Alternative-Globalization Movement of South Korean Civil Society Organizations: Implications, Limitations and Future Directions

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I. Objectives and Background of the Research

South Korea was no exception to witness the growth of anti-globalization movement in response to the increasing problems of globalization – summed up as open market and liberalization – since the 1997 Asian financial crisis. This movement gradually shifted and expanded its horizon to seeking alternative globalization, set off by conflicts surrounding the pressure to open up the market after South Korea joined the Uruguay Round and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The 2000s is marked by various events including protests against free trade agreements (FTAs), candlelight rallies opposing US beef imports, watchdog movements led by the Network\(^2\) against the domination of financial capital, demonstrations opposing the G20 Summit in Seoul, welfare society building movements, etc. (Refer to Table 1)

The spirit of alternative-globalization or “globalization from below” brought many changes to the civil movement scenario in South Korea, and its theme has emerged, since the late 1990s, as a mainstream issue within the domain of civil society.

Alternative-Globalization thus is now settling in as a popular form of reformist and

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2 Korean Civil Society Network for Tightening the Financial Re-regulation and the Taxation on Speculative Capital
progressive social movement seeking a post-capitalist, alternative society against the negative effects of neoliberal globalization and the slogan “there is no alternative (TINA).”

By reviewing other studies and examining the websites of individual organizations as well as interviews with social activists, this paper analyzes the implications, limitations and future directions concerning the alternative-globalization movements in South Korea which have expanded and centered around civil society organizations (hereafter CSO). The main focus of the paper will be on the economic aspects of the alternative-globalization movement.

In Part II, I will first examine preceding researches on the civil movements and alternative-globalization of South Korea up until the late 2000s, paying attention to the role played by integration of alternative-globalization movement into the civil movements of Korea in the letter’s transformation and development. Part III looks into the details and characteristics of the alternative-globalization movements pursued by CSOs in South Korea. Part IV examines the ideological and practical limitations to discuss future directions. Finally, Part V concludes the paper by summarizing the key points and their significance as well as their limitations.

II. Growth of South Korean CSOs and the Progress of Alternative-Globalization Movement

In this part, I will examine the backgrounds and features of the integration of alternative-globalization movement\(^3\) within existing civil society actions in South Korea. We

\(^3\) Alternative-Globalization movement is commonly referred to as ‘anti-globalization movement,’ ‘global
will then take a look stretching our views to international solidarities, at the dynamics and issues being raised by the CSO-led alternative-globalization movements.

**1. Review of Preceding Studies**

Along with the deepening effect of globalization, increasing number of studies are being carried out, since the late 2000s, on the transformation of civil movements. In their attempt to outline the characteristics and tendencies of Korean civil society’s anti-globalization movement as well as the on-going efforts at seeking alternative, Kim Sun-mi (2008 & 2009) pays attention to the aspects of economy and environmental movements, and Lee Jae-chul (2008 & 2009) focuses on the income polarization and peace movements.

Park Jai-chang (2006) carries out studies and analysis of Korean CSOs international exchange and cooperation. Kim Ho-ki (2007) argues that the core principle of social change is shifting in Korea from ‘democratization,’ which has played the key role for the last twenty years, to ‘globalization.’ Cho Dae-yop & Kim Chul-kyoo (2007) and Jeong Tae-seok (2007) look into the necessary changes and tasks that the civil society is facing in the macroscopic social transition accompanying globalization.

Chung Jin-sang (2009) examines how alternative-globalization movement is integrated into World Social Forum, paying a close look on the internationalism of alternative-globalization movement, and he shares his view on the issue of addressing justice movement,’ ‘anti-capitalism movement,’ etc. However, the alternative-globalization movement goes beyond a flash of ‘discontent against globalization’ and takes it further to construct ‘counter-hegemony’ in the pursuit of ‘an alternative world’ to replace the neoliberalistic globalization. It does not oppose globalization itself but rather seeks the rightful globalization ‘from below,’ and it is ‘a movement of movements’ which embraces diverse political tendencies.
domestic struggles in transnational dimensions. Kim Tae-lyong, Kwon Hae-soo, Jeong
Jeong-hwa and An Hui-jeong (2010) take an interest in the CSOs’ activities and international
partnerships in the era of multiculturalism and globalization in their general overview of the
civil society.

