

The Pennsylvania State University

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**DEEPENING DEMOCRACY WITHIN AND BEYOND CITIZENS' MOVEMENT
ORGANIZATIONS: AN INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF ADULT EDUCATION
FOR DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH KOREA**

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and

Comparative and International Education

by

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ABSTRACT

This research connects the trajectories of adult education for democratic participation¹ and activist-educators' work at citizens' movement organizations in South Korea with discourses on deepening democracy (Fung & Olin-Wright, 2003; Gaventa, 2006b) and envisioning real utopias (Olin-Wright, 2010; 2019). In particular, I focus on such education activities as a way to address the puzzle of how collective agency can be cultivated for social change. Social movement research on cultivating collective agency has proceeded in both directions of skepticism against organizations (e.g., Michels, 1915; Piven & Cloward, 1977) as well as viewing organizations as the basis for cultivating collective agency (e.g., Behrens et al., 2004; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Osterman, 2006). However, how education activities create processes of "becoming" for both (potential) activists and social movement organizations have been overlooked in the social movement literature. I shed light on this dimension by focusing on the work processes of activist-educators and reconceptualizing the concept of "in-between space" from liminality literature (Bhabha, 1994) and cultural-historical activity theory (Engeström, 2014). Using institutional ethnography as the methodology and incorporating comparison across three cases, I engaged in 14 months of ethnographic research to answer the question of how activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education cultivate directions for social change from within and beyond citizens' movement organizations.

The three cases show different approaches to achieving a deeper democracy.

Democratic citizenship education activities at Academy Neutnamu of People's Solidarity for

¹ I refer to such education activities that developed at citizens' movement organizations in South Korea as "democratic citizenship education" in this research. For further information, refer to note 6 on page 32 in the dissertation.

Participatory Democracy eventually developed into a separate activity system in the organization, with education becoming a venue for activist-educators to experiment with new approaches to broaden the definition of democracy and activism within their organization to influence the wider society. Education activities at Gwangmyeong YMCA developed in relation to other organizations in the region, such as the publicly-funded Gwangmyeong Lifelong Learning Center. Heterogenous approaches to democratic citizenship education in the community led to an awareness of in-between space at the inter-organizational level. This case illuminates how activist-educators fill such in-between space at the community level to explicitly reclaim democratic citizenship education as “political education.” Activist-educators at Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE maximize the fluid nature of their organization to engage at local, municipal, and national levels of the state across the country. Seeping into invited spaces within state institutions, activist-educators focus on fostering individual experiences of democratic discussions and seek to make these invited spaces into in-between spaces for general people and activist-educators to participate. Whereas these cases differed in their approaches to deepening democracy and their engagement with the state, they share common mechanisms of activist-educators identifying in-between space between activities and seeking to fill in such space through their interpretations of how democracy can be deepened through education work.

This research adds to literature across several areas, including liminality, cultural-historical activity theory, real utopias, and social movements. I argue that an additional mechanism for explaining the emergence of “in-between space” is possible by drawing on the unit of activity from cultural-historical activity theory. This mechanism characterizes democratic citizenship education that has developed the unique trajectory of democratic development in

Korea. Activist-educators in democratic citizenship education reflect on the extent to which democratic citizenship education activities as achievable options for real utopias are developing into viable and desirable alternatives against the elite-centered institutional politics in Korea, suggesting pathways that activists pursue real utopias. Lastly, through the work of activist-educators across citizens' movement organizations, I argue that the main question for cultivating collective agency hinges upon how education processes develop across different organizational formats, rather than whether or not organizations are important for social movements.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(alphabetical order)

CHAT (Cultural-Historical Activity Theory)
DCE (Democratic Citizenship Education)
LLC (Lifelong Learning Center)
NGO (Non-Governmental Organization)
NPO (Non-Profit Organization)
PSPD (People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy)
SIDE (Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE)
YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association)
ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development)

NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION AND KOREAN

- Korean names, except for scholars, are transliterated by their pronunciation, with the conventional order of Korean names preserved (first name after last name with no interceding comma). For Korean scholars, I use the preferred transliteration of their names with their first names before the last name. If Koreans did not indicate their preferred English transliterated names, I transliterated their names by their pronunciation, inserting a hyphen between the sounds of their first names.
- According to the APA 7th publication manual (2020), authors with the same last name are to be cited by including initials of their first names to “help avoid confusion within the text” (p. 267). However, as a Korean, I find that only including initials for Korean first names is not sufficient for distinguishing Koreans with the same last names. According to the 2015 Korean Census, the top three majority last names (Kim, Lee, Park) comprise 44.6% of the total population. Therefore, for in-text citations, I chose to indicate both first and last names for Korean scholars when they are first mentioned to minimize confusion.
- Unless otherwise noted, “Korea” in this paper refers to South Korea.

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DEDICATION

For my parents and grandma,

Jong-Jin Kuk, Mi-Ja Kim

and

Sun-Rye Kim

1. Introduction

Once you are part of an organization, you realize in a certain moment of its rigidity, even if you are pursuing progressive values. ... Organizations are also dwindling in their influences ... But other activists [outside the organization] would point out that the organization has been and still is crucial to making changes possible. ... So, I would get up, wrap up my thoughts, and continue my work again.

- activist-educator in a citizens' movement organization

The long-term puzzle of the role of organizations in social change continues to haunt activists today. This is not just for “traditional” movements, such as labor movements, for which labor unions and collective bargaining are important in leveraging power against the economic and state powers (Bacharach & Lawler, 1981; Leap & Grigsby, 1986). “Citizens’ movements,” with which the activist quoted above identifies, refer to a range of movements that emerged after the democratization of South Korea in 1989. Citizens’ movements are characterized by their shift from a focus on confrontational strategies to strategies that seek to work within the boundaries of society – in the case of Korea in the 1990s, within the newly afforded arena of liberal democracy. Rather than focusing on the identities of the working class or peasants, as in popular movements, activists in citizens’ movements emphasize the identity of “citizens” in a democratic society to engage a wide range of people in political activities that pressure the state and the economy based on values of social justice. They seek to defend the institutional mechanisms

achieved through democratization as well as to foster the participatory mechanisms of democracy – in other words, to “deepen democracy” beyond democratic consolidation.

Along with their shift in strategies and targeted participants, citizens’ movement activists also critically reflect on on past ways of organizing and organizational structures in pro-democracy movements in Korea during the 1980s. For example, In-Sook Kwon (2000, 2016) illuminates the experiences of female student activists who had participated in these movements, highlighting the militarized and gendered sub-cultures within the social movements at the time. She describes such sub-cultures as reflecting the entrenched militarism of Korea’s society constructed through decades of military authoritarianism. With the emergence of citizens’ movements in the 1990s, activists throughout the Korean society had opportunities to reflect on past ways of organizing. Yet, the path taken by citizens’ movement activists in the 1990s was *not* to dispense of organizations as a whole, but to build new organizations that could fit the visions and strategies of the new movements. “At least to pressure the large powers of the state and the market, some type of way to garner collective power was necessary,” recalled a citizens’ movement activist who had engaged in the discussions in the 1990s. Amidst the thriving activities, large-scale citizens’ movement organizations became representative of Korean civil society in the 1990s (Lee, Jong-Sik, 2005; You, Pal-Mu, 1998). Citizens’ movement organizations flourished in the 1990s and particularly after the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 that precipitated in an abrupt transition into neoliberal globalization in Korean society (Ji, Ju-Hyung, 2013). A long-term task for citizens’ movement activists was to foster broad participation of the general public in their organization-based activities. Such efforts to engage the public manifested as education activities by these citizens’ movement organizations, which

can be referred to as the field of “democratic citizenship education” in Korea (Han, SoongHee, et al., 2002).

However, citizens’ movement activists are now re-evaluating their paths, particularly regarding how organizations can contribute to a continuous deepening of democracy beyond liberal democracy. This question has become a dilemma, with increased skepticism around citizens’ movement organizations (Jeong, Han Wool, 2016) and the rise of fluid, network-based movements that have emerged since the 2000s (Choi, Jaehoon, 2017; Lee, Hang-Woo, 2012). These newly emerged movements are characterized by a shift away from organizational membership, allowing people to join in and opt out freely according to issues and types of action. Candlelight rallies in 2008 against the import of US beef marked a crucial turning point for organization-based activists in Korea, demonstrating that it is possible for networks of ordinary people to spark and lead large-scale mobilization. Organization-based activists, in turn, are working to keep up with this new phenomenon (Lee, Hang-Woo, 2012). Activists, who have witnessed the potential of the fluid, network-based movements, have begun to reflect on how best to unfold strategies to make gradual changes in society through their organizations (Lim, Hyun-Chin & Kong, Suk-Ki, 2005), toward “real utopias” that “deepen democracy” (Olin-Wright, 2010).

The discourse of “deepening democracy,” which refers to ideas and practices that cultivate opportunities for increased citizenship participation within the political arena, is intricately tied to Erik Olin-Wright’s search for finding “real utopias.” The notion of “deepening democracy” is exemplified by a range of case studies that illustrated how ordinary people can participate in policies that directly affects them (Fung & Olin-Wright, 2003; Gaventa, 2006b), from participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, to decentralized planning in Kerala, neighborhood

governance councils in Chicago, and habitat conservation planning in the US. Fung and Olin-Wright (2003) conceptualizes such mechanisms for people's participation in policies and politics as "Empowered Participatory Governance," through which democracy could be "deepened" beyond electoral democracy towards a more participatory model. Olin-Wright (2010) highlights these efforts to cultivate a form of direct, participatory democracy as an example of "real utopias," referring to utopian ideals that reject the current status quo, but are pragmatically possible and are continuously shaped through the real practices of people. His emphasis on real utopias is a response to the postmodern rejection of "grand narratives" and the associated cynicism toward social change. Pivoting from such cynicism, Olin-Wright argues that rather than positing a fixed "vision" of a utopia that relies on a theory of crisis and the destiny of capitalism, an alternative strategy is possible based on a theory of structural possibility that explores practical alternatives to capitalism that are possible and builds visions for achievable change through this process – in other words, real utopias.

Olin-Wright's (2010) vision for real utopias suggests several pathways through the state, the economy, and civil society. Democracy, in his view, is understood as "a specific way of linking social power and state power," which in its ideal form would have "state power fully subordinated to and accountable to social power" (p. 121). While Olin-Wright proposes several pathways for change from the civil society (social power) in relation to economic power, state power, and the economy, his work is based on the notion that a society often exists in "hybrids" of capitalist, statist, and socialist elements. As such, it is possible for people to introduce or broaden socialist elements in a hybrid system. Olin-Wright categorizes three strategies for the systemic transformation of the capitalist society: a ruptural transformation, a sustained metamorphosis through interstitial strategies, and a sustained metamorphosis through symbiotic

strategies. A ruptural transformation refers to a dramatic change in the social system. Contrary to ruptural visions, many contemporary leftist scholars have heeded to systemic transformations that can be achieved through sustained change from within the current system. Interstitial strategies refer to activities that deliberately foster new social relations that embody emancipatory ideals within marginal spaces in a capitalist society. Symbiotic strategies also share the assumption of incremental change, but differ in their involvement with the state.

Scholars have often used the concepts of interstitial and symbiotic strategies to highlight the potential for new or innovative types of activism to introduce new alternatives. For example, the work of John Holloway (2002, 2010) represents a call for interstitial change. Holloway (2002) contends that the traditional way of fighting against capital by focusing on the working class as the key revolutionary subject inherently accepts the concept of abstract labor that activists seek to transform. He argues that the key instead lies in struggling against *becoming* abstract labor and draws on the concept of negative identity – the *refusal* to exist as a particular identity – as a way forward. Holloway argues that struggles based on these notions could generate “cracks” in the capitalist society (2010). The intention to move away from the “capitalocentrism” of the past appears in many studies that draw on the notion of interstitial strategies. Davies (2013) describes the politics of “everyday making” as seeking to realize non-capitalist practices that could enact alternative values of democracy, equality, and solidarity through performative agency. Attention to small-scale, localized activism that addresses the interstitial potential of everyday making is reflected in case studies such as that of MacGregor (2021), who examined a small-scale community movement to clean up the community in Manchester. While the attraction of addressing problems that people face in their everyday world can be a key motivation for large-scale mobilization, such as the Occupy movement (Smaligo,

2014), there are critiques regarding the extent to which small-scale micropolitics of the everyday world can drive transformative change to challenge neoliberal capitalism (Blühdorn, 2017; Schlosberg & Coles, 2016).

In the pivot away from traditional ways of organizing towards alternative methods for struggle, a notable tendency has been to do away with the organizations that have been associated with traditional movements. The differing approaches to organizations are summarized in Hardt and Holloway's correspondence (Hardt & Holloway, 2012), where a key component of the conversation was about the issue of organization in movements. On the one hand, Hardt questions how autonomous and localized struggles can be organized and sustained in alternative forms that goes beyond spontaneity. On the other hand, Holloway cautions against traditional ways of organization for their fixed nature and tendency to embed the notion of abstract labor and emphasized the need for new types of experimental organizations "that comes from below, a communi[z]ing." Nevertheless, Holloway acknowledges that the confluence of different struggles at the micro level remains a challenging task. There are two points to take away from these cases and debates. The first is that there are countless attempts at the micro level to adopt innovative, interstitial or symbiotic strategies within the boundaries of capitalist societies in order to achieve change. The second is that the method through which for these micro-level practices can coalesce into larger forces that can drive transformative and sustaining changes in society is questioned, particularly on the issue of organizations.

In addition to these questions of connecting struggles from below to larger-scale changes, Olin-Wright (2019) notes "the most vexing problem" and "the biggest puzzle" in achieving social transformation: the creation of collective agency to drive social change. In other words, it is the question of *who* will participate in collective efforts to erode capitalism and

identify alternative ideas and practices. It is a question of how to reach the stage of achieving real utopias. This research puts forth Korean activist-educators' practices of democratic citizenship education as an answer to this puzzle. Democratic citizenship education may not produce significant "accomplishments" in the manner of well-known examples of interstitial or symbiotic strategies, such as the Mondragon cooperatives or participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre. However, education activities comprise a key mechanism for making and developing cracks in Korean society.

There are several notable characteristics of citizens' movements and democratic citizenship education that differentiate them from other well-known attempts to build real utopias. First, citizens' movement activists, while critical of neoliberal capitalism, are often apprehensive regarding the potential to realize alternative economic systems. This apprehension is a significant contrast to the goals for socialism presumed in Olin-Wright's version of "deepening democracy." However, I explore the historical contexts in Korea that has resulted in both the apprehension toward alternative economic systems and criticism of the current capitalist society. I focus specifically on democratic citizenship education, which has developed in connection to citizens' movements and their organizations in Korea, to address the puzzle of *how* attempts to build collective agency toward real utopias take place. In other words, how do activist-educators in Korea engaging in democratic citizenship education cultivate directions for social change from within and beyond citizens' movement organizations? More specifically, I address the following questions: 1) Through which conditions and processes do in-between spaces for democratic citizenship education emerge and how do activist-educators engage in these spaces? 2) How do activist-educators design and implement activities of democratic

citizenship education activities? 3) What kinds of visions and processes for “deepening democracy” emerge through the activities of democratic citizenship education?

In order to analyze the phenomenon of democratic citizenship education, I characterize this activity as seeking to cultivate collective agency through organizations, but not in the traditional manner of social movement organizations. Whereas scholars have discussed the cultivation of collective agency at social movement organizations in terms of strengthening organizational membership (e.g., Frege & Kelly, 2004), making changes in internal structures within organizations (e.g., Leach, 2013; Voss & Sherman, 2000), and building networks with other organizations (e.g., Eggert & Pavan, 2014; Morris, 1984), the activities of democratic citizenship education do not directly fit into these approaches. In order to analyze the seemingly “peripheral” or transitional nature of democratic citizenship education within citizens’ movement organizations, I draw on the concept of liminality which focuses on the process of “becoming.” Through a discussion of how liminality connects with acts of resistance based on postcolonial and postmodern perspectives and related notions of interstices and interstitial change in critical theory, I develop a theoretical approach to analyzing democratic citizenship education in terms of individual, organizational, and social levels of liminality. Considering the relative weakness of the literature on liminality in addressing organizations as the actor experiencing liminality, I draw on expansive learning and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (Engeström, 2014) to suggest a way to better analyze liminality at the organizational level. Here, I connect the concept of “in-between space” from the liminality literature with the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development from Cultural-Historical Activity Theory in my analysis.

Through comparative ethnographic analysis centering on three differing cases of citizens’ movement organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education, I identify

common patterns in how activist-educators engage in this practice to cultivate changes in the broader society. The analysis draws on institutional ethnography within the field of ethnography in order to find ways to navigate organizational structures according to the perspectives of people who actually drive the practices that occur within organizations. Drawing on a theoretical approach developed by connecting the literature on liminality and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, I find that activist-educators engage in “in-between spaces” that appear as gaps in activity systems or between different activity systems. The three cases illustrate different examples of how activist-educators fill these “in-between spaces” with their context-based articulations of how democracy can be deepened.

Through the three cases, I make four arguments that refer to the theories I draw on for this research. First, democratic citizenship education represents an alternative model to cultivate collective agency and potentially achieve a confluence of diverse movements. The cases illustrate that educational organizations – either as independent organizations dedicated to education activities or as departments within organizations – pose important opportunities for diverse organizations and social movements to connect. This type of confluence is not focused on the *outcomes* of organizing, such as organizing under a common agenda or goal. Instead, it is focused on cultivating common ground across organizations and movements through education activities, which in turn can shape the directions of different movements and their activists.

Second, liminality at the organizational level, which refers to the processes through which organizations experience change, is an effective way to look into both 1) how individual liminality is created and 2) how individual liminality connects to potential liminality at the social level. Although there may be examples where a charismatic movement leader dominates the processes of social change, such cases do not represent the only model for creating liminality at

the social level. In citizens' movement organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education, organizational forms have shifted to find better ways to connect with citizens "out there," and these connections cultivated with individual citizens and activists prompt specific directions that activists can take to cultivate social change beyond their organizations.

Third, I argue that the unit of activity from cultural-historical activity theory is a useful resource to analyze potential in-between spaces in which activists engage. I argue that activity theory is useful in analyzing ways that individuals connect with the collective or organizational unit and also with eventual goals to influence society. The ways in which I draw on activity as a unit of analysis for democratic citizenship education illustrate the different ways that the theory can be utilized for a comprehensive analysis of liminality, particularly relating to its potential to build resistance. This analytic lens provides concrete guidance for activist-educators in the field to analyze activities related to their education initiatives and find "in-between spaces" in which to engage.

Fourth, by connecting the practices of democratic citizenship education in citizens' movements with Olin-Wright's call for "real utopias," I argue for a need to further develop the pathways through which activists navigate their pursuits for "real utopias," from a focus on achievability to viability and desirability. Activist-educators in democratic citizenship education acknowledge that education activities are one of the achievable options for real utopias, but run into questions of the extent to which education creates viable and desirable alternatives to the elite-centered institutional politics in Korea. Citizens' movement activists, often perceived the direction of "deepening democracy" as the first realistic goal for them to pursue, while less emphasis is put on critiques of capitalism. This change and a call to engage with the category of "citizens" has been the way in which citizens' movement activists have distinguished themselves

from popular movements. However, I contend that that the two directions may not be so different. It is a distinction between how activists perceive of the processes and contents of social transformation, each embedding their own “real utopia.” With activist-educators engaged in democratic citizenship education considering the question of the directions for change, there is room for coalescence between the two trajectories of movements that have developed their own paths after democratization in Korea.

Returning to the perspectives of activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education, the question emerges, how are directions for social change cultivated from within and beyond citizens’ movement organizations? What activists engaging in democratic citizenship education emphasize is that social movement organizing includes efforts not only to mobilize power to respond to current issues, but also to build movement agendas. Building movement agendas by necessity requires discussing and interacting with people in their everyday lives to excavate potential directions to build the movement in the long-term. The activity of building movements prompts activist-educators to seek multiple strategies through which they can engage with people external to their organizations. Through various inroads into building movement agendas through democratic citizenship education, activist-educators accumulate a sense of the current issues that people of diverse backgrounds care about. This knowledge offers activist-educators a lens to reconsider how their own respective organizations can address relevant issues and work to cultivate social change through education activities.

Building the movement is not limited to identifying issues that are currently important to a particular group of people. The role of democratic citizenship education is to connect people’s experiences with relevant issues in the development of democracy in Korea as well as with past and current social movements. By identifying commonalities and differences in issues

that people care about, it is possible to develop sustainable agendas for individuals as well as for citizens' movement organizations. Activist-educators working from different organizational structures in this study seek such direction in different ways, such as 1) continuously developing new collective repertoires for the organization to address, 2) drawing on the local community in which the organization belongs to cultivate spontaneous thinking into socially oriented activities, and 3) expanding opportunities for a broad range of people to publicly express opinions and listen to others' opinions. Whereas inequalities or injustices felt by a specific group of people may be the focus in mobilization, the process of *building* a movement requires casting a wider net so as to interact with a wide group of people. Citizens' movements focus on this process of excavating "newly" marginalized groups – whose concerns may in fact be related to long-lasting issues that have been the focus of various trajectories of social movements. Democratic citizenship education is a concrete way to "cast a wider net" for activists to connect with non-activist populations, to hear from and work with them to collectively and gradually develop an open-ended goal of "deepening democracy" in Korea.

2. Context: Democracy and democratic citizenship education in South Korea

From democratization to deepening democracy

From colonial rule to dictatorships to democratization

The current South Korean context of globalization² cannot be understood without tracing the historical build-up towards democratization in 1987 and its lasting impacts on Korean society. The vibrant activism that drove democratization in 1987 amidst the authoritarian dictatorship of Chun Doo Hwan has its roots in nationalist and socialist movements that grew alongside agrarian and industrial development projects during the Japanese colonization of Korea from 1910 to 1945 (Cha, Nam-hee, 1992; Kang, Jin Woong, 2013; Lee, Hyun-Joo, 2007). After Korea gained independence following Japan's defeat in the Second World War and through continuous anti-colonial resistance that underpinned the process of independence, various types of ideological and political activities abruptly expanded. Yet, the ideological expansion was cut short when US military officials partitioned Korea in two in 1948 and North Korea invaded the South in 1950, starting the Korean War. This war ended with an armistice rather than a peace treaty. Although the ideological divide may seem anachronistic, remnants of the Cold War still influence Korean society, exemplified in the disbanding of the third largest political party in 2014 for violating national security laws in its stance towards North Korea.

In addition to external influences from Japan and the US, authoritarian dictatorships took power from the 1960s. The Park Chung Hee regime began in 1961 with a military coup and

² A *strong version* of globalization (Tabb, 1997), where globalization is considered to be a qualitatively 'new' and inevitable phenomenon, prevails in the comparative and international education literature in Korea. To the contrary, democratic citizenship education literature in Korea shares a sense that globalization is an extension of capitalist relations (Kim, Wang Sik, 2006), reflecting a *longer version* of globalization (Tabb, 1997). My interpretation of globalization is based on the latter version as an extension of capitalist relations, connected with Korea's history of colonial rule and neo-imperialist influences from the United States.

ruled until 1979. This era is also when the “developmental state,” referring to the state intervening in the economy in the name of “development,” spearheaded Korean society (Cumings, 1999; C. Johnson, 1999). By upholding anti-communism under the banner of national security and through a state-led project of “modernization,” Korea gained some ground in the world economy with government-backed heavy industries and light industries based on cheap labor. The fact that the Park Chung Hee dictatorship achieved economic development still divides political sides in Korea, with conservatives “defending” the dictatorship to a certain extent. Park Geun-hye, the daughter of Park Chung Hee, was elected president in 2013, which exemplifies the widespread accommodating stance toward the Park Chung Hee dictatorship. Chun Doo Hwan, a military general, took power through another coup in 1980. Although activism during the 1960s and 1970s was relatively quiet due to state repression, it could no longer be silenced in the 1980s. The opposition against dictatorship reached a boiling point in the 1980s, epitomized in *minjung* movements.

Namhee Lee (2011), in her insightful book *The Making of Minjung*, argues that *minjung* is a historical subjectivity created through intellectuals and students interacting with the lives of the masses. *Minjung* literally translated from Korean means “common people,” as opposed to elites or the educated, which Lee (2011) claims “came to signify those who are oppressed in the sociopolitical system but who are capable of rising up against it” (p. 5). She argues that “the central problematic of the *minjung* movements was widespread anxiety among intellectuals and university students that modern Korean history was a history of failure, that the Korean people were not the subjects of their own history” (p. 2). Lee describes the complex positioning of the *minjung* movements along two different axes: first against the state-led developmentalism and the dictatorship and second in the stance toward the US and North Korea. *Minjung* exhibited

conflicting stances toward the US, with a sense of historically being wronged by the US – heightened by the perceived betrayal of the US not intervening in the military massacre of civilians in the Gwangju Uprising of 1980 – while also striving for ideals of liberal democracy linked to US models. Moreover, as the *minjung* movements sought autonomy, North Korea’s ideology³ of state reliance that was hostile to the US was a source of dilemma, challenging *minjung* movement activists to strike a balance between seeking autonomy while not being framed as following North Korean ideology. Lee (2011) describes this dilemma: “Even as *minjung* practitioners articulated their vision in terms of a binary opposition to the state,” they stayed within the boundaries of the nation-state by “persistently [projecting] their future vision onto the narrative of nation-state” while “portraying themselves as nationalistic and true inheritors of the nationalist legacy” from the colonial era (p. 296).

Understanding the dynamics within *minjung* movements is key to grasping the separation between *minjung* and *shimin* (citizens’) movements after democratization in 1987 and into the 1990s. One major aspect is the role of intellectuals in *minjung* movements. Lee (2011) concisely states that “intellectuals were conflicted between Gramscian ideas of organic fusion and Leninist vanguardism” in *minjung* movements (p. 15). Although the theories underlying *minjung* movements defined *minjung* as subjects of opposition, intellectuals regarded *minjung* as necessitating the vision and guidance of intellectuals to truly become revolutionary. University students who engaged in *minjung* movements as intellectuals were called *undongkwon* (literal translation: the sphere of movements). They served as a major engine of activism in the 1980s, as the large increase in university admissions decreased elitist tendencies among university

³ I define ideology as a collective consciousness, or a way of perceiving material realities, that is based on specific political and economic standpoints.

students. With an aspiration to organically connect with workers and peasants, *undongkwon* went into factories or the countryside with aims to organize *minjung* and also to become “reborn” themselves as workers or peasants. Abelmann (1996) and Lee (2011) highlight the self-abnegation that these *undongkwon* intellectuals went through, conflicted by the need to achieve praxis (coherence between thought and action), their undeniable status and privileges as intellectuals, a sense of guilt from possibly becoming traitors similar to Korean intellectuals during the Japanese colonial period, and familial expectations for first-generation university students from families of peasants or lower classes. Thus, I understand the intellectuals of *minjung* movements in the 1980s as grappling with contradictions regarding not only the dictatorship, but also Japanese colonial legacies and neo-imperial influences from the US

There were also intense debates within *minjung* movements, which manifested in a split between the People’s Democracy (PD) and the National Liberation (NL) factions. The two factions diverged on how they interpreted national autonomy and what they prioritized in order to achieve such autonomy (Park, Young-Gyun, 2013). PD regarded South Korean society as producing its own unique system of capitalism and thereby prioritized democracy over reunification, whereas NL regarded South Korean capitalism as an extension of US imperialism and therefore prioritized reunification over democracy. These debates ultimately demobilized the *undongkwon* in the 1990s, as they experienced realistic barriers to stay committed to one ideology (Levine, 2016). Nak Chung Paik (1994) retroactively states that these debates oversimplified and divided *undongkwon* rather than acknowledging the systemic nature of the double bind that Korea faced in international politics.

With democratization in 1987 and the first civilian government coming to power in 1993, *minjung* movements faced important shifts. Levine (2016) identifies several key elements

in the shift from *minjung* to *shimin* (citizens') movements. One was the feminist critique of the implicit militarism in *minjung* movements. Insook Kwon (2000) is well-known for her critique of the "masculine[z]ed activist model" that prevailed in the *minjung* movements, which viewed democracy as "anything but military dictatorship rather than as a system of equality and decision-making" (p. 94). A further element was the interpretation that militarism and ideological dogmatism in *minjung* movements were influenced by the colonial influence of the Japanese-style public education system, which was maintained even after independence (Choi, Chungmoo, 1993). Haejoang Cho (1992), a public intellectual, critiques the uncritical reading of foreign post-colonial theorists by the *undongkwon*, which she claims made the movement "[turn] away from or even oppressed those contradictions that emerged from people's daily lives." These elements led to a portion of *minjung* movement participants mobilizing into citizens' (*shimin*) movements after 1987, diverging from the strict political and ideological orientation of *minjung* movements. Moreover, a notable characteristic of *minjung* movements was that they mobilized against the dictatorship, but did not fundamentally question the power of the state. This idea led to the notion that "their revolution was over when they exchanged the 'bad dictatorship' for 'good power'" (Lee, 2011, p. 297).

Democratic consolidation and citizens' movements

South Korean movements after democratization exhibited a cultural turn, which drew out distinctions between student movements, labor movements, and peasant movements. A "cultural turn" here refers to movements distancing themselves from a strict focus on the political economy and moving towards pluralistic narratives with a postmodern tendency. Lee (2011) diagnoses at the end of her book that in the 1990s,

Instead of “arguments and heroic stands” of intellectuals exemplifying the notion of a correspondence between knowledge and conduct (*chihaeng ilchi*),⁴ originality of ideas and the ability to digest imported theories were now in demand.... South Korean society seems indeed to have entered the postmodern stage.... postmodernity in South Korea did not simply come after modernity but “after particular manifestations of the modern” in Korean history. The postmodern in South Korea is not only postauthoritarian but also post-*minjung*, with all that entails. (pp. 300-301)

Some scholars have defined distinct traits of the cultural turn in South Korea of the 1990s, with Haejoang Cho-Han (2000) stating that Korea “skipped” modernity and went straight into postmodernity and Jesook Song (2009) arguing that Korea adopted neoliberalism before experiencing liberalism. In fact, a long-time activist who contributed to Levine’s (2016) book on citizens’ movement organizations notes how the Korean word *damnon* changed in meaning from the 1970 and 80s to the 2000s. He elaborates that *damnon* in the 1970s and 80s would be translated as “ideologies,” such as socialism, but this meaning changed in the 1990s with the introduction of Foucault, when the term began to be translated as pluralistic “discourses.” This shift in how the word *damnon* has been interpreted and translated by Koreans is a reflection of the postmodern turn and a general tendency of activists to separate from strict adherence to socialist theories.

Peasant movements and labor movements embarked upon their own paths in the 1990s. Nancy Abelman (1996), in her ethnography of the Kochang Tenant Farmers Movement in

⁴ *Chihaeng ilchi* is a concept analogous to praxis from the Korean language. It refers to coherence in thought and conduct.

Korea, traces how the activities of the movement shifted towards a focus on the daily life and how *nonghwal*, which was a key component of university student-peasant solidarity in which university students travelled to and lived in agricultural villages to help peasants work and organize them, changed significantly in the 1990s. She finds while *nonghwal* in the 1980s was characterized by students as the “intellectuals” who raised the political consciousness of peasants, this was no longer the case in the 1990s. Not only did the framing of *nonghwal* within universities shift to more of a cultural exchange, but it was now the peasants who were teaching students about the political implications of their work. As for labor movements, Hagen Koo (2001) discusses the class formation of Korean workers in his book. He posits that the unique characteristic of the Korean labor movement in the 1980s – their solidarity with other movements under the *minjung* movement banner – was due to the fact that the dictatorial state was a major determinant in political and economic processes. The state was a common “enemy” among activists in movements that fought for democracy and labor movements. Yet, Koo states that the South Korean labor movement did not develop into “social-movement unionism” with broad alliances among grassroots social movements because labor issues were often confined to the boundaries of enterprises and labor movements focused on the humane treatment and dignity of laborers rather than wages or standards of living, which could have established closer ties to community-based movements. He further explains that the dominant approach of the labor movement in the 1990s was to refrain from electoral politics and focus on building working-class solidarity. The labor movement in Korea achieved milestones during this period, such as the general strike for job stability in 1997 and the establishment of the first labor party in 2000. These trajectories of peasant movements and labor movements in the 1990s demonstrate that, unlike the 1980s – when a broad umbrella of solidarity was established under the *minjung*

movement against the dictatorship, democratization marked a divergence for social movements to develop their unique paths.

It is at this point of divergence where citizens' movements emerged. Many participants in the *minjung* movement who were neither peasants nor working-class laborers began a new type of movement called citizens' movements. Countless debates have taken place in Korea regarding the relationship between *minjung* and citizens' movements (Cho, Hee-Yeon, 2001; You, Pal-Mu & Kim, Jung-Hoon, 2001). *Shimin*, translated as citizens, also has the connotation in Korean meaning "people of the city," as opposed to the countryside. The word *shimin* (citizen) was initially used in citizens' movements not to emphasize whether a person has official citizenship defined by the nation-state, but rather to accentuate people's statuses as citizens living in a democratic society as opposed to dictatorship. Citizens' movements are manifestations of activists' inquiries regarding what it means to become a political agent in a democracy. Underlying citizens' movements are critiques of some of the practices in the *minjung* movements, including the authoritarian culture, the ideological divides of NL and PD, and the masculine-militant characteristics. Instead, a culture of pragmatism with an issue-by-issue approach characterizes citizens' movements, with a focus on non-class-based issues ranging from gender to the environment and community-based organizing (Levine, 2016). I interpret this focus as a reaction to the intense feeling of self-abnegation that student activists experienced in the 1980s. Although the extent to which class relations are important to citizens' movements is debated (Kim, Sung-Kuk, 2001a, 2001b; Sonn, Hochul, 2001a, 2001b), citizens' movements are not indifferent to economic justice. One of the first organizations under citizens' movements was the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ), which did not oppose the capitalist system *per se*, but sought to correct the distorted elements of inequality in capitalism (Kim, Sunhyuk,

2000). Another major citizens' movement organization is People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), which has departments dedicated to economic justice in the Korean context. However, it is also true that much of the economic discussion in citizens' movements, as well as in labor and peasant movements, has remained within the boundaries of capitalism despite worsening conditions after the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the aggressive expansion of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has exacerbated the diffusion of theories and practices that repurpose the role of the state to prioritize economic prosperity and market functions over other values, such as social welfare.

Some scholars have compared the South Korean government after the 1997 Asian financial crisis to the developmental state during the dictatorship era (Chang, Dae-Oup, 2009; Hundt, 2009; Pirie, 2008). The developmental state is often characterized as unique to the East Asian economy, referring to a state that simultaneously coordinates national security and economic development (Cumings, 1999). The developmental state is undeniably capitalist, as it seeks to expand capitalism through consistent government policies (Johnson, 1999). Whereas the developmental state was both anti-democratic and anti-labor, the activism that led to the democratization of 1987 coalesced to contest the anti-democratic authoritarian dictatorship while the anti-labor practices were not fully dealt with through the democratization. After the Asian financial crisis and the structural adjustment policies of the IMF, the democratized state increasingly utilized market-based neoliberal instruments rather than dirigiste methods, such as policy loans (Hundt, 2009). Dae-Oup Chang (2009), adopts a Marxist perspective in examining an interesting twist in state policies during the early 2000s, when presidents from progressive parties were elected. Progressives in the early 2000s, Dae-Oup Chang (2009) writes, called for statist reforms against neoliberalism while also drawing on the past conservatist notion of the

developmental state. This parallel indicates that 1) the Korean state has often been brought up in order to deal with economic hardships and that 2) Korea has continuously faced the tides of economic globalization. The uniqueness of the Korean political economy is marked by the fact that while the shift from *minjung* to citizens' movements may have been "conducive" to the advent of neoliberalism by seemingly moving away from class struggles, social movements were still successful in pressuring the state to relinquish its authoritarian power and democratize politics to expand political participation in both electoral and non-electoral ways.

