged by violence.” (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 284) Thus it can be interpreted that the perception of the Catholics of Myeongdong Cathedral and who engaged in the MCP was to reject the violently enforced suppression of the protest and activities that was developed under the approval of the cathedral. In this way, the Catholic priests’ “interiorised, introjected system” (Maduro 1982, 87) that the status of Myeongdong Cathedral as a symbol of Korean Catholicism should be defended (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 289) can be seen as one factor which sustained the political opposition of the Korean Catholic priests during the MCP.

Secondly, there is an “objective dimension” of the relative autonomy of religion. This objective dimension refers to “a set of socially shared *teachings* and *practices*. This objectivisation in a structured set of teachings and practices shared and repeated by a community or social group also offers any religious system a certain autonomy and continuity—a certain *social consistency*.” Maduro claims this objective dimension “[contributes] to rendering the system resistant to sudden and repeated transformations. And it will strengthen the tendency to the self-perpetuation of that system.” (Maduro 1982, 88) With regard to this objective dimension of “socially shared teachings and practices,” the impact of Catholic social teachings from the Second Vatican Council to Korean Catholicism should not be excluded. The conciliar document *Gaudium et Spes* particularly clarified “why the Church cannot be indifferent to politics, explored what competence it has in the area, and set a tone for the manner in which it will engage the political realm.” (Himes 2006, 24) In case of Korean Catholicism, the influence of the Second Vatican Council provided the “theological underpinning” for the “political activism of Korean Catholic priests and Bishops.” (Baker 1998, 159) Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan was also considerably influenced by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, while staying close to Vatican during the time of the

council to study sociology at Münster University in Germany from 1956 to 1964. After he came back from Germany, Cardinal Kim enthusiastically supported the mission and responsibility of the Catholic Church for Korean society (Lee Jang-Woo 2011, 93-95).

Lastly, there is an “institutional dimension” of the relative autonomy of religion. According to Maduro, this institutional dimension means that:

[A] religious system is produced, reproduced, preserved, and propagated by a stable body of organised functionaries.

This institutionalisation of certain religious systems offers them a still greater autonomy and continuity—a greater *microsocial* consistency. This will contribute to rendering them still more resistant to repeated and sudden transformations, further consolidating the tendency of any religious system towards self-perpetuation (Maduro 1982, 88 emphasis original).

For this “institutional dimension” of the relative autonomy of religion, the international network of the Catholic Church centring around Vatican needs to be mentioned. This firm universal church of Catholicism itself functions as the system which secures the “autonomy and continuity” of the religion. It is hard to deny that there was the world Catholic Church, which recognised social justice as a realm of evangelisation and mission after the Second Vatican Council, in the background of the participation and support of the dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations in the MCP. In fact, priest Ham Se-woong, who had played a prominent role at the site of the MCP also admits this role of the international network of the Catholic Church as a background support for the opposition (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 296-97). Priest Ham paid particular attention to the influence of the Seoul Olympics which was to be held one year later, 1988. According to priest Ham, in case the Chun Doo Hwan regime “would have done a bloody suppression to the protest at Myeongdong Cathedral, there was a strong likelihood that the South American Catholic countries occupying one-third of the world would boycott the Seoul Olympics.” (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 296-97) Priest Ham’s statement is

a probable explanation when considering the elaborate endeavour of the Chun Doo Hwan regime to succeed in holding the Seoul Olympics.<sup>11</sup>

### **5.6.2 Geographical Features of Myeongdong Cathedral**

The geographical conditions of Myeongdong Cathedral were also crucial for the site being a primary mechanism of networking and mobilisation during and after the MCP. What were the geographical elements enabled Myeongdong Cathedral to be a critical spatial mechanism for networking and mobilisation during the period of the MCP and in the wider context of the June Uprising?

Geographer Chung Hee-sun (2004) explored the “spatiality” of the cathedral in two ways, architectural and geographical factors. Firstly in terms of architectural aspects, Myeongdong Cathedral revealed “superiority, holiness, divineness, and significance” by being situated on “the top of a hill.” This sort of arrangement, towering over the other ground formed the hierarchical structure “between a religious space and other spaces.” Therefore when the people who joined in and observed the protest “were entering Myeongdong Cathedral, they came to revere the cathedral as they climbed up the hill,” and through this they could experience the “process moving into the realm of the sacred from the secular.” (Chung Hee-sun 2004, 106) Also as a Gothic architecture, Myeongdong Cathedral “made even common people, although non-Catholic, realise that the place is a sanctuary by the sacred image of the architecture itself. This furthermore gave the perception to people that the cathedral is the place obstructing disrespectful activities and preventing the reachability of the governmental power.” (Chung Hee-sun 2004, 107)