Jeong Seong-jin (2010) and Kim Ha-young (2010) extend their studies to the
ideology of alternative-globalization among CSOs. Jeong Seong-jin (2010) argues that “the
ideological diversity and the international dynamics are what makes the
alternative-globalization movement unique,” differentiating various ideologies of
alternative-globalization in the global spectrum (Jeong Seong-jin 2010, 20).

As we have seen so far, it was at the dawn of the 2000s that the substantial discussion
on alternative-globalization and civil society movements was brought to the table in South
Korea, and it was only by the late 2000s that scholars started working on a more collective
outlining of the transition that civil society movements underwent. We can also say that the
discussion on the ideology of alternative-globalization movement is at its nascent stage.

2. Transformation of Civil Society Movements in South Korea and the Integration with
Alternative-Globalization Movement

The number of CSOs⁴ in South Korea grew rapidly since the June 1987
democratization movement and the subsequent stepping down of the authoritarian
government. In contrast to the period before the June 1987 democratization movement when
the goal of social movements revolved around systemic revolution, the movements now

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⁴ As of January 10, 2010, there are 452 groups registered with the Civil Society Organizations Network in
Korea. (website: http://www.civilnet.net/member.php)
focused on ‘citizenship’ rather than ‘class’ and ‘improvement in quality of life’ rather than ‘systemic revolution,’ thus changing their direction towards some form of reformism and rapidly spreading out to the society. This is supported by the fact that about 80% of Korean CSOs were established in the 1990s and 2000s along with the progress of democratization. What is notable after 2000 is that the methods of activism have greatly diversified and that, in accordance with the broader usage of the Internet, there are now a number of organizations that use the cyber space as their platform.

The local factors that have caused such changes can be summarized as: the attainment of better material security by the middle class and the working class since the late 1980s; the issue based divergence of the civil society and the transitions of movements after the June 1987 democratization movement; the delay in political reforms and democratization, etc. (Kim Tae-lyong et al. 2010, 226-227). As for the global factors, one can point out the end of the Cold War and the expansion of neoliberal globalization. We cannot also miss out the fact that a significant number of CSO members were embraced into the institution by the officers of the former governments, namely the regimes of Kim Young-sam, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, which contributed to not only a quantitative but also qualitative development of the civil society.

On the other hand, however, the expanding cooperation of the civil society with the state and the political society also received increased concerns for the conformance to the institution. With its bureaucratization and quest for power in its political exercise, the civil society now seemed somewhat detached from people, heading towards facing a crisis. This theory, which started gaining increased attention from the mid 2000s, manifested itself into reality following a series of infamous scandals such as the embezzlement case of the Korean Federation for Environmental Movements (KFEM) in 2008 fall and the sexual harassment
involving one of the male executives of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). These evidences indicate that the Korean CSOs are at a critical stage of transition.

Despite such self-exposed limitations, the Korean CSOs have, since their rapid growth in the 1990s, contributed greatly to the forms and features of the democratization of South Korea for the last 20 years. They have also served as the key agents in initiating anti-globalization movement against the negative effects of neoliberal globalization. Although their voices and approaches may vary, anti-globalization movements share their critical views on the negative consequences of neoliberalism, which will bring about destructive effects on human life in its course of globalization. (Kim Sun-mi 2008, 188)

The key CSOs were thus to make two major resolutions from the mid 1990s. They had to take over the tasks for democratization which remained unfinished since the June 1987 democratization movement, and at the same time, take parts in alternative-globalization movement against neoliberal globalization.

The civil society has been, as the matter of fact, in the core of most major events that caused social turbulence in Korea since the 1990s. On top of their responsibilities towards the transition from procedural democracy to substantial democracy, they were now to play roles in dealing with widening economic gaps and other life-concerning issues arising out of the market domination of global capital, on. It can be said that, since its notable growth in the 1990s, the alternative-globalization movement has put its emphasis among other objectives on the economic democratization or eradication of economic disparities. On the other hand, the on-going neoliberal consolidation of the world economy called for cooperation among civil societies beyond national boundaries in their search for alternatives.

The political democratization accompanied by an increase in the autonomy of the civil society does not, apparently, always lead to the resolution of class conflict within itself.
This is the reason why the integration of alternative-globalization movement with the existing CSO movements is necessary and significant.

