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THE ROLE OF NGOS IN POLITICAL ELECTIONS IN SOUTH KOREA

The Case of the Citizens' Alliance for the 2000 General Election

Eui Hang Shin

Abstract

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the role of civic organizations in political processes in South Korea. More specifically, this article examines the impact of the blacklisting of candidates by the Citizens' Alliance for the 2000 General Election (CAGE) on the outcomes of the National Assembly election of April 13, 2000. I discuss the relationship between the characteristics of political systems and political culture and the emergence of civic organizations. I analyze the effects of CAGE's blacklisting of politicians on the nomination processes of candidates by major political parties. I also discuss the long-term effects of CAGE on the political system.

Introduction

The "June 10 Citizens' Democratic Revolt of 1987" forced Roh Tae Woo—then a candidate and the heir apparent to President Chun Doo Hwan—to declare support for the democratization of the political system and for the liberalization of laws relating to civic organizations. The

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aim of these policies was to provide civic organizations with the opportunity to organize and conduct their activities in a more liberal environment than before. Since then, the number of South Korean civic organizations has increased drastically. More than 4,000 civic organizations were in existence as of 1997.¹ The rate of increase in the number of civic organizations has accelerated further since Kim Dae Jung assumed the presidency in February 1998. The *Directory of Korean NGOs*, published in 1999 by the Citizens' Movement Communication Center, listed 7,600 organizations.² A factor that has contributed to the proliferation of civic organizations was the increase in government financial assistance to such organizations under the Kim Dae Jung administration,³ which hoped that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) would initiate a citizens' movement to overcome the financial crisis of 1997.⁴

The growing interest of citizens in political and economic reforms and other societal issues coincided with the Kim administration's need for support from civil society in advocating its political and public policy agendas. Many of the leaders of civic organizations participated in the democratization movement of the 1980s.⁵ Thus, they were already committed to the reform movement, and had substantial experience in running NGOs. Civic organizations such as the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ), People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), Green Korea United (GKU), and the Korean Foundation for Environmental Movement (KFEM) established nationwide networks, well-organized administrative structures, and solid reputations in terms of their programs and records of accomplishment.

A second factor that provided a favorable environment for the development of citizens' organizations has been a growing distrust among Koreans of politicians, political parties, and political systems in general.⁶ Former presi-

1. The Citizen's Newspaper, *Directory of Civic Organizations* (Seoul: Citizen's Newspaper, 1997).

2. Roland Wein, "Civic Organizations under the Kim Dae-Jung Government: Puppets or a New Political Force?" in *The Two Koreas in 2000: Sustaining Recovery and Seeking Reconciliation*, ed. Korea Economic Institute of America (KEIA) (Washington, D.C.: KEIA, 2000), p. 68.

3. Wein, "Civic Organizations under the Kim Dae-Jung Government," p. 66.

4. Hyuck Rae Kim, "The State and Civil Society in Transition: The Role of Non-governmental Organizations in South Korea," *The Pacific Review* 13:4 (November 2000), p. 595; Hagen Koo, "The Dilemmas of Empowered Labor in Korea: Korean Workers in the Face of Global Capitalism," *Asian Survey* 40:2 (March/April 2000), pp. 243-47.

5. Kyung Ran Moon, *Wooriegen kumi isupnida* [We have a dream] (Seoul: Nanam, 2000), p. 493.

6. Richard C. Box, *Citizen Governance: Leading American Communities into the 21st Century* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 1998), pp. 66-102; Hee Yeon Cho, "Jeongchi gaehyuck, siminsahwoe eui nachon nakseonundong" [Political reform, blackballing nomination and defeat movement of civil society] in *Siminsahwoewa siminundong* [Civil society and citizens' movement], eds. Pal M. Yu and Jung H. Kim (Seoul: Hanwool, 2001), pp. 192-234; Sang Jin Han,

dents and their family members have been at the center of a series of major scandals involving corruption, bribery and other abuses of political power. Furthermore, the 1997 financial crisis revealed the incompetence and inefficiency of the government bureaucracy, as well as the lack of transparency of the political system.⁷ On the whole, the increased distrust of the political system, the favorable environments for the activities of NGOs, and the availability of experienced civic organizational leadership provided ideal conditions for the participation of civic organizations in political processes. Also, the Kim Dae Jung administration recruited a substantial number of individuals who were in leadership positions in various citizens' organizations during the democratization movement of the 1970s and 1980s.⁸ Thus, the administration believed that the activities of civic organizations would aid it in carrying out the political reforms Kim was committed to. The 16th National Assembly election of April 13, 2000, was the first major election under the Kim administration, and it was regarded as a mid-term vote of confidence on Kim's presidency.⁹

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the role of Korean civic organizations in political processes. More specifically, this article examines the impact of the blacklisting of candidates by the Citizens' Alliance of the 2000 General Election (CAGE) on the outcomes of the National Assembly election of April 13, 2000, in South Korea. In the first section, I will discuss the relationship between the characteristics of political systems and political culture and the emergence of civic organizations. In the second section, I will analyze the effects of CAGE's blacklisting of politicians on the nominations of candidates by major political parties. In the third section, I will discuss the long-term effects of CAGE on the political system. I will also

"The Public Sphere and Democracy in Korea: A Debate on Civil Society," *Korea Journal* 37:4 (Winter 1997), pp. 78–97; Ann C. Hudock, *NGOs and Civil Society: Democracy by Proxy?* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1999), pp. 1–31; Pippa Norris, "Introduction: The Growth of Critical Citizens?" in *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, ed. Pippa Norris (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 1–30; Eui Hang Shin, "Social Change, Political Elections, and the Middle Class in Korea," *East Asia* 17:3 (Autumn 1999), pp. 27–59; Eui Hang Shin, "Political Demography of Korea: An Analysis of the Political Effects of Changes in Population Composition and Distribution," *East Asia* 19:1/2 (Spring/Summer 2001), pp. 179–212.