Geographically, Myeongdong Cathedral “had an advantage for deriving media attention” due to the large spatiality of the “land area of over 12,000

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<sup>11</sup> It is verified that the Chun Doo Hwan government was in fact under a burden to send in the police inside Myeongdong Cathedral, since it was the representative cathedral of Korean Catholicism (Seo Joong-Seok 2011, 337).

pyeong [9.72 acre] and the total floor space of over 4,000 pyeong [3.24 acre]” and to be equipped with the “accessibility” situated in the centre of Seoul city. Moreover, as stated earlier, the “geographical centrality” of Myeongdong as “the most major business district where finance, service, and shopping districts are concentrated” is another element<sup>12</sup> which made Myeongdong Cathedral as an effective space for protest (Chung Hee-sun 2004, 108).<sup>13</sup>

Regarding the reasons for Myeongdong Cathedral being attractive as the place of protest, other than the foregoing mentioned factors, the newspaper *Kyunghyang Shinmun* of 20 November in 1987 pointed out two additional elements. One was that “the activities within the cathedral could be protected from the force of the police since the site was regarded as a particular area of extra-territorial rights.” The other was the easiness of entry where the crowd of “unspecified, random people” could frequent the cathedral (the number of 17,000 people on average Sunday).

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<sup>12</sup> As for the year 2004, the number of people “getting on and off at the Myeongdong underground station was approximately 130,000 people. Also, a floating population on the streets from the entrance of Euljiro to Myeongdong underground station was about 100,000 people” (Chung Hee-sun 2004, 109).

<sup>13</sup> Surely this geographical and spatial centrality is not a unique characteristic of Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul. For example, in cases of St Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City and St Paul’s Cathedral in London, it can be said that these prestigious churches are also located at the heart of the city with good accessibility and easy view from many parts of the city. In this respect, it is suggestive that the protesters of Occupy London movement in 2011 set up their camp outside St Paul’s Cathedral for four months (see Halvorsen 2012). Therefore, from a contemporary, international perspective, the emerging interplay between (religious) space and social movements in a global scale calls for researchers’ explanations for mechanisms, opportunities, threats, and implications on the dynamics of (religious) space and contentious politics to better understand the contemporary dynamics of social and political transformations (see for instance, Kong 2010).

## **5.7 Movement Context after the MCP**

The death of two university students Park Jong Chul and Lee Han Yeol was a crucial impetus for the development of the 1987 June Uprising. If the Park Jong Chul incident facilitated the democracy movement from the beginning of 1987 to the critical stages of the June Uprising, the news of Lee Han Yeol's serious injury by hit from a tear gas canister on 9 June became a critical driving force of national resentment for the Chun Doo Hwan regime's violence and authoritarian rule that brought Korean people of all walks of life to the streets to wage protests for the constitutional revision and democratisation (Kim Sun-hyuk 2007, 57-58).

On 15 June 1987 when the MCP was demobilised, the student protests erupted across the country in Seoul, Daejeon, Busan, Daegu, Gwangju, and many other places. The National Committee for a Democratic Constitution (NCDC) planned to hold another major nationwide demonstration on 18 June that was aimed to protest against the Chun regime's use of tear gas to suppress the demonstrations. This demonstration on 18 June was particularly influenced by the incident of Lee Han Yeol who was in a state of coma since 9 June after hit by a tear gas canister from the police. On 18 June, the protests against the use of tear gas were held at 16 cities across the country. On this day, at numerous sites across the country, hundreds and thousands of students and citizens waged protests denouncing the Chun regime's use of tear gas. The largest demonstration on 18 June was held in Busan. Nearly 300,000 people joined in the protest in Busan. Together with students and citizens, taxi drivers of Busan participated in demonstrations with their hundreds of taxis (KDF Research Centre 2010, 323-31; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 143-47). It can be assessed that the ripple effect of the MCP bridged and solidified the wave of democracy movement of early June to the later stages of the June Uprising in 1987.

As the demonstrations were intensively held across the country, the Chun Doo Hwan regime could not repress the protests only with the force of riot police. So by the time around 18 June 1987, the Chun government internally considered the deployment of troops to quell the nationwide democracy movement. But

through diplomatic channels, the United States expressed disagreement with the Chun government's idea of deploying military troops to repress the June Uprising. Also the Chun regime itself was doubtful about the actual outcome and aftermath of using the military force to repress the protests considering the previous case of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising (Park Se-gil 2015, 229-33; Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 145-46).