The start of the alternative-globalization movement in Korea centered around economic issues marked by the 1990s’ opposition movements against the Uruguay Round or the opening up of the rice market. It then emerged as the key issue since the 1997 financial crisis which exposed people to feel the direct brunt of globalization through aggravating conditions of economic inequalities and polarization. As it can be seen in Table 1, the alternative-globalization movement goes through drastic expansion in the 2000s, which means a number of CSOs recognize the urgency of responding to globalization.

III. Details and Characteristics of the Alternative-Globalization Movements of South Korean CSOs

1. The Directions and Details of the Anti-Globalization and Alternative-Globalization Movements of CSOs

Since the 1997 financial crisis, The CSOs in South Korea were now faced with the dual responsibilities of responding to both the mass movements and the anti-neoliberal political battle line. (Refer to Table 1)

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5 It was revealed that the top 1% of the population possessed 9.7% of the wealth in South Korea in 1997, which increased to a staggering 16.7% in 2006. The wealth possessed by the top 5% and 10% of the population also increased from 30.9% and 46.2% each in 1999 to 39.8% and 54.3% in 2006, which shows the drastic aggravation of inequalities and polarization in South Korea since the 1997 Asian financial crisis. (Nam Sang-ho, 2008)
Table 1. Anti-Neoliberalism and Alternative-Globalization Movements in S. Korea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early 1990s</td>
<td>Opposition to the Uruguay Round</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Opposition against joining OECD and Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI)</td>
<td>After the 2nd APEC summit meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 1999</td>
<td>Launching of the Korean People’s Action against Investment Treaties and The Millennium Round</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 1999</td>
<td>Taegu Round Global Forum</td>
<td>Participation in an international forum of civil or nongovernmental organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1999</td>
<td>Participation in the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle</td>
<td>Expansion of international solidarity for anti-globalization movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2000</td>
<td>Expansion and reorganization into the Korean People’s Action against Investment Treaties and the WTO</td>
<td>Official participating organization of the World Social Forum along with the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Oct 2000      | Massive demonstrations against ASEM with participation of about 120 domestic CSOs and over 1,000 individuals representing the CSOs based in 33 European countries under the theme of “People’s Action and Solidarity Challenging Globalization” | - Start of the workers-peasants solidarity  
- Formation of domestic and transnational solidarity |
| Sep 2001      | Protests against DDA and MAI                                           |                                                                      |
| Nov 2002      | - Series of massive candlelight rallies organized through the Internet following the accident involving a U.S. military vehicle which killed two 14-year-old Korean school girls  
- The Nosamo fan club started (The Nosamo or Rohsamo stands for “those who love Roh Moo-hyun”) | Notable increase in the Internet-based social movements |
<p>| 2001-2004     | Opposition against the Korea-Chile FTA                                 | Ratification at the National Assembly in Feb 2004                    |
| Oct 2003      | Protest in Cancun, Mexico and the abrupt ending of the WTO Ministerial Conference as the result | Suicide of Lee Kyung-hae in a protest against the opening up of agricultural market which started since the Uruguay Round |
| Feb 2003      | Reorganization into the Korean People’s Action against FTA &amp; WTO        |                                                                      |
| Mar 2003 and after | Opposition movement against the dispatching of Korean troops to Iraq with the ‘Korean Network Against Dispatching Troops To Iraq’ playing the key role | Expansion of peace/anti-war movements                                |
| 2004          | Participation in the anti-WEF (World Economic Forum) protest, the World Social Forum (WSF) and the Asian Social Forum (ASF) | Increased participation in international solidarity forums            |
| Apr 26, 2004  | Massive rallies by CSOs against the Korea-Japan FTA negotiations        |                                                                      |
| Jun 13, 2004  | Massive rally against the World Economic Forum on East Asia 2009; anti-war and anti-globalization rallies |                                                                      |
| Aug 2004      | Establishment of Spec Watch Korea for the regulation of and taxation on speculative capital | Close monitoring of foreign capital                                   |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Jun 2004  | - Large-scale rally for protecting the domestic rice market in which over 400,000 people participated  
- La Via-Campesina; solidarity with organizations abroad                                                                                                                        | Led by the National Movement Headquarters of Protecting Food Sovereignty                   |
| Nov 2004  | Opposition against Korea-Japan FTA                                                                                                                                                                        | Death of a farmer in protest                                                              |