7. Hagen Koo, "The Dilemmas of Empowered Labor in Korea," pp. 243–47.

8. Wein, "Civic Organizations under the Kim Dae-Jung Government," pp. 65–67.

9. Young-Chool Ha, "South Korea in 2000: A Summit and the Search for New Institutional Identity," *Asian Survey* 41:1 (January/February 2001), pp. 32–33; Hong Nack Kim, "The 2000 Parliamentary Election in South Korea," *Asian Survey* 40:6 (November/December 2000), pp. 901–04.

identify important factors that have contributed to the effectiveness of CAGE in defeating blacklisted candidates.

Data and Methods of Analysis

Information about the activities of CAGE was obtained from major South Korean newspapers from September 1999 to May 2000. In particular, the special archives of the *Joongang Ilbo* (Central Daily) on the April 13 National Assembly election were the primary sources of the data used to analyze CAGE activities related to blacklisting potential candidates. The archives supplied the list of potential candidates who had been rejected by CAGE. The data included the reasons cited by CAGE for its objection to each candidate. The archives also included information about the nominees of major parties that were on the CAGE “defeat list.” I will first examine the CAGE blacklist of potential major-party nominees, and then will investigate the CAGE defeat list.

Procedural Democracy and Civic Organizations

Historical correlates of the emergence of civil society have had an important influence on the characteristics of civic organizations. Thus, it is essential to consider the South Korean political culture, in order to place civic organizations in the proper context of the political structures. Below, I will discuss the dynamic interplay between the formal and informal structures of political power in South Korea, and examine the role of NGOs in such political structures.

David I. Steinberg uses the term “imperial presidency” to note that there is little difference in the images of success and failure of political leadership between a typical monarch of the Yi Dynasty (1392–1910) and a democratically elected Korean president.¹⁰ His observations remain appropriate descriptions of South Korean political culture. Steinberg argues that fundamental elements of traditional political systems and attitudes toward power are still intact, with such political traditions frequently manifested in political practices.¹¹ Nevertheless, the dynamics of interrelationship between state and civil society have changed since 1987, especially during the two civilian administrations of Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung. One of the important factors that have redefined the nature of the relationship between state and civil society has been the role of civic organizations. The state-society rela-

10. David I. Steinberg, “Korean Politics: The New and Old,” in *The Two Koreas in 2000: Sustaining Recovery and Seeking Reconciliation*, ed. KEIA (Washington, D.C.: KEIA, 2000), p. 56.

11. Steinberg, “Korean Politics,” p. 56.

tionship in Korea was transformed from “strong state-weak society” to “strong state-weak but contentious society” during the era of the military authoritarian regimes between 1961 and 1987. Since 1987, although the state has remained strong, the relative status of civil society has improved remarkably. Thus “strong state-strong society” may be a reasonable view of the current conditions.¹²

The weaknesses inherent in a traditionally strong Korean state, such as civil rights issues, corruption of the power elite, and the ineffectiveness of bureaucracy, gave rise to the role of NGOs. The military authoritarian regimes had to deal with opposition parties, and progressive student, labor, and religious groups that relentlessly challenged the regimes’ legitimacy. The authoritarian presidents, Park Chung Hee, Chun Doo Hwan, and Roh Tae Woo, utilized coercive strategies to maintain and solidify their power base. One of the most interesting political realities is that the two civilian presidents, Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, who championed the democratization movement throughout their political struggle as opposition leaders and were elected through free and democratic elections, turned out to be “imperial presidents,” not substantially different from their predecessors with military backgrounds. Thus, it can be argued that the formal aspects of the governance system may have changed significantly in the transition from a military to a civilian presidency, but the nature of the informal structures and the actual exercise of presidential power were largely sustained, despite substantial progress made in the democratization of the political system. The evidence of the imperial presidency can be easily detected in institutionalized political practices such as the dominance of the Blue House (the presidential palace) in its relationship with the cabinet, the National Assembly, and the judiciary system. An example of the imperial presidency that is relevant to this study is the influence of the president, as head of his party, on the nomination of candidates for the National Assembly, both for election district-level and proportional-representation candidates. In the absence of a primary to select each party’s nominee at the election district level, the central nomination committee of the party reviews the applicants’ credentials and selects the nominees. However, the president, as party head, names the nomination committee and, as a result, may effectively hand-pick the party’s nominees. The nomination committee essentially rubber stamps the president’s choices and makes it appear that deliberations on nominations go through a formal independent process.