The wave of demonstrations in June 1987 culminated on 26 June. The NCDC organised the nationwide peace demonstration for a democratic constitution on 26 June. Prior to this date, however, protests for democratisation continued across the country from 21 to 25 June. On the day for the nationwide peace demonstration on 26 June, over 1,000,000 people assembled to wage demonstrations against the Chun Doo Hwan regime's autocratic rule in more than 30 cities across the country (KDF Research Centre 2010, 329-36; Park Se-gil 2015, 228-29; Kang Won-taek 2015, 198). In the regions of industrial complex such as Masan, Changwon, and Incheon, many workers participated in the June Uprising. Also in Gwangju city, the place of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, numerous participants of students, citizens, and farmers showed intensity of demonstrations against authoritarianism of the Chun regime throughout the period of the June Uprising (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 146-51; KDF Research Centre 2010, 335-40).

Facing this wave of the democracy movement across the country in June 1987, the Chun Doo Hwan regime came to accept the public opinion of the constitutional revision for a democratic reform. On 29 June 1987, then presidential candidate of the ruling party Democratic Justice Party Roh Tae Woo announced the June 29 Declaration which mainly included the acceptance of the request for direct presidential election in December 1987 (Kang Won-taek 2015, 199-200; KDF Research Centre 2010, 341-43).

Even though it had some limitations<sup>14</sup>, Roh Tae Woo's June 29 Declaration was a significant achievement for the democracy movement sectors

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<sup>14</sup> Observers point out that Roh's June 29 Declaration alienated the middle-class people from participating further in the democratisation movement since their minimum goal of

in terms of ending the military dictatorship that existed from 1961 in South Korea (Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 153).

Although another general-president Roh Tae Woo was elected as the next president in 1987 after Chun Doo Hwan, benefited by another divide between Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam for electing presidential candidate from the opposition party, the Korean politics came to proceed with further measures of democratisation and civil society was flourished with diversification after 1987 (KDF Research Centre 2010, 347-49).

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has mainly investigated the significance of the MCP as an opportunity and mechanism of networking actors and resources in the movement context of the June Uprising in 1987. For the MCP to be strengthened, the role of dissident Catholic priests and organisations was crucial. To summarise the role of these progressive Catholic priests and organisations: firstly, they provided the “frames” for the movement and their “framing” made the protest and the “collective action” of participants possible and sustainable (Benford and Snow 2000, 614). This role of framing the movement was examined in section 5.3.1 through analysing the remarks of the Catholic priests and the official statements announced during the MCP. Secondly, the Catholic priests and organisations functioned as a primary “connective” movement structure (Tarrow 2011, 124) by filling the absence of a communication channel between the government authorities and the movement participants. Thirdly, by participating in the MCP through religious and ritual forms such as masses and prayer services, the Catholic side accorded the sacredness to the democratisation movement. It was

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a democratic reform was accomplished. In the subsequent large-scale workers’ struggles after the June Uprising, the middle-class did not participate. See Choi Jang-Jip (1993, 37-40), Kim Hyung-A (1995, 54-55), Cumings (2005, 392-93), and Park Se-gil (2015, 236-37).



examined how this bestowed sacred dimension onto a political struggle was effective in building collective identities among the participants of the MCP and other protesters in wider Myeongdong region.

As explored, the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest (MCP) presented the features of “campaign” and “coalition formation.” More importantly, in the movement context of the 1987 June Uprising, the MCP worked as a mechanism of networking the actors and resources at the critical beginning juncture of the uprising after the June 10 Demonstration. This chapter has shown how the spatial politics of the MCP by the agency of the dissident Catholic priests/organisations, student protesters, the NCDC, and the dispossessed people from Sanggyedong had shaped and consolidated the power and capacity of the June Uprising. In fact the subsequently unfolding movements demonstrated the impact of the MCP that facilitated the diffusion of collective actions for democratisation after 15 June across the country. Through utilising a spatial approach in analysing social movements, Chapter 5 explains that the spatiality of the MCP, with its networking function that connected different actors and resources across the “social movement space” of Myeondong Cathedral (Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013, 12), played a constituting role of moulding and strengthening the power and ripple effects of the 1987 June Uprising, particularly in its early stage.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Conclusion:**