| Nov 2005  | Protest against WTO’s renegotiation over opening up of rice market                                                                                                                                           |                                             |
| Nov 2005  | Opposition against the APEC Summit in Busan led by People’s Action Against APEC and Bush                                                                                                                 |                                             |
| Dec 2005  | - Nov 23: the National Assembly passes an import treaty on the further opening up of the domestic rice market, and the farmers protest in response  
- Dec 1: candlelight protest by peasants & workers’ group opposing the ratification of the Rice Bill  
- Dec 4: the mass gathering co-organized by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the Korea Peasants League and the Democratic Labor Party  
- Protest against the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong (the ‘three steps, one bow’ walk of Korean participants)                                                                 | - Continuation of the peasant movement since the Uruguay Round  
- The year that marked a peak in anti-globalization struggles                                             |
| Feb 2006 and after | Opposition movements against Korea-US FTA led by the Committee  
- Establishment of the Korean Alliance against the Korea-US FTA (KoA) in March                                                                                           | Marked by the participation of KoA, the largest anti-globalization group in Korea since 1987, and almost every solidarity formed by CSOs |
| Apr 2006  | Establishment of ‘People’s Action for the Investigation of Lone Star Funds and against Illegitimate Acquisition of Korea Exchange Bank’                                                                 |                                             |
| Jul 2006  | Negotiation begins as President Roh Moo-hyun accepts the four preconditions of the Korea-US FTA                                                                                                                                 | Strong resistance of the people expressed through anti-globalization movements that continued for two years |
| Aug 2006  | Establishment of the Solidarity for Economic Reform, a civic organization specializing in economic movement which was formerly known as People’s Solidarity for Economic Reform prior to its independence from the People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) | Specialization of civil movement organizations                                                |
| May 2007  | Opposition movements against Korea-EU FTA                                                                                                                                                                  |                                             |
| May-Aug 2008 | The candlelight rallies opposing US beef imports and other resistance movements against the negative effects of neoliberalism                                                                                 | Formation of the platform for the resistance against neoliberal policies in general               |
| 2008      | Increased attention on the sub-prime mortgage crisis and the failure of the neoliberal reforms for international governance                                                                                   | Caused an increase in the resistance against market fundamentalism                          |
| Oct 2008  | - Establishment of the People’s Council for Livelihood and Democracy which was to succeed the spirit of candlelight movements  
- Various groups were formed for social participation through the candlelight movements                                                                                                                   | The nurturing of participatory democracy on the basis of popular sovereignty and collective intelligence |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>The Yongsan Countermeasure Coalition and the Federation Against Housing Demolition in the Yongsan demolition protest, Ssangyong Motor workers on strike⁶ and the Korean Metal Workers’ Union</td>
<td>Spreading of the fear for the economic suppression and use of violence by the police and institution acting in favor of the capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2010</td>
<td>Korean CSOs founds ‘the Korean Civil Society Network for Tightening the Financial Re-regulation and the Taxation on Speculative Capital’ which leads to: - Joint action against the G20 Seoul Summit in Nov - National campaign on finance - Joining of international solidarities</td>
<td>- Start of alternative-seeking movements in response to the neoliberal financial landscape - Active response to the global governance of the foreign exchange and finance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: various articles and Kim Sun-mi (2009, 166)

It can be said that, since its advent in South Korea in early 1990s, the alternative-globalization movement have disseminated the awareness that the fundamental problems of neoliberal globalization lies in the structural contradiction of capitalism rather than in the institutional aspects of its policies. Led by civic groups represented by Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), Korea Peasants League (KPL), Democratic Labor Party (DLP), etc., the alternative-globalization movements also started to critically examine how the anti-neoliberal forces can incorporate strategies for hegemonic intervention within the national political sphere (Sohn Ho-chul 2009, 260).