Despite explicit economic and anti-labor policies implemented by the Korean government (Ji, Ju-Hyung, 2013), some sectors and actors within the Korean state retained the influence of statist efforts to address inequalities arising from capitalism in the early 2000s. Similar to Dale's (1989) analysis of teachers resisting state-led education reform at schools in the UK, I explore whether and how pockets of struggle exist in the field of adult education in Korea. Education is a particularly important domain because activism cannot succeed and be sustained merely through the efforts of full-time activists, but also requires support from the general public. A specific field that emerged in Korea in the 1990s is "democratic citizenship education." Contrary to "citizenship education," which was previously led by the state to promulgate the state's desired imagery of "citizenship," activists in civil society organizations began to take active roles in reinterpreting citizenship education from the perspective of the newly achieved democracy in Korea. Based on the historical context of colonialism, imperialism, dictatorship, and neoliberalism, it is important to consider how the notion of democracy and the unique field of democratic citizenship education developed in Korea.

The political left in Korea and democratic citizenship education

While South Korea is considered to be a consolidated democracy (L. A. Diamond & Kim, 2000; Yun, Seongyi & Min, Hee, 2012), many Korean scholars share the awareness that consolidation of democracy is not enough to guarantee alignment between institutional consolidation of democracy and substantive content (Choi, Jang-Jip, 2002; Lim, Hyun-Chin, 2009). Lim (2009) in particular emphasizes that whereas substantive democracy should ensure inclusion and contestation for all social groups, Korean society in general is still hostile to marginalized populations, such as the working class, peasants, and urban poor.

Why is Korean society struggling to move beyond institutional consolidation of democracy? Many Korean scholars in political science argue that the limitations of political parties serve as a key barrier to deepening democracy beyond democratic consolidation (Choi, Jang-Jip 2002; Kim, Yong-Bok, 2012; Lim, Hyun-Chin, 2009; Moon, Woo-Jin, 2018). The Democratic Party and the People Power party, the two largest political parties in Korea today, are considered to be descendants of elite, catch-all parties (Shim, Ji-Yeon, 2017). Although multiple political parties exist in Korea, political power has primarily been a tug-of-war between these two large parties. However, these two political parties do not represent the voices of the marginalized or social activists; instead, they largely seek to represent the interests of middle-class constituents. Thus, the differences in political ideology and orientations between the two are minimal, even resulting in the pejorative phrase “migratory bird politicians (*cheolsae-jeongchi-in*),” which refers to politicians who change their parties – even to the opposite side of the political spectrum – to best serve their personal interests.

Thus, the “political left” in Korea are better defined by considering the tensions between institutional and non-institutional politics (social movements) than between political parties in institutional politics. The non-institutional politics refers to the development of social

movements in the so-called “popular” and “citizens” camps in Korea after democratization. Popular movements, centered on labor movements, developed during the formative era of active resistance against the repression of the state (1987–1992), the transformative era during which organized labor developed along with a repertoire of strategies (1993–1997), and institutionalization of organized labor through the opening of the possibilities for union-based parties and the legalization of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (Kweon, Young-sook, 2017). Citizens’ movements, which claimed to move beyond a specific focus on the working class as the basis for mobilization, expanded into multiple areas of interest through the political freedom afforded by democratization (You, Pal-Mu & Kim, Ho-Ki, 1995, 2001). Moving away from a class basis, these activists began to focus on “new” issues that could be addressed through a wide lens, such as environmentalism, human rights, and “new” democratic ways to achieve change by working with the state on issues such as social welfare or transparency in finance (Kim, Jung-Hyun, 1993; Lee, Young-Hwan, & Lee, Jeong-Woon, 1995). Although it is difficult to pinpoint a single political ideology that groups citizens’ movements together, they share an emphasis on the democratic values of political freedom and equality as the starting point for exposing unequal power relations. Both the popular movement and citizens’ movement have been important platforms for recognizing and addressing issues of marginalized communities through campaigns, protests, and rallies to pressure politicians in institutional politics.

The question emerges, has there been no way for the marginalized to represent their interests through political parties in Korea? One of the key barriers to connections between social movements and political parties is the legal and institutional rules that prohibit civil society organizations from identifying with particular political parties. The Korean Public Officials Election Law specifies complex details regarding when civil society organizations can and

cannot engage in political activities related to elections. Although the revised version of the Public Officials Election Law (58-1) designates actions that do not comprise an election campaign (e.g., “a simple statement of opinion or manifestation of an intention on the election; an act of preparing candidacy and election campaign; a simple statement of opinion on support or opposition to the recommendation of a political party’s candidate, or manifestation of an intention thereof,” etc.), the court and the National Election Commission regard campaigns by civil society organization to support or oppose election candidates as illegal (Kim, Hyung Chul & Hong, Kyung Sun, 2018). Any connection between social movements and political parties is often deemed “illegal” based on the ambiguity of the legal wording that defines “electoral campaigns,” leaving social movement activists limited room to engage in institutional politics.

Still, there have been attempts by social movement activists to do so, and Lim (2009) sheds light on this topic by tracing the trajectories of what he categorizes as “progressive parties.” He defines “progressive parties” in Korea as parties that 1) seek to change the dominant political order and political agendas in a certain period and 2) are based on a connection with social movements that have been excluded from previous institutional politics. This categorization of progressive parties includes parties that emerged through a coalition of activists from popular or citizens’ movements. Lim refers to parties based on “traditional” topics of labor movements as “progressive parties in a narrow sense.” There are also parties that developed from citizens’ movements that sought to address “new” types of agendas, which he encompasses under “progressive parties in a broader sense.” The parties Lim addresses include the Hankyoreh Democratic Party (1988–1991); Minjung Party (1990–1992); New Reform Party (1995–1995), which later became the (integrated) Democratic Party⁵ (1995–1997); and Korean Democratic

⁵ This Democracy Party, currently called **통합민주당**, is different from the Democratic Party of Korea established

Labor Party (2000–2011). The Minjung Party and Korean Democratic Labor Party derived from popular movements, specifically labor movements. Meanwhile, the Hankyoreh Democratic Party and New Reform Party represent attempts to create political parties from citizens' movements. In his work, Lim (2009) analyzes the components that contributed to the “success” and “failures” of these attempts by activists to move into institutional politics, with the Hankyoreh Democratic Party and Korean Democratic Labor Party succeeding in making their way into Congress. However, I focus in this research on how Lim described the political ideologies and orientations of these political parties. I seek to provide a rough overview of the political orientations of the “political left” in Korea. In doing so, I aim to position the characteristics of democratic citizenship education within Korean politics.

Drawing on Lim (2009), progressive parties stemming from popular movements are relatively succinctly described in their political ideologies and orientations. For example, the Minjung Party (1990–1992) stemmed from *minjung* movement activists who sought to create a separate political party to represent the interests of *minjung* rather than integrating with the oppositional political party at the time, which was gathering power against the ruling party. The organizing body of the Minjung Party comprised 18 labor movement activists, 17 peasant movement activists, and 21 other activists who had contributed to popular movements in general. According to the party's declaration, “the owners of Minjung Party are minjung themselves who are workers, peasants and fishermen, urban poor, women, middle class, and small and medium business owners, who comprise the absolute majority of Koreans.” The party's stated goals include “terminating military authoritarian rule and establishing a democratic government with minjung as agents, and establishing autonomous economies led by minjung and achieving

in 2014.

independent and peaceful unification of the country” (recited from Lim, 2009, 44%). The party explicitly focuses on the category of *minjung* who have been marginalized in Korean society and seeks to build a government and economy based on the interests of *minjung*. In the case of the Korean Democratic Labor Party (2000–2011), the party emerged from organized labor movements founded in the 1990s against the heightened expansion of neoliberal capitalism. The party encompasses various organizations in the labor and popular movements. The political ideologies encompassed by the party include social democracy, the NL (National Liberation) camp, democratic socialism, as well as Trotskyism and councilism, which are regarded as radical leftist camps. Both the Minjung Party and the Korean Democratic Labor Party are characterized by their explicit emphasis on *minjung*, with the central organizing bodies converging around labor movements since the 1990s.

The Hankyoreh Democratic Party (1988–1991) emerged after Roh Tae-Woo, the presidential candidate from the ruling party during military authoritarian rule, won the election. The party focused on the goal of integrating the oppositional party in order to effectively win against the ruling party. The party initially comprised activists who had engaged in pro-democracy and human rights movements and intellectuals who had been influential in student movements in the 1970s and 1980s. The declared aims of the Hankyoreh Democratic Party included the call for an end of the authoritarian government and the establishment of a democratic one that would protect human rights, political freedom, and education equality. In terms of economic policy, the party called for strengthening regulations against monopolizing conglomerates, guaranteeing the 8-hour workday, and preserving the political activities of labor unions. What distinguishes the Hankyoreh Democratic Party from the Minjung Party is that the former focused on the integration of oppositional power against the ruling party, whereas the

Minjung Party declined the direction of integrating parties with different political roots. The New Reform Party (1995–1995), which later became the (integrated) Democratic Party (1995–1997), developed among citizens’ movement activists in the 1990s. With increasing awareness of the need to encompass the wide range of political agendas addressed through citizens’ movements, citizens’ movement activists sought to venture into institutional politics. These activists convened under the initiative to form the New Reform Party, but they had very different political orientations and foci. The party goals included overcoming authoritarian political dynamics; going beyond a focus on particular politicians and regions to focus on specific policies; pursuing economic equity by addressing large conglomerates; developing a new “framework” to coherently address issues of education, political institutions, and the environment that should not be instrumentalized for politics; and pursuing a society where law and justice thrive. Rather than seeking to critique the capitalist order, the party sought reforms to the current order, which eventually led them to integrate with the existing Democratic Party. The (integrated) Democratic Party declared itself as “the legitimate party that has inherited the spirits of anti-authoritarian pro-democracy struggles, and seeks to facilitate all kinds of people to become agents in politics.” Whereas popular movement activists proceeded in the direction of honing in on labor movements and the working class, a key focus of citizens’ movement activists was how to encompass the wide range of citizens’ movements into a common framework. This focus led to less identification with a particular group of people and more emphasis on the values of democracy and a compromise toward reform.

Despite the limited achievements resulting from attempts by social movement activists to represent marginalized people’s perspectives in institutional politics, social movements still comprise an important part of the political left in Korea. The trajectory of citizens’ movements

into institutional politics demonstrates the difficulty of identifying the “core” foci of citizens’ movements in terms of the populations they focus on or the agendas they address. Rather, there is a focus in citizens’ movements on the continuous development of new agendas by addressing inequalities that surface across society. For this reason, emphasis is placed on the participatory aspect of democracy. It is through the participation of people that new areas of marginalization can be addressed. In this way, citizens’ movements connect with efforts for democratic citizenship education. Education that empowers people to problematize the status quo and express their opinions is crucial for citizens’ movements. In the limited political environment in Korea, where the voices of the marginalized are not sufficiently addressed through political parties (Lim, Hyun-Chin, 2009) and apathy toward politics (i.e., institutional politics) is prevalent – particularly among the youth and young adults (Jang, Seokjun, & Ryu, SeungKwan, 2017; Kim, Kang Hoon & Park, Sang Hyun, 2011), activists engaging in democratic citizenship education are at the forefront of interacting with citizens, hearing their concerns, raising awareness of different sources of marginalization and inequity, and helping citizens as they seek to become political agents taking action.

Positioning democratic citizenship education in Korea

Historical shifts in (democratic) citizenship education

Citizenship education has several connotations in academia and in practice. The common core that binds citizenship education is the question of what it means to be a “citizen” in a society and what kind of education is necessary in order to educate citizens. Definitions of citizenship accordingly drive how citizenship education will unfold. I identify four trends in the general citizenship education literature. A large part of the discussion around citizenship

education is on what ought to be taught at schools, is often referred to as “civic education” (e.g., Schugurensky & Myers, 2003). Citizenship here is defined as an essential character that youth need to learn in order to become active participants in liberal democracy (Korbey, 2019). Another component of citizenship education is the education that immigrants complete in order to obtain official citizenship in a country (e.g., Pohlmann et al., 2013). Whereas the first notion of citizenship is based on theories of liberal democracy, the second type of citizenship education focuses on nationality and the state as a central actor in conferring citizenship. A third notion of “global citizenship education” has also recently emerged, spearheaded by international organizations such as UNESCO (Nikolitsa-Winter et al., 2019). Global citizenship education concerns the ethical responsibilities and duties that “global citizens” have in the current context when the boundaries of nation-states are blurring due to globalization. These three types of citizenship education identify certain traits tied to notions of citizenship. A fourth approach is based on Latin American perspectives that contest such passive definitions and redefine citizenship as the marginalized having “a right to define rights” (Dagnino, 1998; Yashar, 2005). Yet, all four of these approaches toward citizenship education do not adequately capture what *shimin* (citizenship) education means in the Korean context.⁶ Not only do social movement dynamics underlie *shimin* education, but its manifestations are closely tied to state and society relations and the ideals regarding consolidation of democracy in Korea. The result is that competing, at times contradictory, ideals of democracy and citizenship are encompassed under the banner of *shimin* education.

⁶ To avoid confusion regarding the four trends in the general citizenship education literature and to highlight the unique historical trajectory of citizenship education in Korea, I use democratic citizenship education to refer to the development of citizenship education at citizens’ movement organizations in Korea.

Shimin education, translated as citizenship education, has different characteristics across three historical eras: from 1945 to 1960 after independence and until the dictatorship era, from 1960 to 1987 during dictatorship, and after 1987 when procedural democracy emerged (Chun, Tuk Chu, 1995). Citizenship education in the first period imbued values of nationalism and positive representations of the US, with anti-communism “equated” with democracy. During this period, *shimin* education resembled the first trend of citizenship education based on liberal democracy outlined in the previous paragraph, with the history of colonialism and US influence during the Cold War integrated within notions of citizenship. As Korea entered the dictatorship era in 1961, discourses on economic development and national security facing North Korea prevailed in *shimin* education. Kyung-Sup Chang (2012) refers to this notion as “developmental citizenship,” which he argues is tied to the overall withdrawal from social and personal life in *shimin* education when citizenship was narrowly defined from a developmental and nationalistic perspective. In both the first and second eras, *shimin* education signified political education spearheaded by the government to garner support for its policies. Democratization in 1987 marked a significant departure from state-centered notions of *shimin* education, marked by the wording of *minju-shimin* education (literally translated as “democratic citizenship” education) to emphasize the retreat of the state and rise of civil society organizations as major actors in *shimin* education (Shin, Hyung-Sik, 2012). Global citizenship education was also introduced by international organizations during this era as Korea became increasingly multicultural (Kang, Soon-Won 2010). Thus, contrary to the field of lifelong education – where intellectuals continuously sought to engage with the state and eventually construct a state-led system, the field of democratic citizenship education followed a path of departure from the state and an emphasis on the agency of social actors.

Efforts to build a public system for democratic citizenship education similar to the German Federal Agency for Civic Education took place in Korea, but were unsuccessful due to the lack of interest from government officials and political parties (Chang, Eun-Joo, 2019; Chun, Tuk Chu, 1995). However, both Seoul city and Gyeonggi province, which comprise the Seoul Metropolitan Area, passed Ordinances for Democratic Citizenship Education in 2014 and 2015, respectively. The ordinances define the contents of democratic citizenship education to include education about democratic institutions and political participation, with Gyeonggi province amending the ordinance to explicitly call for addressing labor rights, human rights, gender, and environmental issues. While *shimin* education is defined by its content area, albeit with variations, the state-led system of lifelong education claims to include *shimin* education as one of its many content areas, as legislated under the Lifelong Education Law. Further details are discussed in the following section.

State-led lifelong education and its relation to democratic citizenship education

Adult education in South Korea has developed from being categorized as “social education” into “lifelong education” through the process of state-led institutionalization (Jeon, Kwang Soo, 2012; Ko, Young-Sang, 2010). Adult education practices referred to as “social education” span from education led by the Japanese colonial government and the Korean government to social education with similarities to Freirean pedagogy that sought resistance against Japanese colonists and ultimately independence (Chang, Sang-Un & Kim, Mi-Hyang, 2017; Kwak, Min Ji, 2018; Namgung, Yong-Kwon, 1994). This field of education for adults continued to develop after Korea’s independence, with a legal framework, the “Social Education Act,” established in 1983 to support its activities. Based on a critical awareness of the limitations

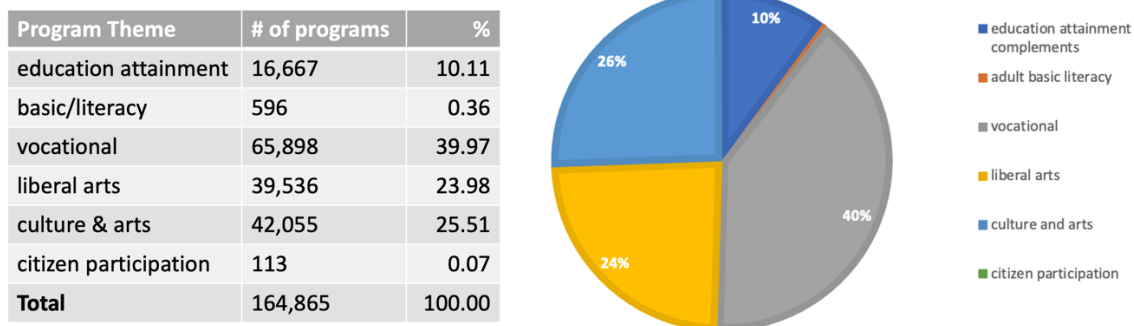
of the Social Education Act, educators sought to establish a state-led system for adult education activities in the 1990s. This system primarily referred to the allocation of public funding as well as the establishment of public institutions specifically for this purpose. With the Asian financial crisis of 1997, increased attention was paid to how adult education could help overcome the rampant unemployment and economic crises in Korea (Ko, Young-Sang, 2010). The Lifelong Education Act of 2000 emerged in this context, and the Social Education Act was amended into the Lifelong Education Act. The Lifelong Education Act includes comprehensive support from the state for adult education activities, including the allocation of public funding and legal mandates to create public institutions for lifelong education and to establish regular policy plans for the promotion of lifelong education in Korea. Although the intent to deal with labor flexibility through adult education was a partial motivation in the establishment of a state-led lifelong education system, the system also opened up opportunities for increased education activities in other areas – particularly in liberal arts, culture, and arts. Publicly funded lifelong learning centers (LLCs) at local levels began to be created, followed by municipal and national institutes of lifelong education. The legal categorization of fields within lifelong education into six themes of 1) education attainment complements, 2) adult basic literacy education, 3) vocational education, 4) liberal arts education, 5) culture and arts education, and 6) citizen participation education became the foundation for annual statistical surveys collected by state-led public institution for educational statistics. The survey reaches both public and private institutions that register as lifelong education institutions. With the broad category of themes encompassed under lifelong education, education activities with different philosophical backgrounds (e.g., human resource development and humanistic education) came to be encompassed together under lifelong education.

However, there have also been critiques of the institutionalization of lifelong education in Korea. For example, Sung-Jung Park (2002) points out how the lifelong education system in the globalized era has resulted in increased educational inequality and the distancing of lifelong education from social movements. Many social movement organizations that engage in education activities refuse to or do not feel the need to enroll as a state-registered lifelong education institution. This is the case for many citizens' movement organizations that engage in democratic citizenship education. There is ongoing controversy among activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education regarding how to cooperate with the field of lifelong education, with some activists arguing for the institutionalization of democratic citizenship education as a separate field and other activists accepting the possibility of increasing their engagement within the framework provided by lifelong education. In these debates, the issue centers on the extent to which the movement and activist orientations can be maintained even while potentially engaging with the state or state-led lifelong education.

According to data from 2021 illustrated in Figure 1, the current field of education programs encompassed under lifelong education is dominated by the themes of vocational education (39.97%), arts and culture (25.51%), liberal arts (23.98%), and educational attainment complements (10.11%; e.g., high school equivalencies in the US). These programs comprised 99.57% of lifelong education programs offered in 2021. The theme of "citizen participation education," which is criticized for its ambiguities (Han, SoongHee, et al., 2011; Kang, Dae Joong, 2009), comprised only 0.07% of programs offered in 2021. However, this figure does not correspond with the actual field of democratic citizenship education activities. Many organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education are not registered as lifelong education institutions. Moreover, according to data from research specifically focused on

democratic citizenship education conducted by the Korea Democracy Foundation (2021), 175 organizations reported offering at least one democratic citizenship education program in 2021 (compared to the 113 programs from the lifelong education statistics). Considering that this research required participating organizations to report their “representative program” for democratic citizenship education, the total pool of programs is expected to be much larger. In other words, not only does democratic citizenship education represent an extremely minimal proportion of programming within the state-led lifelong education system, but the lifelong education system in Korea is currently insufficient to encompass the whole range of democratic citizenship education activities that are taking place.

Figure 1. Number of programs in lifelong education by theme (2021)



Source: Lifelong Education Statistics (Korea Educational Statistics Service, 2021)

Even when considering that the data on citizen participation education from the 2021 lifelong education statistics do not represent the full range of democratic citizenship education, it is true that democratic citizenship education is not the mainstream of adult education in Korea. However, it is an important window into how citizens’ movement activists seek to achieve

interstitial changes within Korean society by engaging with “people in general.” For a movement without a particular target group to mobilize and a broadly defined goal of “deepening democracy,” how are stepping stones for interstitial change cultivated? What kinds of directions for “deepening democracy” underpin and emerge through their activities?

3. Theoretical approach

Through an investigation of theoretical approaches from different fields, I seek to shed light on the phenomenon of democratic citizenship education in Korea. I characterize this specific type of education provided by citizens' movement organizations as attempts for organization-based activists to create sustainable collective agency among the public (or "citizens"). I draw on theoretical discussions in three different areas to characterize this activity. First, I investigate the concept of collective agency in the social movement literature. Second, focusing on the fact that democratic citizenship education is located "in-between" citizens' movement organizations and the general public, I delve into the literature on liminality to identify the dimensions of liminality involved. Third, I draw on cultural-historical activity theory and the concept of expansive learning to discuss how activist-educators seek to build new alternatives through democratic citizenship education. The purpose of this chapter is to tailor the related theories to fit the phenomenon and I achieve this by developing my own theoretical approach that builds on and reinterprets the theories discussed. This approach provides a basis for articulating the research question and sub-questions of this study, which are introduced in the conclusion of this chapter.

Collective agency, organizations, and social change

Skepticism toward organizations for collective agency

Collective agency, which refers to people intentionally acting together toward a shared goal, is a concept that underlies many discussions of social movements. It is through concerted, collective action that social movements pressure other political actors to achieve their desired

goals. Social movement theorists' conceptualizations of social movements reveal their views toward collective agency. Reflecting a devaluation of collective agency, early approaches to connecting social movements with collective behavior identified movements with the "contagion" of emotions (Blumer, 1946) or as "anomalies" that occur as a response to structural restraints (Smelser, 1962). Many scholars have adopted views that go beyond this approach. For example, scholars working from a symbolic interactionism perspective emphasize how people collectively produce new meanings and solidarities through their activities in social movements (McPhail, 1991; Snow, 2001b). Resource mobilization theorists focus on factors that facilitate mobilization from the resources in social movement organizations rather than given structural conditions (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Meanwhile, political process theorists focus on the political dynamics between social movements and their related political actors to emphasize that certain political opportunity structures create better conditions for social movements to emerge (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1989; Tilly, 1978). Amidst these varying approaches to social movements, Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald (1996) state that a consensus has emerged among social movement scholars on the importance of 1) political opportunities, 2) mobilizing structures, and 3) framing processes for the development of social movements. These major trajectories of social movement theory have tended to be interested in explaining conditions and processes that "spark" social movements, with a heavy focus on the point of "departure" for protests and visible mobilizations. In other words, these perspectives embed conceptualizations of collective agency that manifests through protests and visible mobilizations. Such emphasis on visible protests and mobilizations is often considered to be in tension with efforts to build collective agency by investing in social movement organizations.

Skepticism toward organizations is closely connected to the so-called “iron law of oligarchy” (Michels, 1915). Michels (1915) focuses on political parties in democracies. He analyzes the emergence of leadership in political parties, the psychological and intellectual characteristics of leaders, and how leaders develop oligarchical tendencies within a political party as an organization. He calls this tendency the “iron law of oligarchy,” which expresses skepticism about the role of organizations in democracies. Even though his study focuses on political parties in particular, Michels’ “iron law of oligarchy” has been referenced in many studies on social movement organizations (Clemens & Minkoff, 2004; Osterman, 2006; Rucht, 1999). This popularity may be because of the continuous tension between “efficient” management of organizations through the decisions of the few versus democratic decision-making and its drawbacks in time and energy.

In fact, Piven and Cloward (1977) directly speak to the iron law of oligarchy within social movement organizations in their book on the poor people’s movement. They argue that building organizations may actually be antithetical to insurgency and mobilization among poor people. Organizers of poor people have tended to build mass-based organizations based on the conviction that formal organizations could become a vehicle of power. However, Piven and Cloward argue that this logic is flawed, as organizations need resources to sustain themselves, and organizations that survive largely do so because they are useful for people who control the resources. The authors point out that organizers may in fact be putting too much work into building and sustaining organizations when this energy could be directed instead towards building insurgency and oppositional movements among poor people. Whereas Michels focuses on the characteristics of leadership within organizations and describes the tendencies of the few to control the whole organization, Piven and Cloward focus on the resources necessary to build

and sustain organizations and the influence of those who have the resources. Both studies are representative of skepticism toward organizations when seeking to mobilize the masses and foster social change. These studies provide a background for understanding approaches to collective agency that emphasize effective protests and mobilization.

Collective agency: Broader than protests and mobilizations

I argue that a major advantage of the concept of collective agency is that it is possible to shed light on situations *prior to* the initiation of visible protests or mobilization. The concept of collective agency allows researchers to explore situations where social movements seem distant or are simmering beneath the surface. How such collective agency develops comprises an important part of the puzzle to explain how activism is sustained through ebbs and flows of society. Moreover, collective agency is closely related to the activities of democratic citizenship education, as education does not directly lead to active mobilization, but seeks to cultivate collective agency for long-term efforts toward deepening democracy. The concept of collective agency offers a lens into how seeds for mobilization can emerge in very unfavorable, disadvantageous situations. For example, Wheatley and Gomberg-Muñoz (2016) illustrate how collective agency emerges among migrants facing aggressive policing at the US-Mexico border. For survival, migrants share knowledge and cooperate as they cross the border, protecting each other. In other words, they engage with others to create collective agency beyond their individual agency though many of these migrants no longer engage in collective agency after they have crossed the border. Authors utilize collective agency to explain how hundreds of immigrant detainees engaged in a series of hunger strikes in 2015 against indefinite detention and poor treatment of detainees. This story is an illustrative case that demonstrates how the lens of

collective agency can shed light on the cultivation of a sense of power among collective units and thereby act as a seedbed for the development of social movements. Salvatore (2013) investigates the social contexts that led to the “Arab Spring,” which emerged out of unfavorable conditions. Amidst repressive states and a continuous gulf between secular and Islamist camps, the blogosphere and social media allowed people to realize collective agency by building discourses around common grievances across their differences.

Collective agency can also manifest beyond single social movements as solidarity across movements or as transnational movements. Jones et al. (2020) argue that it is not through collapsing or erasing differences that solidarity is generated across feminist movements. Rather, it is through differences, diversity, and inclusiveness that collective agency in the form of solidarity emerges. They delineate three forms through which solidarity can be constituted through embodied experiences. The authors refute the assumption that collective agency is based on shared identities or common goals. Francesconi et al. (2021) refer to FridaysForFuture as a transnational movement that was built through “enactive networks” that translated scientific knowledge into meaningful information shared by youth through social media. Discussions of collective agency center around values, ideas, and practices with which people identify and take action. Fostering a large scale of collective agency requires forging connections between diverse values, which is how collective agency connects with discussions of collective identity in the social movement literature. In other words, collective identity is a way to discuss the development of collective agency *without* becoming invested in discussions about organizational structures.

Many debates exist in the scholarship on collective identity centering around its definition as well as its role within the larger framework of social movements. The debate

regarding its definition concerns whether collective identity is defined using individuals as the unit of analysis (Polletta & Jasper, 2001) or collective units (Snow, 2001a; Taylor & Whittier, 1992). The debate that speaks most directly to the concerns of activists in the field is whether collective identity strengthens social movements. This is a key question for activist-educators in the field dedicated to democratic citizenship education, who often face questions from other activists on the effectiveness of such education for social movements and mobilization. In fact, some scholars conclude that collective identity formed at the level of groups or organizations does not necessarily contribute to broader social movements (Crowley, 2008; Saunders, 2008). They argue that a strong sense of identity at the group level may in fact deter collective identity at the movement level. Along this line, Gamson (1991) calls for a distinction between collective identity at the organizational, movement, and solidary levels. However, there are also scholars who point out that collective identity and social movements may not be connected only through commonalities in identities across different groups and organizations. From a strategy of the “strength of weak ties” in women’s movements (Mansbridge, 1986), or competing organizations choosing to work together for a common goal (Rupp & Taylor, 1999), scholars who argue that cultivating collective identity could benefit social movements call for new ways to conceptualize solidarity across organizations and how organizations work.

Thus, the literature on collective identity must be connected with discussions concerning social movement organizations to explain how collective identity influences the build-up to broad social movements. How are collective identity and collective agency created and sustained within, across, and beyond social movement organizations? Whereas Piven and Cloward (1977) adopt a skeptical attitude toward organizational structures in social movements, there are scholars who argue against their perspective (Morris, 1984; Valocchi, 1990). For

example, Morris (1984) provides a rebuttal to Piven and Cloward's (1977) argument that the poor people's movement was successful because of activists not investing in counterproductive organizational structures. He provides details of many types of organizations involved in the organizing of Black communities and argues that these organizational structures were crucial to successfully organizing the communities in the civil rights movements. In line with this perspective are scholars who consider social movement organizations as important sites for mobilizing and maintaining long-term support for movements (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Taylor, 1989). In considering the realization of real utopias through gradual changes in society, I also adopt the perspective that the organizational level is an important dimension to understand how aspirations for social change simmer and develop, even when they are not manifesting as ruptural strategies.

Cultivating collective agency via organizations

Cultivating collective agency via organizations has been approached in the literature from several angles: through collective power exerted through organizations, as in cases of trade unions and union revitalization; through "prefiguring" social change via efforts made in social movement organizations; and through alternative conceptualizations of collective agency as manifesting through networked forms of social movement organizational structures. Trade unions are a representative model for designing collective agency via organizations. Workers organize and accumulate their power through the organizational structure of trade unions. Amidst the crisis of trade unions due to the globalized economy and diversification of the working class (Bacon & Blyton, 2004; Bispinck & Schulten, 2011; Keune, 2013), discussions and practice regarding union revitalization indicate that the notion of collective agency exerted

through trade unions remains widely accepted. Behrens et al. (2004) identify four dimensions of union revitalization: 1) increasing membership, 2) enhancing bargaining power in the economic arena, 3) influencing policy-making processes in the political arena, and 4) demonstrating internal enthusiasm to embrace new strategies, ideas, and practices. Strategies for revitalizing unions either seek to 1) loosen the boundaries of the union by restructuring through mergers, extending cross-national union activity, or building coalitions with other types of social movement organizations, or 2) promote relations with members and related actors, such as employers or the government (J. Kelly & Frege, 2004; L. Turner, 2004). Many arenas for change are pursued in union revitalization strategies. Even with a common goal of accumulating collective agency through the union, revitalization strategies do not seek to make the union boundaries rigid. In contrast, they involve opening up the organizational format to enhance interactions with members, with other unions and social movement organizations, and with other political actors. This characteristic also holds true for unions seeking change in a different direction toward “social movement unionism,” where unions seek to align their interests with wider values asserted by broad social movements (Fairbrother, 2008).

Another angle for realizing collective agency via organizations is related to internal procedures and mechanisms. Social movement organizations engaging in prefigurative politics explicitly show this character. Attempts to “prefigure” social change through social movement organizations are closely connected to cautions against the “iron law of oligarchy” (Michels, 1915) in organizational structures. Analysis of these attempts demonstrates how activists draw on internal mechanisms and culture to prevent a minority from illegitimately holding power over the organization (Diefenbach, 2019; Leach, 2013; Osterman, 2006; Voss & Sherman, 2000). From logical refutations against the assumptions of the “iron law of oligarchy” (Diefenbach,

2019) to actual cases where hierarchy is diffused in favor of democratic decision-making and a culture of members pushing back against the ideas of organizers (Leach, 2013; Osterman 2006; Voss and Sherman, 2000), a notion of collective agency from this perspective emerges from each member of the organization feeling competent to exert power over decisions made at the organizational level. The “collective” dimension emanates from the fact that these processes of internal decision-making that democratically reflect members’ opinions derive from a collective agreement on the ideas and practices they will engage in as a group.

In addition to conceptualizing collective power through a revitalization of the relative power of the organization amidst other political actors or through the strengthening of members’ agency within the organization, a further approach is to consider the networked relations of organizations. The concept of “network,” which is increasingly used in relation to the development of digital technology and its implications for activism (Foust & Hoyt, 2018), is not necessarily a new concept in the social movement literature. Many types of social movement organizations have drawn on different networks for successful organizing. Morris (1984) details various types of organizations that were involved in the civil rights movement as well as their different characteristics and roles. For example, the black church served as the institutional center for a mass base and the leadership of clergymen, the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) emerged as a dominant black protest organization before the development of the modern civil rights movement, “local movement centers” worked closely in local communities and drew on disruptive tactics in comparison to the NAACP, the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) acted as a decentralized arm of the black church offering opportunities for leaders to convene, and “movement halfway houses,” such as the Highlander Folk School, were relatively isolated from society, but actively involved in

developing and providing resources for the whole movement. Morris's work illustrates how the intricate network of relations and the division of labor among these different types of organizations contributed to organizing black communities in the civil rights movement. Not only does this study provide significant counterarguments to Piven and Cloward (1977), but it also indicates that social movement organizations are not a unitary category. Even when working toward a common goal, organizations exhibit different emphases and divisions of labor. Approaches toward networks can manifest in ways such as local social movement organizations acting as affiliates of nationally federated organizations (McCarthy, 2005), and transnational social movement organizations increasingly adopting a "coalition" structure instead of a "federated" structure (J. Smith, 2005).