### **The Spatial Constitution of the South Korean Democracy Movement**

This study has accounted for the religious spatial mechanism for dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations to play a salient, distinctive role compared with other dissident Christian denominations and organisations in the South Korean democracy movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Explicating the mechanism for enabling the effective participation of the Korean Catholic Church in the democratisation movement, the thesis is situated in debates about the role of space in shaping processes of contentious politics and collective actions (Miller et al. 2013; see also Arias et al. 2009). Accordingly, critiquing and moving beyond the dominant actor-oriented perspective (Lee Nam-hee 2007; Park Mi 2005; Chung Chul-hee 1994; Koo Hagen 2001; Kim Sun-hyuk 2000; Im Hyug-Baeg 1990), this dissertation sets out to utilise a spatial perspective of analysis to examine critical phases of Korean democratisation in order to explicate the relational dynamics of movement actors in which how these actors are mobilised, connected and diffused across the social movement space. Throughout the empirical research chapters, the thesis has shown how the religious spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul shaped some significant junctures of the South Korean democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

Myeongdong Cathedral has historically established its spatial salience both as religious and socio-political space since liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945 to the 1960s. During the tempestuous period of uncertainties and tension after liberation, Myeongdong Catholic Church began to emerge as one of crucial societal arenas where religious and secular leading figures, such as Bishop Roh Ki-nam, Syngman Rhee and generals of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK), met and coordinated both domestic and

international issues. Through these encounters and experiences with secular politics, Myeongdong Cathedral could begin to be prepared for a role in both national and international affairs. Moreover, benefited by its transnational networks and the USAMGIK's Christian-friendly attitude (Yoon Seung-yong 1997, 104; Kang Don-gu 1993), Myeongdong Catholic Church and Korean Catholicism could establish its material infrastructure in the post-liberation period. The advancement of Myeongdong Cathedral as one of the most important religious and social spaces in the post-liberation society became the foundation for its subsequent influential role in the wartime conditions and the democratisation movement period.

During the Korean War period and 1950s, Myeongdong Cathedral chiefly became a place of empowerment through active war relief works. To the people who lost both their material basis and psychological stability, the conspicuous role of Myeongdong Catholic Church and Korean Catholicism to help and support the needy and re-establish the social infrastructure (Chang Jeong-ran 2001) such as schools and hospitals was perceived as positively empowering to achieve public good. Aided by this active social work, the Korean Catholic Church experienced remarkable numerical growth during the 1950s.

For Myeongdong Cathedral and Korean Catholicism, the 1960s was another vibrant period when the cathedral and the Korean Catholic Church underwent dynamic change. In 1962, the hierarchy of the Korean Catholic Church was officially established. In respect of the international context, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) exerted a transformative impact on the configuration of the theological, ecclesiastical, social aspects of the Korean Catholic Church. Most members of the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) which championed the pro-democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980 were ordained after the Second Vatican Council. Starting from the 1960s, also, Myeongdong Catholic Church and Korean Catholicism did the work for labour and human rights issues (Cho Kwang 2010, 288-293; see also Cheonjugyo Jeongui Guhyeon Jeonguk Sajedan 1985, 23-24; Gatollik Jeongui Pyeonghwa Yeonguso 1990, 30-32). At the domestic level, the Korean Catholic Church

underwent a time of acquiring empirical knowledge in terms of its relationships with Korean politics as it experienced the regimes of Syngman Rhee, Chang Myon, and General Park Chung Hee. These encounters, collisions, and negotiations with political powers (Ro Kil-Myung 2005, 174-78; Kang In-Cheol 2013b, 61-62; Cho Kwang 2010, 268-72; Hanguk Gyohoesa Yeonguso 2010, 146) had provided critical knowledge that Korean Catholicism could utilise in its dissident role in contentious politics of the 1970s and 1980s in which Myeongdong Catholic Church became a centrepiece as will be highlighted in the following sections.

### **6.1 Place: Contentious Sanctuary for Political Mobilisation**

The main empirical chapters of this study have shown how the spatialities of place, scale, and networks in socio-spatial relations (Jessop, Brenner, and Jones 2008; Leitner et al. 2008; Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013) constituted some critical junctures of the South Korean democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s through the operation of the religious spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Catholic Church.

Myeongdong Cathedral began to emerge as a contentious sanctuary through the oppositional role of dissident Catholic figures and organisations that developed their protests centring on the cathedral against the authoritarian rule of Park Chung Hee in the 1970s. Through situational analysis on religious space (section 3.3), this thesis explored how human agency could contribute to the production of Myeongdong Cathedral as a contentious sanctuary for the democratisation movement in the South Korean case. Chapter 3 has shown that it was the role of numerous prayer services and masses held for dissident Catholics and activists that enabled Myeongdong Cathedral to attain spatial centrality for struggles towards democratisation. In this respect, the production of Myeongdong Cathedral as sanctuary for pro-democracy protests was in part facilitated by external societal and political factors of the 1970s, namely political oppression and social injustice caused by the authoritarian regime.