12. Hagen Koo, “Strong State and Contentious Society,” in *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*, ed. Hagen Koo (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 232–33; Richard Rose, Doh C. Shin, and Neil Munro, “Tensions between the Democratic Ideal and Reality: South Korea,” in *Critical Citizens*, ed. Pippa Norris (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 154–64.

Civic organizations have challenged the entire political system—the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches, as well as the ruling and opposition parties, the intelligence agency, the tax organization, and law enforcement organizations—for their anti-democratic practices and lack of transparency. Civic organizations also have attracted a large number of experienced professionals with expertise in various fields. These professionals tend to have strong commitments toward their organization's causes, such as economic justice, civil rights, clean environments, and transparency of the political system. With such commitment and quality of personnel, civic organizations have been able to produce solid findings from their investigative research on current political, economic, environmental, and other types of policy issues.

Both government and opposition parties need as much support from civic organizations as they can get, in order to solidify their power bases. Hence, these organizations have occupied a strategic position from which they can establish networks of influence on political and social reform processes. Of course, civic organizations have had to establish their credibility on the basis of factors such as their impartiality; their independence from established political parties; the democratic nature of their programs and activities; their emphasis on issues and reforms that directly promote the popular welfare; and the quality of their leaderships. Many Koreans believe that the major civic organizations have garnered such credibility on the basis of their past track records. In a sense, the activities of CAGE in the 2000 National Assembly election were the first and most significant test of civic organizations within the political process in Korea. The following sections will document CAGE's activities in the parliamentary election.

CAGE Blacklisting of Potential Candidates for the National Assembly Election

In the months leading up to the April 13, 2000, elections, the leaders of civic organizations argued that the major political parties were not sufficiently reform-oriented. They asserted that political reform and transparency would have to be initiated by citizens' movements.¹³ One of the most effective courses of action for political reform proposed by civic organization leaders was to replace corrupt, incompetent, opportunistic, and self-serving politicians with well-qualified fresh faces with impeccable backgrounds. Thus, the primary purpose of blacklisting established politicians was to publicize the unacceptable characteristics of potential candidates in order to pressure the parties not to nominate such individuals, and also to motivate voters to defeat those blacklisted if they were nominated. On January 12, the CAGE was

13. *Shindonga Monthly* [New East Asia Monthly], February 2000, pp. 138–79.

formally organized, with more than 450 organizations as participating members.¹⁴ Its immediate plans included organizing a campaign against Article 87 of the Election Law, which prohibited civic groups from election-related campaign activities. Another major goal was to develop a set of guidelines for the nomination of candidates for the 16th National Assembly, and to publish a list of politicians who were deemed unfit to run.

On January 10, before the CAGE blacklist was publicized, the CCEJ published a list of 164 politicians it had evaluated as unfit for nomination. Of these, 66 were affiliated with the Grand National Party (GNP), 50 with the National Council for New Politics (NCNP; later renamed the Millennium Democratic Party [MDP]), and 32 with the United Liberal Democrats (ULD).¹⁵ One hundred twenty-three were current members of the 15th National Assembly. It is interesting to note that the list was evenly divided between the ruling coalition of the NCNP/ULD and the GNP/independents. It is also interesting to note that CCEJ was a highly regarded civic organization, yet it decided not to join CAGE for activities targeting the April election. This prior publication points to disagreement between CCEJ and CAGE on the nature of civic organizations' election participation.

On January 24, CAGE announced that it had blacklisted 66 politicians as unfit to be nominated by any party.¹⁶ As a nod to popular sentiments, CAGE indicated that it had relied on the evaluation of the potential candidates by the Committee of One Hundred Voters, appointed by CAGE.¹⁷ However, it was reported that the leadership went through a series of painful debates before finalizing the blacklist.¹⁸ The distribution of the blacklisted politicians by party affiliation was as follows: 29 for GNP, 16 for NCNP, 16 for ULD, and five independents. This blacklisting was a serious setback for the entire group of Korean politicians, in that voters believed a large number of the potential candidates were unfit to serve on the National Assembly in view of their past track record. In any case, it appeared that ULD was hit hardest, because Kim Jong Pil, ULD head and a former prime minister, was one of the politicians blacklisted. The CAGE blacklist included other big shots in Korean politics: Park Joon Kyu, then-incumbent speaker of the National Assembly; Kim Yoon Hwan, an influential GNP leader for the Taegu and Kyungbuk regions and five-term member of the National Assembly; Oh Sae Woong, a seven-term member and vice speaker of the National Assembly; and Jung Mong Joon, a son of Hyundai chairman Jung Joo Young and a two-

14. *Joongang Ilbo* [Central Daily], January 13, 2000, p. 5.

15. *Shindonga*, February 2000, pp. 164–65.

16. *Joongang Ilbo*, January 25, 2000, p. 4.

17. Cho, "Political Reform, Blackballing Nomination and Defeat Movement of Civil Society," pp. 295–96.

18. Moon, *We Have a Dream*, pp. 51–83.

term member. By including such powerful big-name politicians on the blacklist, CAGE was able to generate an immediate and significant amount of publicity, and thus attract attention from both the political establishment and voters.