These attempts by social movement organizations to gain back power, democratize internal mechanisms, and build power through networked structures demonstrate that social movement organizations are in a constant processes of "becoming." Internal changes or inter-organizational relations with other organizations or actors prompt changes in the ways that social movement organizations embed collective agency. From this perspective, I interpret the trajectories of democratic citizenship education under citizens' movement organizations as processes of "becoming" through which activists have responded to their visions for collective agency and to changes in social contexts. However, democratic citizenship education does not neatly fit into the organizational approaches discussed above. The education is oriented toward fostering political participation and activism among the general public beyond the organization and is no longer subordinated to organizational goals of recruiting new members or training members for leadership within the organization. Democratic citizenship education is not oriented toward achieving internal democratic procedures, but rather aims to deepen democracy from

small scales to build up to large social changes. While inter-organizational networks may be cultivated through the process of democratic citizenship education, the key dynamic that democratic citizenship education sheds light on is the relations between citizens' movement organizations and seemingly fragmented populations of individuals beyond the organization. In this way, democratic citizenship education shares characteristics of digital activism, as its activities tend to run independently from the agendas of social movement organizations (Selander & Javenpaa, 2016). However, the fact that democratic citizenship education is intentionally designed by activists within social movement organizations seeking to embrace autonomous realms of political activity positions it as a unique process of "becoming" occurring within citizens' movement organizations. Driven by a process-oriented view of social movement organizations, I draw on the literature on liminality and organizational studies as a way to encompass the variance of social movement organizations and to characterize democratic citizenship education in light of these variances.

Liminality and democratic citizenship education

Origins and evolution of the concept of liminality

The origin of the concept "liminality" traces back to the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (van Gennep, 1908/1960) in his work *The Rites of Passage*, which was later translated from French into English in 1960 and revitalized by Victor Turner (1967, 1969). The term "liminality" stems from the Latin *limen* (threshold), refers to the stage of transition from a previous situation to a new one. In van Gennep's (1908/1960) detailed anthropological analysis of the rituals and ceremonies that take place throughout a person's life in African tribes, he utilizes the now-widespread term of "rites of passage" to refer to these stages of transition. He

finds patterns across different tribes and across different types of rituals and ceremonies, which generally involve three stages: preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition), and postliminal rites (rites of incorporation). Among the three stages, “liminal” refers to the central stage of transition after separation, before incorporation into the new state. Yet, van Gennep’s anthropological work on transitions did not receive much attention in anthropology and the social sciences until Victor Turner repositioned his work in the late 20th century. van Gennep’s book was translated into English in 1960, making it accessible to Turner. Victor Turner (1967; 1969) then revitalized the concept of “liminality” from van Gennep’s work, particularly focusing on its processual approach. Turner (1969) places more emphasis on the people going through the processes of transition, describing them as “neither here nor there; ... betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (p. 95). Focusing on these people going through liminal processes in tribes, he characterizes liminal entities as “passive or humble,” but creating a sense of “communitas,” or a sacred sense of social relationship, with people who went through the processes together. Turner (1969) also introduces concepts of timeliness and spaceness in liminality, which cause disorientation among people going through such processes, and anti-structure, through which the previous order is taken down. The origin of the concept of liminality is therefore derived from the transitional processes and experiences that people go through throughout their lives, and the connection to identity work and identity construction, topics that continue to be discussed in relation to liminality today (Atkinson & Robson, 2012; Beech, 2011; Hoyer & Steyaert, 2015).

Through a thorough analysis of the historical trajectory of liminality and the delayed recognition of the significance of van Gennep’s work, Thomassen (2014) applies the concept in an analysis of modernity and large-scale social transformations. Acknowledging that the concept

of liminality refers to situations or objects that are “betwixt and between” according to Turner’s expression, Thomassen (2014) contends that the concept has potential for wide application. Thus, he develops a typology of liminality with extended notions of subjecthood and temporal dimensions, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Types of Liminal Experiences
(Thomassen, 2014, p. 90)

Time	Subject		
	Individual	Group	Society
Moment	Sudden event affecting one’s life (death, divorce, illness) or individualized ritual passage (baptism, ritual passage to womanhood, as for example among the Ndembu)	Ritual passage to manhood (almost always in cohorts); graduation ceremonies, etc. Ritualized passage within a cosmological event-calendar, such as New Year, Harvest, Solstice.	A whole society facing a sudden event (sudden invasion, natural disaster, a plague) where social distinctions and normal hierarchy disappear Carnivals Revolutionary moments
Period	Critical life-stages Puberty or teenage	Ritual passage to manhood, which may extend into weeks or months in some societies Group travels	Wars Revolutionary periods
Epoch (or life-space duration)	Individuals standing outside society, by choice or designated Monkhood. In some tribal societies, individuals remain ‘dangerous’ because of a failed ritual passage Twins are permanently liminal in some societies	Religious Fraternities, Ethnic minorities, Social minorities, Transgender Immigrant groups betwixt and between old and new culture Groups that live at the edge of ‘normal structures’, often perceived as both dangerous and ‘holy’	Prolonged wars, enduring political instability, prolonged intellectual confusion (example: the Thirty Years’ War) Incorporation and reproduction of liminality into social and political structures Modernity as ‘permanent liminality’?

What I find notable in this typology is the different approach to conceptualizing liminality at the group level compared to the individual and society levels. At the individual level, liminality is found in the transitions that individuals experience – sudden events, ritual passages such as baptism, and life stages. At the society level, liminality refers to sudden changes in a society, such as natural disasters, wars, or revolutions, where the society as a whole transitions from the previous state. In both cases, it is the subject – individuals or societies – that goes through transitions. However, at the group level, the identification of liminality is mixed, including the transitions that individuals who are part of a community go through as well as the experience of certain groups in transitional statuses, such as travelling or marginalization in society (e.g., among immigrants or sexual minorities). In other words, the typology lacks clarity around *the transitions that groups go through*. Liminality at the group level is not confined to rituals or transitions that are shared among members of the group. The group or organization itself goes through change. Moreover, I argue that the group level is particularly important in that this level is another expression of liminality that connects individuals and society. The group level and the extended category of organizations are crucial units for analyzing how individuals convene, act together, and potentially exert influence on society. Thus, the group and organizational level itself is a liminal connection that can potentially explain the relations between individual and collective agency and social transformations.

Although Thomassen (2014) broadened the application of liminality to large-scale societies and political revolutions, his application of the concept is distorted by an excessive emphasis on individual “leaders” of revolutions and a narrow concept of political revolutions that does not reflect the development of social movement studies on social transformations. His conceptualization of political revolutions is based on the notion that “masses and crowds” are led

by “leaders” (p. 204), which resembles the collective behavior approach to social movements that positions protests and movements as irrational eruptions of demands. This tendency to disregard the decisions of people participating in revolutionary struggles is explicitly reflected in Thomassen’s reference to Mauss’s (1992) analysis of the Bolshevik revolution. Mauss characterizes the leaders of the Bolshevik revolution as liars “who had no connection to and no genuine interest in the people” (p. 178), and Thomassen (2014) applies the anthropological term “trickster” to characterize revolutionary leaders. Even when looking beyond prejudices that may be embedded in the analysis of political revolutions, I argue that the polarized depiction of relationships between rank-and-file participants and leaders in revolutionary struggles is partly influenced by a simplification of liminality at the group or organizational level. This depiction neglects to explain how individuals’ thoughts, aspirations, and actions build up to the collective level of groups and organizations (depicted in limited terms as “masses and crowds”) and ultimately to social transformations. This neglect leads to a disproportionate emphasis on the roles of revolutionary leaders as individuals as “manipulating” the transitional processes of revolutions.

What are alternative approaches to analyzing political and social transformations that draw on the concept of liminality? How do broad conceptualizations of social transformation and political resistance add nuance to the application of liminality? How can liminality at the collective or organizational level be further elaborated in these processes? To answer these questions, I first look into different directions for applying the concept of liminality in relation to political resistance. Here, I delve into how Homi K. Bhabha elaborates on the concept of liminality through the postmodern and postcolonial perspective. Second, I look into literature from the critical theory tradition and recent endeavors to envision social transformation that goes

beyond ruptural transformations, as exemplified by Erik Olin-Wright's work. I apply the concept of liminality to the newly articulated vision of social transformation through gradual metamorphosis and find that the organizational dimension of liminality is not sufficiently addressed through postmodern, postcolonial, or critical theory lenses. I lastly delve into how liminality has been discussed in the organization studies literature. Through this process, I seek to articulate a theoretical approach to analyze the phenomenon of democratic citizenship education as a form of organizational-level liminality that emerges in citizens' movement organizations as activists engage in efforts to build societal-level-liminality toward a deeper democracy.

Liminality in postmodern and postcolonial studies

Building the postcolonial perspective into postmodernism, Bhabha (1994) adds to Turners' (1969) revitalization of liminality and Jameson's (1991) concept of the third space. He explicitly works from the perspective of minorities, migrants, and disenfranchised groups in search of how these subjects and their agency can be formed in the (post)colonial condition. In this process, the "in-between" is regarded as the site through which differences can be articulated from the minority perspective, a notion which is in contrast to cultural pluralism that envisions different cultures co-existing in separate boundaries. Bhabha's approach to the "in-between" involves temporal and spatial dimensions. In terms of space, he emphasizes that time is not linear across the hegemonic group and the minority. The "in-between" space is where interventions occur in the here and now by renewing the past while simultaneously interrupting the present to look into the future. This non-linear understanding of time shapes how Bhabha contributes to Jameson's (1991) concept of the third space. Whereas Jameson characterizes the third space as

“where the newness of cultural practices and historical narratives are registered in ‘generic discordance,’ ‘unexpected juxtaposition’” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 311), Bhabha adds that the non-synchronous temporality should also be considered as creating a third space and states that the “thirdness” reflects Jameson’s assumption of a binary of the inside and outside. Thus, while drawing on the spatial notion of the “third space” conceptualized by Jameson, Bhabha rearticulates this notion as the “in-between space” by rejecting the binary and drawing instead on a non-linear sense of temporality. Regarding the tendency to essentialize culture, Bhabha (1996) argues that this tendency can be overcome “through a sense of causality shared with psychoanalysis, that negotiates the recurrence of the image of the past while keeping open the question of the future” (p. 59), which represents the postmodernist approach that connects liminality with psychoanalysis.

The manifestation of “liminality” as “in-between spaces” in the postmodern perspective offers insights for the analysis of democratic citizenship education in citizens’ movement organizations. First, varying viewpoints on current social problems creates educational space as a venue to envision a new direction to deal with such problems. It is the openness to future directions, which Bhabha articulates through his non-linear notion of temporality. He argues that different temporalities co-exist in in-between spaces, which makes differences visible and future directions impossible to determine beforehand. The convening of different temporalities in the here and now of in-between spaces is what provides the basis for innovative future directions to emerge. This approach poses important questions for analyzing democratic citizenship education, particularly regarding the processes through which new ideas and directions for deepening democracy emerge. Is it through the co-existence of non-linear temporality? If not, what other mechanisms engender the emergence of new directions?

Despite these insights, there are significant aspects in which the postmodern perspective does not sufficiently capture the phenomenon of democratic citizenship education. First, the notion of (collective) agency in the postmodern approach is largely focused on the articulation of identity, translation among identities, and challenging “legitimate” or “hegemonic” knowledge. While these are important arenas of struggle, they do not correspond to the agency that activists engaging in democratic citizenship education have in mind. Activists continuously consider what forms of “democratic participation” they can create through education activities, beyond the narrow concept of participation as voting. In other words, they seek to connect agency created through democratic citizenship education with action, even though they are open to exploring new types of action and new ways to achieve their goals. Second, a crucial discrepancy when drawing on Bhabha’s approach is the extent to which the postcolonial perspective is central to the activities of democratic citizenship education. A key defining characteristic of Bhabha’s approach is the emphasis on postcolonial conditions and the minority who have been disenfranchised in these conditions. However, democratic citizenship education under citizens’ movements starts from a contrasting point of seeking to move *away* from specific populations, such as the working class or peasants, into a broad, encompassing category of “citizens.” Even when specific contents of education focus on minorities through lenses of gender and sexuality, migration, or economic conditions, they tend to be encompassed under the umbrella notion of “democracy.” This is not to say that postcoloniality is not an issue in South Korea, but that the axis of the colonizer-colonized is not a key problematic that shapes the goals of democratic citizenship education.

Liminality in critical theory

Informed by the insights from Bhabha's concept of the "in-between space," yet aware of the limitations in directly applying this concept to democratic citizenship education, I examine another approach that analyzes transitional and liminal approaches to resistance and social change. Working from a distinctly different theoretical background from postmodernists, critical theorists and activists have increasingly leaned toward transitional strategies for eroding capitalism rather than relying on Marxist strategies of ruptures and taking over the state (Holloway, 2010; Olin-Wright, 2010, 2019). This approach seeks to work from within the *interstices* of a capitalist society to achieve "real utopias" (Olin-Wright, 2010) that can be envisioned and achieved based on the current context of society. This concept of "real utopias" departs from previous approaches to achieving an alternative to capitalist society in two characteristics. The first is reflected in the word "real:" the goal needs to be approachable from the current context. An alternative cannot be a mere "utopia" that people cannot reasonably reach. Second, "real utopias" are not pre-determined and fixed. Whereas past revolutions presumed communism as an alternative to the capitalist order, the focus in critical theory is on searching for alternatives to capitalism with potential for experimentation in multiple directions. It is in this attention to incremental, gradual approaches to social change that liminality – broadly defined as transitions from one stage to the next – emerges in critical theory.

Erik Olin-Wright's (2010) *Envisioning Real Utopias* has been crucial to the development of ideas and practices that resonate with liminality while seeking alternatives to capitalism. He lays out two different directions for systemic transformation of society with minor differences. One is a ruptural transformation, where a new social order radically departs from the previous order, forcing a rupture from the past. The other is a sustained metamorphosis, where change occurs through gradual yet sustained adaptations that take place within the fabric of

society. It is this latter version of social transformation that resonates with the transitional aspect of liminality. For this latter version, Olin-Wright (2010) suggests two strategies: “symbiotic” or “interstitial.” The major difference between the two is that symbiotic strategies involve the state, whereas interstitial strategies build alternative practices or institutions outside of the state. Olin-Wright (2019) later categorizes the strategies for social transformation into five types: 1) smashing capitalism, 2) dismantling capitalism, 3) taming capitalism, 4) resisting capitalism, and 5) escaping capitalism. Whereas smashing capitalism corresponds to the strategy used in ruptural transformation, symbiotic strategies are divided into dismantling capitalism (introduction of socialist-oriented state policies) or taming capitalism (state policies to decrease the harms of capitalism). Interstitial strategies are also divided into resisting capitalism (opposing capitalism from outside the state) or escaping capitalism (building alternative lifestyles). In other words, the second to fifth strategies outlined by Olin-Wright (2019) are strategies that speak to liminal approaches to social change. In search for alternatives to capitalism, Olin-Wright (2010; 2019) also emphasizes the power of deepening democracy through democratically empowered decentralization, new forms of citizen participation, or new institutions and rules that democratize the state. He argues that “the more robustly democratic the forms of decision-making and accountability, the less purely capitalist the class character of a state apparatus (Olin-Wright, 2019, p. 136). This idea is a very different starting point to liminality when compared with Bhabha’s postcolonial and postmodern approach that discusses the potential of liminality to build minority power. After exploring how the notion of liminality in critical studies inspired by Olin-Wright (2010; 2019) has influenced ideas and practices, I discuss how the two approaches differ and what remains unanswered from both approaches.

Scholars and activists have suggested many concrete directions that are derived from, or pertain to, the strategies suggested by Olin-Wright (2010; 2019). Holloway (2010), for example, focuses on abstract labor as perpetuating the capitalist order and calls for “concrete doing” that works from the logic of dignity rather than the logic of market values. As not all actions can be subsumed under abstract labor, there is always room for people to engage in concrete doings, such as through making community gardens or establishing reading groups for books not covered in school curricula. Holloway argues that these actions embed the value of self-determination, which is a building block to interstitial revolution. Reignsborough and Canning (2010/2017) suggest the use of story-based strategies to build movements and navigate transitional moments. In addition to these strategies, many scholars draw on the concept of the “interstitial” to refer to alternative practices that take place within the boundaries of capitalism – such as the commons (Ryan, 2013), cooperative movements (Kaswan, 2012), and ecovillages (Renau, 2018) – that create spaces for alternative ways of living. The focus on interstitial and symbiotic strategies within the boundaries of a capitalist society has led to increased attention to the transformative potential of everyday activities practiced by “ordinary people.” To the extreme, Holloway (2010) states that “social change is not produced by activists, however important activism may be in the process. Social change is rather the outcome of the barely visible transformation of the daily activities of millions of people” (p. 12). Echoing this call for attention to small-scale transformations of everyday life, Davies (2013) argues against a dualistic view between everyday and systemic struggles. However, there is also cautious skepticism regarding the transformative potential of small-scale actions. MacGregor (2021) analyzes a case of urban environmental activism in a neoliberal context and highlights relevant limitations, such as the reluctance to politicize a community issue, the lack of discussion about racial and social

equity, and the fact that the “ties” created through such activism may be narrower than presumed. Thus, whereas liminal approaches to social transformation prevent people from being “stuck” between the current society and a distant utopia, the extent to which liminal strategies can indeed lead to significant changes in society is difficult to fathom.

How do the discussions on liminality from critical theory relate to democratic citizenship education in Korea? First, the most visible connection is the focus on deepening democracy. In seeking alternatives to capitalism, deepening democracy and thereby eroding the capitalist characteristics of the state is regarded as a way to achieve egalitarian, participatory ideals. Democratic citizenship education explicitly refers to activities pursuing this goal. Second, democratic citizenship education often seeks to appeal to the everyday lives of ordinary people in order to lower the threshold for potential learners to join. The approach of interstitial or symbiotic strategies offers conceptual tools that highlight the transformative potential of such characteristics. Third, citizens’ movements, from which democratic citizenship education in civil society has developed, are characterized by strategies for change that work within the boundaries afforded through democratization in Korea. In other words, citizens’ movements are an example of a movement embracing the potential for a gradual metamorphosis of society, which is central to liminality in critical studies.

Meanwhile, the focus of democratic citizenship education primarily lies on deepening democracy in the political realm within civil society and the state. Many different forms of citizen participation are encouraged in these areas. The caveat is that the issue of economic democracy has not been prioritized in citizens’ movements (Kim, Eui Dong, 2010). Activists engaging in democratic citizenship education agree that neoliberal capitalism has created serious social problems and that alternatives are necessary. However, they tend to be cautious of

positioning “socialism” as a goal of democratic citizenship education. The focus is instead on (political) democracy. I argue that these characteristics have arisen from the geopolitical context of Korea, in which the Korean War that divided the peninsula has only reached a ceasefire agreement and North Korea and its ideology are considered a threat. This context creates an additional condition that activists in South Korea have to work through: they call for a deeper democracy and resisting social problems created from neoliberal capitalism, but they also need to seek alternatives that differ from the authoritarian “communism” that North Korea asserts. The authoritarian North Korean government provides another reason that activists focus on deepening democracy. Thus, even though questions may be raised regarding the extent to which democratic citizenship education resonates with critical theory seeking alternatives to capitalism, I argue that democratic citizenship education represents a strategy for the gradual metamorphosis of South Korean society away from current neoliberal capitalism within the boundaries afforded by the historical trajectories of the Cold War and democratization.

In fact, democratic citizenship education could provide hints to solve a key puzzle in Olin-Wright’s (2019) call for social transformation – “how to create collective actors with sufficient coherence and capacity for struggle to sustain the project of challenging capitalism” (p. 159). In Bhabha’s approach to liminality, individuals unwillingly face liminal situations in the postcolonial context. His articulation of the “in-between space” was an attempt to figure out how a disenfranchised minority could gain agency in such unfavorable situations. In this perspective, it is not sufficient to gain power through treating different identities as “plural” and “parallel” to each other; rather, it is through translations among identities and new articulations of identity that collective identity emerges. What education activities bring to such an approach is that the liminal situations in which “in-between spaces” emerge need not be left to “fate.” Education

activities provide an opportunity to create liminal experiences, even though the experiences may not be as harsh as those faced by minorities in (post)colonial contexts. Moreover, whereas Bhabha's approach is focused on liminality in terms of identity, education activities can cast a broader net that touches upon the components of collective agency outlined by Olin-Wright (2019): identities (how people categorize themselves), interests (how to solve the problems they face), and values (beliefs about what is good). In other words, I argue that democratic citizenship education provides a lens into how education activities produce collective actors, which are necessary when envisioning gradual and sustained changes that lead to real utopias.

However, there is a limitation that is shared by both Bhabha's approach to liminality in terms of identities and Olin-Wright's approach to liminality in terms of strategies available for social transformation. That limitation is the organizational dimension. Although the organizational dimension is crucial to building and sustaining the impetus for social change – as discussed in the previous section on collective agency and organizations – neither approach addresses how organizations fit into liminal approaches for resistance and change. Within democratic citizenship education in Korea, a major proportion of the activities are based in citizens' movement organizations. In order to shed light on this character of democratic citizenship education, I explore how liminality has been discussed in organization studies.

Liminality at organizations and in democratic citizenship education

Liminality has attracted increasing attention in organization studies, particularly with the increase of transient and temporary work in the contemporary era (Tagliaventi, 2020). Among scholars who connect the concept to organizational contexts, liminality is no longer considered to be “outside or peripheral to organi[z]ation and leadership, but in the cracks within

its very social structure and processes” (Küpers, 2011, p. 49). Scholars have recently reviewed and categorized different approaches through which the two concepts of liminality and organizations intersect (Söderlund & Borg, 2018; Tagliaventi, 2020). In a literature review on liminality in management and organization studies, Söderlund and Borg (2018) identify three themes in approaches toward liminality: liminality as process, liminality as position, and liminality as place. Each theme is sub-categorized into individual and collective dimensions. First, the literature that discusses liminality as a process focuses on the experiences of individuals or collectives of liminality within organizations. For example, studies at the individual level address how individuals cope with organizational changes and how they go through such processes as they voluntarily enter liminality through new attempts (Simpson et al., 2010; Tansley & Tietze, 2013; Thurlow & Helms Mills, 2009). At the collective level, the coping mechanisms can be found across certain groups, such as consultants (Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003), or among members of new organizations (Gioia et al., 2010). The second theme of liminality as position concerns particular positions that are considered to be liminal in an organization (individual dimension) or organizations that intentionally hire or host people of liminal statuses (collective dimension). Individual liminality can also be related with the development of professional identity (Reed & Thomas, 2021) or those who are intentionally positioned between different organizations (Borg & Soderlund, 2015; Mahadevan, 2015). Collective liminal positions can range from companies hiring workers of liminal status (e.g., temporary workers; Garsten, 1999; Tempest & Starkey, 2004) to organizations (e.g., solidarity economies) that intentionally position themselves at the periphery of mainstream society (Meira, 2014). The third theme identified by Söderlund and Borg (2018) is liminality as place or space, encompassing both physical and mental spaces. The individual and collective dimensions here

are identified in terms of how subjects engage with the liminal space. For example, liminal spaces are discussed in terms of transitory spaces, such as stairways (Shortt, 2015), or a sense of community created through liminal spaces such as cafés (Delanty, 2003/2010). Collective liminal spaces also include temporary workshops or project teams (G. Johnson et al., 2010; Sturdy et al., 2009). This overview of how liminality is discussed in connection to organization studies reveals the spectrum in which the concept of liminality is utilized and the underlying assumptions.

I identify a shared pattern in the literature on liminality and organizations. The overarching tendency underlying the studies is to initially focus on various manifestations of liminality in organizational contexts (as processes, positions, or places/spaces) and then analyze experiences that individuals and collectives go through amidst these instances of liminality. This tendency is also reflected in Tagliaventi's (2020) book titled *Liminality in Organization Studies*, where the final chapter coalesces into a focus on liminal experiences with the title "Towards a model of liminal experience." The focus on identity is unsurprising considering that the concept of liminality arose from an interest in people's experiences as they move through rituals throughout their lives (van Gennep, 1902/1960). However, I question whether the analytic lens even at the organizational level should "trickle down" into the individual and collective levels and identities. A key arena that an organizational lens into liminality could illuminate is discussing from a processual perspective *the conditions under which various dimensions of liminality emerge in organizational contexts*. In a majority of studies on organization and liminality, the "condition" that leads to liminality is taken for granted – such as the intentions of organizational leaders' decisions, changing political-economic contexts that foster temporary work, or the initiation of inter-organizational projects. Contrary to the emphasis on transitions

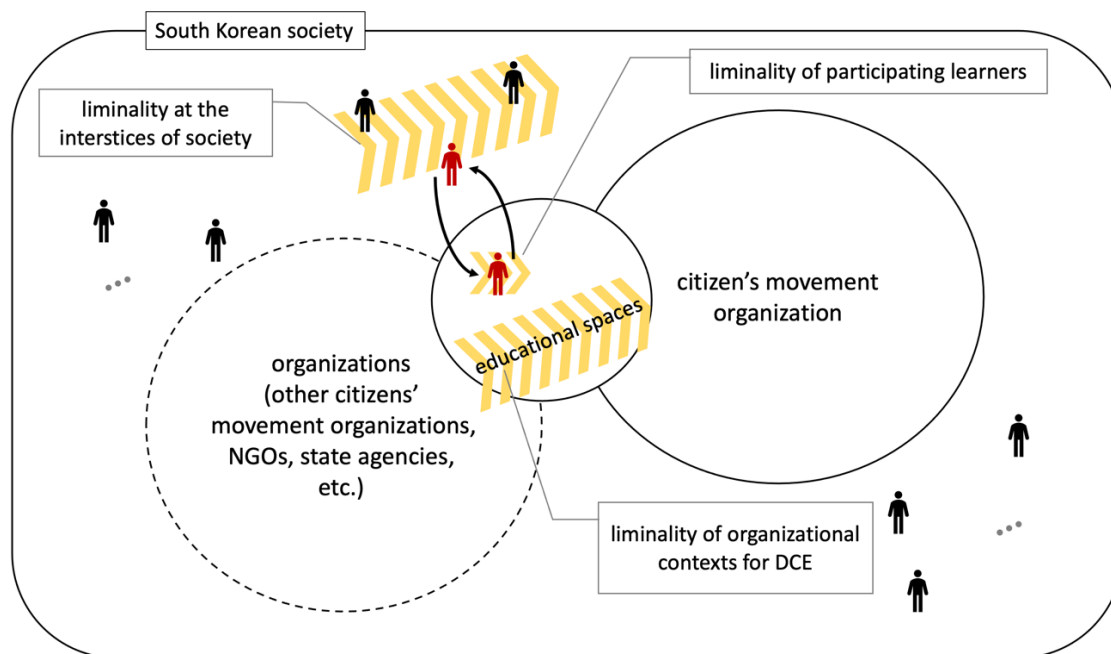
and processes in liminality, there is a disconnect with how the conditions that engender liminality emerge. This disconnect leads to an unnecessary divide between liminality as a given “structure” versus individuals and collectives working to adapt to these “structures.” The extent of agency that can be discussed in such approaches is limited to adaptative rather than transformative levels.

When considering democratic citizenship education in Korea through the literature on organizations and liminality, several aspects remain unaddressed. First, the intentional *designing of liminality* in citizens’ movement organizations remains an undiscussed topic. The literature on organization and liminality does discuss cases where individuals or collectives intentionally move into experiences of liminality by venturing into education programs (Simpson et al., 2010; Tansley & Tietze, 2013). However, the process of intentionally designing programs to elicit liminal experiences remains an unaddressed topic. Second, the organizational characteristics from which liminality emerges are not thoroughly discussed or compared, as indicated by Söderlund and Borg’s (2018) calls for a comparative approach to research on liminality. Not only is democratic citizenship education closely tied to citizens’ movement organizations, but there is diversity in these organizational contexts: some practices of democratic citizenship education may emerge within a large social movement organization, some organizations may focus on education activities from the beginning, and some may draw on networked forms of organizing. Thus, democratic citizenship education provides a useful example to engage in a comparative analysis of liminality. Third, whereas experiences of liminality at the organizational level are directed at changes *within* the organizational level among people who are part of the organization, democratic citizenship education is intentionally positioned in-between the citizens’ movement organization and the general population. In other words, it has an explicit

emphasis on creating liminal experiences for people *outside* of the organization as a way to deepen democracy in the long term.

What these discrepancies reveal is that liminality occurs at multiple levels in democratic citizenship education. First, the goal of democratic citizenship education is to foster liminal experiences of potential participants, through which they can become active citizens in political participation. In attempting to cultivate collective agency for deepening democracy, activist-educators design democratic citizenship education programs in which “ordinary citizens,” or “general people” can participate. Activist-educators seek to foster a kind of liminal experience through these education activities, through which participants can become activists or broaden their previous ideas and practices of activism. Second, the organizational contexts in which democratic citizenship education occur often exhibit liminal characteristics of being “in-between” two entities. Even in the case of democratic citizenship education led by citizens’ movement organizations, there is variance in the organizational context, including democratic citizenship education occurring within a single citizens’ movement organization, across several organizations, or with state agencies. Third, democratic citizenship education represents an attempt by organization-based activists to build sustainable collective agency *beyond* their respective organizations. It is based on the awareness that interstitial changes can be sustained only through widespread transformation among people in society, even if they do not join as members of an organization. Citizens’ movements, and particularly the emergence of democratic citizenship education, reflect the recognition that ruptural protests alone cannot sustain democratic political change that does not relegate popular power to economic and political elites. An illustration of the multiple levels of liminality involved in democratic citizenship education is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Liminality involved in democratic citizenship education



The figure illustrates the structure of democratic citizenship education activities, which occur in various “educational spaces” created in relation to citizens’ movement organizations. In the figure, the yellow “>>>>” icons signify liminality that occurs at multiple levels in approaches to achieve gradual social transformation through democratic citizenship education. Individuals who are part of society move freely in and out of the educational spaces of democratic citizenship education, as illustrated by the red human icon that indicates a movement in and out of the educational space. Activist-educators who design democratic citizenship education seek to foster liminal experiences for these individuals (“liminality of participating learners”) in order for them to become more active citizens who participate in various political actions. Whereas these activist-educators are part of citizens’ movement organizations, the educational spaces in which democratic citizenship education occurs exhibit liminal characteristics of being in-

between other organizations or within the citizens' movement organization ("liminality of organizational contexts for DCE"). Through these educational spaces and activities, an intended direction for social change through democratic citizenship education is for the individuals to become seeds for "liminality at the interstices of society," devising or engaging in concrete actions to deepen the participatory mechanisms of democracy.

Among the multiple levels of liminality, my approach begins from the standpoint of activist-educators who are involved in designing democratic citizenship education. The category of activist-educators in this research refers to activists working in citizens' movement organizations who are dedicated to democratic citizenship education activities. Their engagement at the organizational level opens up the opportunity for me to understand 1) how educational spaces emerge in different organizational contexts, 2) how these activist-educators design activities for democratic citizenship education to elicit individuals' liminal experiences, and 3) how these they envision the activation of collective agency to influence society beyond their organizations. In other words, adopting the standpoint of activist-educators allows me to understand all three levels of liminality involved in democratic citizenship education, albeit from one standpoint. Liminality from the perspective of individual learners or from a macro-level perspective of democratic citizenship education's effects on fostering social change should be further analyzed through future research projects.

While the concept of liminality is useful in characterizing the transitions involved in multiple dimensions of democratic citizenship education, it does not provide a lens for theoretically analyzing the processes of education and learning that occur in democratic citizenship education. Given the main goal of this research to shed light on *how activist-educators seek to deepen democracy from within and beyond their organizations*, a theoretical

approach that captures the dynamics of learning beyond individual or collective adaptations is necessary. In particular, a key characteristic of learning processes in democratic citizenship education is that they seek to engender new ideas, new practices, and new visions for change. Thus, I draw on a specific adult learning theory that focuses on this question of how something new is created through learning – cultural-historical activity theory – and its concept of expansive learning. I discuss its characteristics and how the theory could contribute to a better understanding of democratic citizenship education within and beyond organizations.

Cultural-historical activity theory and expansive learning

The central question in Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

The central question that grounds cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) is the learning paradox articulated by Bereiter (1985), which questions how something new and with greater complexity can arise from a previous activity. In order to examine this question, I identify three components that characterize CHAT: 1) its attention to activity as a unit of analysis to foreground processes, 2) the utilization of the concept of “zone of proximal development” to connect individuals to societal levels, and 3) the focus on the historical development of activity by drawing on dialectics and contradictions. Based on these components, learning activity in CHAT is defined as follows.

Learning activity (a) *analyzes* and *connects* these discrete elements [discrete tasks, problems, and actions] with their systemic activity contexts, (b) *transforms* them into contradictions demanding creative solution, and (c) *expands* and *generalizes* them into a qualitatively new activity structure within societal productive practice. (Engeström, 1987/2015, p. 99, emphasis in original)

In other words, learning in CHAT is defined as the process through which a qualitatively new type of activity comes into being. This focus on the expansion of activities is reflected in the concept of “expansive learning” (Engeström, 1987/2015). To explain the expansion from the level of individual actions to the level of new collective activities, Engeström (1987/2015) calls for a new understanding of “conceptual thinking” that goes beyond dichotomies of “primitive” versus “advanced” thought, experience versus analysis, or narrative versus paradigmatic thought. To go beyond the limits of cognitivism, he argues that theory and concepts should no longer be considered as entities within an individual’s mind, but as “*a social activity system in itself*” (p. 188, emphasis in original). He asserts that creating and utilizing conceptual models can become a foundation for individual thoughts and actions to transition into new collective activities. In the interactions and mediations at the collective level lies potential for novel types of activity to be formulated. This emphasis on transitioning from the individual to the collective level through expansive learning is particularly pertinent to democratic citizenship education, which is often characterized as individuals from different backgrounds coming together through educational spaces.

Three main components of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

CHAT is based on the insights of the Soviet cultural-historical school of psychology, such as the work of Lev Vygotsky and Aleksei Leont’ev, though various sub-streams of the theory differ in the extent to which they affiliate with the Marxist tradition (Niewolny & Wilson, 2009; Sawchuk et al., 2006). The concepts of activity and development under the cultural-historical school of psychology resonate with the first two components I identify as crucial to CHAT: 1) attention to activity as a unit of analysis to foreground processes that comprise an

activity, and 2) utilization of the concept of the “zone of proximal development (ZPD).” The Marxist tradition is imbued in the ZPD conceptualization as connecting individuals to societal processes and in 3) the focus on historical development of activity by drawing on dialectics and contradictions, which I identify as the third main component of CHAT. Theoretical interpretations of CHAT differ in the extent to which they emphasize these components.

The first component is key to the triangular model of activity that is often affiliated with CHAT. Engeström (1987/2015) traces the development of the concept of activity through three lineages. Activity in CHAT specifically refers to a culturally mediated form of human activity, which acts as the smallest unit of analysis behind complex activities. Through the three lineages identified by Engeström (1987/2015), the concept of activity develops from a focus on signs and meanings, through studies on intersubjectivity, and later into the cultural-historical school of psychology. Throughout these developments, the common character within human activity is *mediation* that creates the triangular model to depict activity as a unit of analysis.