Two events in the 1970s were crucial for Myeongdong Cathedral to be produced as contentious sanctuary. First, the 1974 incident of the arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun provided a momentum for dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations to take actions against the regime's repression on the Korean Catholic Church. Through this opportunity, one of the most powerful social movement organisations of contemporary South Korea came to be established, which was the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ). The arrest of Bishop Chi Hak-sun was also a catalyst for the following rituals of resistance, namely numerous masses and prayer-protests for the recovery of democracy and human rights that were instrumental for Myeongdong Cathedral to become widely considered as a holy place for democratisation. The other important event was the 1976 March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation (MFD), which was promulgated at Myeongdong Cathedral. The MFD provided the "breakthrough" for the following nationwide dissident movement against the Yushin system of Park Chung Hee (Kang Man-gil 1998, 29). This event turned out to be more compelling since prominent dissenting religious figures, politicians, and intellectuals participated in the MFD. Driven by the role of the authoritarian regime itself, through pronouncing and accusing the MFD of being anti-government and subversive, the Yushin system paradoxically contributed to bringing about and consolidating solidarity among dissident movement camps against the Park Chung Hee government. More significant in terms of the ripple effects of the MFD was that it went beyond the spatial boundary of Myeongdong Cathedral, and mobilised support and solidarity from wider pro-democracy movement camps at an international level from Japan, Germany, and North America. This expansion of the dissidence movement to an international scale is notable since in this case, the spatial politics of opposition overcame the possible limitations of the "space-confined" resistance (cf. Nicholls, Miller, and Beaumont 2013, 6; Brenner 2013) and opened up new opportunities for intensifying dissidence and developing solidarity to challenge the Park Chung Hee government.

## **6.2 Scale: Sustaining the Vitality of Dissidence**

This study also made a significant contribution to newly understand the evolution of the 1980s Korean democracy movement. Through investigating the role of dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations and the spatial politics developed in and around Myeongdong Cathedral, Chapter 4 challenged the dominant paradigm of understanding the early-1980s and mid-1980s as the periods when the democracy movement in general was in stagnation due to the strong state repression and coercion on Korean society after the 1980 Gwangju Uprising (e.g., Lee Nam-hee 2007, 53-54; Koo Hagen 2001, 107-108; see also Jung Hae-Gu 2011, 101; 130-31; KDF Research Centre 2010, 185-273).

The findings of this study show that even under the conditions of harsh suppression by the authoritarian Chun Doo Hwan regime during 1980-1983 and 1985-1986, dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations, and the spatial politics of Myeongdong Cathedral contributed to sustaining the vitality of dissidence and facilitated the continuous evolution and development of the democracy movement up to the period of June 1987. The dissertation has examined the significance of the Catholic involvement in the 1982 arson attack at the US Cultural Centre in Busan as a key opportunity to re-establish the contentious dissident identity of Korean Catholicism which can be traced back to its introduction to the Korean peninsula.

Other crucial mechanisms that played a role of sustaining the vitality of dissidence in the early-1980s and mid-1980s were the commemoration ceremonies and media representations of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising. The rituals of commemoration for the Gwangju Uprising not only were threatening to the Chun Doo Hwan regime by challenging its legitimacy, but also solidified the spatial centrality of Myeongdong Catholic Church as a strategic site of resistance that notably developed until the critical junctures of the 1987 June Uprising. The visual media events that powerfully represented the truth of the Gwangju Uprising held at Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul and other Catholic churches in

Gwangju facilitated the sustaining of the vitality of resistance in the evolutionary dynamics of the democracy movement in the 1980s: movement (1980) — repression (1980-1983) — countermovement (1984-1985) — repression (1985-1986), when the strength of dissidence became relatively weak due to re-intensified state repression.

### **6.3 Networks: Connecting Disparate Movement Actors across Space**

The role of the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral as a social and political mechanism was clearly manifested in the 1987 June Uprising period. Myeongdong Cathedral Protest (MCP) in 1987 as a political instrument functioned in two important ways in the wider context of the June Uprising: being an effective, strategic camp for the protests in Myeongdong region and beyond, and being a mechanism of mobilisation and diffusion for the subsequent nationwide protests in June 1987.

Chapter 5 examined the background to Myeongdong Cathedral becoming the critical site for the protests in June 1987. Firstly, it played a framing role for dissident Catholic figures and organisations that waged the discursive battle against the Chun Doo Hwan regime through the direct intervention of the priests such as Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan and Ham Se-woong, and official statements delivered to the general public. Secondly, under circumstances where an effective, leading organisation for the protesters was absent, dissenting Catholic priests of Myeongdong Cathedral became the “connective structure” that mediated the Chun Doo Hwan government and the participants of the MCP. Thirdly, through engagement in religious and ritual ceremonies such as prayer services, masses, and peace marches, dissident Catholic figures and organisations such as the CPAJ contributed to building collective identities among the movement participants and influenced them to think of political resistance as legitimate collective actions.