In addition, on January 27, the Citizens' Alliance for Political Reform (CAPR) released a list of 15th National Assembly members whose past records it felt voters should be aware of. Eighty-seven members of the National Assembly were on their blacklist. Compared with the two previously announced lists, the CAPR blacklist included proportionally greater numbers of National Assembly members who were affiliated with the MDP: 33 for MDP, 30 for GNP, 20 for ULD, and 4 independents. Twenty-nine members of the 15th National Assembly were on all of the three blacklists (CEJ, CAGE, and CAPR), and were labeled as members with "three strikes" or a "triple crown."¹⁹

Although the criteria used by the three civic organizations varied, there was substantial overlap in the records the organizations used in developing the blacklists. The criteria included the following track records of each potential candidate: conviction for taking bribes, conviction for violating election laws, provocation of regional animosity to obtain support from voters in a specific region, frequent switching of party affiliation, speculative investment in real estate, serving as a member of the National Security Council's legislative committee under the authoritarian regime of Chun Doo Hwan, taking expensive foreign trips, and making statements unbecoming to a lawmaker.²⁰

The reactions of political parties and politicians to the CAGE blacklist varied substantially. President Kim Dae Jung indicated that "citizens' movements such as the CAGE blacklisting of politicians were due to the fact that the public lost confidence in the political establishment and the CAGE campaign was a natural course of development toward a true participatory democracy."²¹ The spokesperson for the MDP asserted that his party would consider the information disclosed by CAGE when reviewing candidates for the party's nomination for the 16th National Assembly. He also said that the blacklisting would not hurt the party in the 16th National Assembly election. As expected, the ULD reacted with extreme disapproval, even suggesting that the blacklisting was a product of a conspiracy involving political strategists of the MDP.²² The ULD suspected that the head of the policy and planning secretariat of the Blue House, and the chairman of the policy and planning

19. *Joongang Ilbo*, January 27, 2000.

20. Cho, "Political Reform, Blackballing Nomination and Defeat Movement of Civil Society," pp. 294-98; Moon, *We Have a Dream*, pp. 51-83.

21. *Joongang Ilbo*, January 15, 2000, B-5.

22. *Ibid.*, January 25, 2000, B-4.

committee of the MDP, both of whom had had long careers in the citizens' movement for democratization, had close ties to the leaders of CAGE and had influenced the deliberations on determining the blacklist.²³ On the other hand, GNP's leader Lee Hoi Chang did not make any official comments on the CAGE blacklist, and appeared to waver on the issue. However, GNP's spokesperson agreed with CAGE on the inclusion of Kim Jong Pil on the blacklist, but criticized CAGE for not including Lee In Jeh, who lost GNP's nomination race and then ran as a third-party candidate in the 1997 presidential election. Lee In Jeh's candidacy helped Kim Dae Jung to win the presidential election in a three-way race among Lee Hoi Chang, Lee In Jeh, and Kim Dae Jung.²⁴

On February 2, CAGE released a second blacklist, which included 47 politicians identified by CAGE as unfit. CAGE reported that the 47 were selected out of 600 politicians in the pool. This list included 30 current members of the 15th National Assembly who were not included in the first round of evaluation, former members of the National Assembly, former ministers and vice ministers of the cabinet, and governors and mayors who were expected to run in the 16th National Assembly election. In contrast with the composition of the first blacklist, only six on the second list were members of the 15th National Assembly. Forty-one were former members of the National Assembly, former cabinet members, or high-ranking government officials of the military regimes. Of the 47, 33 were linked to corruption charges. Several of those politicians who occupied important positions in the Chun Doo Hwan regime were on the list, despite the fact that the statute of limitations on their charges had expired.²⁵

The shock effect of the second blacklist was not as great as that of the first list, simply because several blacklists had already been released by other civic organizations. Nevertheless, spokespersons of major parties, as well as those who were on the list, reacted more aggressively than before by questioning the impartiality and motives of CAGE.²⁶ In particular, the spokesperson of the GNP demanded that those who were pro-Kim Dae Jung and were past members of the NCNP political reform committee resign from the leadership positions of CAGE immediately.²⁷ He also pointed out that the Kim administration had provided the civic organizations with a large amount of financial assistance, more than 192.5 billion won (\$17.5 million) since

23. *Ibid.*, February 25, 2000, p. 3.

24. *Ibid.*, January 25, 2000, B-3.

25. *Ibid.*, February 2, 2000, p. 3.

26. Cho, "Political Reform, Blackballing Nomination and Defeat Movement of Civil Society," pp. 297-98; Moon, *We Have a Dream*, pp. 94-208.

27. *Joongang Ilbo*, February 3, 2000, p. 3.