The first lineage focuses on signs or meanings as mediating activity. Engeström (1987/2015) draws on the work of Peirce (1902, recited from Parmentier, 1985) to identify the triadic relationship among an object, an interpretant, and a sign that mediates between the two. However, in this conceptualization of activity, dilemmas arise, because 1) this conceptualization of activity is highly individualistic and 2) the relation between signs and objects and between the interpretant and the sign is predominant, blurring the necessity to consider the triad as an activity. In this line of thought, Popper (1972) insists on the separation of immaterial substance, where a person interprets an object through signs, and the material reality of objects. Despite the attempt to understand human activity as mediated by signs, this first lineage could not overcome

the individualistic approach to human activity. Yet, it did lay the basis to understand how knowledge and meaning is constructed from mediated activities.

The second lineage overcomes the individualistic dilemma in the first lineage through the concept of intersubjectivity. Mead (1934) is a key scholar in this second lineage and articulates reality as socially constructed through interactions mediated by symbols. It is in this lineage that the ontology shifts from a dichotomy between the abstract and concrete to social constructionism. In this perspective, signs and symbols as mediators are key for people to engage in activities that produce their social reality. Symbols are not individualized artifacts, but exist in social and public dimensions of interaction.

In the third lineage, action is differentiated from activity. Building on Leontyev's (1981) description of labor activity and hunting, Engeström (1987/2015) notes how an individual's tool-mediated action, such as beating the bushes, cannot be fully understood without understanding the overall collective activity of hunting. In other words, individual actions are coordinated into collective activities with a shared motive and object. Activity as a collective unit is oriented toward producing its object and is mediated by technical and psychological tools. Building on this tradition, Engeström (1987/2015) articulates the structure of human activity through the triangular model depicted in Figure 3, which adds the dimensions of rules, community, and division of labor to the basic structure of mediation comprised of a subject, an object, and an instrument.

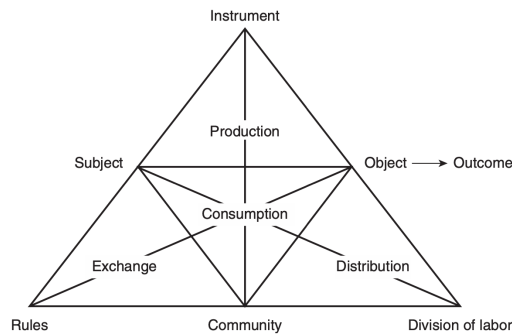


Figure 3. The structure of human activity
(Engeström, 1987/2015, p. 63)

While the first component of CHAT is riddled with complex discussions about mediation and activity, the major take-away is the potential to utilize activity as a unit to analyze social phenomena that neither reifies the social as a mere accumulation of individual actions nor disregards the dialectical relation between individual and collective dimensions of interaction.

The second component of CHAT is how the concept of the ZPD is utilized to conceptualize expansive learning. Engeström (1987/2015) examines the theory of learning by Bateson (1972) to conceptualize activity as a mediating factor to explain how new types of activity are generated. Bateson (1972) differentiates three levels of learning, with the first level referring to habituation of a given response, the second level referring to processes through which one solves a given problem, and the third level referring to processes that begin from defining the problem itself. Key to the shift from the second level to the third level is the concept of “double bind,” in which the relationships that comprise the problem at hand are subject to internal contradictions and critical analysis. Engeström (1987/2015) reconceptualizes Vygotsky’s ZPD to refer to “*the distance between the present everyday actions of the individuals and the historically new form of the societal activity that can be collectively generated as a solution to*

the double bind potentially embedded in the everyday actions” (p. 138, emphasis in original). In other words, the ZPD refers to the distance between the present actions and the new actions achieved through expansive learning.

The second component of CHAT resonates with the third component, the historical development of activity drawing on concepts of dialectics and contradictions. Engeström (1987/2015) identifies the basic internal contradiction of human activity as its “*dual existence* as the total societal production *and* one specific production among many” (p. 66, emphasis in original). An action may seem to comprise an independent activity, but also be subordinate to the larger society with many different activities occurring simultaneously. In a capitalist society, the contradiction in human activity manifests through the relation between exchange value and use value in commodities. Contradictions within activities in capitalist societies can range from this primary contradiction between exchange and use value, to the secondary contradiction *between* elements of an activity (e.g., between the division of labor and the instruments used), to the tertiary contradiction when a more culturally advanced form of activity is introduced into an existing activity, to the quaternary contradiction between the central activity and other activities. This analysis of contradiction is based on Marx’s dialectics, which regard the object and subject not as separate and independent entities in external relations, but as internal relations where one is defined through the other. This philosophy of internal relations is connected with the ontology outlined in Engeström’s (1987/2015) theorization of activity stated above. The concept of activity seeks to understand social phenomena as they are dialectically constructed through mediated interactions between the subject and object.

Different nuances and applications of CHAT arise from how the central activity is theorized, which builds the basis for understanding secondary, tertiary, and quaternary

contradictions. Engeström (1987/2015) identifies the central activity in capitalist society as the process of production, with the primary contradiction arising from the relation between use value and exchange values. However, it is unclear whether this will comprise the central activity in other kinds of activities analyzed through the CHAT approach. In cases of workplace-based activities, production is predominantly the central activity. However, what about activities in non-profit organizations (NPOs) or social movement organizations? Particularly when considering democratic citizenship education in citizens' movement organizations, it remains unclear how the central activity should be defined. Thus, in the next section, I discuss how CHAT and expansive learning have been applied in cases with central activities that do not correspond to material production in capitalism.

Applications of CHAT in contexts outside of material production

The concept of “contradiction,” while central to cultural-historical activity theory, is often misunderstood or used interchangeably with other similar concepts. This confusion is detrimental and hinders the explanatory power. To overcome this confusion, Engeström and Sannino (2011) distinguish between contradictions and other types of discursive manifestations of contradictions. They argue that the concept of contradiction is based on Marxist dialectics, referring to a dialectical “unity of opposites, opposite forces, or tendencies within such a moving system” (p. 370). A contradiction is historically developed, and resolving contradictions cannot be achieved by “rebalancing” competing priorities. Instead, contradictions can only be resolved by developing a qualitatively new kind of practice. The trick is contradictions cannot be directly observed, but only identified by researchers and actors through their various types of manifestations in discourse. Engeström and Sannino distinguish between four non-exhaustive

types of discursive manifestations of contradiction: dilemmas, conflicts, critical conflicts, and double binds. Dilemmas manifest as incompatible evaluations of the same object, and conflicts manifest in forms of disagreement. Critical conflicts refer to cases in which people face inner doubts that paralyze them from making a coherent decision. Lastly, double binds refer to cases in which actors face equally unacceptable alternatives to a problem. These discursive manifestations are signals for researchers to analyze the types of contradictions that exist.

Because the concept of contradiction is based on a historical-materialist perspective, it is often the case that capitalist relations are brought up as an inherent contradiction in an activity, even if the central activity is not directly related to material production. For example, Kelly (P. R. Kelly, 2018) analyzes the evaluation activities of a philanthropy toward an NGO in rural India that receives funds from the philanthropy. A CHAT analysis of the evaluation activities by the philanthropy reveals that these activities embed power relations and that the evaluation activity is designed to prioritize expert-normalized processes while marginalizing farmer contexts in rural India. The impact of the funds is only articulated from an outsider's perspective. This case demonstrates that even when the central activity does not pertain to material production, the influence of capitalist relations can manifest in the use of funds. In this case, the evaluation of so-called experts gained exchange value while marginalizing the exchange value of local farmers' evaluations. Other studies drawing on CHAT have analyzed contradictions ranging from capital-labor relations in the workplace, manifesting in grievance processes in unions (Carter, 2013); to young students in Brazil mobilizing against various attempts by the government to incorporate the neoliberal logic into education (da Cunha Junior & Lemos, 2016); to cases that seem distant from direct capitalist contradictions, such as South African student movements to decolonize universities (Francis & Hardman, 2018) and social work activities that

go into the street level in immigrant communities in Denmark (Mørck, 2011). However, what is important is to identify tensions that may arise in discursive interactions and to analyze potential contradictions behind these tensions in a historical perspective.

Another pitfall in applications of CHAT is that the generic model of human activity articulated by Engeström (1987/2015) can become reductionist or overly complex (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). The triangular model of CHAT may lead researchers to fit the generic model to their specific cases. I intend to use the generic triangular model only as a resource and to place more emphasis on the expansive and transformative potential that the lens of activity theory provides. Many studies have in fact focused on such expansive potential, particularly in relation to social movements and community development efforts. These studies draw on third-generation activity theory, which discusses contradictions between interconnected activity systems, and fourth-generation activity theory, which encompasses activities that occur in multiple levels and sectors of society (Engeström & Sannino, 2021). For example, Francis and Harman (2018) analyze how the use of social media prompted inter-organizational connections that expanded student movements to decolonize universities in South Africa. They draw on concepts of runaway objects (Engeström, 2008) and knotworking (Engeström, 2005) to analyze how the mobilization expanded. Mørck (2011) also conducted a study that focuses on the creation of new directions through expansion. He explores the approach of “wild” social work in Copenhagen that seeks to empower immigrant individuals and groups rather than othering them in the mainstream discourse. Similar cases of expansive activities were reported by Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2017) in four case studies of community-based education that led to sustainable agricultural practices in the southern Africa region. In addition, Sannino (2020) presents a case that draws on fourth-generation activity theory with changes simultaneously occurring at the

local, municipal, and national levels on housing policies for the homeless in Finland. What these studies share is an emphasis on how new approaches emerge in attempts to resolve contradictions and how the object of the activity changes through these processes.

Connecting back to my interest in democratic citizenship education and how large-scale change can be brought about by organization-based activities, CHAT is a fruitful resource to analyze activities without being restricted to the boundaries of organizations. The concept of activities need not correspond to organizations. Rather, it is more often the case that inter-organizational relations (3rd level of contradiction in activity theory) and multi-level organizations (4th level of contradiction in activity theory) are encompassed under a unit of activity. Thus, CHAT is a useful tool to analyze the kinds of activities that occur in civil society organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education, how the activity of organizing education interacts with other kinds of activities, and the kinds of actors involved in education activities that may go beyond the explicit boundaries of an organization. Although the notion that multiple activities can exist in an organization can sufficiently be articulated through CHAT, it has not been the interest of many empirical studies that draw on the theory. This lack of attention may be due to the fact that both the third and fourth generation activity theories discuss activities as occurring in “inter-organizational” or “multi-level organizations.” Despite the fact that concept of activity makes the connection between organizations and activity systems fluid, there has been a tendency to articulate such fluid notions in terms of inter-organizational dynamics. In other words, the liminal potential that exists in or across organizations has been overlooked. While acknowledging the strengths of CHAT in analyzing inter-organizational dynamics, I adopt the stance that CHAT is also a valuable resource for analyzing liminality at the organizational level: how various spaces for liminality emerge across different organizational contexts. In

addition, the CHAT approach can be applied to other levels of how activist-educators seek to create liminal experiences for participating individuals, as well as how they envision social change at the societal level. Before moving onto analysis of the processes involved in democratic citizenship education and its liminal characteristics, I discuss another connection between CHAT and the literature on liminality: the extended interpretation of the ZPD and a focus on “in-between space” in the liminality literature.

The Zone of Proximal Development and “in-between space”

Positioning CHAT in relation to the literature on liminality creates an interesting parallel between two different concepts used in each field: the ZPD and “in-between space.” Given Engeström’s extended use of the concept of ZPD to refer to collective dimensions of development, the concept of ZPD is readily applied to the phenomenon of democratic citizenship education. The concept addresses not only the potential transitions (or liminal experiences) that participating learners go through, but also the collective dimension of democratic citizenship education as an activity within and across citizens’ movement organization(s). Because the definition of the ZPD includes a spatial reference to the *distance* that exists *between* the present and future, a connection is readily made with the concept of “in-between space” in liminality. Each concept illuminates the phenomenon of democratic citizenship education while also addressing separate limitations from each approach. I argue that the concepts of ZPD and in-between space complement each other in ways that shed light on the processes involved in the development of new strategies and directions for social change.

In CHAT, the ZPD is related to agents’ realization of inner contradictions that may emerge in discursive forms of dilemmas, conflicts, critical conflicts, or double binds. These

discursive cues point to contradictions within the activity, which create potential for new forms of activity to arise in response. The conceptual advantage of ZPD is that it provides a starting point for new actions to emerge, and this starting point connects to subsequent learning activities under CHAT, which creates a smooth connection to learning and education phenomena.

However, contrary to Vygotsky's use of ZPD, which identifies the distance between the present and future based on inputs that the learner receives from other entities, the emphasis in CHAT on the development of *new* activity means that the "distance" in ZPD cannot be predetermined. In other words, the "distance" is conceptualized mainly in the temporal dimension. While this indeterminacy and openness to new activities aligns seamlessly with the conceptualization of liminality from critical theory, which focuses on envisioning alternatives at the interstices of society, there is a conceptual limitation that the ZPD can only be applied after a new form of activity has emerged. Therefore, the extent to which the concept of ZPD can be used to describe the *processes* that seek to achieve change is limited.

Meanwhile, the concept of "in-between space" articulated by Bhabha (2004) through a re-interpretation of Jameson's "third space" refers to the spatial and temporal position where interventions occur in the here and now in order to interrupt the present and look into the future. In particular, Bhabha's postcolonial and postmodern perspective emphasizes the cultural translations that occur in these in-between spaces where differences interact with each other, rather than existing in separate cubicles in a pluralistic perspective. Here, the mechanism of change arises from the intersection of different cultural bases with a non-linear notion of temporality that characterizes the marginalized in a postcolonial society and distinguishes them from the mainstream. A key caveat in applying this notion of in-between space to democratic citizenship education is that the differences between activist-educators in citizens' movement

organizations and general citizens does not derive directly from postcolonial influences. In other words, in-between space does not provide an explanation for how liminality can emerge or be created in situations other than conditions of postcoloniality and cultural discrepancies.

However, a major advantage of the concept of in-between space is that it incorporates the spatial dimension of liminality, which is missing from the ZPD in CHAT. This addition of the spatial dimension is beneficial in analyzing education programs and activities as it points to a concrete field to analyze. Another advantage is the idea of nonsynchronous, non-linear temporality, even among people who live the same era. Although Bhabha (2004) was concerned with the discrepancy in the temporality between the colonizer and the colonized, I argue that this non-linear temporality can also be applied to people who do not share knowledge of, or interpretations of, history. This ability connects to the emphasis in CHAT on analyzing the historical dimensions of an activity in order to understand the contradictions that emerge.

Although the concept of in-between space has its roots in postcolonial and postmodern discussions of liminality, I call for a re-interpretation of the concept to be utilized in analyzing phenomena where postcolonial dynamics are not as visible. For these phenomena, cultural discrepancies may not be the mechanism that causes liminality. I argue for the benefits of drawing on CHAT and activities as a unit of analysis to identify potential sources of liminality. I contend that the different types of activities and discrepancies emerging from these differences are potential sources or conditions of liminality in which activist-educators can engage. I highlight how CHAT as an adult education theory can benefit the literature on liminality, as well as how the concept of in-between space in liminality can complement CHAT by adding a spatial dimension to potential sources of change. With this analytic approach, I intend to analyze the multiple levels of liminality in democratic citizenship education from the standpoint of activist-

educators. I specifically analyze 1) the historical processes through which educational spaces for democratic citizenship education emerge across different organizational contexts, 2) how activist-educators design activities for democratic citizenship education, and 3) in which ways activist-educators embed their visions for collective agency and social change beyond their organizations through education activities.

Research questions

The theoretical approaches discussed in this chapter provide several directions to delve into the topic of creating sustainable collective agency among the public through organization-based education activities facilitated by citizens' movement organizations in Korea. Framing this topic requires analytic lenses from multiple theoretical backgrounds. First, I discuss theoretical approaches to collective agency and the implicit tension between an emphasis on visible protests versus investing in organizational processes. Through the analysis, I argue that envisioning social change at a large scale necessitates a focus on organizations as a source of sustaining and building power and that these organizations should not be considered as "fixed" but as engaging in processes of "becoming," particularly when seeking to achieve social transformation through long but sustained processes of change within the given conditions in a society. Focusing on this concept of "becoming" and the transitory character of activities and organizations that seek to change society, I explore the concept of "liminality" which highlights the transitory statuses between two different stages or entities. I focus on how this concept has been referenced and can be connected with discussions about political resistance. Although there is a lack of discussion on the organizational dimension in liminality studies from postcolonial and critical studies, I address this gap by investigating how liminality has been discussed in organization studies. It is

through these discussions that I find discrepancies in the literature on liminality and the phenomenon of democratic citizenship education. I find that multiple levels of liminality are at play in democratic citizenship education: individual, organizational, and societal. However, a pattern in the literature on liminality and organizations is that the learning described is limited to adaptative processes in response to experiences of liminality. This notion does not fit with democratic citizenship education, which seeks to find new ways to deepen democracy through education activities. Thus, in order to address how something new is generated from learning processes, I delve into the activity system, focusing on the third level of contradiction in CHAT. Through a discussion of CHAT's key question and major components, I identify ways in which CHAT and the literature on liminality connect and potentially complement each other. I articulate a re-interpretation of the concept of "in-between space" from liminality studies to address mechanisms that could lead to liminality beyond postcolonial contexts of cultural marginalization and dominance. The literature on liminality and CHAT share a common emphasis on historical dimensions, which is reflected in my approach to analyzing democratic citizenship education.

Grounding the phenomenon of democratic citizenship education through these theoretical approaches, I pose the following research question and sub-questions for this study:

How do activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education cultivate directions for social change from within and beyond citizens' movement organizations?

- Through which conditions and processes do in-between spaces for democratic citizenship education emerge and how do activist-educators engage in these spaces?
- How do activist-educators design and implement activities of democratic citizenship education activities?

- What kinds of visions and processes for “deepening democracy” emerge through activities of democratic citizenship education?

Crucial to investigating these questions is the explicit acknowledgement of the standpoint of activist-educators as adult educators. I draw on institutional ethnography as a methodology that can operationalize the analysis of organizations and institutions based on a specific standpoint. Considering the benefits of a comparative analysis across different types of organizational structures and how liminality develops, I also draw on a comparative method to select several anchor points for investigating different directions in which democratic citizenship education has developed in Korea. Details about my methodology are discussed in the next chapter.

4. Methodology

The purpose of this research is to investigate the processes through which adult educators seek to deepen democracy through education activities provided by their respective organizations. A key element of this purpose is to understand these processes from the standpoint of adult educators. In this chapter, I outline the methodology I employ to answer my research question: institutional ethnography infused with a comparative approach. I also discuss the research practicalities for this study.

Institutional ethnography

Institutional ethnography is a method of inquiry developed by the Canadian feminist scholar Dorothy Smith (D. E. Smith, 2005). This method developed through Smith's extended inquiries around the feminist sociology of knowledge, through which she draws on women's experiences as the basis for a radical critique of mainstream sociological knowledge (D. E. Smith, 1987, 1990a, 1990b). Smith critiques how sociologists have tended to explain phenomena from an external point of view, leaving out the standpoints of people who actually experience and work within the phenomena. Her emphasis on the feminist perspective is buttressed by Marxist approaches to the social, which view subject and objects as dialectically related to one another (D. E. Smith, 1999). Driven by these approaches to understand the social, Dorothy Smith calls for a "sociology for people" through institutional ethnography (D. E. Smith, 2005). The key is to render the processes within organizations and institutions visible through the standpoint of people who come into direct contact with them such that it becomes possible to concretely grasp ways to intervene in organizations and institutions. The strength of institutional ethnography in transforming objectified institutional "structures" into concrete processes in which a person can

intervene is what makes this method resonate with political activist ethnography, which seeks to produce knowledge explicitly to benefit social movements and organizing (Bisaillon, 2012; G. W. Smith, 1988).

The approach of institutional ethnography toward organizations contrasts with mainstream organization theories in sociology (D. E. Smith, 1999). The new institutionalism in sociology expands organizations into “complexes of cultural rules” (Scott, 1995, p. 30), where rules occupy an objectified status that exists independently from individual actions. Institutional ethnography engages in a direct critique of approaches that disregard the actor’s standpoint in enforcing, maintaining, and changing rules within an organization (Smith, 1999). In other words, institutional ethnography calls for a different ontology and epistemology in studying organizations and institutions that does not objectify them as “structures” that exist externally to individuals. Institutional ethnography instead draws on the Marxist perspective of internal relations, which considers organizations and institutions to be dialectically constituted by individuals and collectives.

Dorothy Smith (2005) draws methodological comparisons between institutional ethnography and other types of ethnography. Institutional ethnography shares commonalities with other types of ethnography in its interpretive tradition, emphasis on thick description, and fieldwork that allows the researcher to become part of and learn from the culture of the research participants (Glesne, 2016; Spradley, 1979). However, differences exist in how the research is designed and its overall goals. Smith (2005) offers distinctions from conventional uses of ethnography in sociology and also from Michael Burawoy’s extended case method. Drawing on Anyon’s (1997) ethnographic study on schooling in Newark, New Jersey as an example, Smith (2005) describes how the research design in institutional ethnography differs from conventional

ethnography in sociology. The main difference is that whereas conventional ethnography draws on theoretical categories and concepts to position the research topic of interest, the starting point of institutional ethnography is the actual experiences of people involved in institutional processes. In the former, theoretical categories such as “sociocultural differences” or “social class” are conceptualized and then populated through ethnographic data that illustrate how these categories manifest in the research phenomenon. In the latter, the starting point is the standpoint of specific individuals, from which the problematics and processes involved with the phenomenon come to light. Through this process, the researcher builds accounts of how the organizational and institutional contexts surrounding actors operate. This approach of starting from individual actors to look into the larger organizational and institutional contexts shares some similarities with the extended case method of Michael Burawoy and colleagues (Burawoy et al., 1991, 2000). The difference between institutional ethnography and the extended case method is in the treatment of the macro level. Smith (2005) points out that in the extended case method, the micro-level research is ethnographic, and as the analysis moves onto the macro level, theoretical discussions about the “system” and relations of dominance become prevalent. Institutional ethnography takes another route in addressing the macro level in research: examining how macro-level relations in fact manifest in people’s everyday lives. An example would be to analyze how neoliberal capitalism manifests in people’s lives through processes that evaluate a person’s ability to work according to notions of competence and how demands from the labor market influence priorities in education activities at schools.

Scholars have utilized institutional ethnography in various studies that highlight how macro-level social relations manifest in people’s actual experiences. For example, Timothy Diamond’s ethnography, *Making Gray Gold: Narratives of Nursing Home Care* (T. Diamond,

1992), illustrates the work of care in three different nursing homes. He follows documents that record the practices of nursing assistants in nursing homes, such as taking care of bedridden patients or leading exercises. Whereas most actions by nursing assistants are governed by the documents related to their actions, Diamond also finds caregiving that goes against the documented reality. Another example is Janet Rankin and Marie Campbell's *Managing to Nurse: Inside Canada's Health Care Reform* (2006). They note changes in the practice of hospital nurses regarding patient discharge plans and attempts to seek an administrative diagnosis of an "alternate level of care" for people who are expected to be discharged but still need medical assistance. The paradigmatic changes in nursing that prioritize "managing" the most efficient use of hospital beds has manifested in computerized systems that flag patients to be discharged soon. Nurses therefore face pressure to provide an "alternative level of care" for these patients, with some examples that demonstrate how they seek to collectively resist such pressure. Further examples include George Smith's (1988) study on how the gay community is policed with institutional language and discourses that alienate and "other" the community, leading to increased tensions with the police, and Roxana Ng's (1988) study on the work of an advocacy group for immigrants that is struggling to maintain state funding for its activities to find employment for immigrants on the one hand, while also accepting stereotyped notions of "immigrants' work" by sending their clients into low-wage work to conform to funding requirements. These studies illustrate how macro-level discourses that prioritize economic efficiency or marginalize particular groups of people manifest as concrete actions through institutional measures and the actions of people within organizations. These examples provide hands-on illustrations of the characteristics of institutional ethnography in finding the macro level within the micro levels.

Understanding the components of institutional ethnography starts from understanding its ontological and epistemological roots. Two components characterize the ontology and epistemology of institutional ethnography: 1) standpoint theory and attention to work and 2) analysis of ruling relations through texts.

Standpoint theory and attention to work

Dorothy Smith's (1987, 2005) feminist standpoint is crucial to how she came to realize that prevailing ideological practices not just in daily lives, but also in the academic field of sociology. In her book published in 2005, she recounts her realization of the split between her subjectivities as a single mother of two boys and a sociologist teaching at the University of British Columbia. She finds that the sociological knowledge that she had learned could not adequately capture such realities. She diagnoses that this split is specifically tied to how standard sociological concepts have tended to adopt a Cartesian knower, which splits "rational" knowledge from the embodied presence of subjects. Starting from the standpoint of women and calling for a "sociology of women" (Smith, 1987), Smith later broadened her use of standpoint theory to encompass various types of subject positions and argued for a "sociology of people" (Smith, 2005). Standpoint thus refers to "a subject position in institutional ethnography [that creates] a point of entry into discovering the social that does not subordinate the knowing subject to objectified forms of knowledge of society or political economy" (Smith, 2005, p. 10). The feminist standpoint theory by Harding (1986) is reconceptualized by Smith (2005) to establish a subject position in institutional ethnography as a method of inquiry.

Locating the subject in the articulation of knowledge resonates with Mead's (1934) symbolic interactionism, which addresses how the self is dialogically involved in the social

processes of knowledge production and action. Mead's theory views language and meaning as inherently social, with the meaning of a symbol constructed by the people who are involved in related social acts. In this view, language is constituted through interactions among people, where one person uses a word and another person responds to the word. Mead emphasizes how the self, symbol, and meaning interact in social actions to constitute meaning. While Smith's (1999) approach aligns with Mead's emphasis on interactions and social action, she diverges from Mead by acknowledging the inherently social character of knowledge and language. therefore, although language and symbols obtain context-specific meaning through social actions, this does not mean, in Smith's perspective, that language and symbols exist as "voids" before the social actions, as in other post-structural theories. Smith (1999) is also critical of structuralist theories, which she identifies as "provid[ing] for how words already mean before particular local settings of their uttering" (p. 112). Smith (1999; 2005) suggests to alternatively acknowledge language, and texts in particular, as coordinating social actions throughout organizations and institutions that go beyond the directly perceivable ranges of an individual. Language embeds historically constructed meanings and has the potential to coordinate activities within and across organizations. However, texts do not dominate the whole range of social actions in an organization. It is up to the actors taking concrete action within organizational structures to interpret the texts and coordinate their own range of social actions. For this reason, it is important to acknowledge the given standpoint in understanding social phenomena across organizations and institutions. Not acknowledging a particular standpoint increases the tendency to either neglect the agency of actors involved in constituting unique meanings through social actions or to fragment social phenomena into individualized occurrences isolated from one another. Thus, standpoint theory characterizes not only the ontological basis of institutional

ethnography that positions people as dialectically constituting the social fabric, but also the epistemological basis for how actors engage in the processes of building knowledge.

How does standpoint theory manifest in a study drawing on institutional ethnography? First, the researcher explicitly adopts a particular position or category of people to center the method of inquiry. Whereas ethnographers have acknowledged the importance of explicitly addressing the positionality of the researcher to refrain from a false sense of objectivity (Glesne, 2016), the focus of the researcher is to go into the culture that is the focus of the study and meet people who embody unique positions within the culture. However, the focus of institutional ethnography is not to narrate a generalized account of a particular culture. It is to make explicit the processes that occur in a particular institutional setting as they pertain to particular groups of people who live and experience the institutional mechanisms. Therefore, the researcher not only acknowledges her positionality, but makes explicit the standpoint that she will explore for analyzing organizational dynamics. Second, prioritizing the standpoint of a particular group means that the researcher focuses on how the everyday work and actions of people are coordinated – even if the subjects may be taken aback by the researcher’s interest in mundane, taken-for-granted actions. This approach reflects the feminist roots of institutional ethnography, which calls for a broad definition of “work” to encompass not only wage-earning work, but also domestic and reproductive work that often goes unacknowledged (Ferguson, 2020; Jarrett, 2014). This broad definition of work is also applied to the actions of individuals within institutional processes. While there is work that is considered to be “significant” or “professionalized,” there is also work that takes place on a daily basis that goes without acknowledgement. For the institutional ethnographer, it is important to gain a full understanding of the breadth of people’s work in an organization and pay attention to the everyday lives of people who inhabit the

organization as the basis for understanding ways that macro-level discourses are embedded in the coordinated actions in an organization.

Analyzing ruling relations through texts

A crucial component of institutional ethnography is the concept of ruling relations, which is based on the Marxist ontology that regards subjects and objects as dialectically constituting each other through historical processes. Based on this notion of social relations, the concept of ruling relations specifically refers to “forms of consciousness and organization that are objectified in the sense that they are constituted externally to particular people and places” (Smith, 2005, p. 13). The meaning of “objectified” in this definition refers to the use of texts in particular. As discussed in the conceptualization of standpoints and knowledge, language and texts contain historically accumulated meanings, yet leave space for people actually engaged in the use of texts to realize their context-embedded meanings. In other words, texts become an objectified signifier that can exist externally to particular people and embedded in organizational structures, ready to be “activated” through the work of actual people involved in organizational processes. The focus is not to regard texts as “fixed” entities that “govern” the organizational actions, but to understand that texts only gain power through how actors interpret them, act upon their interpretations, and coordinate their actions accordingly (D. E. Smith, 2001).

Smith (2005) proposes a way to render organizations and institutions accessible for ethnographic analysis through a strategy of text-reader conversations. The strategy pays attention to how a person “activates” a text by reading and interpreting it and then responding to it or talking about it in a particular way. Through this process, actions that take place are reconfigured based on institutional texts. It is also a process through which the objectified elements that

comprise an organization are translated into everyday practices of related social actors. The process of text-reader conversations is not often visible and may require the researcher to engage in focus group interviews or the use of tools to facilitate conversations about engagement with texts (McCoy, 1995). It is also important to follow how chains of action become coordinated through encounters with institutional texts. In this way, texts in their objectified form become the bases for the coordination of collective action in an organization.

The focus on text-mediated coordination of action also influences appropriate strategies for interviewing in institutional ethnography. DeVault (2012) discusses strategies for interviews in institutional ethnography. DeVault notes that the point is to follow and learn about the actual actions of research participants whose standpoint the researcher is taking. Doing so requires close participant observation by shadowing. Being interested in the daily actions of participants is also a useful strategy. The researcher needs to be aware of the threat of “institutional capture,” (J. Rankin, 2017) in which the actor is so accustomed to the institutional discourse that the actual actions that she engages in are blurred by the institutionally defined concepts. A key capacity of an institutional ethnographer is therefore to detect uses of institutional discourse and ask the participant to describe how she is using the concept and what kinds of actions are involved as she responds to her interpretation of the concept. As the institutional processes become visible to the researcher, the researcher may also map out the sequences and relations throughout the organization or institution to make them accessible (Campbell & Gregor, 2002; S. Turner, 2006). Through these processes, institutional ethnography as a methodology seeks to go beyond “giving voice” to marginalized people. The focus is to disclose the relations and mechanisms that underlie institutional processes, which are often outside of people’s general interpretations or intentions. People engage in the activation of institutional mechanisms, but the whole picture of

how the institution shapes everyday lives is difficult to fathom. Institutional ethnography thus seeks to uncover these mechanisms by looking into the everyday experiences of people and how they coordinate their actions at organizational levels.

In sum, institutional ethnography adds nuance to my ethnographic study through 1) standpoint theory and the attention to work and 2) analysis of ruling relations through texts. In the next section, I discuss how I design a comparative study across three sites while drawing on institutional ethnography.

Infusing comparison in institutional ethnography

Comparative analysis

Along with the development of fields such as comparative politics (Lichbach & Zuckerman, 2009) and comparative education (Altbach & Kelly, 1986; Arnove et al., 2013), many scholars have focused specifically on methodological approaches to comparative analysis. Even under the banner of “comparison,” methodological approaches to comparison differ in terms of the purposes, methods, and philosophical underpinnings. In this section, I discuss how the comparative approach has developed in the social sciences and how two different methodological paradigms emerged. These paradigms resonate with different assumptions in quantitative and qualitative studies. I particularly focus on how comparative analysis has been incorporated into the qualitative research tradition.

In early approaches to comparative analysis, there was a strong tendency to regard social sciences as following one common logic – identifying generalizable theories (della Porta, 2008). In such approaches, social science research aimed to approximate the experimental method in the natural sciences through statistical methods. However, there was pushback against

this overarching logic, later identified as two different logics that underlie social sciences in general: Durkeimian and Weberian approaches (della Porta, 2008; C. Ragin & Zaret, 1983). On the one hand, the first logic draws on the work of Durkeim and is characterized as “variable-oriented.” Corresponding to the “universalizing” logic in early approaches, the aim of the researcher in the Durkeimian approach is to seek generalization and permanent causes that extend beyond historical contingencies. The search for permanence and generalization is based on probabilistic and statistical logic. Explanations for social phenomena focus on a configuration of causal influence on the agents rather than looking into individual motivations of agents. Statistical correlation or regression are utilized for comparative analysis in this paradigm, and the focus is on identifying correlations among variables. Cases tend to be selected randomly or based on the independent variable. On the other hand, the second logic draws on the work of Weber and is characterized as “case-oriented.” Researchers in this paradigm aim for an in-depth understanding of a particular context. The context is regarded as a complex unity – or a “case” – rather than an accumulation of variables. Comparison in this paradigm focuses on similarities and differences across a small number of cases, based on dense narratives. Explanations for social phenomena are sought internally to identify the reasons that particular actors choose to act in a specific way. Cases tend to be selected because they are unique or paradigmatic.

The logic for comparative analysis differs greatly according to which paradigm the researcher draws on. This distinction is helpful in identifying differences across qualitative studies that draw on comparisons. For example, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA; C. C. Ragin, 1987/2014) is a widely utilized method for comparison in comparative politics. Ragin, trained as a quantitative sociologist and accustomed to a variable-oriented approach, was shocked when he read Moore’s (1966) *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*,

which provides in-depth, comparative analysis of a limited number of cases (Marx et al., 2014). This experience prompted Ragin to seek ways to integrate within-case and cross-case analysis by drawing on qualitative approaches, which led him to focus on the combination of factors rather than a binary presence or absence of factors. In this way, Ragin (1987/2014) sought to “integrate the best features of the case-oriented approach with the best features of the variable-oriented approach” (p. 84). Emphasis was placed on the case-based nature of comparison to view each case as a complex whole. However, the focus on causal relations and the logic of external explanations for a social phenomenon still persisted, albeit with greater consideration of causal diversity. In other words, QCA draws on the case-oriented paradigm for its strengths in explaining diversity, but maintains the logic of the variable-oriented paradigm to seek causal explanations through configurations of variables.

Another approach that draws on comparison in qualitative research is the constant comparison method in grounded theory (Glaser, 1965). Contrary to variable-based approaches that seek to test a hypothesis and make generalizations, the focus of grounded theory is to *generate* new theories through qualitative research. This goal is achieved through the constant comparative method, which proceeds in four stages (Glaser, 1965). First, the researcher codes each incident in the data into as many categories as possible by comparing incidents with each other. Second, categories are integrated into their properties, laying the basis for the third and fourth steps of identifying the boundaries of the theory and writing the theory. The grounded theory approach embraces the possibility of generalization by creating new theories. For identifying various facets of an emerging theory, researchers draw on the constant comparison method to expand the breadth of their explanations as wide as possible.