The thesis accounted for how the MCP, as campaign and coalition formation, could become the influential mechanism of the mobilisation and diffusion of protests in June 1987 which subsequently erupted nationwide after the MCP. Firstly, it was the firm conviction of dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations that Myeongdong Cathedral was a “sanctuary” and “spiritual and moral symbol” of Korean Catholicism and hence should be protected from violence (Minjuhwa Undong Ginyeom Saeophoe 2007, 284), which reinforced the determination of dissident Catholic priests of Myeongdong Cathedral to maintain their contentious position during the MCP. Secondly, it is necessary to consider the impact of the Second Vatican Council on the Korean Catholic Church. The refined Catholic social teaching from the Vatican became a strong foundation for dissident Korean Catholic figures and organisations to develop their opposition against unjust political repression and social injustice. There was also the geographical centrality of Myeongdong Catholic Church that enabled the cathedral to become a critical “space for resistance” in the wider context of the 1987 June Uprising (Chung Hee-sun 2004, 108).

This study hence enriched the understanding of processes and developments of the 1987 June Uprising through proposing an epistemological turn to examine the dynamics of the uprising with a spatial perspective. The literature on the June Uprising has largely focused on the temporal progress of the events and opportunities (e.g., Koo Hagen 2001, 154; Kim Sun-hyuk 2007, 57-58; Lee Nam-hee 2007, 265; Park Se-gil 2015, 213-17) and views that the gradual accumulation of these events and opportunities such as Chun Doo Hwan’s April 13 Statement to reject the constitutional revision and the emergence of the National Committee for a Democratic Constitution (NCDC) caused and culminated in the mass mobilisation of the general public for the June Uprising in 1987. Contending that these accounts fail to explain how the movement actors for the June protests were connected and opportunities were created, this dissertation proposed to note the relational dynamics between these movement actors and opportunities through exploring the effects of the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest (MCP) which developed in the early stages of the 1987 June



Uprising. Chapter 5 especially highlighted how the spatial politics of the MCP shaped the early stages of the June Uprising and facilitated the diffusion of subsequent important protests for the constitutional revision and democratisation after 15 June, 1987 across the country. Through this investigation, the study added a new relational dimension in understanding how the dynamics of the June Uprising were constituted in its early stages, by explaining the important role of the MCP as connecting different actors and resources across the social movement space of Myeongdong Cathedral.

These empirical chapters have succeeded in drawing out elements and conditions by which religious place can work as a social and political mechanism. Firstly, religious place can be a social and political mechanism when it establishes its public salience through the surrounding historical and situational factors. Secondly, religious place can attain the spatial centrality which can exert a discursive influence on and receive sacred attention from the general public to function as a social and political mechanism. Thirdly, for its impact to be wide-ranging and extensive in society, religious place should take a pivotal position in the symbolic domain of society. In other words, religious place can be a powerful social mechanism when its spatial dynamics are able to represent a sublime ideal or the longing of people in society. Lastly, for the spatial dynamics of religious place to be politically facilitating, members of the concerned religious organisation and relevant actors in and around the space need to be actively participating in, communicating with, effectively confronting and coordinating with oppositional actors in contentious political situations.

The processes of the spatial dynamics of religious place to build up this historical salience, spatial centrality, symbolic resonance, and political power, however, need not occur in a precisely chronological order. Rather, there is a dynamic way, in which these characteristics of the historical, spatial, symbolic, and political aspects of the religious place formulate the establishment of the space as a social and political mechanism. This study suggests that the four features of the spatial dynamics of religious place examined interact, contest, and coexist with each other. For instance in Chapter 2, the historical salience of

Myeongdong Cathedral was built through interrelated political aspects and issues of the time and the spatial centrality of Myeongdong Cathedral as a rising centre of South Korean Catholicism in the post-liberation period. Also in Chapter 4, the symbolic power of Myeongdong Cathedral in the 1980s entailed the historical and political background of the previous democratisation movement and the 1980 Gwangju Uprising. Nevertheless, the exploration of the main features—historical, spatial, symbolic, and political—of the spatial dynamics of religious place as social and political mechanism in this study has significance for it demonstrates the validity and suitability of a (religious) spatial perspective as an analytical framework to examine contemporary societal and political affairs (Arias et al. 2009; Miller et al. 2013).