1998.²⁸ The spokesperson argued that those civic organizations that had received financial assistance from the government would not be objective in dealing with the fitness of politicians to be candidates for the National Assembly.²⁹

The spokesperson for the ULD emphasized that both the Central Election Council and the Prosecutor's Office had ruled that the CAGE blacklisting was a violation of the election laws. He argued that it was not worthwhile to comment on the illegal activities of CAGE. Interestingly, he pointed out that the core members of CAGE had previously advocated the abolition of the National Security Law and the withdrawal of the United States military troops from Korea. Hence, he implied that the ideological "make-up" of some members of CAGE was questionable.³⁰ Even the spokesperson for the MDP commented that the objectivity and fairness of CAGE blacklists were questionable. The press was generally supportive of CAGE, but some newspapers reported that CAGE rushed in the deliberations for the second list so it could be released before the lunar New Year holidays, and thus, included individuals who apparently did not intend to run for National Assembly seats. On February 10, CAGE announced its decision to drop two individuals from the blacklist after discovering that the charge against one was not substantiated, and that the other had decided not to run in the election.³¹

Nomination of Candidates

Observation of behavior patterns of the leaders of major political parties in the nomination processes, and the corollary effects on the results of the election, reveal some interesting dynamics of Korean political culture. As indicated earlier, the nomination processes of major parties revealed hitherto unheard-of outcomes, in that a large number of incumbents of the two major parties failed to win their respective party's nomination. It is important to consider the nomination processes of each of the major political parties for the April 13 National Assembly election.

Grand National Party. On February 18, less than two months before the election, the GNP announced its slate of nominees. Those incumbents who expected but failed to obtain the nomination described the GNP slate as the "February 18 Great Massacre."³² Of the 109 district-level incumbents of the GNP, 28 (25.7%) failed to get the GNP's nomination. This was the largest proportion of incumbents not being nominated by their party in the history of

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 4.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., February 10, 2000, p. 3

32. Ibid., February 18, 2000, p. 3.

National Assembly elections.³³ In particular, none of the six incumbents who had served six terms or longer in the National Assembly received GNP nominations. Also, only eight of 17 incumbents who served four or five terms were nominated by the GNP. Those nominees who replaced the experienced incumbents were relatively young “new faces” and had close ties with Lee Hoi Chang. In particular, the GNP nominated 12 “386 generation” candidates in the Seoul-Inchon-Kyonggi region, meaning persons in their thirties who entered college in the 1980s, and were born in the 1960s.

The majority of those incumbents who failed to get GNP nominations were not in the mainstream factional structure, and were opposing Lee’s total control of the party. Conveniently, Lee’s faction had legitimate excuses for dropping old-timers, in view of public opinion and the blacklisting by civic organizations. With the announcement of the party’s slate of nominees, Lee Hoi Chang put strong and irreversible imprints on GNP leadership and his relationships with former President Kim Young Sam. However, those who failed to get GNP nominations subsequently became the founding members of a splinter party, the Democratic National Party (DNP), thus dividing the GNP’s traditionally strong support base in the Youngnam region.

Millennium Democratic Party. The deadline for submitting a nomination application to the MDP was February 7, nearly two months before election. The total number of applications was 1,041. Of the 90 incumbents, 26 (29%, including six who decided not to seek nomination) failed to get an MDP nomination.³⁴ Also, 21 applicants for MDP nomination were on the CAGE blacklist, and 12 of them were nominated by the MDP. Of the 28 election districts in Honam, eighteen incumbents were nominated. In announcing the nominees, the MDP officers emphasized the fact that nearly one-third of their nominees were not involved in politics prior to their applications for MDP nomination, thus highlighting their clean backgrounds. The MDP indicated that about 37% of their nominees were under age 50. Also, eight women were nominated for district seats. This nomination of female candidates for the National Assembly by a major political party was unheard of at the time.

On the whole, the MDP attempted to present an image among voters that it had nominated young and fresh new faces with successful professional backgrounds, people who were not contaminated by corruption or old politics. It should be noted that some of President Kim’s close lieutenants gave up their district seats, in a gesture of supporting the party’s image-building efforts. This action indicated that Kim and his party were reform-oriented and receptive to the sentiments of the general public that “water in a pond has to be drained and filled with fresh water.”

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.; February 17, 2000, p. 5.

United Liberal Democrats. On February 18, the ULD released an initial list that included its nominees for 108 election districts. Several points should be noted about nominations by the ULD. First, 34 of the 41 district-level incumbents were nominated, and thus the proportion of incumbents who failed to receive their party's nomination was considerably lower than those for the GNP and MDP. Second, the ULD delayed decisions on nominees until the GNP and MDP had determined their slates of nominees. This was by design, so that the ULD would be able to recruit those who were not selected by the other parties. Third, by delaying nomination decisions, the party discouraged those who failed to get nominated from seeking other parties' nominations or from running as independents, as they would lack the time needed to do so before the election. Nonetheless, the news media reported that the ULD slate of nominees failed to account for voter sentiments of reform orientations and the presence of fresh faces. Moreover, it was reported that among the three major party leaders, Kim Dae Jung, Lee Hoi Chang, and Kim Jong Pil, Kim Jong Pil had greater control over the nomination process than the others.³⁵

Effects of CAGE Blacklisting on the Nomination of Candidates

The effects of the CAGE blacklisting campaign against the nomination of unfit politicians were mixed. A total of 113 potential candidates were on the CAGE first and second blacklists. Of the 113 on the original list, 11 did not seek nomination. Forty-eight of the 102 on the blacklists failed to win party nomination.³⁶ Among the nominees on the CAGE blacklists were 18 for GNP, 12 for MDP, and 10 for ULD.