QCA seeks to infuse the strengths of a case-oriented approach within the variable-oriented approach, while the constant comparison method in grounded theory draws on comparison to make generalizations in terms of theories based on qualitative data. However, comparison stills remains an ambiguous – even a controversial – topic in qualitative research. Regarding comparative case studies, many orientations co-exist, from comparative case studies that seek to approximate the conditions of experiments (George & Bennett, 2005) to those that seek a processual approach to comparison that focuses on how social phenomena in distinct locations are connected in complex ways (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). Yin (2018) occupies an ambiguous position in his discussion of multiple-case studies, as he emphasizes the need to follow a “replication design” that follows the logics of experiments, but argues against the “sampling logic” that presumes that a whole population can be approximated through a pool of cases. In the cases discussed thus far, incorporating comparison in qualitative research has often resulted in a shift towards the variable-oriented paradigm or towards increased generalizability. Such tendencies are the reason that ethnographers have distanced themselves from comparative approaches, with fierce debates on the issue of comparison in ethnography. In the next section, I discuss how these discussions about comparisons have coalesced in the field of ethnography as a stepping stone for articulating how I intend to infuse comparison in institutional ethnography for my research.

Comparisons in ethnography

The comparative approach has long been a subject of debate in the field of ethnography. The comparative approach has tended to be associated with experimental research designs and approaches that seek to approximate those designs. Geertz’s (1973) dictum that ethnography as a

methodology for studying culture is “not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (p. 311) demonstrates how ethnographers can distance themselves from comparative approaches. Such distancing is epitomized by a frequently quoted saying by Evans-Pritchard:⁷ “There is only one method in social anthropology, the comparative method – and that is impossible.”

These early stances in ethnography toward comparison developed into debates about comparison in ethnographic research, such as the debate between Matt Desmond and Michael Burawoy. Desmond (2014), calling for a “relational ethnography,” argues that selecting research objects to compare with one another based on theoretical assumptions results in the researcher reifying the object of the study. He concludes that rather than comparative research designs, the logic of multi-sited studies that examine a social phenomenon across several different sites better suit ethnographic inquiries. Burawoy (2017), in response to Desmond, contends that framing a study through theoretical endeavors is necessary to move beyond a mere description of everyday categories. He emphasizes that ethnographic studies should also engage with theoretical arguments and that making comparisons is a part of modifying and updating theories to fit what is actually happening in the field. Such debates are important foundations for scholars to delve into the question of incorporating comparison in ethnography. In fact, a wide range of differences exist within ethnography related to ontology, epistemology, axiology, and the goals of ethnography (Abramson & Gong, 2020). Differences in these areas also shape ethnographers’ approaches to comparison. For example, behaviorists drawing on participant observation in ethnography utilize comparisons to understand variations in behaviors and chart potential causal

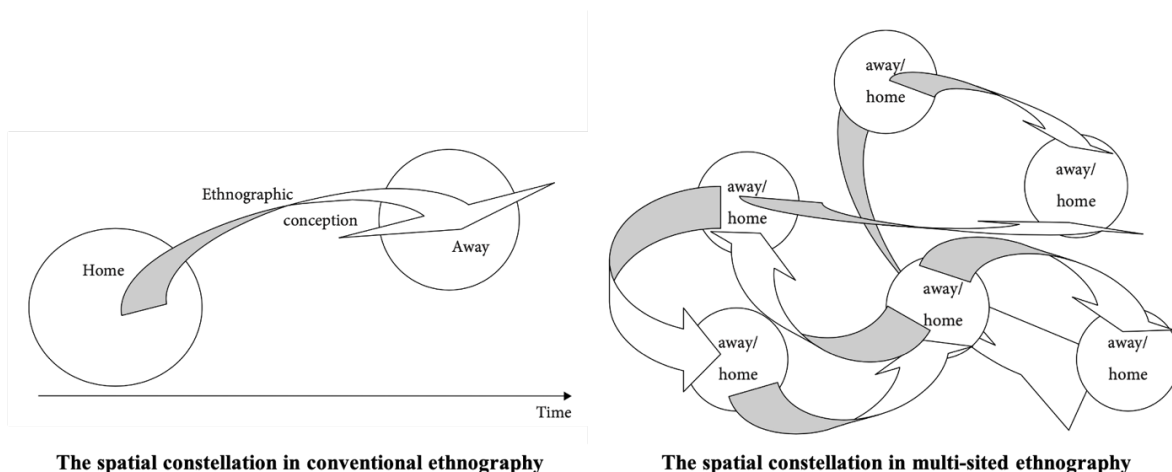
⁷ This quote is known to have occurred in conversation and is not from Evans-Pritchard’s publications. It has been relayed continuously by his colleagues (see Needham, 1975) and is often cited as support against using the comparative method in ethnography.

mechanisms (Sánchez-Jankowski & Abramson, 2020). Ethnographers drawing on the extended case method by Burawoy (1998) utilize comparisons to leverage variance among cases in order to elaborate on existing theories. Researchers using grounded theory add additional cases in order to compare the cases and sufficiently code the differences in data as the basis for generating new theories (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In short, comparison is not inherently at odds with ethnography. Rather, the important point is that the researcher should understand his or her own philosophical positions, justify the reason for incorporating comparison, and clarify the purpose of comparison.

The approach to comparison in my study is particularly influenced by Niewöhner and Scheffer's (2010) notion of "thick comparison" in ethnography. My approach departs from quantitative and experimental approaches to comparison by arguing that comparability is not something that is given from the starting point of research. Instead, comparability is created through the process of ethnographic inquiry, through thickening of contextualizations. Many examples of how comparability is constructed in ethnographic study are discussed in Niewöhner and Scheffer's edited book, and I further shape the use of comparison in my research based on Sørensen's (2010) approach. She illustrates how the philosophical underpinnings in traditional ethnographic approaches contradict the task of comparison and articulates her own way of incorporating comparison in ethnography while respecting the ethnographic approach. She states that an important characteristic of ethnography is "inside description," which is not about the researcher promoting the views of people native to the culture as the topic of research, but rather about demonstrating how social phenomena are entangled in the world with its actors and other entities. This is the reasoning for ethnographers to "go into the field" as outsiders, but familiarize themselves with the culture as insiders. However, comparing different cases often presumes that

the topic of comparison is conceptualized externally to the field in a so-called “God’s eye view” (Haraway, 1988), prior to the fieldwork. Sørensen (2010) solves the tension regarding comparison in ethnography in two steps: 1) acknowledging the fluidity of insiders and outsiders in multi-sited ethnographies and 2) reconceptualizing the topic of comparison as emerging through fieldwork rather than prior to fieldwork. Contrary to traditional ethnographies, where insider and outsider was defined in a dichotomous way, research that includes fieldwork across multiple sites generates a “process-oriented comparability” where the notion of insider and outsider continuously shifts throughout the fieldwork. Figure 4 illustrates how the spatial constellation differs in conventional ethnography and multi-sited ethnography. As the researcher shifts through multiple sites, comparability is constructed when the researcher identifies similar organizing patterns *across* the different sites. In other words, the topic for comparison emerges through the process of the researcher engaging in thick descriptions of each site. This approach to comparative research allows the researcher to describe mechanisms that exist across different sites without succumbing to the pitfalls of generalizing in a universalist sense.

Figure 4. Comparison between conventional and multi-sited ethnography
(adapted from Sørensen (2010, p. 48 & p. 54))



As I further elaborate in the section on research practicalities, democratic citizenship education in Korea developed in various areas of civil society in the 1990s. Because of the nonformal and bottom-up character of democratic citizenship education, there are internal divergences within the field. For example, even as activists across different sites engage in democratic citizenship education with common goals of “deepening democracy,” there are internal “boundaries” across which activists do not interact and instead follow their own paths of developing democratic citizenship education. For this reason, I embrace the approach of comparative ethnography articulated by Sørensen (2010). However, I also distinguish my approach to comparative ethnography from the well-established genre of multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995). Researchers using multi-sited ethnography follow the social phenomenon of interest across different sites to observe the processes through which the phenomenon unfolds. My study is different in that I investigate how the social phenomenon of democratic citizenship education has developed across different sites that are not necessarily interacting with each other. Thus, rather than following a single process of democratic citizenship education as it unfolds across different sites, I design my research to follow several processes of democratic citizenship education across different cases. A single case may well involve multiple sites, but the main focus of the comparison in my study is to investigate similar mechanisms that exist across different cases as activists seek to deepen democracy through education activities. In the following section, I discuss how this approach harmonizes with the methodology of institutional ethnography.

Infusing comparison into institutional ethnography

Comparison has not often been practiced in institutional ethnography. A majority of institutional ethnographies focus on a specific case, although some studies do embed characteristics of multi-sited ethnographies as researchers map out the processes involved in a specific social phenomenon (e.g., S. Turner, 2006). The reason for such tendencies is because the goal of institutional ethnography is to uncover social mechanisms that may not be visible to an individual from the standpoint of a particular group of actors. This emphasis on the standpoint is a defining characteristic of institutional ethnography and is a reason that Smith (2005) distinguishes institutional ethnography from Burawoy's (1998) extended case method. She criticizes that the extended case method "lifts" the micro-level ethnographic analysis to an abstract level when engaging with theories at the macro level. This same critique may be a reason that comparisons have not often been utilized in institutional ethnographies. As seen in discussions regarding comparisons in ethnography, there are scholars that caution against comparative approaches for their generalizing tendencies oriented towards experimental research designs.

However, comparative approaches to ethnography also illustrate that comparisons are not unitary and that they can be adjusted to be more compatible with the philosophy of ethnography. In particular, I argue that the process-oriented comparative approach articulated by Sørensen (2010) is compatible with the logic of institutional ethnography. The process-oriented approach is characterized by a relatively fluid definition of insider and outsider, where the researcher joins a research site to become an insider and then moves onto another site, thereby becoming an outsider in the first site while assuming the identity of an insider in the second site. I believe that this process-oriented approach to producing comparability aligns well with the emphasis on standpoints in institutional ethnography. In Sørensen's approach, it is unclear from

which standpoint the “insider” is articulated, which can result in confusion when seeking to create comparability across different sites, as the standpoint and roles of the “insider” could differ. However, incorporating standpoint theory in institutional ethnography clarifies such confusion, as the researcher chooses a particular standpoint to move into each site as an insider. Moreover, the goal of Sørensen’s comparative approach to uncover similar mechanisms across different sites, which can be interpreted as an extension of the purpose of institutional ethnography to uncover the mechanisms of a social phenomenon from the standpoints of actors involved.

Therefore, what becomes critical when infusing comparison with institutional ethnography is the overall purpose and goals of the comparison. Extra attention must be paid so that the research does not become “abstracted” from the concrete contexts due to the comparative process. I dedicate this attention in how I engage with macro-level theories in the research process as well as in how I envision the theoretical contributions to this research. Furthermore, while this dissertation is organized according to a traditional format of doctoral research, this format does not mean that the research process proceeded in the order that the chapters flow. Although I conducted pilot interviews to initially frame my research question, I finalized the research question through the process of fieldwork and through interactions with research participants – using the terminology of institutional ethnography, by focusing on the problematics in the field. Therefore, my theoretical approach changed immensely through the course of the fieldwork. I centered the problematics of the field from the standpoint of adult educators. This focus prompted me to explore the literature on organizations and social change rather than my previous theoretical framework that focused on the dynamics between the state and society. Thus, it is not the theory that shapes the problematics and research questions of the

study, but the problematics of the field becoming the research question and then shaping my theoretical engagement. The main goal of the study is to make visible the mechanisms inherent in the practices of adult educators in seeking to deepen democracy through adult education: to make visible the mechanisms that exist across different sites, which are not easily perceivable from the perspective of an individual adult educator. I delve into shared patterns in the working knowledge of activist-educators in the field and seek to articulate them into a coherent theory. The purpose of such theorization is to construct “really useful knowledge” (R. Johnson, 1993) that activists engaging in democratic citizenship education can draw on for their own practices of activism, rather than prioritizing how such knowledge could modify macro-level theories.

Comparison in this study

Comparison in this study started out with attempts to set up comparative leverages prior to engaging in fieldwork. I primarily focused on organizations that not only engage in adult education for democratic participation, but organizations whose educators identify themselves as citizens’ movement activists⁸. Initial “variables” for comparison were set up based on the level of state engagement that seemed to differ across the sites based on a one-month of pilot study I conducted in 2019. In other words, I reflect that a variable-based comparative design was initially devised for this study. However, upon actually entering the field in 2020, activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education continued to question my design of comparison. Their point was that the level of state engagement is not a significant “variable” that

⁸ There are also other organizations that engage in adult education for democratic participation whose educators do not identify themselves as citizens’ movement activists. Representative organizations in this category includes Korea Saemaul Undong Center and Barugae Salgi Association, which have been known to be organizations intentionally built and funded by the government in the 1980s.

would influence the directions of their educational practices. The assumption behind variable-based comparisons were challenged during this process.

Accordingly, I began to understand the ways in which activist-educators themselves would distinguish among practices and sites of DCE. Citizens' movement activists would distinguish between two branches of activism within the citizens' movement: one focusing on "advocacy"⁹ work against the state or the market and the other focusing on grassroots community organizing. The former became more involved in national-level issues, mainly working on institutional politics among state-level politicians and political parties or major issues that would be of interest to people across the country. The latter became more involved in the local issues in different areas within Korea. Whereas the former's activity tends to be focused in the capital of Korea, Seoul, and its nearby metropolitan areas, the latter's focus on the local means that its activists would seep into the fabrics of everyday life across different regions in South Korea. These origins of their activism have shaped democratic citizenship education that occurs in the organizations.

Based on a distinction among activist-educators as well as an interest in differences across organizational structures, I navigated through sites of democratic citizenship education, conducting interviews with activists and researchers who had a better grasp of the field than I. People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) was well-known for its "advocacy" work, whereas Gwangmyeong YMCA and Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE was considered to stem from grassroots community organizing roots. Along with this process was a

⁹ "Advocacy" here is defined with a subtle difference from how it is used in the English language. Whereas advocacy work in English would primarily refer to institutional lobbying efforts, the word "advocacy (애드보커시)" in Korean used here refers to how activists work to "advocate on behalf of" the rights and demands of citizens. Activists would contrast this approach to grassroots community organizing, which would prioritize directly mobilizing the marginalized.

shift in understanding about comparative research from a variable-based comparison to a case-based comparison. In particular, I drew on Sørensen's (2010) approach where comparability is generated through inside description. Through this process, comparability emerged among the three sites in terms of their approaches to social change and their relationships with the state.

In terms of their approaches to social change, PSPD primarily worked to achieve social change and a deepening of democracy through the power accumulated through and beyond their organization. Even though there are shifts in the extent of the focus, PSPD as an organization is an important base for collective organizing for protests as well as to garner more support.

Gwangmyeong YMCA focuses on the community-level for social change. Activists at Gwangmyeong YMCA seek to reach out to the Gwangmyeong residents as well as to community organizations and public institutions in Gwangmyeong to make changes in the region.

Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE primarily focuses on the individual level as the basis for social change. Their work centers on providing opportunities for democratic debates and discussions for individual learners. These comparisons are not necessarily exclusive to one another, but indicate the areas of focus that each site shows.

Another axis of comparison is the level of state engagement that emerges across each site. At the extreme, activists at PSPD refrains from engaging with the state as much as possible, with a firm principle of not getting any government subsidies to maintain their integrity as watchdog organizations against the state. Activists at Gwangmyeong YMCA works with the Gwangmyeong local government as well as having intereactions with public institutions at the municipal level such as the Gyeonggi Institute for Lifelong Education. Activists at SIDE actively engage in various opportunities for democratic citizenship education that opens up across various levels of the state – at local, municipal, and national levels – throughout the whole country.

In this study, I focus on the roles of adult education activities and how efforts to deepen democracy concretize in different types of citizens' movement organizations with divergent trajectories of development. I compare these trajectories across the cases with existing understandings of the role of organizations, collective agency, and social change in social movement studies and sociology to identify if these examples offer new insights and if so, where the new insights emerge from. In other words, the comparative approach in this study spans not only across the cases in this study, but to the wider literature on social movement organizations and social change. Through this twofold process, I seek to determine whether there is an alternative approach to connect organizations with collective agency and if so, the processes through which alternative approaches come into being.

Research practicalities

My positionality as a researcher

I began my academic studies in the field of lifelong education in South Korea. I was not fully aware at the time that the field of "lifelong education" in Korea is dominated by the institutionalized sector of adult education in Korea. For clarification, I use the concept of *adult education* to refer to a broad range of education activities occurring in various sites, such as workplaces, civil society organizations, schools, universities, and social movements, whereas I employ the context-embedded concept of *lifelong education* to refer to the specific field of adult education in Korea. With the advent of the concept *lifelong education* and the enactment of the national legal framework to support it in the 2000s, a majority of scholars in the field of lifelong education became interested in or simply could not ignore the influence of the state-led approach to adult education in Korea. Through my graduate studies in Korea in the field of lifelong

education, I became acquainted with the institutionalized sector of lifelong education, learning about various publicly funded institutions and licensed adult educators. However, it was when I began my doctoral studies at Pennsylvania State University that my eyes opened to the practices of radical adult education and social movement learning, which maintain strong ties with the tradition of popular education. This experience led me to realize that focusing on the externally defined field of *lifelong education* may limit the scope of what I can understand. Inspired by various mentors I met in my doctoral studies, my aspirations to become a scholar-activist grew.

The identity of an activist is still quite new to me, and I still feel that I have much more to do to confidently state that I am an activist. I became interested in the Korean citizens' movements after I learned of my parents' involvement in student movements for democratization in the 1980s. The 1980s in Korea was a completely different era under the dictatorship, and this history felt less distant when I learned that my parents are living proof of activists during the era. However, my parents only told me about their political activism after I became a university student, and they shared mixed feelings about their involvement. They expressed feelings of both pride and regret and advised me not to become involved in political activities. Even in 2010, they still worried that getting involved in politics could "endanger" my physical safety and future prospects. As I became aware of the reasons for the distance my parents kept toward politics in my childhood, I became curious about the reasons for such changes in my parents' attitudes toward politics. I also sought to become more well versed in politics after I realized this had been a neglected area in my education. I soon realized that becoming well versed and active in politics is a difficult endeavor and that I needed to devote time to learn more about politics. I also realized that a person can easily live her life without considering any political engagement except for a few occasional votes cast in major elections. As I expanded my breadth of experience by

working in a middle school teaching English and became aware of the limitations of the classed nature of English speaking in Korea, I came to question basic aspects in my daily life. Beginning to question opened up a different perspective toward society, prompting me to confront fact that “not being bothered to question” is reflective of the privileged position a person has in society. I believed that the field of lifelong education may be a “movement” was it emerged from critiques of schooling, but I gained further insights about social movements and activism during my doctoral studies. Thus, I only became familiar with activism in the Korean context when I was studying in the US I am therefore only an aspiring activist and a novice willing to learn more about activism in Korea. My personal objective as I engage in fieldwork is to learn from the activists and about the activists.

I also discovered through my experience in South Korea and the US that for many non-Korean people, South Korea appears to be a fertile ground for political activism. For example, the candlelight rallies of 2016 that called for and achieved the presidential impeachment¹⁰ of Park Geun-Hye interested foreign observers, demonstrating that the direct participation of citizens could drive dramatic political change.¹¹ Korea is also well-known for its labor movements (Koo, 2001; Lim, 2002). However, there is a large gap between macro-level issues involving institutional politics that become widely politicized and the everyday realities that people face. Many people in Korea face injustice, but become accustomed to accepting the situation rather than questioning and taking action. My experiences illustrate this gap. Even though I knew about the issues politicized by political parties, I did not know what to do when I

¹⁰ The impeachment of Park Geun-Hye was the second time that presidential impeachment was set in motion, and the first time that the impeachment bill actually passed and resulted in an actual removal of the president from office in Korea. For this reason, the impeachment of Park Geun-Hye is regarded as being significant in Korean democracy.

¹¹ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/south-korea-downfall-of-president-park-geun-hye-1.4023811>
<https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/asia/100000004764927/vast-protests-in-south-korea.html?searchResultPosition=37>

faced physical violence by a stranger in broad daylight. I was disconnected from the community that I lived in and I did not know where to begin. Merely learning about political facts was not enough. I needed to learn new ways of being and living as an adult, which is why I became interested in the role of adult education in political engagement.

Research process and data collection

I began reaching out into the field through a pilot study that I conducted from June to July 2019. The whole duration of fieldwork lasted from October 2020 to December 2021. I visited seven adult education centers that are well known for adult citizenship education practice in several regions throughout South Korea and attended an annual conference where adult education practitioners convene each year. At this time, I found that there are different types of organizations that engage in democratic citizenship education, including some centers that do not explicitly identify as certified adult education institutions in South Korea. At this stage of the research, I expected that there would be differences across organizations within the state-led infrastructure of adult education in Korea and other organizations within society. This expectation led me to categorize potential sites into three groups based on levels of state and civil society influence. The initial design of the research was shaped by theoretical discussions on state-society relations.

My fieldwork began in October 2020, when I moved to South Korea and reestablished contacts that I previously had with the potential organizations. My initial plan was to spend approximately four months at each site, shifting my attention from one site to another throughout the year. Some cultural customs became relevant when I began contacting potential sites. The first was that many of the organizations were not familiar with ethnographic fieldwork. The

organizations had prior experience with research involving qualitative interviews, but my initial plan to go into the field and shadow adult educators required a high degree of access. This request also faced challenges because of the Covid-19 situation. At the time, many of the organizations had a portion of their full-time employees working from home. It did not make much sense for an outsider to join the in-person workday when not even all of the full-time workers could work in-person. The types of organizations also complicated access. Particularly for public institutions, bureaucrats were cautious that offering me a chance to volunteer as an intern could be perceived as “unfair treatment” and undue privilege, which involved a suspicion that I might use the experience as a means to advance my career. Therefore, I had to adjust my levels of access to what was available to me at each site. A second custom that I experienced was that organizations were not used to scheduling fieldwork several months ahead of time. I initially contacted potential sites asking to begin my research in 2021 during summer or fall. However, the organizations tended to prefer researchers coming in soon after the request is made. This preference shaped my research process to first reach out to one site, get involved in the site for several months, and reach out to the next potential site during the fieldwork stage. Although this procedure meant that access was a continuing concern throughout my study, it afforded fluidity to change my initially planned research sites as I increasingly engaged in the field of democratic citizenship education and found more appropriate sites for the study.

As I engaged in interactions with educators in the field, I observed the processes through which they planned, designed, and implemented education programs under the umbrella of deepening democracy. My initial research question sought to track differences in the influence of the state across different sites. However, as I learned more about the actual processes and talked with educators in the field, I realized the limitations of placing the central focus on state-

society relations. The factors shaping the actions of educators in the field could not be attributed solely to state-society relations. The initial research design was a variable-oriented study, but it became increasingly apparent that a case-oriented research design was better suited to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the processes within each site and how these processes have developed historically. Therefore, I broke away from my focus on state-society relations and decided to investigate the overall education activities and a range of related factors.

I also interviewed people who are not directly involved in organizations dedicated to democratic citizenship education but are knowledgeable about the field. For example, I interviewed a senior activist in an umbrella organization for social movement organizations who is also involved in mobilization for establishing legal frameworks to financially support democratic citizenship education. Whereas my fieldwork in the first site opened my eyes to the web of social relations in which activists in the organization are engaged, my interview with the senior activist enlightened me to other organizations that have no working relations with the first site. As I moved into the second site, I recognized that there are implicit “boundaries” among activists engaging in democratic citizenship education. This insight emerged from an activist informally stating that she “does not think of education in [another site] as *real* democratic citizenship education.” As I engaged in further investigation, I realized that the boundaries involve not only differences in the social relations that activists draw on, but also the histories and traditions of social movements at each site. Through this explorative process, I narrowed down three sites as cases for my study. Although they may not encompass the whole range of democratic citizenship education in South Korea, the cases illustrate varying landscapes of how democratic citizenship education emerged among different activist circles.

At each site, I negotiated my research activities with research participants so that I could understand the educators as much as possible. The level of engagement at each site differed, but the overall research process began with participant observations and writing fieldnotes. Interviews were conducted at the later stages of engagement at each site, after I had built rapport with the educators and come to understand the unique context. The interviews were conducted in Korean and then transcribed through a Korean transcribing service. I then translated the transcripts myself, as my mother tongue is Korean and I am a fluent English speaker. Depending on the level of access, the extent of participant observations differed. However, I compensated for the relative lack of participant observation by utilizing different types of data.

Research settings and participants

I conducted my study across three sites: Academy Neutnamu at People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), Gwangmyeong YMCA and the Gwangmyeong Center for Democratic Citizenship Education, and the Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE. Although these cases have different characteristics, I find similar patterns in the educators' strategies for deepening democracy in society. In this section, I give a rough description of each of the sites and research participants. Further details about the historical emergence of each site are provided in the respective chapters.

Academy Neutnamu at People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy

PSPD is a social movement organization that is also registered as an NGO in Korea. Student activists who were keen to continue the work of progressive activism and "citizen's movements" after Korea's democratization in 1987 founded People's Solidarity for Participatory

Democracy (PSPD) in 1994. Since then, PSPD has developed into a social movement organization in Korea that is representative of progressive civil society. The organization is highly visible in the national political arena, with newspaper articles often citing press releases by PSPD on controversial issues or campaigns.¹² People can become members of PSPD by paying monthly dues, which grants them access into the organization's networks, newsletters, and discounts when they take nonformal education classes offered by PSPD. Activism at PSPD is primarily led by professional full-time paid activists, but PSPD has sought to increase the participation of its members since its founding. A majority of the funding for the organization is based on member dues, and PSPD prides itself on receiving no government funding. The principle of no government funding is important at PSPD, because activists believe that a reliance on such funding would result in increased control of the organization by the state.

PSPD as a whole encompasses different areas of activism, with 15 departments in total. I categorize the 15 departments into four groups. The first group includes PSPD's foremost strength as a watchdog organization for the state as well as varying issues of social injustice. It comprises the departments of judicial watch, legislative watch, executive watch, whistleblower support, and public interest lawsuits. The second group deals with issues of labor and economy, with departments for fair labor, people's livelihood improvement, social welfare, economic and financial justice, and tax reform. The third group deals with international relations, with the department for international solidarity and peace and disarmament in Korea. The last group deals with outreach to members and non-members. It includes Academy Neutinuamu, the PSPD

¹² For example, see following newspaper articles:
<https://www.khan.co.kr/national/court-law/article/202205301706011>
https://www.chosun.com/national/national_general/2021/10/07/CNUXKJ3LXFEADPBXKPTPVY73EM/?utm_source=naver&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=naver-news

research center, and the youth council of PSPD. The departments run relatively autonomously from one another. My fieldwork focuses specifically on Academy Neutinamu, which is in charge of providing non-formal education for both members and non-members.

As PSPD is a representative social movement organization, many of the activists had experience with researchers conducting qualitative research at PSPD. Thus, there are many requests for interviews with the activists, which creates additional work. I made my initial contact with Academy Neutinamu in October 2020, but I did not receive an immediate answer, as the activists needed to discuss my participation in internal meetings. In the meantime, I asked permission to could enroll as a learner in the non-formal education classes offered at the time. The activists welcomed me to take part in the classes, and this was the starting point of my in-person contact with Academy Neutinamu. I assured the activists that I would not be beginning my fieldwork as I participated in the classes, as I had not received their consent. However, the three months in which I participated in the classes offered at Academy Neutinamu from October 2020 to December 2020 offered me indirect insights into the atmosphere at PSPD. As the activist-educators at Academy Neutinamu also take part as learners in the classes that they are in charge of, my participation in the classes also meant that the activist-educators could gain a sense of who I was through my interactions within the classes. Through later conversations with the activist-educators, I learned that my participation in the classes offered a basis for the activist-educators to build rapport with me and helped them to reach an agreement about my participation as a researcher.

The activist-educators at Academy Neutinamu suggested that I join their activities from January 2021 and recommended that I follow their activities through the cycle of their spring semester from January to June. This cycle includes time allotted for planning, implementing, and

evaluating the programs they offer for the spring semester. Although this proposal differed from my initial plan to stay for four months at each site, I believed that it made more sense to shadow the activist-educators through the whole cycle. I adjusted the schedule so that my participation would be more intensive during the first four months, and less intensive in May and June so that I would have time to explore my second site. Because of the Covid-19 situation, many classes took place via Zoom and sometimes YouTube. However, activists sought to open in-person classes as much as possible depending on the guidelines by the Korean government.

Furthermore, even for online classes, the preparations for classes often involved in-person interactions. I participated in these interactions as well as weekly meetings in which activists discussed the matters within Academy Neutnamu. Each activist-educator in charge of a program is expected to participate in the program as a learner. Thus, shadowing the activist-educators' work also involved taking part in the programs as a learner. I took part in 12 classes as a learner, and I participated in the processes of planning and evaluation for nine classes. A list of the classes I participated is provided in Table 2 below.

I interviewed 10 people during my fieldwork at Academy Neutnamu. The interviewees include three full-time activist-educators working at the academy, two heads of the academy who I also identify as activist-educators, and five lecturers who are invited by activists at the academy as part of their programs. One interview was conducted asynchronously via email and nine were conducted synchronously in person or via Zoom (seven interviews in person and two via Zoom). The interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes on average, but some interviews lasted for more than three hours. The interviews focused on the activist-educators' work at the academy and how lecturers became involved in preparing a program at the academy. By investigating work processes, my goal was to understand the activist-educators' interpretations of how democracy

could be deepened through education and how their interpretations become realized through actual practices and interactions in the programs.

Table 2. Participation at Academy Neutinamu

Program	Duration	Researcher's Involvement
Rainbow Reading Club: Issues about feminism and gender	2020.11.19. ~ 2020.12.17. (3 sessions)	learner
Plutocracy, meritocracy, and fairness	2020.11.03. ~ 2020.11.17. (3 sessions)	learner
My first judicial watch: Reading verdicts together	2020.11.11. ~ 2020.12.02. (4 sessions)	learner
Advocacy school for citizens and activists	2021.02.09. ~ 2021.03.04. (7 sessions)	learner, shadowed activist-educators
The future ahead, and agendas for the Korean society suggested by citizens	2021.02.17. ~ 2021.03.03. (3 sessions)	learner, shadowed activist-educators
Kim Man-Kwon's political philosophy: Loneliness and the Other	2021.03.08. ~ 2021.03.22. (3 sessions)	learner, shadowed activist-educators
Having delightful gatherings online	2021.03.10. ~ 2021.03.31. (4 sessions)	learner, shadowed activist-educators
Timely sex education for myself and my life	2021.04.06. ~ 2021.04.27. (4 sessions)	learner, shadowed activist-educators
For the ethical co-existence of people and animals	2021.04.08. ~ 2021.07.08. (4 sessions)	learner, shadowed activist-educators
It's a skill not to be able to live alone	2021.04.14. ~ 2021.06.09. (3 sessions)	learner, shadowed activist-educators
The extremes of life, human being's ethical choices	2021.05.20. ~ 2021.07.15. (4 sessions)	learner, shadowed activist-educators
Mini-theatre workshops	2021.05.04. ~ 2021.06.19. (8 sessions)	learner, shadowed activist-educators

Gwangmyeong Center for Democratic Citizenship Education

The Gwangmyeong Center for Democratic Citizenship Education is an offshoot of the Gwangmyeong Lifelong Learning Center (LLC), which is run by the local government of Gwangmyeong. This case illustrates how interactions have developed across the field of democratic citizenship education and the field of lifelong education, which has become increasingly state-led since the 2000s. Local LLCs were established as a result of the state-led development of adult education, with public funding allotted to designate or build these centers. The adult education activities that take place in these centers range from workforce development to hobby-oriented activities. Gwangmyeong LLC is one of the centers that outsources to a separate center for democratic citizenship education. As further discussed in the chapter on the Gwangmyeong Center for Democratic Citizenship Education (Center for DCE), the LLC designates a civil society organization to take charge of the Center for DCE and allot funding for its purposes. In Gwangmyeong, the local YMCA was designated as this organization and established the Center for DCE as a department within the Gwangmyeong YMCA.

The Gwangmyeong Center for DCE operates as a hub for education activities related to democratic participation in the local region of Gwangmyeong. The establishment of these centers reflects the awareness that democratic citizenship education often takes places within civil society organizations and that public institutions may be limited in building relations with these organizations. The Center for DCE positions itself as an “intermediary supporting organization” that connects and supports civil society organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education. The limited amount of funding to run the center only allows for one full-time activist-educator to run the center, with other activists at the YMCA lending a “helping hand” to manage its activities. Regarding the task of materializing an abstract notion of an “intermediary

supporting organization,” the Gwangmyeong Network for Democratic Citizenship Education is significant, and both the YMCA and LLC are part of this network. Thus, Gwangmyeong exhibited multi-sited characteristics– the LLC, the Center for DCE, as well as civil society organizations that are part of the Gwangmyeong Network for Democratic Citizenship Education. My focus was on the activities of the Center for DCE, but I also conducted interviews with related actors to understand the activities of the center in full detail.

I initially sought to connect with adult educators in Gwangmyeong through the Gwangmyeong LLC. I had continuously maintained contact with a key gatekeeper at LLC beginning in early 2022, but only received tentative responses that neither approved nor denied my access. However, through the focus group interviews I participated in at the second site (SIDE), I became acquainted with the activist-educator who is in charge of the Center for DCE at the Gwangmyeong YMCA. My contact allowed me to take part in public events that were held on behalf of the Center for DCE, as well as to interview key actors who are involved in democratic citizenship education in the local region of Gwangmyeong. It was through these interactions that I became aware of the importance of the Gwangmyeong Network for Democratic Citizenship Education in the development of education activities in the region. Because the Center for DCE must meet bureaucratic standards, there were more archival and documents available compared to the other two sites. Moreover, the Center for DCE only opened in 2019, with activities in democratic citizenship education developing over parallel routes at the local LLC and among civil society organization in Gwangmyeong. To track the historical development of these activities, I followed the extensive archival data from the LLC and interviewed actors who were previously involved in the LLC, and did the same for the Gwangmyeong YMCA as a representative community organization in the area. My qualitative

interviews in the Gwangmyeong region began in May with past actors at the LLC, and my access into the field of democratic citizenship education was ongoing from September to October 2022. I participated in as many public activities as I could and engaged in interviews during this period.

The interviewees related to the Gwangmyeong Center for DCE represent several different organizations. In total, I interviewed two current bureaucrats, two administrators who had run democratic citizenship education at the LLC in the past, two activist-educators from the YMCA, and five activist-educators who are either a part of the Gwangmyeong Network for DCE or engage in education activities with the Gwangmyeong Center for DCE. A total of 11 individuals were interviewed, with each interview spanning 60–90 minutes on average and 2 hours at a maximum. These interviews responses reveal how the institutionalized field of lifelong education intersects with democratic citizenship education – a landscape that was not visible in the other two cases in this study.

Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE¹³

The Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE is a small-scale NGO founded in 2015. Although the formal organization has a relatively short history, the activists who lead the organization have long been involved in the citizens' movement. They share experiences of being involved in local grassroots movements for community development after democratization, often with organizations such as the YMCA or the Young Korean Academy. In

¹³ Activist-educators at Democratic Civic Education SIDE intentionally used the term “civic education” to express their orientations to engage in civic education at schools along with adult education for democratic participation. I translate the term *minju-shimin-kyoyuk* in Korean as democratic citizenship education in English. I refrain from using the term “civic education” because of tendencies to narrow its interpretations to school-based or state-centered notions of education related to democracy. Rather than using my translation of *minju-shimin-kyoyuk* into democratic citizenship education, I use the name of the organization put forward by the activist-educators to respect their translation when using materials from their direct materials from archives.

contrast to PSPD, which has engaged in more “professionalized” institutional politics, the focus of activists in community development movements has been to go into local contexts and find ways for building solidarity from the grassroots. Thus, education has been a key part of their activities. The activists who founded the Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE maintain extensive networks that they developed as community development activists and draw on them to build networks for democratic citizenship education not only in the Seoul metropolitan region, but also in other regions throughout South Korea. The founding of the Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE was based on an awareness that there needs to be an organization dedicated to the agenda of democratic citizenship education under the community development movement tradition – an organization that can get involved in relevant governmental projects that expanded in the 2000s and 2010s.

As reflected in the word “project” in its name, the Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE initially began as a project among activists who were working in different organizations with a shared commitment to democratic citizenship education. They formed a network of activists who would organize programs, often in collaboration with local governments or public institutions. The activists would construct a team for each collaboration and take part in programs as lecturers. However, as the scale grew, an organizational format was required, so they decided to register the project as an NGO. Thus, there are full-time activists who work at SIDE, with a broader network of activists who are affiliated with the organization as potential lecturers. The organization’s working philosophy is reflected in the name SIDE, through which the activists state that they intend to work “*alongside* activists, *alongside* local governments, *alongside* public institutions” to contribute to efforts to deepen democracy through education. Activists at SIDE intentionally designed the organization to be fluid, cautioning against

tendencies for formal organizations to become bureaucratized. Although SIDE started out with a community of activists, the organization has developed with full-time activists at the organization devoting more time and effort into the activities and drawing on their network of activists as a resource. The membership of the organization is mainly comprised of the network of activists who pay monthly dues. A majority of the funding for running the organization comes from its various “projects” in collaboration with several local governments and public institutions that contract out democratic citizenship education activities.

I first came into contact with SIDE through background interviews I conducted during the course of my fieldwork. In addition to activists within my sites, I came into contact with activists engaged in the “big picture” activities in civil society. For example, I interviewed activists from the Civil Society Organization Network in Korea, which is an umbrella organization of various civil society organizations that seek to foster solidarity across the organizations. Although these activists may not be solely dedicated to the issue of democratic citizenship education, they spoke to overall trends in democratic citizenship education without being tied to a specific organization. One activist introduced me to several other activists and organizations dedicated to democratic citizenship education, and Democratic Civic Education SIDE was one of the organizations. My first interaction with SIDE was through an interview I conducted with the head of the organization. After the interview, I added that I was looking for sites to engage in ethnographic research through shadowing activist-educators and possibly helping out in certain areas. Activists at SIDE welcomed my interest in ethnographic research, and we soon agreed on weekly schedules for me to join their activities. They welcomed me as a fellow activist, and I began working in May 2022. At this time, not only was the Covid-19

situation improved, but the small scale of the organization afforded me the chance to participate in person in the everyday activities of SIDE.

I learned a great deal from regularly conducting fieldwork at SIDE, engaging in participant observations and informal conversations. I also participated in various tasks at SIDE on a daily basis as well as via three large projects that took place during the period from May 2022 to December 2022. One project, which had already begun taking place when I joined in May, was a series of Roundtable Discussions for Peace and Unification of Korea in collaboration with the National Unification Advisory Council.¹⁴ The project involved holding roundtables across various provinces throughout South Korea, and I accompanied activists at SIDE during one of their trips to hold a large-scale roundtable session. The second project was a publicly funded research project to create a Handbook of Democratic Citizenship Education Programs in Korea, funded by the Korea Democracy Foundation.¹⁵ I participated as a research assistant involved in the process, including in meetings with the Korea Democracy Foundation as well as supporting qualitative survey investigations of various programs throughout Korea. The last project I was involved in was the National Forums for Education,¹⁶ which aims to build educational agendas at the national level through participatory mechanisms at the local level. The Committee meetings were organized via Zoom due to the limitations of Covid-19, and SIDE was

¹⁴ The National Unification Advisory Council is a constitutional organization that serves to advise the president of South Korea on policies related to peaceful unification. It is based on the Korean Constitution and the National Unification Advisory Council Act and has been established since 1980.

¹⁵ The Korea Democracy Foundation is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Korean Ministry of the Interior and Safety. Its purpose is to honor and pass on the experience of pro-democracy movements to future generations. Its founding is based on the Korea Democracy Foundation Act, legislated in June 2001.

¹⁶ National Forums for Education were advisory bodies of the president and a stepping stone to build a National Committee for Education in the future. The National Forums for Education began with an aspiration to make education policy stable regardless of political changes in the government, based on the awareness that abrupt changes in education policy does more harm than good. It also seeks to embed participatory mechanisms for people to participate in the planning and implementation of education policy.

the main collaborator for running the programs. The fluid nature of SIDE means that there are multiple projects proceeding at the same time, with activists stretched out both in time and space. My initial plan to engage in four months of ethnographic research at each site adapted as I became involved in SIDE and as my access into the third site became increasingly questionable despite my continuous contact with the main gatekeeper for the site. I ultimately adjusted my work schedules at SIDE to allow for time to engage in the third site during the fall and winter of 2022, completing my tasks at SIDE via online tools while decreasing my time in the field.

Because of the nature of my fieldwork at SIDE working alongside the activist-educators, many of my informal interactions provided significant data. At the time that I joined SIDE, three full-time activist-educators were working, and a fourth activist-educator joined as I was engaging in fieldwork. In addition to informal conversations with these activist-educators, I also conducted formal interviews with them. I conducted four interviews with the full-time activist-educators and two others with activist-educators who are part of the larger network of SIDE. The interviews lasted 60–90 minutes on average, with the longest interview lasting two hours. In addition to individual interviews with the activist-educators, I also took part in focus group interviews with activist-educators across various regions in Korea as part of the project to make the Handbook of Democratic Citizenship Education Programs in Korea. In these focus groups, I participated as an observer with an activist-educator at SIDE running the interviews. These observations provided me with ample data to understand the overall network of activist-educators with which SIDE interacts, the organization's concerns, and how it envisions ways to move forward.

5. Deepening democracy at PSPD (People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy)

PSPD (People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy) began as a sub-division within citizens' movements that focuses on advocacy-based activism and the accumulation of collective agency through its organizational structure. Through PSPD, advocacy-based activism is directed against both the state and the market, with its repertoire of activism including anti-corruption campaigns and watchdog activism against the state and organizing against large-scale conglomerates. Since the organization's founding in 1994, there has been an emphasis on strengthening PSPD through increasing its membership and making its name known to the general public. This effort also includes an aspiration to eventually become a mass-based organization, even though most of the work at PSPD is currently led by professional full-time activists, marking it as a professional social movement organization. Since PSPD's beginning, the notion of building collective agency *through* the organization was strong. As a rule, PSPD does not receive any government funding for its activities and refrains from collaborating with the state. Although Academy Neutinamu, the department in charge of democratic citizenship education at PSPD, became a state-registered lifelong education institution in the 2000s, the organization's connections with other organizations that primarily identify as lifelong education institutions are minimal. PSPD comprises many departments, with central departments focusing on advocacy work across multiple areas and affiliated departments (including Academy Neutinamu) focusing on other types of work.

The trajectory of democratic citizenship education activities at PSPD reveals a gradual process of creating a separate activity system. At the organization's beginning, the goal of democratic citizenship education was closely connected to the direct campaigns and advocacy work launched by central department, and there was no separate activity system for democratic

citizenship education. However, with an increased awareness of the need to engage the general public and to go beyond notions of organization-based collective agency, the department dedicated to democratic citizenship education, which was temporarily closed, reopened in 2009 as Academy Neutnamu. At this point, democratic citizenship education became a separate activity system in PSPD, which turned each education program into a potential in-between space that activist-educators could fill. Although some space was dedicated to the previous roles of education activities, a separate in-between space for democratic citizenship education became dedicated to new goals of introducing novel or experimental approaches to the concept of democracy and the meaning of political participation. Thus, the partition of democratic citizenship education as a separate activity system within PSPD paved the way for the emergence of in-between spaces, which the activist-educators filled.

How do activist-educators at PSPD seek to deepen democracy? First, the relative size and status of PSPD as a citizens' movement organization in Korea provides it ample resources to act as a hub for democratic citizenship education, particularly pertaining to leftist politics. People with progressive orientations who are interested in education programs often find Academy Neutnamu as an access point into democratic citizenship education. The activist-educators now place less emphasis on participating learners becoming active members at PSPD. Instead, they are much more open to the idea that participants will join their education activities and leave to engage in their own activist work beyond the boundaries of PSPD. As such, serving as an educational hub for progressive-leaning (potential) activists is one way that activist-educators at PSPD seek to deepen democracy beyond the immediate organization. Second, the status of PSPD as a representative citizens' movement organization means that the topics covered under the umbrella of "democracy" through its education programs convey a significant message to its

members and activists as well as to the wider public. Although the central departments may not be engaging in relatively “new” topics (e.g., gender and environmental issues, which are currently being addressed through other social movement organizations in Korea), the inclusion of these topics in the education programs at PSPD sends a message to the wider public, as well as to members and activists within the organization. This mechanism comprises another way that PSPD seeks to work from within, yet extend beyond the organization’s previous activity system.

Based on the activities at Academy Neutinamu, what does deepening democracy mean for its activist-educators? What kinds of visions for deepening democracy do activist-educators embed through their education activities? The educational contents of PSPD’s programs, although not fully addressed due to the practical limitations of this research, aim to connect multiple levels and forms of political participation – from struggles within daily interactions to organized protests. Even though a person may join an education program with interest in a particular type of action, the full curriculum offered through Academy Neutinamu nudges people to venture into new types of action. Moreover, deepening democracy increasingly necessitates building connections across activists from different types of movements. The case of Academy Neutinamu indicates that democratic citizenship education activities are an important mechanism through which an organization can build connections and enable actions that do not directly fit into the initiatives of the organization. In other words, Academy Neutinamu at PSPD illustrates an alternative approach to cultivating collective agency by creating and engaging in in-between spaces within the organization through adult education activities that build connections beyond the immediate strategies of the organization. I argue that this approach offers a potential direction to develop a confluence of collective agency across different types of movements and

to deepen dominant “norms” that prioritize institutional forms of democracy to encompass wider varieties of political action and wider definitions of democracy beyond electoral rights.

Contextualizing PSPD: Its beginning, development, and current status

The beginning of PSPD

According to the published archival data from 1994 to 2014, the initial aspirations that led to the founding of PSPD originated from past student-activists, scholars, and legal professionals with progressive agendas, who convened to discuss a new movement platform under the banner of citizens’ movements. These members formed a group of activists called *Sarangbang for Human Rights Movements* (인권운동사랑방) and moved on to build a progressive citizens’ movement organization that stands in solidarity with previous minjung movements rather breaking from them, as in some variants of citizens’ movements.

The initial meeting of 20 core founders occurred on May 15, 1994, when the founders discussed the positionality of the organization, its name, and key tasks. According to the meeting agenda for the second preparatory meeting for the founding of PSPD, the founders describe the organization as a “progressive citizens’ movement entity” (PSPD, 2014, p. 14). First, the founders seek to differentiate the organization from “political movements that seek to obtain power on the one hand, and mass organizations characterized as unions on the other hand, to conceptualize this organization as a mass-based social movement entity” (PSPD, 2014, p. 12). Second, “the organization is based on a coalition of legal professionals, scholars, and activists which become foundations for participation of the masses.” The organization plans to utilize methods such as lawsuits or bringing attention to specific issues to pressure relevant entities towards “rational and progressive alternatives” (PSPD, 2014, p. 14). Third, the founders envision

that “the organizational pursuit is to become a mass-based organization of broad participation rather than an organization of few professionals” (PSPD, 2014, p. 14). Fourth, “the organization cooperates with all social organizations involved in the democratization and social change and openly engages in activities in solidarity with others. However, being in solidarity is restricted on an issue-base and organization-based solidarity is not considered for the time being” (PSPD, 2014, p. 15).

The founders caution against the organization itself seeking to become a mainstream power and emphasized the need for social movement organizations that exist in the margins, always critiquing those in power. The fact that the founders differentiated the organization from unions, which they identify as “mass organizations,” reflects an ambivalent position regarding the identity of the “citizen.” It is difficult to identify who comprises the “masses” that the organization prioritizes and represents. Drawing on the diverse and broad category of “citizens” makes it difficult to explicitly identify what citizen’s priorities, but the founders also cannot let go of their ideals to potentially construct a shared front in the name of “citizens.” As a result, the founders state that they seek to build a “mass-based social movement entity.”

Intensive debates took place about PSPD’s identity compared to other civil society organizations and whether to use the word “citizen” in the name of the organization (e.g., PSPD, 2014, pp. 75-77). The members initially decided that the official name of the organization would be “*Solidarity for Participation and Human Rights* (참여연대: 참여민주사회와 인권을 위한 시민연대).” After gradual changes in organizational structure, such as the initial members of *Sarangbang for Human Rights Movements* (인권운동사랑방) becoming a separate and independent organization, the organization is now well-known by its shortened Korean name, *Chamyeo-yeondae* (참여연대), with the English name modified as People’s Solidarity for

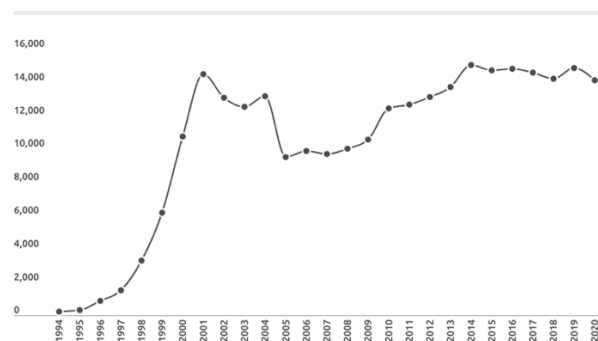
Participatory Democracy. In the modified English name, the term “people,” not “citizen,” was selected. Although PSPD is known as one of the representative citizens’ movement organizations that emerged during the late 1980s and 1990s, the process of naming the organization was complicated by the dilemma of redirecting activism after democratization while struggling against the fragmentation of civil society along the lines of whether movements were class-based or not.

Rather than getting immersed in debates to clarify the conceptual positionality of PSPD in comparison to other civil society organizations, activists at PSPD explicitly sought to characterize themselves based on their activities (PSPD, 2014, p. 73). The initial organization in 1994 comprised the Center for Legislative Watch, Center for Judicial Watch, Center for Human Rights, Public Interest Law Center, Center for Whistle-Blower Support, Policy Committee, and Citizens’ Committee. The organization’s activities involved serving as an active watchdog of the legislature and judicial bodies of the state, enhancing public good through public interest lawsuits and whistleblower support, and endeavouring to create a society where human rights are protected regardless of one’s financial or political status.

The funding sources for these activities are based on three principles according to PSPD’s homepage: “1) The main source of income is the individual membership fees, 2) They do not receive any government grants, and 3) Being financially independent is the priority.” These principles reflect a strong tendency for PSPD to refrain from getting involved with any state entities. Members as well as representatives pay differing amounts of money according to their positions: for example, members of the Citizens’ Committee in 1994 paid 10,000 won for monthly dues (student members: 5,000 won), whereas the representative or executive committee members paid more. In 1994, the total membership comprised 296 members. This figure grew to

14,111 members as of December 2020 (see Figure 5). Working on a roughly rotating basis within the organization, full-time activists run PSPD, pressuring powerful institutions such as the state and conglomerates while seeking to connect to and facilitate the participation of people referred to in the porous category of “citizens.”

Figure 5. Total number of dues-paying membership at PSPD (1994-2020)



Source: PSPD homepage (<https://www.peoplepower21.org/>)

One of the key changes at PSPD that relates to its offering of regular education programs has been the procurement of a dedicated building as its headquarters in 2007. The funding for building the new headquarters was based on members’ dues and donations. Through one year of construction work, a five-story building was built as the headquarters in Jongno-gu of Seoul. It is located in the central area of Seoul and is in a 20-minute walking distance from Gwanghwamun agora, where most large-scale protests take place in Korea. It is also within a 15-minute walking distance from entrances of the Blue House (*cheongwadae*)¹⁷. A map of the location of PSPD is marked as a white star circled by a red circle (★) in Figure 6 below. The

¹⁷ The Blue House (*cheongwadae*) has been where Korean presidents live and work from the era of Syngman Rhee who served as the president from 1948 to 1960. It has been the official residence and office of the South Korean president until Yoon Suk-Yeol became the new president in May 2022. Since May 2022, the Blue House has been relieved of its duties and changed into a public park.

map on the left uses a smaller-scale than the map on the right. The map on the right shows the Seoul region in white, locating PSPD in Jongno-gu.

Figure 6. Location of PSPD



source: Kakao map & Wikimedia commons

Approaches toward activism at PSPD

In understanding the roots of educational practices at PSPD, it is important to understand the kinds of struggles in which activists of PSPD engaged since the organization's founding. The lineage of these struggles defines the identities of activists at PSPD, some of whom are now practitioners planning and organization citizenship education activities at PSPD. There are various centers within PSPD, ranging from issues of judicial and legislative monitoring to livelihood improvement. I first explore how the activists have archived their trajectory of activism and which struggles they view as central to their activism.

Table 3. Major campaigns at PSPD

Year	Campaign
1994–2001	Campaign for social safety nets and securing minimum living standards
1994–present	Campaign to protect whistle-blowers
1996–2001	Campaign to enact the Anti-Corruption Act (enacted in 2001)
1997–2007	Campaign for Minor Shareholders Rights of Chaebol(conglomerate) including Samsung Electronics
2000, 2004	Civil Action for the General Election (CAGE) – No Vote for Corrupted Candidates Campaign
2001–present	Campaign to lower mobile phone bill
2002	Campaign against the purchase of the F-15K Fighter
2002–present	Campaign to amend the US-South Korea Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA)
2003–2008	Campaign against dispatching Korean troops to Iraq and Afghanistan
2004, 2006	Hope-up Campaign to raise minimum cost of living provided by the government
2006–present	Open and update an online database website to monitor activities of members of parliament
2006–2011	Campaign against the South Korea-US free trade agreement
2007–present	Campaign to lower expenses of university tuition fees
2008	Campaign against the import of US beef with mad cow disease
2009	Campaign to revise the Ordinance of Seoul Square for People’s Freedom of Assembly
2010–present	Campaign to reinvestigate the sunken Cheonan warship incident
2011–present	Campaign against the construction of the Jeju naval base
2012	Campaign to introduce living wage by the Seoul Metropolitan local government
2013–present	Campaign for economic democratization by protecting small merchants and regulating Chaebol (conglomerates)
2013–present	Campaign calling for a transparent investigation of illegal intervention to the 2012 Presidential Election by the National Intelligence Service
2014–present	Campaign to find the truth of the Sewol ferry tragedy
2014–present	70th year anniversary of liberation, Peace Now Campaign
2015–present	Campaign to reform electoral system by expanding proportional representation
2016–2017	People's Action for Immediate Resignation of President Park Geun-Hye
2018	Campaign for the abolition of National Assembly’s special activity expense
2019	Campaign to enact Act on the Establishment and Operation of the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials
2020	Campaign to amend Housing Lease Protection Act / Peace Campaign to End the Korean War

According to Table 3 above, PSPD has engaged in many major campaigns that have been defining features of the era: from campaigns against conglomerates in the 1990s, rallies against free trade agreements in the 2000s, to investigation of the Sewol ferry tragedy and the impeachment of president Park Geun-Hye in the 2010s. PSPD primarily engages in national and macro-level issues rather than local concerns, and even engages in international issues such as the dispatchment of Korean troops or peace campaigns to end the Korean war. The large-scale nature of organizing is also linked to the fact that full-time activists at PSPD have professional expertise on these topics. They take the lead in tracking these issues and raising awareness about them through campaigns to encourage participation from the members of PSPD as well as non-members.

Trajectory of democratic citizenship education at PSPD

As PSPD developed its unique repertoire of activism to deepen democracy after democratization, the organization also established an internal department dedicated to nonformal education for its members and non-members. In this section, I analyze the processes through which activities for designing and implementing democratic citizenship education became an independent activity system distinct from the activity system involved in organizing advocacy work. Based on the separation of the activity system of democratic citizenship education from the main advocacy work of PSPD, I argue that activist-educators identified the in-between space afforded to them to enact novel and experimental approaches. In other words, the trajectory of democratic citizenship education at PSPD illustrates the emergence of liminality at the organizational level, which affects how activist-educators seek to design potential participants' individual experiences of liminality through education programs.

Activity systems for democratic citizenship education prior to, and at Participatory Society Academy

Education has been one of the pillars of PSPD from its beginning. Drawing on the expertise of scholars and legal professionals, PSPD hoped to ultimately become a “mass-based organization.” In the initial design of PSPD in its founding documents, the organizational body most closely related to educational efforts within PSPD was the “Citizens’ Committee,” which was designated the role of “cultivat[ing] diverse structures for mass participation.” The Citizens’ Committee is a mechanism through which general dues-paying members of PSPD can express their opinions about decisions at PSPD. However, the founding documents of PSPD identify several expected difficulties in enhancing participation via these mechanisms (PSPD, 1994, p. 13): 1) people’s lack of experience in democratic participation and exercising rights, 2) the initial design of PSPD that is inclined toward professional activism and restricts the scope of general people’s participation in monitoring activities, and 3) the fact that participation may be practically limited for people who do not have time, such as housewives or the self-employed.

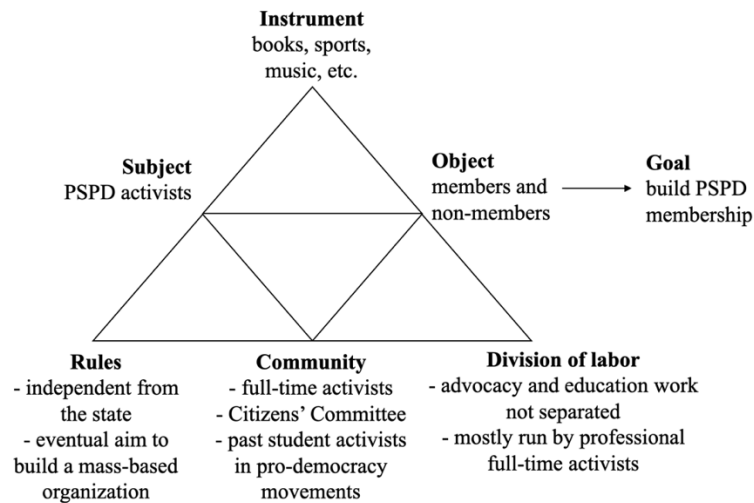
Considering such potential difficulties, the Citizens’ Committee started out with five goals. The first goal was to systematize the Citizens’ Committee. Systemizing refers to identifying key actors who would organize the committee as well as working with other departments within PSPD to develop education programs. This first goal demonstrates that even from the initial stages, there was consideration to embed education activities in conjunction with getting members involved in the activities of PSPD. The second goal was to organize university students and graduates as members of PSPD by running monitoring teams across six universities in the Seoul metropolitan area. This goal reflects the fact that PSPD was founded by student

movement activists and indicates that PSPD seeks to connect university-based student movements to citizens' movements. The third goal was to create various club activities among members of PSPD. In fact, many club activities were organized among members – such as soccer clubs or music bands – in the 1990s. This goal also reflects a pattern similar to student movements in the 1980s, where most of the organizing work was accomplished through various club activities and book clubs within the universities (Kim, A Ram, 2021; Shin, Dong Ho, 2013). The fourth goal was to organize general “citizens” who are not members of PSPD. The founding documents describe the initial plans to work with departments within PSPD to create participatory mechanisms for non-members of PSPD, with plans to create a separate department dedicated to nonformal education. The fifth goal was to sustain the regular activities of the Citizens' Committee, such as all-member gatherings every three months and publishing newsletters on a bimonthly basis.

As such, the founding documents of PSPD illustrate that the organization's beginnings were more inclined toward developing a professional activist organization with aspirations to enforce participatory mechanisms for members and also non-members of PSPD. During this period, education was discussed along the lines of enhancing members' and non-members' involvement at PSPD. Rather than designing explicit education programs with instructors and learners, the focus was on creating informal communities where members could build relations and non-members could become involved in the organization to ultimately become members. Informal learning and community building were emphasized to increase the membership base of the organization. As such, the design of initial education activities at PSPD, prior to opening a separate department dedicated to democratic citizenship education, embedded an activity system as shown in Figure 7 below. PSPD activists, whose work was not divided between advocacy and

education work, sought to engage with members and non-members through media such as books, sports, and music to build informal learning opportunities and a sense of community. Key rules were also solidified during this period, namely the principle of *not* engaging with the state to guarantee political independence and integrity in serving as watchdogs of the state.

Figure 7. Activity system for designing initial education activities at PSPD



In line with the initial plans to form an organizational body dedicated to nonformal education, PSPD activists created the Participatory Society Academy in 1996. The 1996 annual plan envisioned projects to reach out to the general public in addition to the professional-oriented advocacy activities that had been the main focus of PSPD. The plan also articulated differentiations between activities oriented toward members and activities oriented toward non-members. These plans blossomed into the Participatory Society Academy, initially as a sub-unit under the department for projects related to members and non-members (시민사업국) and later as a separate, affiliated department within PSPD. The designation of an “affiliated” organization

signals that the work within the department is relatively autonomous from the larger organization of PSPD and its traditional departments that engage in professional-led activism.

The initial composition of the Participatory Society Academy continues today in its renovated Academy Neutnamu. The Participatory Society Academy involved two to three activists (referred to as activist-educators in this study) whose work was dedicated to the design and implementation of education, a director of the academy (also included under the category of activist-educators), an education committee, and a pool of volunteers. The education committee included scholars or practitioners invited by activists as “experts” on democratic citizenship education. The practitioners in the committee also offered some programs at the academy. The education committee met every month to discuss the overall status of education activities at the academy and plans for upcoming programs. The volunteers were often learners enrolled in classes, and they helped the activists to prepare the classrooms before classes and to reorganize the tables and chairs back to their previous formation after classes. At the Participatory Society Academy, volunteers also engaged in monitoring activities of the programs offered. A pool of volunteers would take classes and provide collective feedback and recommendations for future classes. All of these activities were coordinated by the full-time activists who worked at the academy.

Table 4 outlines general information about the programs.¹⁸ As shown in Table 4, 102 programs were offered at PSPD Academy from 1996 to 1999. The spring and fall semesters typically included around 12 programs, whereas summer and winter semesters included fewer

¹⁸ Compared to other citizens’ movement organizations that engage in citizenship education, data at PSPD are relatively well preserved, including course names and syllabi. The analysis in this section is based on qualitative coding of the courses and their syllabi. Because this is a historical case, my analysis in this section is based on historical archives (course pamphlets, syllabi, published materials by PSPD) and interviews.

programs. Based on analysis of the program titles and introductions to the programs, I first discuss the pedagogical approaches in each program and move onto the contents to illustrate the overall tapestry of education activities at the Participatory Society Academy in the 1990s.

Table 4. Number of programs at PSPD Academy (1996–1999)

Year	Number of programs
1996	12
1997	35
1998	23
1999	32
Total	102

I identify five pedagogical approaches: lectures, reading clubs, on-site visits, workshops, and debates (see Table 5). Lectures mainly involve the instructor giving a talk with question and answer sessions at the end. The academy also offered some programs where public figures were invited to give lectures. Reading clubs reflected a more informal approach, where learners were expected to read the same materials and join seminars for discussion of the reading material. On-site visits involved learners collectively visiting a particular site to learn from direct observation. Workshops required learners to take active roles within the program, with activities that required their participation. Finally, debates were similar to lectures in that invited speakers usually dominated the stage, but were designed such that speakers argued competing views. Although I define each pedagogical approach as exclusive from the others, this does not mean that multiple approaches could not be embedded in one program. In fact, many programs utilized several pedagogical approaches in one program.

Table 5. Types of programs at PSPD Academy (1996-1999)

Type	Number of programs	Type	Number of programs
Lectures	89	On-site visits	8
Workshops	12	Debates	10
Reading clubs	6		

Among programs at the Participatory Society Academy from 1996 to 1999, the predominant form of education was lectures, comprising 89 programs, which far exceeds the second most predominant form of workshops, with 12 programs. Even for programs that involved on-site visits or workshops, lectures were often a part of the syllabus. The program details reveal that the education organizers attempted several variations of lectures to inspire learners to engage in some type of social action. For example, a program in 1997 held on-site lectures at various apartment complex communities in a region in Gyeonggi province. The focus of the program was to create self-governing communities in the apartment complexes to deal with issues such as local environmental problems or poor construction practices impacted by corrupt companies. Activists sought to get “up close” to the local community by having lectures “brought” to potential participants to help them envision ways forward. Such efforts to reach out into local communities diminished in PSPD in later periods. Another example is a program designed for senior citizens, which included lectures on the poor quality of welfare policies for senior citizens, practical information on managing personal finances, and philosophies of death. This program sought to involve learners in volunteer activities. These examples illustrate lecture-based programs in which activists sought to encourage learners to take action in their communities or through PSPD.

Turning to the contents covered through the programs at the academy, I coded each program according to the contents, assigning multiple codes if necessary. For example, if a

program addressed environmental movements as well as feminism, both codes were assigned to the same program. Table 6 below presents the frequency of nodes coded more than 15 times among programs offered at the academy from 1996 to 1999.

Table 6. Frequency of codes (PSPD Academy programs, 1996–1999)

Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
Social movements	39	Welfare	20
History	30	International relations	19
Humanities	28	Labor movements	17
Neo-liberalism, Economy	26	Citizens' movements	17
Livelihood	26	Government, The state	17
Environment	24	Feminism	16
Institutional politics, Election	22	Law	16
Human rights	22	Technology	15

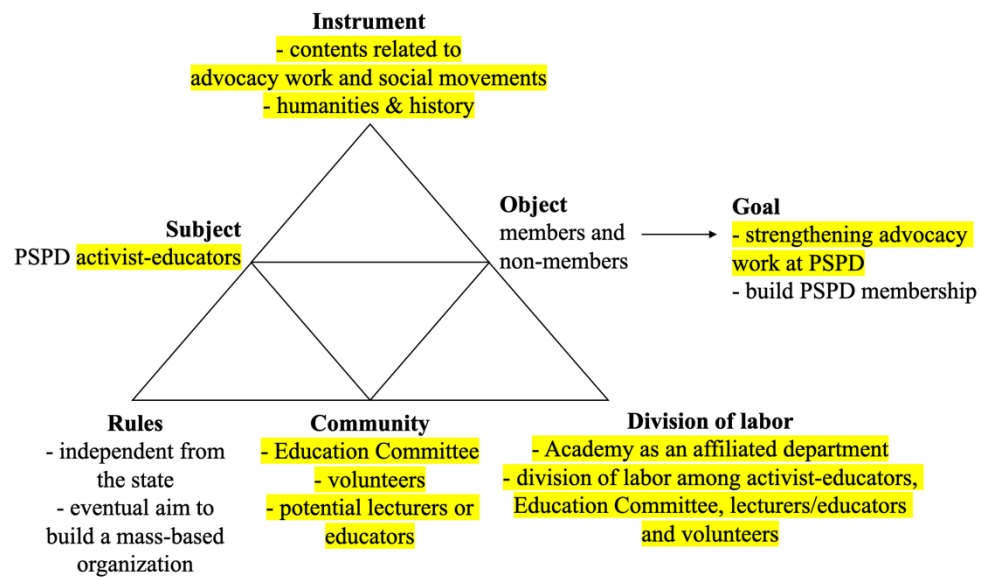
The academy mainstreamed programs that explicitly dealt with the dynamics of social movements, including labor movements and the newly emerged citizens' movements. Another important section of programs offered were those dealing with the larger topic of humanities and history, including on-site visits and retreats to historical sites and programs that discussed movies or literature. These programs contributed to the community-building aspect of education activities at PSPD. Because of the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the economy, livelihoods, and welfare were also important topics for people to understand the source of their suffering and how to address it. These subjects also connected with issues of human rights – an area of focus for the founding activists of PSPD. PSPD has a strong focus on engaging with institutional politics and elections, the government and state structures, and legal mechanisms, which are also some of the most frequent codes.

Scholars who have examined this era of democratic citizenship education at PSPD have raised questions about whether the organization's education activities prioritized the goal of

deepening democracy through the facilitation of autonomous social actions from learners.

Chang-Yeob Kim and Nak-Don Sung (2006), who have both either worked at PSPD or engaged in fieldwork at PSPD, point out that citizenship education led by PSPD prioritized resource mobilization and membership recruitment through education activities rather than the enhancement of democratic competencies. Drawing on data from Heejoon Yang (2002), they argue that there were efforts to recruit learners who took classes at the academy as members or volunteers, which contributed to the growth of PSPD in its initial periods in the 1990s. They criticize that citizenship education at PSPD during this period was targeted at resource mobilization rather than the ideals of citizenship education to facilitate autonomous democratic competencies and action from learners. Nak-Don Sung (2000) also denounces the lecture-based character of education at the academy and calls for more discussion-based programs to maximize autonomous judgments and actions from learners. In other words, the goals of education activities during this period were aligned with strengthening advocacy work and a continuing goal to build the membership of PSPD. Based on this analysis, the activity system of democratic citizenship education at the Participatory Society Academy is depicted in Figure 8 below. The components of the activity system that changed from prior to the establishment of the Participatory Society Academy are highlighted in yellow.

Figure 8. Activity system for designing education activities at the Participatory Society Academy



Even though some components of the activity system changed, I characterize this activity system of the Participatory Society Academy as an extension of the prior activity system. The goal of “building PSPD membership” was expanded to “strengthening advocacy work at PSPD.” These two goals can be encompassed under the broad goal of resource mobilization through PSPD, which is also the goal for advocacy work at PSPD. In other words, education activities remained unseparated from advocacy work activities during the duration of the Participatory Society Academy.

The Participatory Society Academy confronted a dilemma in the 2000s. First, the pressure of the limited number of full-time activists working at PSPD in contrast to the amount of work became exacerbated as PSPD engaged in a large-scale electoral campaign against corrupt politicians in the 2000 general elections. Second, many other nonformal education organizations emerged in Korean society, which led to implicit competition among

organizations. The learners at the academy primarily constituted two groups: potential and current activists interested in strengthening their organizing competencies, and general people with interest in participating in citizens' movements or learning about social issues. Education for the former group began to be addressed in new disciplines such as "NGO studies" at universities. Moreover, nonformal education expanded greatly in the 2000s due to the enactment of the Lifelong Education Act of 2000, which allowed several types of organizations to be registered as lifelong education organizations, including "education organizations affiliated with non-governmental organizations" as well as "press-affiliated education organizations." These legal changes prompted the progressive press, such as KyungHyang and HanKyoRae, to begin providing nonformal education programs. Because of the shared progressive views toward social issues, programs provided by these organizations became a significant threat to the Participatory Society Academy. With limited funds, the enrollment fees for each program determined whether or not activists could run a program without creating funding deficits.