#### **6.4 Theory for the Secular Expansion of Religious Place**

The findings of this dissertation offer implications and contributions to scholarship beyond the field of Korean studies and the study of the South Korean democracy movement. The empirical chapters of this thesis that examined the role of the religious spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral in South Korea's democratisation movement have shown, more generally, that a religious place can be the durable and effective space that moulds some critical junctures and developments of a social movement. The findings of this research imply that a religious place can become a strategic space for a social movement when that religious place expands itself to embrace the goals of concerned collective actions and becomes part of the dynamics of secular contentious politics.

When this secular expansion of religious place into the social movement space successfully takes place, as shown in the case of Myeongdong Catholic Church in Seoul, the space is instrumental in mobilising believers and non-believers alike for collective efforts (see especially Chapters 4 and 5). The space is further useful to sustain the vitality of the dissidence by drawing and reinforcing solidarity across the space through both its symbolic (sacredness) and material

(geographical centrality) power that articulates the language of hope for change (Chapters 3 and 4). As examined in the case of the Myeongdong Cathedral Protest in June 1987, the secularly expanded religious space is an efficient site to connect different movement actors for contentious politics. It can also be the social movement space where achievable goals are to be negotiated and coordinated between the authorities and protesters by being a neutral mediating site of morality and social trust (Chapter 5).

As for the preconditions needed to effectively bring the above-mentioned burgeoning outcomes, with regards to the secular expansion of religious places into the social movement spaces, the empirical chapters of this study suggest that a religious place first needs to have attained the historically established religious spatial centrality as explained through Myeongdong Cathedral's history, especially from 1945 to the 1960s in Chapter 2. The expanded religious space itself, surely, does not work as a hub for the movement in its own right. The human agency of collective efforts should be entangled in the spatial dynamics of the religious space as shown in the cases of the role of the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) in Chapter 3 and the Committee for Justice and Peace of the Korean Catholic Church in Chapter 4. As conceptualised in Chapter 4, moreover, through examining commemorative rituals of protest and media representations of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, the establishment of the "social imaginary" of the need and hope for change also can be a necessary context for facilitating the religious spatial dynamics to work effectively in social movements.

The consideration of facilitating preconditions for the secular expansion of a religious space into the social movement space leads to thinking about key questions and matters that could work as leverage to determine the productive development of the related social movement. Firstly, it is crucial to what extent the concerned religious circles—in the case of this dissertation, dissenting Korean Catholic figures and organisations—can accommodate the goals, tactics, and duration of the protest of the secular contentious politics in order to affect the durability and effectiveness of the social movement based on that space. This is evident as shown in Chapter 3 when the dissident Korean Catholic priests joined

in the promulgation of the March First Declaration for the Salvation of the Nation (MFD) at Myeongdong Cathedral on 1 March 1976. The nature and extent of this declaration was the obvious anti-Yushin movement and included the resignation of the Park Chung Hee government which was interpreted by the authorities as an attempt at subversion. Since the dissident Korean Catholic figures such as priests Ham Se-woong and Kim Seung-hun joined and coordinated in this declaration event, Myeongdong Cathedral could be used as a central movement space for the reinforcement of dissidence and drawing international support for the 1970s democracy movement.

Another dimension that requires attention is that the degree of how much the general public would perceive and recognise the religious place as a space of significance and hope for public good and social cohesion is crucial for the achievability of the social movement developing around on that space. Since Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul and Namdong Catholic Church in Gwangju had been perceived as a place of the sacred and social reliability, commemorative services for the 1980 Gwangju Uprising held at these sites could draw the support from citizens for these ritualistic protests and the commemoration itself could further developed into actual street demonstrations after the services. The support from citizens was also shown where the media events organised by the Archdioceses of Seoul and Gwangju received extensive attention from the participating general public in these media representations of the Gwangju Uprising.

A third question that could be asked is to what extent the religious place has established historical, moral, and spatial centrality and authority. This established spatial centrality can be another important factor for the religious social movement to be powerful. As investigated in Chapter 2, the social reliability of Myeongdong Cathedral was a historically constructed strength of the cathedral that stood in the centre of social and political transformations of South Korea which included the national divide and the following (post-)war conditions in the 1940s and 1950s.