On February 21, CAGE declared in a press conference that it would start a recall campaign against those 40 nominees of the major parties who were blacklisted.³⁷ CAGE leaders decided to file a lawsuit against the major parties on the ground of violating the Political Party Law. Article 31 stipulates that each political party is required to select nominees through a democratic procedure. However, CAGE's attempt to recruit party members as plaintiffs failed, and CAGE abandoned the litigation route of nullifying the nomination of blacklisted candidates.

CAGE's "Defeat Movement"

On April 3, CAGE announced a list of 86 candidates who were targeted for defeat in the National Assembly election. Of the 86, 64 were on CAGE's first and second blacklists and were registered as candidates for the election.

35. *Ibid.*; February 3, 2000, p. 3; February 6, 2000, p. 5.

36. Moon, *We Have a Dream*, p. 110.

37. *Ibid.*

Twenty-two were those who were accused by citizens for alleged election campaign infractions and/or tax evasion, or for instigating regional animosities.³⁸ Of those on the defeat list, 28 were affiliated with GNP, 16 with MDP, 18 with ULD, 8 with DNP, 3 with Korea New Party, and 13 were independents. An interesting scene occurred at the press conference where the defeat list was announced. When the names were called, CAGE members waved red cards that recalled the use of red cards in a soccer game, i.e., ejection for committing a serious foul.

The regional branches of CAGE added four more candidates to the defeat list, bringing the total to 90. Of these candidates, 22 were identified by CAGE as “most problematic—candidates who were targeted for defeat with concentrated effort.”³⁹ Nine of the 22 were affiliated with GNP, seven with MDP, four with ULD, and 2 with DNP. Most of the 22 candidates labeled as “most problematic” were senior-level politicians in their respective parties. Two of the 22 “most problematic” candidates were also identified by other civic organizations.

With its April 3 press conference, CAGE started a full-scale campaign against the candidates on its list. A nationwide campaign was organized by CAGE headquarters in Seoul. Ten extended area-level (major cities) chapters and 53 local autonomous unit-level chapters were mobilized in their respective geographic areas. In addition, CAGE established linkages to civic organizations with specialized areas of concerns to garner assistance on specific campaign issues.⁴⁰ CAGE indicated that it would organize street demonstrations, call and inform voters about the movement to defeat the blacklisted candidates, and send voters electronic mail concerning the defeat campaign.

Moreover, CAGE designated each of the leaders of civic organizations that were participating in CAGE as a “marksman-in-charge.” Each “marksman-in-charge” was given the responsibility of carrying out the defeat campaign in an assigned election district. Park Won Soon, chairman of CAGE, was assigned to the Kangdong district of Seoul. His target was Kim Joong Wi, who was a nominee of the GNP and was on the “most problematic” candidate list. Kim Joong Wi allegedly made remarks on the issue of torture that were regarded as anti-women’s civil rights.⁴¹

The participation of CAGE leaders in the defeat campaign at a district level turned out to be an effective strategy for publicizing CAGE causes, as

38. Ibid.

39. Wein, “Civic Organizations under the Kim Dae-Jung Government,” p. 21.

40. Dae Hwa Chung, “Siminsahwoeei naksunundonguei jeongae gwajunggwa jeongchijog euii” [The development processes and political significance of the citizens’ defeat movement in the 2000 National Assembly election], in *4.13 chongseon* [The April 13 general election], eds. Chan Wook Park et al. (Seoul: Nanam, 2000), pp. 155–85.

41. Moon, *We Have a Dream*, p. 232.

well as for generating voters' support for the campaign. It should be noted, however, that CAGE street and bus-tour campaigners ran into physical confrontations with the campaign workers of the blacklisted candidates. CAGE leaders were interested in generating support from and participation of young voters in the defeat campaign. The leaders shared a view that one of the most effective methods of approaching young voters would be through a cultural event befitting their tastes; thus, CAGE organized the "Daehakro Woodstock Festival" on April 8, five days before the election. The festival included various events, but the highlight was a concert in which several popular performers entertained about 50,000 young people.⁴² Near the end of the concert, the young audience members were waving red cards reading "Out!" to the rhythm of the music. The event attracted the largest crowd of CAGE's three-month long campaign. CAGE also published resource materials on political and judiciary reforms to publicize its position that the election campaign should involve debates on policy proposals from different political parties and candidates. In addition, CAGE organized a drive to gather candidates' pledges for political reforms, if they were elected. Approximately 450 candidates signed the pledges between April 3 and 13.⁴³

Of the 86 candidates on the CAGE list, 59 lost the election. Fifteen of the 22 "most problematic" candidates were not elected.⁴⁴ The most revealing information about the impact of the CAGE campaign on election outcomes was the election results for nine of the 22 candidates on the list. The win or loss status of 13 of them was predictable. The remaining nine candidates had a very tight race, and thus the outcome was too close to call. It turned out that eight of the nine lost the election.⁴⁵ The effects of the CAGE campaign varied significantly by region. In the Seoul area, 19 out of 20 on the blacklist were defeated, while in the Chungchong region, 15 of the 18 on the defeat list lost.⁴⁶ In Honam, the home region and power base of Kim Dae Jung, six of eight were defeated. However, in Youngnam, traditionally a stronghold of the GNP, only 16 among 35 on the list were defeated.⁴⁷ In particular, none of those who were defeated in the Youngnam region were GNP nominees; the nominees on the CAGE defeat list were primarily from the MDP and DNP. Hence, even those who were on the list and lost the election in the Youngnam region were defeated largely because of their party affiliation, and not due to being blacklisted.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 245–50.