"The most significant difference between our Academy and the press-affiliated organizations was the amount of money available for education programs," recollected an education organizer who worked at the Participatory Society Academy. She stated that the emergence of education institutions established by progressive media was a critical hit to the Participatory Society Academy in two respects: 1) press-affiliated institutions could pay more money to invite the same lecturers, and 2) press-affiliated institutions were able to decrease the fees that participants paid by spending money of their own. For PSPD, the financial situation was more restricted, as the organization relies on donations from its members and the registration fees for each program. Such financial differences had a large impact on running education programs because both the Participatory Society Academy and press-affiliated institutions were

lecture-oriented. Even though other types of programs, such as on-site visits and workshops, were implemented, it was the contents of the lectures and the educators teaching in these programs that defined many programs at the Participatory Society Academy. Moreover, with increases in the provision of nonformal education in general, tendencies for learners to “shop through” education programs increased. Thus, learners came to approach education programs as “consumers,” with education activities converted into credentials or enjoyable experiences in exchange for money. The dilemma that the Participatory Society Academy faced in the 2000s resulted in the temporary closure of the academy as an independent department in 2003, with education work absorbed back into the department in charge of outreach to members and non-members and relegated as sub-projects prepared by activists as a way to draw in members and non-members for their campaigns.

Re-opening of Academy Neutinamu and its activity system

Although the provision of education programs continued after the closure of the academy, there were no longer activists whose work was specifically dedicated to education activities. Several branches within PSPD, such as the Research Center, Committee on Social Welfare, and the Center for Peace and Disarmament, organized education programs as a part of their activities. However, during the preparations for the 15th annual general assembly, some activists brought up the need for a more systemized approach to the provision of democratic citizenship education by PSPD.

The idea was that PSPD needs education in the rapidly changing dynamics in society. In other words, we are an organization engaging in citizens’ movements and it’s necessary to have citizenship education to make the organization more

oriented towards our members and also to expand our breadth to the larger public.

Also, to make PSPD more accessible to general citizens and people. In actions like being watchdogs against the judicial body or executive body, what people can actually do and take action is quite limited. In these ways, there were voices from within PSPD that we need citizenship education. Of course, there was also much apprehension among PSPD activists too. ... However, through a process of persuasion, the academy was able to re-open. (Ju, Eun-Kyung)

Given that activists at PSPD are thinly spread with a large amount of work per activist, the decision to revive the academy dedicated to democratic citizenship education reflects the importance that PSPD activists assigned to education activities. The experience of closing the academy and running education activities within other departments within PSPD allowed activists to directly experience the advantages and disadvantages of having a separate organizational structure for education. While education activities could be more intricately connected to the work and agendas of other departments in this system, there was no mandate for activists in these departments to opt for education as a part of their strategies. It was primarily the department in charge of fostering member and citizen participation that engaged in education activities, ranging from professional workshops for teachers about citizenship education, to seminars for graduate students, to classes about the political economy. However, education work was only a part of the activities for member and citizen participation among other types of work, such as strengthening the communicative capacities of PSPD through various media, organizing and sustaining membership, and reinforcing services for members. Embedding education activities within other work within the organization led to the drawback of education activities

either being subsumed under the current agenda of the organization or dispersed in contents and directions.

With the decision to re-open the academy with a new brand of “Academy Neutinamu” in 2009, Ju Eun-Kyung, the new director of the academy, sought to build a sense of “PSPD-ness¹⁹” that was not restricted to specific agendas for past or current activist work at PSPD. A major difference that became clear was that much less focus was put on education activities as a way to build the membership of PSPD or strengthen PSPD campaigns and protests. Hwang Mi-Jeong, the current director of the Academy and an active member at the Academy during this time, recalls that one of the many dictums that activists and members shared during this time was to offer programs that “does not have the explicit scent of PSPD,” referring to the main organizing and “advocacy” activities of which PSPD is well-known for. Discount benefits offered for PSPD members did continue. Some people choose to become dues-paying “members” for the sheer purpose of receiving membership discounts for education programs, which exposes them to regular newsletters and phone messenger updates about PSPD’s activities. However, others explicitly choose not to become a member. “I didn’t feel comfortable about being ‘tied to’ a social movement organization, but I was interested in this program. Even though the discount range is quite high, I just chose to pay the full rate,” shared a learner who took part in a program at the academy. He had participated in programs offered at the academy for years and decided not to become a member. Even though activist-educators know who are PSPD members and who are not, they do not seek to “pressure” people to become members. With the exception of occasional advertisements about other programs offered at the academy, I

¹⁹ “PSPD-ness” is an English translation of the expression “참여연대스럽다, 참여연대답다” in Korean.

did not witness any activist-educator nudging a person to become a member during my fieldwork at the academy.

It's been quite some time since we shifted away from setting the goal for democratic citizenship education at the academy as building our membership. Participants, regardless of members or non-members, can join our education programs and go along with their own lives after the program finishes. It [Building membership] is not a critical goal that we pursue through our education. (Lee Tae-Ho)

Thus, the goal of democratic citizenship education at Academy Neutinamu reflects a significant shift from the experiences at the Participatory Society Academy, which has important implications for the composition of the activity system. What is the new goal for democratic citizenship education activities? Although the specific goals of each program differ, a broad-stroke goal for education at Academy Neutinamu is condensed in the slogan, which calls for “an integration of intellect (*ji-seong*), spirituality (*young-seong*), and emotional sensitivity (*kahm-seong*)” through democratic citizenship education. The intentions underlying this slogan are further explained in the quote below.

I think that it's important to go beyond consuming education programs. What's important is to get to know people you didn't know about before, become friends, do something together, and building a learning community. I think this is very important in citizenship education. Moving beyond just coming here, taking a program, thinking ‘Oh~ So that's what it was!’ as you learn new knowledge is not enough. Developing the intellect is also an important part, but that does not fulfill what we aim for. (Ju, Eun-Kyung)

Ju seeks to adapt the education activities at Academy Neutinuamu by going beyond the emphasis on intellect. She emphasizes that spirituality and emotional sensitivity are just as important. This view is reflected in the multiplicity of education programs that have been offered at Academy Neutinuamu. Academy Neutinuamu began with groups such as “The Democracy School,” “Humanities School,” “Lifeworld and Culture School,” and “Morning Seminars,” and later added additional categories such as “Citizens’ Art” and “Reading Groups.” At first and until today, other activists at PSPD would critique the wide variety of programs offered at the academy, contending that “the academy is no different than education programs offered at commercial department centers.” Ju states that there are still two different ways in which activists at PSPD interpret education activities. First, some consider the foremost goal for education activities to be to complement the campaigns and advocacy work of PSPD, which is similar to how education was perceived before the Participatory Society Academy. Second, others understand the importance of offering a wide variety of programs, even if they are not directly related to advocacy work. Amidst these views, activist-educators share the awareness that *all* programs at Academy Neutinuamu, regardless of their type, are characterized as democratic citizenship education. Democratic citizenship education in their view is not limited to teaching and lecturing about explicitly political issues. How spirituality and emotional sensitivity are developed to benefit democratic interactions and relations is just as important in enhancing political participation.

A closer analysis of the organization of work at Academy Neutinuamu paints a clear picture on its activity system. In particular, even though Academy Neutinuamu is an affiliated department within PSPD, like the Participatory Society Academy, this affiliated status does not guarantee the coalescence or separation of activity systems. What matters is how work is

organized as well as the goals for the activities. Among activist-educators working at Academy Neutinuamu, there is awareness about the differences in the nature of work at the academy compared to other departments at PSPD.

When I was in a more ‘traditional’ department at PSPD, I could not be separated from my phone. We always needed to *be there*, reading the most updated news to see if there are anything we need to respond to. However, working at Academy Neutinuamu requires a qualitatively different skillset. We need a long-term perspective. What is currently at stake in society and where is it heading? What should PSPD address as a representative citizens’ movement organization? (Lee, Song-Hee)

Activist-educators at the academy, particularly activists who previously worked at other departments, commonly recognize the different nature of work at the academy. In addition to the fast-moving pace of work and the need to quickly “respond” to social issues, the academy requires perspectives that go beyond the imminent issues in society. The work requires activist-educators to become aware of social trends or trends in nonformal education in addition to the flows of activism in society. As reflected in Lee’s quote above, another key issue that activist-educators at PSPD consider is the relative status of PSPD in civil society and the roles that Academy Neutinuamu should serve in correspondence with the organization’s status. This issue encompasses two aspects. First, whereas citizens’ movements in the 1990s and early 2000s focused on pressuring institutional politics and serving as watchdogs for corruption, the field of citizens’ movements is now facing an abundance of change. Considering that images related to institutional politics and anti-corruption remain dominant among former participants in citizens’ movements, the academy’s attention to relatively “new” issues such as feminism, gender politics,

and environmentalism could signal to former activists to be more receptive to these issues.

Second, the fact that PSPD has become a representative organization in civil society also means that the issues it addresses could threaten small-scale civil society organizations that focus on a particular issue, such as feminism or environmentalism. Thus, rather than PSPD adopting these new areas of activism in their main activism work, the academy working with other specialized civil society organizations to offer educational programs serves as a way to foster connections with these organizations rather than creating a “competitive” angle. In these key ways, among others, the organization of work at the academy differs from other departments at PSPD.

Academy Neutnamu has its own cycle of work. There are four semesters – spring, summer, fall, and winter – with the spring and fall semesters constituting a major proportion of the work. Activist-educators differentiate between the focus of the spring and fall semesters: the spring semester is for activist-educators to launch new, experimental programs, whereas the fall semester involves programs that are closely connected to other departments in PSPD. Spring semester classes are primarily planned and designed by activist-educators at the academy, which requires activist-educators to take on the role of semi-researchers by studying recent trends and considering what courses to launch. Fall semester classes are organized through collaborations with activists in other departments at PSPD. For example, activist-educators at the academy may work with the Judicial Watchdog department to design a class for reading verdicts and developing competencies to critique verdicts. The annual cycle is unique to the academy, providing a sense of order while also differentiating the department from other departments. Another cycle important for activist-educators at the academy is the cycle through which a program is planned, implemented, and evaluated. Activist-educators’ attempts to design new programs in the spring semester do not end with the design process. Activist-educators also

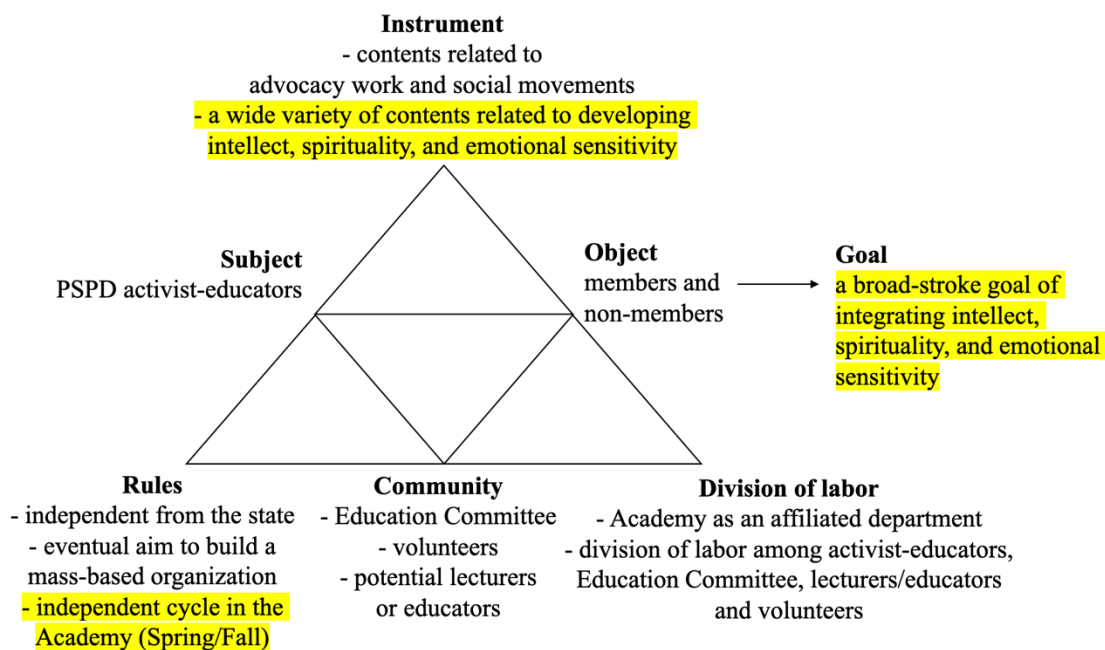
participate in the whole duration of the program, both as assistants and learners themselves. This process of participation lays the groundwork for each activist-educator to reflect upon and evaluate the program, which helps to modify or design programs in the future.

The program syllabi comprise the key documents that “travel” through the organization, prompting communication among activist-educators as well as with potential learners. New programs are announced through the online platform of Academy Neutinamu with the title of the program, introductory paragraphs, week-by-week syllabi, and information on the instructor(s). This format is used from the very beginning of the design stage. Each activist-educator writes his or her own draft of a proposed program and shares it with other activist-educators at their weekly Monday meetings. The activist-educators then engage in intensive debates about the topic, usage of words in the program introductions, and attractiveness of proposed programs, often resulting in multiple rounds of edits. The drafts become the basis for collective discussions among activist-educators and open the official channel for activist-educators to suggest new programs. The process of writing drafts and providing collective feedback is an opportunity for activist-educators who have been at the academy for a long time to share their accumulated expertise and for activist-educators to think together about what constitutes unique characteristics of education. Work at the academy is divided such that one activist-educator is in charge of each specific program from its development, to reaching out to potential lecturers and educators, preparing for the classes, and taking part in the classes. Other activist-educators can sometimes join a class if they are interested in it. Evaluations of the programs happen collectively, with the activist-educator in charge of a program giving a brief summary of his or her own evaluations.

Activist-educators at the academy are granted a high level of autonomy in designing and implementing the programs. The processes for developing new programs and improving already

existing programs differ to some extent, but the commonality is the important role of an activist-educator as the liaison between instructors and the academy as a whole. Activist-educators at PSPD do not teach in the courses they offer; they engage in intensive planning of the course and researching which instructor(s) to invite. With a rough idea of what kind of topics or directions that they want the instructor to cover in the program, the activist-educators make contact with and invite potential instructors. The draft syllabi may be developed and edited with the instructors as activist-educators collectively offer feedback to each other. The activist-educators share with potential instructors the kinds of programs that have been previously offered and the approaches they have found helpful in programs, which smoothens the process for an instructor to adjust to providing education programs at Academy Neutinamu. Activist-educators discuss newly suggested programs regarding how they fit into the plans they already have and programs that have previously been offered at the academy.

Figure 9. Activity system for democratic citizenship education at Academy Neutinamu



Based on such work processes, the activity system for designing and implementing democratic citizenship education at Academy Neutinamu is illustrated in Figure 9 above. The components of the activity system that changed from the Participatory Society Academy are highlighted in yellow. At Academy Neutinamu, the goal of democratic citizenship education exhibited a significant shift compared to the previous era. There was a shift away from resource mobilization focused on building membership and strengthening advocacy work, which still remains a goal for other central departments at PSPD. This shift is related to shifts in society toward individual-based mobilization and the reopening of the academy as an independent department. The current goal is articulated in broad concepts of “intellect, spirituality, and emotional sensitivity,” which offers autonomy for activist-educators to embed their own interpretations in education programs. The independent cycle for offering programs at the academy guarantees that effort is exerted on developing new and experimental approaches to democratic citizenship education. I argue that the different type of activity system cultivated at Academy Neutinamu, which is distinct from the central departments at PSPD, has opened up “in-between spaces” of ambiguity and fluidity. These in-between spaces are sources of organizational liminality, where the space is still located within PSPD but is open to new possibilities. The ambiguity highlights the roles of activist-educators in designing and filling the in-between spaces with their respective interpretations of “deepening democracy.” In the next section, I delve into some examples of programs offered at Academy Neutinamu.

Filling in-between spaces at Academy Neutinamu

A separate activity system for organizing education at PSPD developed, quite different from the main departments of PSPD directly engaging in campaigns and activism. The different

goal of education activities produces in-between spaces, where activist-educators are granted autonomy to introduce new or experimental approaches for democratic citizenship education. These in-between spaces can be identified as liminality at the organizational level for PSPD, and the activist-educators, through these spaces, seek to encourage individual participants to engage in educational experiences that transform their knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors. At the extreme, educational experiences designed for these in-between spaces seek to cultivate liminality at the individual level, for participants to go through a process of transition that involves parting from their previous identities and adopting a newly acquired identity (e.g., from a person not identifying as an activist to identifying as an activist). This notion connects to the sub-question in this study regarding how activist-educators seek to create liminal experiences at the individual level through in-between spaces. An additional sub-question of this study concerns how liminality at the organizational level connects to potentially changing broader society. In other words, how do activist-educators interpret their activities in designing democratic citizenship education as contributing to deepening democracy at the societal level? These two dimensions underlie the central research question of this study: “How do activist-educators seek to deepen democracy from within and beyond their organizations?” Thus, along with the specific details of each program, I discuss the following two dimensions 1) how activist-educators and other lecturers and educators seek to cultivate liminal experiences through education programs and 2) how education activities connect with deepening democracy at the society level beyond the given boundary of an organization.

“Advocacy School for Citizens and Activists Taking Action”

The “Advocacy School for Public-Interest Activists” is a regularly offered annual program at PSPD. The full name of the course is “Imagination and Action Strategies for Change: Advocacy School for Citizens and Activists Taking Action.” The learners targeted for this program are budding activists or activists who have accumulated some experience but wish to reflect on their activism from the basics. To attract budding activists who are not yet a part of a specific activist organization, the program explicitly invites “citizens” taking action. This practice also reflects the trend of increasingly individual- and network-based activism, in which people who have their own way of making a living while simultaneously taking on an identity as an activist are equally as important as full-time activists working for social movement organizations. The syllabus for the program, which is the central focus of discussion among activist-educators and the instructor during course preparation and the main route of communication to potential learners, is as follows:

Program Introduction

Citizens’ power to freely speak and act peacefully is hope for the world going through the crisis of the later era of neo-liberalism. Speaking and acting on social problems is no longer exclusive to particular groups. Anyone can become the forefront of action for change even before they realize it. These people who have come to advocate for and represent others are all “activists working for public-interests.”

However, there are not many systematic education programs for supporting the many citizens and public-interest activists who participate in and build solidarity in various fields of change. There is also a lack of spaces to share experiences with one another. Based on such problematization, we began annual advocacy workshops starting from the 2014 Advocacy School, <If we speak up, the world changes: Advocacy and direction action>.

This program is a workshop program where participants learn and have theory and practice, cases and strategies for advocating citizens’ rights and monitoring those in power. Rather than learning a pre-given manual, it is a program where the instructor and participants build the class according to the flow of Korean society.

Not only activists, but any citizen who is interested in it can participate. We invite you, seeking for knowledge that can drive practice.

Targeted Learners

Citizens and budding/full-time activists who are interested in advocacy work

Program Goal

- Sharing the philosophy, basic theories, general strategies, and cases for effective advocacy work with citizens and budding/full-time activists seeking social change.
- Discussing attitudes and roles as organizers/facilitators of movements and public-interest activists, and reflecting on their own activism and actions.
- Through a 1:1 mentoring with the instructor where learners can discuss their own projects and prospects for activists, sharing experiences and finding prospects for activism together.

Schedule (note: The 5th class is an All-Day workshop on a Saturday)

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 2/9 (Tue) | [Lecture] Imagination for Change: We, the People
- select a task for group campaign practicum & divide groups |
| 2/16 (Tue) | [Lecture] Looking from a different angle
- understanding power and rights, basics of strategic planning |
| 2/18 (Thu) | [Practicum] Acting differently 1
- campaign planning and implementation |
| 2/23 (Tue) | [Practicum] Acting differently 2
- writing my own campaign plan |
| 2/27 (Sat) | Saturday All-day workshop (10am-5pm)
- Part 1: Insights from movements (conversation with guest lecturer)
- Part 2: Case analysis: successful vs. unsuccessful campaigns
- Part 3: Practicum group tasks for writing campaigns & group discussion |
| 3/2 (Tue) | [Lecture] Engaging in conversation differently
- Speaking and writing in the field |
| 3/4 (Thu) | [Workshop] I am an activist
- What does it mean to be an activist?
- Reflecting on competences that I need |

* Schedules and details may be adjusted according to the Covid-19 situation

Program Characteristics

- [1:1 mentoring] Any participant can have a 1:1 mentoring for about an hour during the course of the program.
- Based on 27 years of experience in citizens' movements, the instructor will share principals of advocacy work as well as basic theories, general strategies and know-hows.
- Along with lectures, the program includes a group practicum of writing campaign plans and an all-day workshop.

Instructor Information

Lee Tae-Ho, a full-time activist at PSPD for 26 years. (Former) General Secretary of PSPD. (Former) Joint Chief of the Emergency Actions for the Impeachment of Park Geun-Hye. Current Committee Chair of the Civil Society Organizations Network in Korea & Senior Committee Member of the 4.16 Solidarity Committee. He has taught in the Advocacy School at Academy Neutnamu for 7 years.

(Academy Neutnamu homepage, translated by researcher)

Prompting individual liminality: Broadening the category of “activists”

The Advocacy School program encompasses activists in different spectrums under the same category. Although the program in its beginning was targeted to people who were working as activists or actively engaging in activism, it now explicitly includes “citizens” as target participants. This shift reflects awareness of increased practices of networked mobilization, with individuals freely moving in and out, and an attempt by activist-educators at the academy to encompass diverse individuals under the category of “activists (*hwaldong-ga*).”

An analysis of the connotations of the word *hwaldong-ga* (translated into English as “activist”) offers insight into how a new interpretation of the word cultivates liminal experiences. The general sense is that *hwaldong-ga* refers to full-time or part-time activists. Full-time activists interpret *hwaldong-ga* as people who organize campaigns or protest activities. Many activists tend not to use the word “activist” to refer to people who only participate in campaigns or protests. Participants in protests or campaigns similarly feel hesitant to embrace the identity of an “activist” just because they participated in campaigns or have opinions that support a particular type of activism. Based on my experiences of living in Korea and the US, I have noticed that a much wider range of people identify as “activists” in the US compared to those who identify as *hwaldong-ga* in Korea. Considering this background, the Advocacy School program makes an important pivot by intentionally broadening the category of an “activist (*hwaldong-ga*)” to encompass general citizens who support or take actions in a particular type of activism.

In fact, the spring 2021 Advocacy School included a mix of full-time activists and budding activists who were not used to identifying themselves as “activists (*hwaldong-ga*).” In the introductions during the first class, some people introduced themselves as “an interested citizen,” “a researcher,” and “a social worker” interested in activism. In the first classes, the educator discussed the category of an “activist” and identified “citizens” as agents of rights, in comparison to other categories, such as *seomin* (a class category of ordinary people in contrast to the elites in Chosun society) or *inmin* (contrasted with ruling elites, often associated with communist articulations of people in the Korean language). In contrast to these categories, the category of “citizens” is connected to various slogans drawn on across the world, such as “We, the People,” “Not in my name!” or “We are the 99%.” Through these connections, the educator and activist-educators sought to cultivate a sense that citizens can be encompassed under the category of “activists (*hwaldong-ga*).” Such endeavors to widen the category of “activists (*hwaldong-ga*)” are reflected in PSPD as a whole organization, including in the reference to volunteers as “volunteer-activists (*jawon-hwaldong-ga*).”

Although many participants who did not work full time or part time as activists felt unfamiliar with the identity of “activists (*hwaldong-ga*)” at first, they gradually became more comfortable with using the word to refer to their identities. During the first class, participants who were “general citizens” introducing themselves after a person identifying as a full-time activist rarely used the term “activist (*hwaldong-ga*).” However, this hesitance diminished as the classes asserted a need to broaden the category of “activists (*hwaldong-ga*)” and fostered collective learning experiences with the assumption that all of the participants are or could be activists. The last class of the program involved a workshop on the types of attributes associated with activists and reflections on what kind of activist participants identify as. At this stage,

participants felt at ease not only to identify as activists, but to openly discuss attributes that they thought were “required” of activists and whether they felt confident or not about these attributes. This shift reflects a transition by people who participated as “citizens” in the Advocacy School program from their initial experiences of liminality in identifying as “activists (*hwaldong-ga*)” to eventually embracing a new identity as “activists (*hwaldong-ga*)” at the end of the class.

Prompting individual liminality: Connecting movements vertically and horizontally

Another way that activist-educators seek to cultivate liminality at the individual level through the Advocacy School program is by connecting social movements vertically with strategies developed from past movements, as well as horizontally with movements that do not identify as citizens’ movements but share similar aspirations for social change. Such attempts to prompt individual liminality date back to the initial iterations of the program in the 2010s. Lee Tae-Ho, who was involved in developing the program from its beginning, traced the idea of the Advocacy School to an education group and model at PSPD in the 1990s called “The Peddlers (*boddari-jangsu*).” The group included several activists from different fields who collaborated on an education model and travelled through several fields of activism, similar to peddlers selling goods via foot. Lee Tae-Ho stated that people who engaged in The Peddlers (*boddari-jangsu*) group became experienced activists and shared a motivation to foster movement experiences that go beyond student movements. In particular, he explained that “going through neoliberalism, post-neoliberalism in the 2000s, we thought that the fusion of vision, fusion of ideas is very important. In other words, it’s not just networking that matters – networking different networks becomes crucial.” The Advocacy School in its initial model focused on activists with different

foci coming together to create an educational space for “networking of networks.” The initial design of the Advocacy School included several instructors with specializations in different fields. The instructors were experienced activists from different types of movements converging in a single program to share their accumulated expertise with budding, less experienced activists. In other words, the Advocacy School was designed to create potential ZPD for people who have worked as activists but are seeking more room for development.

There is Park, who is well-known in the field of human rights movements. And ... we would also invite some statistics specialists who would talk about current Korean status in society. Another includes direct action specialists – I always made sure to include them. And also another team working on non-violent peace activism. I would focus on the basics of advocacy ... or strategies of lobbying.

(Lee Tae-Ho)

This team-teaching model initially adopted at the Advocacy School changed during the course of its work, particularly due to the difficulty of aligning at least five people’s schedules and the time required for these people to discuss the overall flow of the program. Lee said that he still dreams of becoming a Peddler in the social movement field. Lee Tae-Ho took charge of the program by himself three to four years ago. He shared that the activist-educators in the academy continuously provide feedback about how to better the program. The activist-educators continue to call for more workshops and practicums based on experiential learning, though Lee feels that there is a lack of time for intensive practicums. Lee Song-Hee, the activist-educator in charge of the Advocacy School, always shares feedback with Lee Tae-Ho at the end of each class.

Through my years of leading the Advocacy school, I feel that there is a lot of limitations as to passing on some strategies to the learners. Strategies do not fit

perfectly because you've taken a class. ... Rather, I've come to understand that rather than strategies, we should focus on the basics. Not basics as in "how the traditional activists have done it before," but ... how I think of myself, how I think of other activists and the sort. Just by sharing these – I see that people with many different levels of experiences come to take this program – so if we accumulate these experiences effectively, it creates a collective arena of pondering about activism together. ... (Lee Tae-Ho)

In addition to the vertical connections to strategies and expertise built from past movements, another source of liminality for participating activists is to connect with and learn from other types of movements. After Lee Tae-Ho began teaching the program, he began to allot time for guest lecturers in the program. He would think of approximately three activists to invite that were relevant to the social dynamics of the time, and learners taking the class would vote on which guest lecturer they wanted to meet. The candidates for guest lectures came from movements such as the labor movement for the Serious Accident Punishment Act,²⁰ the feminist and human rights movements advocating for the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Law,²¹ and the environmental movement regarding the climate crisis. The class of 2021 chose to invite Choi Myung-Seon, an activist at the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions to talk about her activism calling for the enactment of the Serious Accident Punishment Act. Labor movements focused their work on this bill in 2020 and 2021, driving the enactment of the law in

²⁰ The Serious Accident Punishment Act information on the Serious Accident Punishment Act makes it possible to punish business owners, CEOs, public officials, and corporation that operate business or public facilities or deal with harmful ingredients or products. It has been a key issue for organizing in 2020 and 2021, led by labor movements. The Act became established and implemented from January 2022.

²¹ The Anti-Discrimination Law seeks to prohibit discrimination based on gender, sexuality, race, age, religion, etc. Along with the Serious Accident Punishment Act, the two laws have been considered to be key issues led by progressives in Korea. Numerous attempts to legislate the Anti-Discrimination Law in Korea has taken place since 1997. However, it still remains a task yet to be achieved.

January 2022. Choi Myung-Seon shared her experiences of organizing campaigns in general and specific details of how organizing for the Serious Accident Punishment Act proceeded. There are differences in organizing between citizens' movements and labor movements in that the former mainly adopts the direction of agenda-setting to challenge state institutions while the latter necessarily implements intensive internal processes of discussion and consensus. Nevertheless, Choi Myung-Seon identified similarities and solidarity across citizens' movements and labor movements in the social values that both movements are oriented towards. Both types of movements seek to challenge inequality and discrimination.

The collective decision to invite Choi as a guest lecturer not only signals the effectiveness of her activist campaigns, but also demonstrates how PSPD serves as a bridge between seemingly different labor and citizens' movements. While I did not realize the unique character of this function in the beginning of my fieldwork, my fieldwork at two other sites did not reveal continuous connections with labor movement organizations. Considering that PSPD has its own departments that focus on labor issues and given the history of PSPD in positioning itself as a "progressive citizens' movement organization" that does not prioritize differentiation from labor movements, this connection is unsurprising.

Prompting individual liminality: Drawing on movements around the globe for philosophy and strategies

The first slide used in the Advocacy School lecture presents the words of *subcomandante* Marcos, one of the leaders of the Zapatistas movement in Chiapas, Mexico (see Figure 10). His famous words, also the title of the book of his selected writings – "Our word is our weapon" – introduce the class to how advocacy is defined in this program. The philosophy of

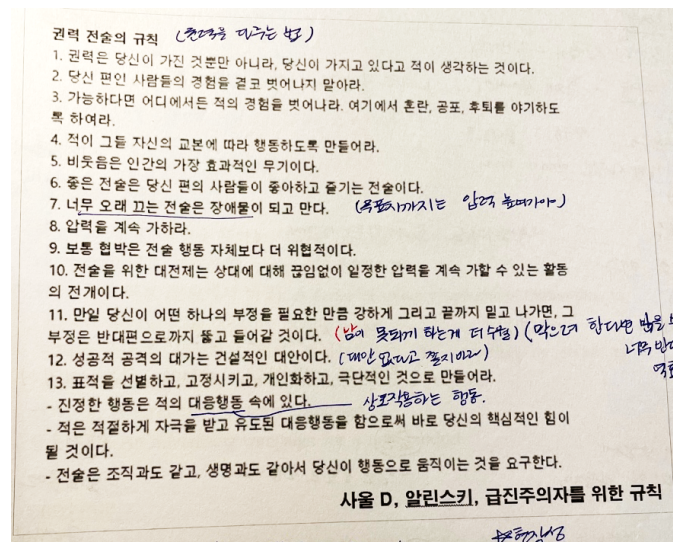
advocacy is addressed from a global perspective of change, drawing on movements from around the world, including the “We are the People” march in East Germany in 1989, “Another World is Possible!” at the 2001 World Social Forum, “Not In Our Name!” in 2003 against the Iraq War, and “We are the 99%” from the Occupy movement in New York in 2011. Advocacy work, Lee reflected, tends to be defined as the representation of interests, but he emphasized that the actual narratives, memories, and records also comprise important components for advocacy work in the long term, which empowers activists to challenge the status quo and make “noise.” Contrary to how Korean scholars in the 1990s considered how to define the unique characteristics of citizens’ movements (similar to how European scholars sought to distinguish “new” social movements), advocacy and activism discussed in the Advocacy School at PSPD are conceptualized as a continuum of strategic organizing with a common philosophy that change is possible.

Figure 10. Slide used in the Advocacy School



Another commonality across global movements that Lee Tae-Ho draws on are the strategies for organizing. Even with different specific focus areas, ways of mobilizing, persuading, and facilitating participation in efforts for change are shared across social movements. Along with Korean resources for activist strategies, a key material often cited throughout the program is the translated version of Saul Alinsky's (1971) *Rules for Radicals* (see Figure 11 below). Although the program does not assign reading materials to participants in advance, Lee Tae-Ho provides materials with the 13 principles of movement strategies from Alinsky's book.

Figure 11. Class materials on Alinsky's 13 rules



Lee Tae-Ho recognizes that Alinsky's way of oppositional organizing may not fit well in the contemporary era. He noted that:

[opposing and challenging the other point of view is important] but I think that in the end, social consensus is important. Attacking the other side may be important

but eventually, I came to realize that truly listening to one another and understanding is the most important for social movements. ... Transformation and revolution are important, but I think a real revolution to move forward requires its individual members to change their minds a little bit, and making consensus a little bit.

(Lee Tae-Ho)

In this way, the contents of the program are designed to address different modes of organizing in a continuum – from oppositional to peaceful protests– and to share Lee’s understanding of what he considers important in the current context of Korea.

The Nashville civil rights movement in the US is a major subject for the all-day workshop on Saturday. Participants watch a video (see Video 1 below) on the Nashville civil rights movement and reflect on the movement based on organizing strategies they have previously learned, including Korean guidelines or Alinsky’s 13 rules. Parallels are made between the non-violence philosophy of the Nashville civil rights movement and aspirations of citizens’ movements.

Participants share their ideas, comments, and questions after watching the video. For example, one participant noted the importance of non-violent movements seeking to “educate a large number of constituents and win them over,” but shared that this aim is not easily achieved.

Participants also expressed awe at how the students’ sit-in movements spread to the community, which expanded the scale and breadth of their actions. This type of expansion has occurred in Korea, but many participants shared that they find this connection with the community increasingly difficult to build. Several participants emphasized how much they respect the participants of the Nashville civil rights movement, considering the potential threats they face in order to participate. Particularly for participants who have oscillated about whether the path of a full-time activist is indeed “right” for them, reflections were sparked about whether they would

have the courage to organize in such social contexts.

Video 1. Video of the Nashville civil rights movement, "We were warriors"



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gs14dOW2lFw&t=46s>

Lee Tae-Ho emphasizes that the series of non-violent actions in the Nashville civil rights movement were a result of meticulous planning and a technique of dramatizing that increased the impact in the community and the nation. The connection from student movements, to the community, even to the mayor also parallels how citizens' movements in Korea developed from student movements and seek to draw a large number of people into non-violent actions to pressure the state. The fact that specific issues of racism, discrimination, and imperialism were not discussed in the activity may be regarded as a limitation. It may reflect the current lack of interest in the issue of racism in Korean society or an unspoken consensus among participants that racism, discrimination, and imperialism should be challenged. These efforts to develop a comparative lens reject the tendency to move away from differentiating among specific movements (e.g., environmentalism, anti-corruption, feminism, labor movements), encouraging

the identification of commonalities for activists to talk about and share their concerns, broadening their lenses beyond the current time and place of their own activism. In this way, the Advocacy School at Academy Neutinamu seeks to build a space for activists from different focus areas to view their work in a continuum rather than as separate fields.