## 6.5 Present and Future of Myeongdong Cathedral

This study also suggests a realm for further research on the spatial dynamics in the South Korean democracy movement of the 1970s and 1980s. One direction could be a comparative study of the role of the spatial politics of the Christian Centre (Gidokgyo Hoegwan) in Seoul with Myeongdong Cathedral during the democratisation period. Together with Myeongdong Cathedral, the Christian Centre of Korean Protestantism was another representative shelter for dissidents in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>1</sup> Dismissed professors and journalists gathered and labour activists waged demonstrations at the Christian Centre during the democratisation period. The office of the National Committee for a Democratic Constitution (NCDC) was also located in the centre in 1987. Another topic could be a wider comparison of the spatial dynamics of Myeongdong Cathedral in the Korean context with other significant religious places in other parts of the world.

If Myeongdong Cathedral had become such a significant religious and social space by the late 1980s, then what was its social and political place in South Korea during the 1990s? If Myeongdong Cathedral was the sacred place for democratisation in the 1970s and 1980s, in the 1990s it was the place for emerging Korean civil societies (Chu Gyo-yun 2001). Aided by the arrival of procedural democratisation and economic growth, a variety of agendas from pluralist Korean civil societies were delivered at Myeongdong Cathedral through demonstrations and sit-in protests in the 1990s. From 1991 to 1997, there occurred 445 rallies, demonstrations, and occupy protests at Myeongdong Cathedral. Among these, 135 were on social issues such as educational reform, environmental and feminist movements, social welfare, etc. (Chu Gyo-yun 2001, 292-99)

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<sup>1</sup> See Lee Han-baek (1989) and the article “Christian Centre to be celebrated as a symbol of democratisation,” from *Newsnjoy*, 24 March, 2014 at: <http://www.newsnjoy.or.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=7348> (accessed 7 September 2016)

Whether Myeongdong Cathedral would continue to function as a spatial mechanism for social change and contentious politics in South Korean society after the 2000s is an open question. Urban theorist Neil Brenner argues that the question of whether places to become burgeoning, effective fields of contentious politics and social movements with enduring influence needs to be approached from a “dialectical” perspective.<sup>2</sup> Social protests and collective actions based on particular, limited places can be restrictive since demonstrations and rallies could be “confined” to this particular place and thus it could be targeted by oppressive authorities to be demobilised and dissolved.

On 7 April, 1993, *The New York Times* published an article on the changing situation that the Korean Catholic Church was facing after achieving procedural democratisation after 1987. The article dealt the dilemmas, which Korean Catholicism was experiencing in the time of economic success and relative political stability. These were, primarily, difficulties “to connect with a generation being shaped more by affluence than confrontation.” (Sterngold 1993) In this report, the former President of Sogang University in Korea and Jesuit priest Park Hong was cited on the challenge to the Korean Catholic Church in the 1990s, which appears relevant to present time:

Before, we had a military dictatorship; the legitimacy of the Government was in question, [...] The Church’s main work was fighting corruption and fighting social injustice. It was easy. But now that target has been removed. It’s harder to know where we are going (Sterngold 1993).

Priest Park Hong suggests that it was rather easier to make efforts to overcome the obvious injustice and violence in the time of oppressive authoritarianism. It is still certainly not difficult to find the problems that priest Park mentions such as corruption and social injustice in contemporary Korea and beyond. But in South Korea and other modern democratic societies these days, there are many other

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<sup>2</sup> Brenner’s presentation, “Place, Capitalism, and the Right to the City” at the 2013 Creativetime Summit is available online at:

<http://creativetime.org/summit/2013/10/25/neil-brenner/> (accessed 10 February, 2016)

varieties of civil society and social movement organisations which can work and fight for public good and social justice.

What would be then the social role and place of Korean Catholicism as an institutionalised religion and Myeongdong Cathedral as the centre of the Korean Catholic Church today? One possible direction would be to contribute to elaborating new languages that make the necessary communication between society and religion possible and constructive. For this effective communication between religious and secular citizens, philosopher Jürgen Habermas suggests that “the potential truth contents of religious utterances must be translated into a generally accessible language before they can find their way onto the agendas of parliaments, courts, or administrative bodies and influence their decisions.” (Habermas 2011, 25-26) For Habermas, this mutual cooperation between religious and non-religious fellow citizens is vital.

Although it is true that religions have caused some serious problems in human history and society, yet it is also hard to deny that religions have established some shining elements in civilisations (Eagleton 2009). Myeongdong Cathedral and Korean Catholicism would need to translate and reinterpret their traditional languages of wisdom and revitalise their historic heritage to provide new discursive insights and open up the symbolic horizons of hope to Korean society and beyond. Based on its recognised historical, spatial, symbolic, and political role, as this study has shown, Myeongdong Cathedral and Korean Catholicism would need to be, or should, create its own space which articulates the languages of public resonance that connect lost, divided individuals and communities in our time.

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