⁶ The Yongsan tragedy resulted in violent deaths of the protesters resisting against the government’s intention for its unilateral support for the domestic capital.
2. The Expansion of the Resistance against Neoliberal Globalization and the Consolidation of International Solidarity

The Korean civil society showed growing interest in international solidarity since its participation in the 1992 Earth Summit. In 1999, they participated in the WTO protests in Seattle and held the Taegu Round Global Forum for the participation of nongovernmental or civil organizations. The massive demonstrations against the 2000 Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Seoul were followed by Korean farmers’ protest in Cancun, Mexico against the 2003 WTO negotiations, participation in the World Social Forum since 2002, participation in the protest against the 2005 WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong and so on. The World Social Forum is one of the international solidarity forums in which the Korean CSOs have been participating on a regular basis.

3. Ideological Backgrounds of the Alternative-Globalization Movements of South Korean CSOs

Table 2 gives a brief outline of the various ideological backbones of the alternative-globalization movements in South Korea. It has been categorized in accordance to the work of Jeong Seong-jin while the column ‘bourgeois reformism’ has been newly added. You can compare the characteristics of each category to see what they have in common or how they are distinguished from each other.
Table 2. Ideological Backgrounds of Korean CSOs’ Alternative-Globalization Movements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The essence of globalization</th>
<th>Bourgeois Capitalist Reformism</th>
<th>Regional Environmentalism</th>
<th>Third World Nationalism</th>
<th>Global Keynesianism</th>
<th>Autonomism</th>
<th>Social Movement Unionism</th>
<th>Socialism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unavoidable process under capitalism</td>
<td>Expansion of commodification</td>
<td>Americanization</td>
<td>Financialization or financial globalization</td>
<td>Commodification or commodity fetishism</td>
<td>Global commodity chain</td>
<td>Globalization of capital relation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main issues of globalization</td>
<td>Inequalities, poverty</td>
<td>Destruction of the ecology and community</td>
<td>Global polarization, disparities between the North and South</td>
<td>Financial insecurities, Military globalization</td>
<td>Empire vs. Multitude</td>
<td>Global capital vs. Global labor</td>
<td>Capital vs. Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The power of the nation-state</td>
<td>Weakened</td>
<td>Scaled down</td>
<td>Scaled down</td>
<td>Scaled down</td>
<td>Extinguished</td>
<td>Scaled down</td>
<td>Strengthened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Regional communities, NGOs</td>
<td>Nation-state, International organizations</td>
<td>Multitude</td>
<td>Labor unions</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction of the movement</td>
<td>From above</td>
<td>From below</td>
<td>From above</td>
<td>From above</td>
<td>From below</td>
<td>From below</td>
<td>From below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-war movement</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and strategy of the movement</td>
<td>Corporate social responsibility, social enterprise</td>
<td>Post-capitalism, fair trade, Consumers cooperatives</td>
<td>Anti-American resistance, Regional economic community</td>
<td>Global governance</td>
<td>Networking, direct action, commun-ism</td>
<td>Internationalism in social movements among labor unions</td>
<td>Political party, united front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key organizations</td>
<td>Hope Institute, Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEI)</td>
<td>Green Review, environmental organizations, consumers cooperatives</td>
<td>Korea Alliance of Progressive Movements (KAPM), Democratic Labor Party</td>
<td>PSPD, People’s Solidarity for Social Progress, Spec Watch Korea,</td>
<td>Autonomy Review</td>
<td>Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU)</td>
<td>All Together, Preparing Group for a Workers Socialist Party, Socialist Workers League of Korea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: websites of individual organizations and Jeong Seong-jin (2010)
4. Characteristics of the Alternative-Globalization Movements of South Korean CSOs

The alternative-globalization movements of Korean CSOs have several characteristics. Firstly, there was no official entity acting as the leader. Rather than a single organization representing the protestors, small and diverse entities sharing values and identities united in solidarities to stand together in their common front against the institutions or issues they were to oppose.

Secondly, while the mass movements mainly led by workers and peasants have been standing at the core of alternative-globalization movement, the civil society movements have been contributing in forms of solidarity formed under the agenda being addressed.

Thirdly, due to its connection to the overall livelihood, the alternative-globalization movement against neoliberalism is being carried out in various fields including social welfare, environment, human rights, gender equality etc. Nonetheless what form the backbone of the alternative-globalization movement are the actions against the life-threatening or economic issues as seen in Table 1. The Korean Alliance against the Korea-US FTA\(^7\) (KoA) makes a perfect example. Some members of this alliance emphasize on anti-capitalism or anti-imperialism.