43. Chung, "The Development Processes," p. 172.

44. Hong Nack Kim, "The 2000 Parliamentary Election in South Korea," pp. 904–09.

45. Moon, *We Have a Dream*, p. 256.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

47. *Ibid.*

It is important to comment on variations in the effectiveness of CAGE's blacklisting activities. For example, why was it so effective in the Seoul region but less so in the Youngnam region? Did the demographic characteristics of the electoral districts (metropolitan versus non-metropolitan areas) make a difference in the CAGE campaigns? Did the degree of the alleged wrongdoing on the part of the blacklisted candidates as charged by CAGE make the difference? In determining the effects of CAGE's blacklisting campaign, two election outcome variables were examined: candidates' vote shares and win-lose status. Since a host of other variables, including the characteristics of districts and candidates, party affiliation, and campaign spending, influence the election outcomes, it is essential to control for these factors to isolate the effects of the blacklisting. Horowitz and Kim used multivariate regression models to analyze the impact of CAGE's blacklisting on the outcomes of the April general election.⁴⁸ They reported that "blackballing was most likely to influence Seoul voters, and especially likely to hurt MDP candidates."⁴⁹ They observed that "Seoul voters, with their weaker party loyalties, would be more likely to switch away from blackballed candidates that they otherwise prefer," and that "candidates from the party with the most reformist reputation were most vulnerable to such defections."⁵⁰ As previously indicated, a high level of regional loyalty to particular parties outside the Seoul region, especially in the Youngnam and Homan regions, has been one of the most significant aspects of South Korean political culture.⁵¹ The fact that the GNP won all but one of the 65 seats in the Youngnam region, while the MDP won 25 of 29 seats in the Honam region, and the ULD won 11 of 12 district-level seats in the Chungchong-Taejon region, shows that party loyalties overpowered the effects of blacklisting.

Variations were observed in metropolitan/non-metropolitan areas with regard to the possible differential effects of blackballing on the election outcomes.⁵² Of the total 86 blacklisted candidates, 34 ran in election districts of large metropolitan areas (Seoul, Busan, Taegu, Taejon, Inchon, Kwangju, and Ulsan), and 52 ran in smaller metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. In the large metropolitan areas, 26 of the 34 blacklisted candidates (76.5%) lost, while 19 of 52 (63.5%) lost, in the smaller areas. It is interesting to note that

48. Shale Horowitz, and Sunwoong Kim, "Public Interest Blackballing in South Korea's Elections: One Trick Pony or Wave of the Future," *Party Politics* (2002), forthcoming.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20. Both candidates' vote shares and win-lose status are used as dependent variables.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

51. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 24, 2000; Shin, "Political Demography of Korea," pp. 191–92; Horowitz and Kim, "Public Interest," p. 7.

52. Horowitz and Kim, "Public Interest," pp. 31–32; Shin, "Political Demography of Korea," p. 191.

three out of nine blacklisted GNP nominees who ran in the large metropolitan areas, and six out of 13 blacklisted GNP nominees in the other areas, were defeated; thus, there was no significant difference in election outcomes by size of area. In contrast, the blacklisted MDP nominees who ran in the large metropolitan areas suffered more than those who ran in smaller areas. Six out of seven lost in large metropolitan areas, while six out of nine lost in the other areas. For the blacklisted independents and ULD and DNP nominees, the difference in defeat rates between the two areas was not significant. Being blacklisted in the Seoul region signified a defeat, regardless of the candidate's party affiliation, while the differences between the large metropolitan areas and the other areas in the defeat rate for blacklisted candidates who ran in other regions were not significant for all parties. Thus, the effects of regionalism and party loyalty were much stronger than the effects of metropolitan/non-metropolitan characteristics of the election district, *per se*. Finally, the Central Election Commission (CEC) reported the amount of property tax paid by the candidate over the three years before filing for candidacy, as well as the candidate's history of military service, if any. The results of the multiple regression analysis showed that property tax payment and military-service status did not have any significant effects on the election outcomes when the effects of other variables were controlled for.⁵³

Discussion

As indicated, the CAGE blacklisting and defeat campaigns had significant effects on both the nomination processes of candidates by major parties, as well as on the final outcomes of the National Assembly election. The significance of CAGE activities goes far beyond their effects on the election results. Dae Hwa Chung asserted that in the context of Korean political history, the CAGE campaign signified that citizens were reclaiming the long-lost right to self-determination and securing the basic rights guaranteed in a participatory democracy.⁵⁴ Further, the anti-nomination and defeat campaigns can be viewed as a people's resistance movement, or a civil disobedience movement against the political party-centered election systems and undemocratic political practices that essentially have limited the participation of civil society in the election process. It is important to note that the political reform movement was not initiated by political parties or the executive, legislative, or judiciary branches, but by civic organizations. Hence, the political activism of CAGE should be regarded as a citizens' movement for political reforms or

53. Horowitz and Kim, "Public Interest," pp. 31–32. Candidates' age, incumbency, party, and region are controlled.

54. Chung, "The Development Processes," p. 173.

a citizens' political revolution that addressed the imbalance of power between political and civil society.⁵⁵

It is essential to evaluate the long-term effects of CAGE and its activities. First, as Steinberg notes, CAGE set a historical precedent that "civil society organizations are likely to play increasingly important roles in the political process and . . . any future government will ignore them at its peril."⁵⁶ Second, the actions of CAGE helped "to increase citizens' participation in politics as well as their political awareness."⁵⁷ In particular, the political activism of civil society helped young voters become active in civic organizations, and to directly participate in the election by exercising their right to vote, as well as by monitoring the campaign process. Third, CAGE proved the possibility of coordination among various civic organizations having diverse causes and agendas, and also demonstrated the solidarity of civil society movements based on common causes. Although approximately 450 civic organizations participated in the formation of CAGE, the total number of such groups that committed to CAGE increased to more than 800 by the time of the defeat campaign. CAGE's political independence, as well as the credibility, devotion, and experience of CAGE leaders in civic organizations, were important factors that made CAGE a unified force in political activism.

What are the lessons from the shortcomings of CAGE for future political activism by civil society in Korea? First, the political activism of CAGE did not directly translate into an increase in citizens' political participation. The voter participation rate in the April election (57.2%) was the lowest in the history of the National Assembly. The participation rate in the 15th National Assembly election of 1996 was 63.9%. It would be unfair to suggest that CAGE was responsible for the decrease in the voter participation rate. However, it is reasonable to argue that CAGE did not help voters evaluate the differences in qualifications of candidates running in each election district, other than stating that the 86 blacklisted persons were unacceptable. Considering that more than 1,000 candidates ran in the 16th National Assembly election in 227 election districts, CAGE's blacklisting and defeat campaigns had serious limitations.

Second, CAGE was not effective in blocking out regionalism, despite pressing for such rejection during the campaign and repeatedly warning both the political party leadership and the candidates not to recruit voters by using regional sentiments. In particular, of the 65 seats in the Youngnam region, GNP won 64. The only exception was Jung Mong Joon, who was elected in Ulsan City, where a large number of voters were connected to Hyundai in

55. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

56. Steinberg, "Korean Politics," p. 60.

57. Wein, "Civic Organizations under the Kim Dae-Jung Government," p. 71.

one way or another. Even in other regions, the tendency of voters to support candidates on the basis of party leaders' regional connection was extremely strong. Voting behavior in the April election reaffirmed that regionalism is the most serious and persistent obstacle to systemic political reform and progress toward a mature and liberal participatory democracy.

What are the prospects for civic organizations' future role in the elections, in light of other interest groups' professed intention to carry out electioneering activities by organizing political action committees? CAGE, after declaring its blacklist campaign successful, disbanded after the election. The representatives of organizations that had participated in the alliance indicated that they would resume their respective primary programs. Post-mortem debates discussed the past and future roles of citizens' organizations in Korean elections. Leaders of citizens' organizations who were active participants in CAGE activities argued that the blackballing was an effective method of promoting election and political reforms, and that citizens' organizations should continue to play the role of watchdogs in future elections. Leaders of conservative political parties pointed out that the CAGE movement was essentially a negative campaign against blacklisted candidates, based on their backgrounds.⁵⁸ In any case, there have been two major elections since the April 13, 2000, general election: the June 13, 2002, election of provincial governors and mayors, and city, county, and local district council members; and the August 8, 2002, special elections for National Assembly seats. Interestingly, citizens' organizations did not engage in organized activities in either election.

On October 18, 2002, more than 270 citizens' groups formed a new group, the 16th Presidential Election (i.e., December 19, 2002) Voters' Solidarity for Fair Election (VSFE).⁵⁹ Sohn Bong Ho, co-chair of VSFE, announced that the organization would concentrate primarily on positive campaigning, by educating voters about candidates' positions on major policy issues.⁶⁰ He also indicated that VSFE would monitor the campaign of candidates with regard to instigating regionalism for their own political benefits. VSFE asserted that it would not engage in any negative campaigns or blacklisting against any specific candidate(s). It would be interesting to see how VSFE conducts its activities for fair and clean presidential elections as this would set the tone for the future role of citizens' organizations in political elections in South Korea.

Several factors are likely to influence the future roles of civic organizations in South Korean elections. Given the impact CAGE had on the processes and

58. <<http://www.ngojoongang.or.kr/column/January 22, 2002>>.

59. *Donga Ilbo* [East Asia Daily], October 18, 2002, p. A-29.

60. *Ibid.*

outcomes of the National Assembly election of April 13, 2000, civic organizations can be expected to continue to exert their agendas in the political processes, including elections at various levels. One important switch in their approaches will likely be toward greater concentration on comparative evaluations of policy proposals and the campaign promises of various parties and candidates. Civic organizations will actively screen the backgrounds and qualifications of nominees for important political appointments, including cabinet posts, since the general public may have more confidence in the organizations' nominally politically neutral assessments than in formal and partisan interest-driven parliamentary screening procedures. As the decision-making processes of political parties become more democratic and transparent, civic organizations may increasingly return to concentrating on their original purposes. Nevertheless, as special interest groups form their own political action committees and aggressively promote their agendas, civic organizations may have to play the role of impartial judges in Korean political processes.