The fourth characteristics can be found in the embodiment process of the movement energy for its release. What used to be practiced through coalitions among CSOs in earlier stage of the alternative-globalization movement is now being replaced with exploding mass movements initiated by individual citizens with the help of rapid advances in

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\(^7\) In July 2006, the Roh Moo-hyun administration began the Korea-US FTA negotiations by accommodating the four preconditions presented by the US – restarting beef imports, lowering the mandatory film screen quota for domestic movies, allowing higher reimbursements for US pharmaceuticals and relaxation of automobile exhaust emission standards to allow more US imports.
information-technology. Among a series of candlelight vigils, which became a typical form of such Netizen-led movement, the demonstration against US beef imports perhaps makes a perfect example. The temporary coalition known as the ‘Citizens Against the Import of U.S. Beef Organization (established on May 6)’ functioned as a task force carrying out the follow-up actions.

Lastly, the alternative-globalization movement in South Korea is unique in its display of the possibilities of the Internet, with its great infrastructure, turning into the platform and space for wide range of civil society movements against the negative effects of neoliberal globalization or its policies in general (Kim Gwang-il 2009, 50-51). The cyver space, as a medium for social movement, allows for more diverse issues to be brought to the surface for discussion – e.g. boycott against the Chosun Ilbo (one of the major newspapers in South Korea), media reform (for democratization in media), human rights protection in the information society, reducing discrimination based on educational background, conscientious objection to military service, abolition of the National Security Law, etc. One can also witness the growing diversity in smaller-scale demonstration methods, including signature campaign, performance, human chain, three steps one bow, bicycle rally, cyber demonstration, etc.

8 Ahn Jin-gul, the Chief of Social-Economic Team at the People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), in a discussion held on Jun 16, 2010
IV. The Limitations of and the Ideological and Practical Directions for the Future of Alternative-Globalization Movement of Korean CSOs

The Korean civil society experienced rapid exhaustion of its strength for alternative-globalization movement as they encountered both internal and external crisis. The internal factors include split of the Democratic Labor Party in 2008, the end of the opposition movement against US beef imports, the outbreak of the 2008 accounting scandal of the Korean Federation for Environmental Movements (KFEM), the sexual harassment within Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), etc., and the external crisis was the discontinuation of the government support for civil society and the oppression by the Lee Myung-bak administration. At the time of writing (end of 2010), there hasn’t been much progress in the reinforcement of hegemony for the alternative-globalization movement due to the absence of a consolidated power taking the leadership and the continuous weakening of people’s movements as well as the CSOs activities. In the midst of facing such limitations, the alternative-globalization movement in Korea is now at the phase to overcome the crisis and find its ideological and practical directions to take.

1. Limitations of the Alternative-Globalization Movements of South Korean CSOs

The first limitation in the alternative-globalization movement in Korea has been that, due to its tendency to take the form of coalition actions, it often ended in more or less single events lacking consistency and continuity. It is true that there exist many obstacles in forming consolidation among civil organizations due to the diversity and complexity of their backgrounds. In its response against the neoliberal globalization, every participating entity will have different positions, objectives, alternatives, methods, etc.
The second issue is that the responses to neoliberal globalization have been restricted to ‘opposition’ itself mostly, away from presenting feasible alternatives and engaging in active communication within the civil society. In other words, it is being criticized for the absence of the people or mass in its base, hence referred to as the “people’s movement without people,” or “citizens’ movement without citizens.” Without the ability to move the people, the coalition of the upper strata will not be able to overcome its numerous limitations.

Thirdly, the twenty-year history of the alternative-globalization movement is not being followed by the reinforcement of its hegemony in its political front line. It is still in the practical dilemma because of the ‘insufficiency of material base’ for the anti-neoliberal resistance hegemony.  

Additional problems are found in the area of international solidarity. The international exchanges and cooperation of the Korean CSOs have been restricted to regions of Asia in terms of its geographical extension. Also, as far as the contents and forms are concerned, about eighty percent of such exchange is done at an introductory level, which calls for the need to move on to a more advanced level.

2. Future Directions for the Ideology and Practice of South Korean CSOs

Entering the 2010s, there have been attempts to come up with a new agenda and to form effective driving forces within the civil movement domain, putting the alternative-globalization movement in its way to a new phase. Such trend can be traced in the setting of the two recent agenda. One is the discussion on issues around financial capitalism and the G20 Summit to be held in Seoul in November 2010. The other one is the movement

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9 Lee Jae-yeong in a discussion held on April 17, 2010
for the transition into a welfare state. (Refer to Table 1)

At the present, these two branches of agendas and the setting of their objectives have their ideological background in the global Keynesianism, which appears suitable on the surface. However, there seems to be a number of realistic concerns in reaching their goals. To begin with, in terms of their reaction to G20, there are many doubts on whether the sporadic demonstrations, academic forums and workshops can play the role of monitoring and checking the activities of G20 and take initiatives to speak out for the people.

In the case of the welfare movements, most of them do not appear to have been formed on the basis of active discussions and opinion-gathering within the context of alternative-globalization movement in terms of its organization and construction of its subjectivity. Also, their demands for improvements in government-funded social services and benefits can be criticized as unrealistic pledges for elections if not accompanied by their contribution to the settlement of the government’s financial deficit.

Furthermore, they have had only little to say about the impact of social insecurities on people’s desire for communal actions. The increase in social risks and insecurities lead people to concentrate their energy on personal interests, preventing them from pursuing solidarity and justice for achieving public benefits and good. This is a potential threat to the future of solidarity or coalition of the civil society.

Now, as for the roles of the younger generation, their early experiences of participating in or witnessing the candlelight vigils and other online activities supported by the wide use of the Internet and wireless communications, have helped them emerge as the potential subjects to take new initiatives in the future social movements. One can anticipate that thus cultivated creativity and openness to the cultural diversity will serve as important qualities for their future roles in the movement.
Relatively liberated from the anti-communism, authoritarianism and materialism of the older generation, there are more possibilities for the younger generation to act upon more open and diverse values. The massive outdoor experiences occupying public space during the 2002 World Cup was the key landmark to their emergence. Their spontaneous and open interests for actions in the candlelight demonstrations and the local election on June 2, 2010 have shown new, dynamic possibilities for further advances in the community and democracy. This is a significant proof that democratization is extending into daily life of people.

V. Conclusion

The media, education, religion, corporation, law and society of South Korea are currently heading towards reverse-democratization or oligarchy. While democratization means the realization of both liberty and equality, the Korean society is undergoing a retrogressive course in terms of equality. On the other hand, liberty has been pursued in most aspects of the society in exclusive manners, not cooperative with the requests of the state or the civil society. This is the very reason why alternative globalization movement has become a necessity for the Korean Society.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the twenty-year long history of alternative-globalization movement in Korea has contributed towards delivering substantive democracy and to extending its parameters to economic issues or livelihood of the people which was under extreme repression under the authoritarian governments of the past. There are, however, limitations in obtaining hegemony and in setting out the alternatives or programs in counter-measure to the (neoliberal) globalization – e.g. the income or class polarization brought by the implementation of neoliberal policies.
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Abstract

**Alternative-Globalization Movement of South Korean Civil Society Organizations: Implications, Limitations and Future Directions**

Kim, Eui-dong

CSO in the era of globalization is facing new ideological and practical problems to surpass the existing domains of CSO movement in various aspects. In Korean society, too, anti-globalization protest of CSO has risen gradually after 1990s, and it has spread out to alternative globalization movement (AGM).

After mid-1990s, major CSOs had to solve two facing problems. One was to carry out the tasks of democratization left even after the strife in June, 1987. At the same time, they were forced to get down to AGM against neoliberalism. It's because expansion of political democracy doesn't exactly mean there should be a relaxing of economic inequality. The issues of anti-neoliberalism made CSO to graft AGM onto the existing movements.

Ideological and practical limitations appeared in AGM will be discussed. First is that the movement has been working on short-term basis, without coherence. Second, there were no particular changeovers in ways of campaigns or systematic management. Next problem is that the movement has really fallen short of raising achievable alternatives and communications with civil society so far. Still, the result of 20 years of alternative globalization movement is not yet followed by reinforcing hegemony in political front lines.

Key Words: Civil Social Organization (CSO), Alternative-Globalization Movement (AGM), Political Democracy, Economic Democracy, National and International Consolidation

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