Beyond the organization: A transitory educational space for activists

The participants who enroll in the class are key to building the program as a “live” arena for discussing activism in the current era and learning from previous experiences. The experiences of participants in the program during my fieldwork ranged across several areas and years. Activists from feminist organizations, activists from environmental movement organizations, activists from youth movements, activists from religious movements, novice PSPD activists, a social worker interested in taking a more activist-oriented approach to his social work, and people who were more comfortable identifying themselves as “interested citizens” joined the program. Among the 20 participants enrolled, the highest number of participants worked in the field of environmental activism, albeit in different organizations. Many activists noted that they had been waiting to enroll in this annual program. Some stated that their fellow activists had failed to enroll in the program that year, and that they hoped to take the program in the following year. The program has become quite well known for novice activists and activists who have accumulated several years of experience. As shown in the composition of activists detailed above, the participants tend to identify with a wide range of activism.

The contents of the program can be categorized into two themes: content that seeks to enhance the competencies of (potential) activists and content that seeks to deal with dilemmas

and ambiguities that activists face. Content for enhancing competencies has already been discussed in previous sections, including analyzing and sharing strategies from diverse historical and current movements. The program also includes one-to-one mentoring sessions outside of the class with the educator in charge, Lee Tae-Ho. These components enhance the competencies of participants in organizing, mobilizing, and developing strategies. Another component of the program is to provide opportunities for activists to share their concerns, dilemmas, and anxieties. A common question shared among people with various experience was how to sustain their lives and careers as activists. Many shared feelings of isolation, particularly when they encounter people disinterested in politics in social circles outside of their activist work. They recognized that the concerns and thoughts they have differ from some people who they have personal relations with – maybe family, maybe friends. Whether and how to persuade these people and if this is a part of their responsibility as an activist poses a difficult conundrum. The Advocacy School offers opportunities for these activists to share such dilemmas with fellow activists based on a comfortable distance they develop with other participants, as they share an identity as activists but do not work closely together in specific movements.

Thus, the Advocacy School is a transitory educational space for (potential) activists to freely join the programs, gain competencies, and enjoy opportunities to reflect on their personal dilemmas as activists, before moving onto their respective activities beyond PSPD when they “graduate” from the program. The goal of the program is not attracting activists or members into PSPD, but to provide resources and the space for activists across society. In this way, activist-educators at Academy Neutnamu seek to go beyond the immediate advocacy and campaign work at PSPD in order to provide an educational hub for progressive-leaning activists in Korean society.

Beyond the organization: Confronting the here-and-now of Korean activism through the lens of learners

A further way in which the activities in the Advocacy School extend beyond PSPD as an organization is through the interactions that occur in the program. As many of the participants are full-time activists at an organization, a key dilemma that arises in the program is the issue of the general public's discomfort toward social movement organizations and how activists, as part of organizations, should process this discomfort.

I was shocked when a widespread feminist movement against hidden cameras that film women in public restrooms explicitly rejected any official organization from getting involved. We have resources that we can offer, but I think it's telling that the organizers rejected *both* the participation of males along with anyone associated with social movement organizations. There even appeared some derisive words against who people consider to be "hard-core" activists. (participant in the Advocacy School)

Many other participants nodded at this comment, indicating that they also faced similar dilemmas as organization-based activists. Although this topic was not explicitly addressed in the program and curriculum that Lee Tae-Ho had previously designed, it is a dilemma that organizers continue to face along with balancing their personal lives and work as an activist. The dilemma extends beyond the identity of an individual activist to a dilemma that stems from an activist's position to be based in an organization. The instructor may not have a final answer, but is in the process of exploring the position of organization-based activists. Based on his experience of large-scale organizing against US-imported beef with the threat of the Mad Cow Disease in 2008, Lee recollects the differences in the atmosphere in the rallying fields where

individual participants in the rallies would demand social movement organizations to hold the flag of their organizations down because they did not want to be affiliated with particular organizations. Any affiliation with an organization was perceived with caution and doubt. Reflecting on this experience, Lee shared that the belief and self-confidence of individuals seems to have decreased, particularly considering the larger civil society that tends to be represented by a few civil society organizations. It is also true that the boundary of an organization may result in limits for what kinds of actions individuals can take. Although his stance is that democratic thinking and decision-making are better served through organizational mechanisms, this interpretation is rejected by some individuals, who doubt the extent of democracy within organizations.

The Advocacy School program itself does not offer a straightforward “answer” to this dilemma. However, participating learners’ contributions are key mechanisms through which previous methods of organizing and advocacy work are connected to the contexts that activists currently face, including identifying areas that need to be further contemplated and areas where activists can feel more confident and resourceful. “The ideal way for me to organize the Advocacy School is to build it into a series with different foci – which is not practically possible at the moment,” Lee Tae-Ho stated. While the course began from a “Peddler” model in which experienced activists could share their know-how, gradual processes of change and the interactional nature of education activities have added another dimension to the original design: addressing the dilemmas of the here and now and confronting difficult questions about ways to move forward. This dimension raises questions and creates tasks not only for participants in the program, but also for the activist-educators at Academy Neutnamu and activists at PSPD, including the instructor, Lee Tae-Ho. The in-between space filled through the Advocacy School

connects past activism work not only to current activists, but also to future directions for activism in Korea. It prompts activists and activist-educators at PSPD to think of potential ways to address the current limitations of the organization. A summary of how Advocacy School fills in-between space at PSPD is shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Filling the in-between space through the Advocacy School

How do activist-educators design and implement activities of democratic citizenship education activities? (How do activist-educators design and implement individual-level liminality?)	1) Broadening the category of “activists”
	2) Connecting movements vertically and horizontally
	3) Drawing on movements around the globe for philosophy and strategies
What kinds of visions and processes for deepening democracy are embedded in activities of democratic citizenship education activities? (How do activities from within the organization go beyond the organization?)	1) A transitory educational space for activists
	2) Confronting the here-and-now of Korean activism through the lens of learners

“Timely sex education for myself and my life”

The in-between space at Academy Neutnamu has made room for Han Chae-Yoon, an activist working with sexual minorities, to engage in educational activities within the boundaries of PSPD. Han Chae-Yoon is currently an executive director at the Beyond the Rainbow Foundation in Korea and has engaged in activism for sexual minorities in Korea since 1997. She plays a major role in the annual Seoul Queer Cultural Festivals, writes for the first Korean magazine dedicated to the issue of sexual minorities called *Buddy*, and actively takes part in education activities. She is also part of a platform for offering education related to issues of sexual minorities called the *Korean Sexual-Minority Culture and Rights Center*. When asked about any changes she went through in her journey of activist work, Han Chae-Yoon recalled that in the 1990s, she thought that enough information and knowledge about sexual minorities

would naturally lead to a reduction in discrimination and hatred against sexual minorities.

However, she ultimately realized that,

the biggest difference between the 1990s and after mid-2000s in Korean society is that there are people who explicitly and intentionally, systematically seek to spread hatred against sexual minorities. They are like ‘Sexual minorities are weird. Let’s hate them together.’ ... Because the society has changed this way, we also need allies who stand by our side and argue against these intentional attempts. (Han Chae-Yoon)

In this way, she connects education activities for sexual minorities with democratic citizenship education. It has become much more important to reach out to the general public in addition to people who are directly struggling through their sexual identities.

The first time that Han Chae-Yoon came into contact with PSPD was through internal workshops for PSPD activists. Activists at PSPD had concerns about their largely male-dominated, heteronormative membership base, with many members joining PSPD in the 1990s focusing on institutional politics. At the time, social movements were diversifying into several areas, with some female activists in the 1980s critiquing the male-dominated character of organizing and establishing their own paths of feminist and gender equality movements (Kwon, Insook, 2000). Contrary to this trend, the “mainstream” of social movements was citizens’ movements represented by large organizations such as PSPD. The composition of PSPD’s members, compared to the high ratio of female activists working at PSPD, would sometimes create additional stress for the activists. Han took part in an internal workshop about gender sensitivity and ways to respond to insensitive words or actions. This workshop illustrates the

inner dynamics within PSPD that confront issues of how to realize democracy within person-to-person relations in addition to macro-level efforts against the state or conglomerates.

Han Chae-Yoon has offered programs at Academy Neutinuamu for approximately 3 years. Her courses include “Gender and democracy,” which examines the tendency for democracy to be considered through masculine and hetero-normative assumptions, and “Timely sex education for myself and my life,” which offers sex education that directly embraces gender diversity. During my fieldwork at Academy Neutinuamu, the program offered was the latter. It was the second time to offer the program, and it was an online program through Zoom due to Covid-19. The syllabus was as follows.

Program Introduction

When you’re young, people would say “Why teach something like this for a child so young!” and when you’re older, people say “Why bother to teach something like this now you’ve all grown.” In this way, people sidestep and avoid sex education.

You thought that when you grow up, love, relations, sex will all become familiar to you. However, when you actually do grow up, you face more questions. “Why is it so difficult?” “Am I doing it right?” “Not everyone seems to be very good. Is it maybe the way that life is?”

Even if you want relevant knowledge and information, it is difficult to figure out what’s right. That’s why we prepared this program. People who want to properly learn about sex, people who have been overlooked of sex education from school education. We hope this could be a timely sex education for anyone interested.

Schedule

4/6

[Do reproductive organs refer to sexual organs? Let’s first get to know about “my” body and “others” bodies]

When talking about sex, people often mention orgasm, various positions of the body, or elaborate techniques, dominating the discourse from masculine perspectives. Do reproductive organs refer to sexual organs? Are sexual desires instincts? In order to answer these questions, let’s first get to know about the “structure of the body.” Whether it’s with people from the other sex, the same sex, or by yourself, understanding the basics become foundations for applications.

4/13

[The more you know, the more power it gives you: Ways to enjoy healthy and joyful sex lives]

We'll talk about topics that you were secretly curious about, but had difficulty talking about it out loud. If you were curious about enjoying sex without pain or anxiety about sexually transmitted diseases, were eager to know your options about contraception, and were curious about how to use sex toys, let's talk about it in this class. We also look into long-time taboos and prejudices in sex, such as BDSM. If you had questions that you could not ask before, let's talk about it all in this class. The more you know, the more power it gives you.

4/20

[The difference between “having”²² sex and “engaging in” sex: For a healthy and equal sex life]

A one-night with a stranger is dangerous whereas sex between partners or couples is safe? Is that really so? How can we enjoy safe and equal sex lives? Let's figure out ways to talk about respectful and consensual sex with our friends and colleagues without making a mistake.

4/27

[Can we love for life? Dealing with anxiety in relationships]

We spend a lot of time between anxieties of “Will I be able to fall in love?” and “Will this love last?” We sometimes ask ourselves whether love is a necessity or wonder why we are not happy even though in love. Being in pain through breakups and setting relationships with your exes is also not an easy task. The answer to all these questions is not “marriage” either. Let's investigate about love.

Instructor Introduction

Han, Chae-Yoon. The executive director of the Beyond the Rainbow foundation. She is a human rights activist and have abundant experiences in sexual counselling and sex education. She has written and co-authored [multiple books in Korean].

Prompting individual liminality: Encouraging participants to think outside of their boxes

Tailoring the program is not limited to a discussion of the content. Han also noted that she places focus on short-term lectures about sexual minorities and further tailors her way of

²² The differentiation here between “having” (*katneunda*) and “engaging in” (*maetneunda*) sex comes from two different Korean linguistic expressions for having sex. The former expression directly translates into “having sex” in the English language, but there is no corresponding English phrase for the latter when it is used in relation to sex.

engaging with participants when offering programs at PSPD. Teaching about topics related to sex may not directly address sexual minorities, but the goal is directly related to raising awareness about sexual minorities and combating prejudice – a difficult task to achieve when the focus of education is the knowledge and content that it covers. Han articulated that her usual educational goals take on a different emphasis.

People usually do not remember the contents they learn in education programs. ... Even though you take notes, you later think “Oh that’s what I learned!” ... I think the main part is to take the classes, and have something that touches upon learners, that eventually leads them to think that they need to change the way their perspectives toward the world. Leaving this behind is so important. ... For this to happen, they need to know that their previous knowledge may in fact be wrong. Taking what they already know out of their minds before filling it in with new ideas. ... If they find that what they had been thinking by themselves is not wrong but in fact correct, ... for them to wonder “what is actually real?” “What’s the exact knowledge about this?” And for them to have a good experience in getting to learn about new kinds of knowledge. For the learning experience itself to feel good. (Han, Chae-Yoon)

Her teaching philosophy manifests in her teaching in ways that stimulate participants to think outside of their boxes, to elicit questions that they have never thought of before. For example, in the first class of “Timely sex education,” one of the first activities is for participants to draw an anatomical picture of male reproductive organs, naming the anatomical terms with the knowledge that they currently have. Through the “safety” and distance afforded in a Zoom class, the participants all took out papers and attempted to draw. Many people seemed surprised about

how little they knew about the anatomy. Han leads this activity into the statement that reproductive organs do not equate sexual organs. She states that any part of the body can be used for sexual activity and that there is no anatomical category of “sexual organs.” These provocative questions embedded throughout the program prompt participants to think beyond their previous conceptions little by little.

Another way that Han prompts participants to think outside of their boxes is by providing an anonymous way to ask questions after each class. She emphasizes that *any* question – even if it may seem insensitive or direct – is acceptable by offering some examples of questions that she has previously received from her learners. She may answer the anonymous question directly to the person if the person had contact through their own email, address the topic in the class contents, or answer the question in the next class if she thinks that it would be beneficial. Participants actively utilize this question mechanism, with a few questions from the previous session always discussed during a class. For example, after a discussion about how sex does not equate with love, an anonymous participant commented that s/he was shocked upon hearing this idea and wanted further clarification. This discussion was therefore continued in the next class, as participants considered how equating love and sex could lead to narrow and isolating definitions of sex.

Prompting individual liminality: Addressing gender and sexuality through democracy

Han described an additional consideration that she heeds when preparing and teaching classes at Academy Neutnamu.

When I go out to give lectures, I analyze the potential learners. People who take classes at PSPD at least are willing and actively wish to become “good” citizens. They are different from when I go to programs for bureaucrats [who are mandated to take classes]. However, I’m also aware that the desire to become a “good” citizen, to become “just” sometimes works in an odd way that some people may have extensive obsessions about the normal and abnormal. ... For example, that democracy is normal, that being progressive is normal whereas conservatives are bad – these kinds of dichotomies. So it’s possible to see these people [who wish to become “good” citizens] being politically progressive but sexually conservative. However, these very people are taking the class – even if they don’t need to – to become just people. (Han, Chae-Yoon)

Many people who take classes at Academy Neutnamu are members of PSPD or have positive feelings about PSPD as an organization. They often identify as politically progressive, in alignment with the trajectory that PSPD has followed with its activism. However, the activism most pursued by PSPD centers on institutional politics (Politics with a “P”) and macro-level issues, such as welfare policies or action against large-scale conglomerates. Gender issues and sexual minorities are unfamiliar topics in politics for many of these people, which Han considers important to take into account when teaching at PSPD. She mentioned that she takes great care not to hurt participants’ pride as political progressives and to respect the activities they have supported and engaged in, but that she seeks to convey a sense that “To be a *really good* progressive, here are some more things you need to know.”

In other words, a process of incorporating gender and sexuality issues under the banner of democracy and progressive values takes place. The program provides an arena for members of

PSPD, who tend to focus on the activities of PSPD related to their progressive political values and the role of watchdog of the state and conglomerates, to expand their views to integrate gender and sexuality issues under the name of “democracy.” This arena creates an opportunity for members to re-think their interpretations of the concept, potentially resulting in individual liminality between prior notions of democracy based on electoral politics to a wider notion of democracy that includes social and political rights.

Beyond the organization: Gender and sexuality as a continuous theme addressed at Academy Neutnamu

Han recalled that she was approached by an activist-educator at the academy, Kim Seung-Hwan, to offer a lecture. He had contacted her in his initial attempt to design a program.

We exchanged *a lot* of emails designing this program for the first time. ... It’s not easy for a person who has not specialized in teaching sex education to actually design a program. ... His initial focus was on sexual politics around contraception – like why men tend not to use condoms even though it’s one of the best ways for contraception. However, I felt that if we emphasize contraception as a major component, the end result will be masculine-centered and hetero-normative. ...

Emphasizing the use of condoms to protect health is not wrong, but it may mislead some people to think that it’s to protect women’s health which some men attack that it’s “selfish.” ... These aspects are masked when you just say “Let’s use condoms for contraception.” ... Rather than going this way, I suggested why don’t we talk about why it’s so difficult to learn about contraception, why it’s difficult to

talk about contraception even if you want it. The question of why is it difficult for people to talk about sex at all. (Han Chae-Yoon)

Han's interaction with Kim via email illustrates the processes of developing programs at the academy, which extends beyond the engagement of activist-educators at the academy to the guest instructors. Activist-educators invest a great deal of time and effort into researching and designing initial drafts of the syllabus, particularly for programs that are newly launched. These drafts serve as a basis for the activist-educator at the academy and the invited instructor to adjust their understandings and discuss the best way to design a course. The focus of the sex education program was to encourage participants to feel safe to talk about topics related to sex where they felt "prohibited" to do so in other contexts.

I think it has a huge significance that PSPD is interested in the topic of feminism and queers and seeks to open classes related to it, and invite activists in the field as instructors. It means that PSPD has begun to realize that what has been referred to as democracy had in fact been very male-centered and heteronormative – and that they have begun to realize that this is problematic. I heard that many female members of PSPD were delighted to have these classes offered. ... Members may have had some thirst about it – why does democracy always have to be about Politics with a "P", about who to vote for as president, and about relations with conglomerates? Does the world change just through these issues? (Han, Chae-Yoon)

I think I have been an activist-educator particularly interested in issues of feminism and gender equality. I thought in the beginning [as I joined PSPD] that there are programs that focus on the legal, institutional aspects of society, but there

is a relative weakness in responding to minority issues. We do have mechanisms for building solidarity, but there is no dedicated department for it ... Therefore, I thought that the Academy unravelling the issues related to minority rights through education was something that needed to be done and something that balances our work. I focused specifically on feminist, gender issues among the minority issues.

(Kim Seung-Hwan)

In addition to the “Timely sex education” program, various types of learning opportunities are continuously designed around the issue of feminism and sexual minorities. For example, in the academy, reading clubs are offered as a unique form of education activities focused on participants spending time to read particular texts and talk about the issues rather than an instructor leading the program. There is a facilitator for reading clubs, but with a more flexible role compared to education programs. A reading club called *Rainbow* asks participants to read books related to feminism and sexuality, with learners exchanging short reading memos before getting together for discussions. Another learning opportunity is an experimental type of endeavor where people get drinks together and talk about issues that go against norms. Talks have been organized on topics such as polyamory that challenge how love and relationships are defined and how the norm of a family is enforced. There are also multiple types of education programs related to gender on topics such as sexual minorities and democracy, the recent refusal of a women’s university in Korea to admit a transgender individual, and bridging feminist and queer movements.

PSPD’s venturing into programs on gender politics and sexual minorities demonstrates how Kim Seung-Hwan as an activist educator at the academy is willing and eager to broaden how activists in the organization interpret democracy. Designing the education program does not

mean that all the PSPD activists are fully aware of issues related to gender and sexuality. The interaction with activists external to PSPD and with invited instructors such as Han creates an opportunity for activist-educators at the academy to be at the frontiers of learning about new topics, engaging in research and learning about types of activism unfamiliar to PSPD.

Through these processes, it is possible for topics that are relatively new or not addressed at other departments within PSPD to be discussed through education programs at Academy Neutinuamu. In fact, gender and sexuality has become a topic that is continuously addressed at the academy (see Table 8 below). The topic was not a one-time offering; rather, the academy is continuously developing programs to find new angles through which gender and sexuality can be addressed. These program offerings not only offer stimulus for members at PSPD to learn more about gender and sexuality, but also reflect the continuous work that activist-educators are doing to engage with minority issues that are missing in other departments within PSPD.

Table 8. Programs related to gender and sexuality offered at Academy Neutinuamu

Semester	Program Title
2022 Winter	Gender minorities and democracy
2021 Fall	Sex education with men
2021 Spring	Timely sex education for myself and my life
2020 Fall	[Conversation] Non-monopolizing romantic relationships: About poly-amory
2020 Fall	[Reading club] Reading about feminism and gender issues
2020 Summer	[One-day reading club] Reading <i>Your Genuine Self: Transgenders, Discrimination, and Health</i>
2020 Spring	Again, questioning gender
2020 Spring	Timely sex education for myself and my life
2019 Fall, 2019 Spring	[Reading club] Feminism, democracy eros: Finding the way for women as “thrown” beings into the world
2019 Summer	Reading <i>The Politics of Me-too</i> with the author
2018 Winter	Feminism reading circle
2018 Fall	Feminism and democracy
2017 Summer	Feminism Q&A: We question the masculinity (?) that we want

2017 Spring, 2016 Winter	Gender, sexuality, democracy: Beyond misconceptions and prejudice
2016 Summer	Gender equality: Intended amnesia and subtle accessory in Korean democracy

Beyond the organization: From practices in a program to shifts in PSPD as an organization

The program analyzed above represents part of a larger concerted effort within PSPD to broaden the organization’s efforts to deepen democracy. However, the activities that occur in a program are not restricted in influence on participants alone. Furthermore, what constitutes a “program” is not limited to the content and pedagogy. An example is a program offered at the academy in 2020, “Again, questioning gender,” which discussed issues of transgender identities, queer movements, and feminist movements. Along with the content, activist-educators established all-gender restrooms on the floor where the program took place (see Figure 12). Given the content covered in the program, it would have been incongruous for the academy not to offer any other options beyond female and male restrooms. The restrooms were a temporary measure, run specifically during the times when classes were held. Yet, despite the limited amount of time, this effort made a significant step in driving change within the organization.

Figure 12. Sign announcing all-gender restrooms in 2020



All-gender restrooms remain a hotly debated topic in Korea (Park, Han-Hee, 2020). The current Korean law states that public restrooms are to be “divided as male and female restrooms,” and according to a report by the National Human Rights Commission of Korea in 2021, 39.2% of transgender individuals surveyed answered that they intentionally did not eat or drink when going to public places so as not to go to public restrooms and 36% gave up using public restrooms. After the murder of a woman by a male stranger in a restroom near Gangnam station in 2016, the issue of safety in restrooms has received widespread attention and escalated the debate on female and male restrooms. Furthermore, women in Korea face a serious violation of privacy due to illegal, discrete filming at public restrooms, as discussed in the report *My life is not your porn: Digital sex crimes in South Korea* (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Such issues complicate initiatives to introduce all-gender restrooms in Korea. For example, Sungkonghoe University’s attempt to introduce one-person all-gender restrooms on the campus was thwarted due to heated debate (Jeong, Banseok, 2017).

Given the complex nature of implementing all-gender restrooms in Korea, the permanent renovation at PSPD of an all-gender restroom in late 2021 marks a significant step. Through the experimental and temporary implementation of all-gender restrooms at the academy, activists and activist-educators accumulated hands-on experience about running all-gender restrooms. The continuous flow of gender and sexuality issues discussed at the academy also prompts activists at PSPD to consistently think about issues of gender, sexual minorities, and transgender rights. This renovation will also influence program participants or people who come to PSPD to take classes, meet activists, or for any other purposes. The initiative to create an all-gender restroom indicates that the programs offered through the academy are not bounded to past and current issues mainstreamed at PSPD. It is through the academy that unfamiliar issues

in other departments are introduced and integrated to influence PSPD as an organization. A summary of how programs related to gender and sexuality fill in-between space at PSPD is shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Filling the in-between space through programs addressing gender and sexuality

How do activist-educators design and implement activities of democratic citizenship education activities? (How do activist-educators design and implement individual-level liminality?)	1) Encouraging participants to think outside of their boxes
	2) Addressing gender and sexuality through democracy
What kinds of visions and processes for deepening democracy are embedded in activities of democratic citizenship education activities? (How do activities from within the organization go beyond the organization?)	1) Gender and sexuality as a continuous theme addressed at Academy Neutinamu
	2) From practices in a program to shifts in PSPD as an organization

Deepening democracy from within and beyond Academy Neutinamu and PSPD

Within PSPD as a representative citizens' movement organization well known for its campaigns and advocacy work, democratic citizenship education has developed as an independent activity system from the organizing activities. Although education activity at first was subsumed under the goals of increasing the organization's strength through a focus on membership and support for campaigns and protests, the academy has evolved into having its own goals that are distinct from past goals based on resource mobilization. The current goal of developing "intellect, spirituality, and emotional sensitivity" for deepening democracy, is vaguely formulated, yet clearly distinct from past notions of the goals of education activities. Along with the development of distinct work practices and cycles at Academy Neutinamu, I argue that this "in-between space" formed by the separation of education activities from organizing activities provides activist-educators an opportunity to fill the space with novel or experimental attempts for deepening democracy within the boundaries of PSPD as an

organization. I therefore investigate how activist-educators have filled such in-between spaces by examining the development and implementation of education programs at the academy.

This analysis is made possible by following how texts that guide the preparation of education programs “travel through” PSPD, including advertisement to the public as well as actual interactions in classes. The extent to which common texts underpin activist-educators’ activities makes it possible to fathom the extent of activity systems specifically dedicated to democratic citizenship education at PSPD. Through this analysis, the everyday practices that activist-educators engage in become explicit – actions that are taken for granted alone, but that elicit insights into the question of how activist-educators cultivate directions for social change from within and beyond citizens’ movement organizations. From their standpoint, the defining character that distinguishes activist-educators from other activists is a prioritization of the identity of researchers looking into long-term organizational goals. What new kinds of issues need to be addressed by PSPD as an organization? What roles can PSPD play as an organization regarding these issues? These are questions that activist-educators at PSPD consider. The process of designing an education program is an articulation of how an individual activist-educator thinks regarding important directions for social change in the near future. In other words, the repertoire of education programs offered at PSPD is a collective articulation of potential directions for social change by activist-educators.

Through the Advocacy School and programs related to gender and sexuality issues offered at the academy, I analyze how activist-educators seek to foster liminal experiences for potential participants and how the education activities connect to making changes in society beyond the organization (see Table 10 below).

Table 10. Filling the in-between space at Academy Neutinuamu

How do activist-educators design and implement activities of democratic citizenship education activities? (How do activist-educators design and implement individual-level liminality?)	Advocacy school
	1) Broadening the category of “activists”
	2) Connecting movements vertically and horizontally
	3) Drawing on movements around the globe for philosophy and strategies
	Gender and sexuality programs (e.g., Timely sex education)
	1) Encouraging participants to think outside of their boxes
What kinds of visions and processes for deepening democracy are embedded in activities of democratic citizenship education activities? (How do activities from within the organization go beyond the organization?)	2) Addressing gender and sexuality through democracy
	Advocacy school
	1) A transitory educational space for activists
	2) Confronting the here-and-now of Korean activism through the lens of learners
	Gender and sexuality programs (e.g., Timely sex education)
	1) Gender and sexuality as a continuous theme addressed at Academy Neutinuamu
	2) From practices in a program to shifts in PSPD as an organization

Through these strategies that activist-educators draw on, I characterize two ways in which activist-educators at Academy Neutinuamu seek to deepen democracy. First, activist-educators seek to develop networks among various spectrums of “activists” – from different types of movements and ranging from full-time to budding activists. These networks are not bound to the spatial-temporal context of Korea, but forge connections to historical and global movements for activists to gain a broad perspective of their activities. The construction of such networks is directly related to fostering active agents who can become nodes throughout the society, from which attempts for social change can stem. A second way in which activist-educators at the academy seek to deepen democracy is by broadening the breadth of issues dealt

with at PSPD as an organization through education activities. The central departments within PSPD focus on institutions or legal measures to confront macro-level issues in Korean society. Activist-educators identify other issues not addressed by central departments at PSPD, such as minority issues, to target in their education activities. Doing so not only prompts members and activists to think outside of their previous boxes regarding what constitutes the core value of democracy, but also results in significant change within PSPD as an organization.

Based on the activities at Academy Neutinamu, I argue that adult education activities such as democratic citizenship education are a key mechanism through which the work in a citizens' movement organization goes beyond direct campaigns or protest work. Running the education activities as an independent activity system from the mainstream work of the organization opens up in-between spaces through which connections are more easily built with other activists and new possibilities for the organization to move forward are incorporated. This mechanism represents a potential direction through which to develop a confluence of collective agency across different types of movements, including different agendas and individual and organization-based activists. It is a collective process through which concrete directions for "deepening democracy" can be developed as a united front against "norms" that prioritize institutional forms of democracy.

6. Deepening democracy in Gwangmyeong city

In Gwangmyeong city, democratic citizenship education emerges from two different organizations with different starting points: the Gwangmyeong YMCA, based on a sub-division within citizens' movements that focus on grassroots community organizing, and the Gwangmyeong LLC, which arose from the development of the state-led framework of lifelong education in South Korea in the 2000s. Even with different starting points, the two organizations both emphasize working with residents living in Gwangmyeong city with an aim to cultivate a community. The Gwangmyeong YMCA is open to engagement with the state as well as to interactions with lifelong education institutions such as the Gwangmyeong LLC. This characteristic is a contrast to PSPD, which is related to the different sub-divisions from which each organization developed. The emphasis on grassroots community organizing at the Gwangmyeong YMCA means that activists seek to identify the needs and demands of local residents to enable these residents to become political actors in the community. This emphasis on local residents' needs and demands resonates with the approach of the Gwangmyeong LLC, where local government funding is utilized to offer nonformal education to Gwangmyeong residents.

Both the Gwangmyeong YMCA and Gwangmyeong LLC went through liminal processes through which they solidified the identities of their organizations by searching for in-between spaces in which activist-educators could engage through adult education activities. The two organizations identified and filled these in-between spaces in different directions, with activists at the Gwangmyeong YMCA developing their own repertoire of education activities while the Gwangmyeong LLC eventually came under the direct management of the local government as the concept of nonformal adult education became widely accepted by local

residents. The different organizational trajectories resulted in the creation of another in-between space between publicly funded nonformal adult education activities and education activities explicitly identified as democratic citizenship education by local community organizations, with the Gwangmyeong YMCA as an influential organization. This in-between space became evident through an initiative to create a new organizational format of “intermediary supporting organizations” for democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong. Although the specific mechanisms through which an “intermediary supporting organization” could support democratic citizenship education was unclear, this notion became rooted in Gwangmyeong through the inter-organizational network for democratic citizenship education that began developing in the in-between space. Compared to the initial strategies at the Gwangmyeong YMCA and Gwangmyeong LLC to identify and fill in-between spaces through unique activities, the in-between space at the intermediary supporting organization is filled by activist-educators illuminating common understandings and directions for democratic citizenship education while ensuring that such understandings can be readily adapted by different organizations.

How do activist-educators at the Gwangmyeong YMCA seek to deepen democracy? First, the Gwangmyeong YMCA developed its unique characteristics through activist-educators identifying the in-between space among education opportunities provided and the activities of women (mainly housewives) in the Gwangmyeong community. This in-between space was filled through education activities which aimed to identify the seemingly “trivial” issues that women face. The issue of bribery at schools emerged as a common denominator, which led previously non-activist residents to actively become engaged in protests against school bribery and even to call for a new type of organization (alternative elementary school) to “escape” the bribery. While this case serves as an example of education activities creating individual liminality and

eventually leading to new organizational attempts, the activists recognized the limitations of the approach of “escaping” for prompting large-scale societal change. Second, the in-between space at the inter-organizational level between the Gwangmyeong YMCA and the local LLC was filled by activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education through two levels: 1) introducing new organizational arrangements and 2) focusing on the activities, rather than the content, of democratic citizenship education as a basis for organizing shared goals. In terms of introducing new organizational arrangements, activists and educators across various organizations who had an interest in democratic citizenship education created a network for democratic citizenship education that incorporated not only citizens’ movement organizations, but also community organizations and several public institutions (LLC, libraries, offices of education) in Gwangmyeong. This network became a firm foundation for activist-educators to integrate municipal-level initiatives to create local “Centers for Democratic Citizenship Education (DCE).” Despite the vague guidelines for creating these centers as “intermediary supporting organizations,” this new organizational format aligned with the already established network to fit the local context of democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong. After introducing the new organizational arrangements of the network and the center, room for collaboration across the various organizations in the network was created by focusing on the issue of how to characterize democratic citizenship education. Rather than focusing on specific issues to be addressed through democratic citizenship education – such as critiques of schooling, inequalities in gender, and environmental problems – activist-educators and researchers at the center focused on the issue of how democratic citizenship education is perceived. Working to counteract tendencies to depoliticize democratic citizenship education by focusing on general morals and ethics required of “model citizens,” the center developed common curricula that

members of the network could freely draw on and adapt that instead focus on reclaiming the ambiguous semantical category of “the political” and “political participation.” Through these processes, activist-educators cultivated collective agency at the inter-organizational level among various organization in the Gwangmyeong region. Instead of specific content addressed through education activities becoming the basis for collective agency, how the activity of democratic citizenship education itself is characterized became a united front for diverse organizations in the Gwangmyeong Network to collaborate. Thus, democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong analyzed through the lens of the Gwangmyeong YMCA illustrates two insights for cultivating collective agency through organizations. First, there are different levels of in-between space, the intra-organizational level and inter-organizational level, with different strategies. Activists working to cultivate collective agency through the former in-between space focus on unique agendas to characterize their organization, whereas collective agency through the latter is based on the cultivation of commonality. Second, education activities are not merely “tools” for cultivating collective agency on particular issues; rather, the characterization of education activity can provide an arena for organizing. In Gwangmyeong, focusing on the characterization of democratic citizenship education as “political” has enabled a united front for building collective agency across organizations with different emphases.

Based on the activities at the Gwangmyeong YMCA, what does deepening democracy mean for its activist-educators? What kinds of visions for deepening democracy do they embed in the activities? Rather than focusing on specific agendas for deepening democracy, activists and educators in the Gwangmyeong Network explicitly embrace the emphasis on political participation in the characterization of democratic citizenship education activities. This characterization elicits collaboration among organizations in the community with different

backgrounds and emphases on education, including lifelong education institutions, libraries, civil society organizations with a marginal emphasis on education, and organizations dedicated to democratic citizenship education. Thus, the case of Gwangmyeong illustrates an alternative approach to cultivating collective agency at the inter-organizational level where education activities are not only instruments for organizing, but comprise the topic for organizing across organizations. In terms of broad application, I argue that the characterization of activities involved in cultivating collective agency (such as “mobilization” or “organizing”) represents a potential direction for cultivating collective agency from within and beyond organizations. In Gwangmyeong, the shared understanding of the goal of democratic citizenship education to cultivate political participation at the community and social levels rejects the view that individual levels of political participation are “good enough.” This case demonstrates that for institutional forms of democracy to be “deepened” beyond electoral participation, arguing for the plurality of issues encompassed under the umbrella of “democracy” or the plurality of political action at individual, community, or social levels may not be sufficient. My argument derived from this case is that a clear understanding not just of the plurality, but of the orientation toward the social levels of political action is an important arena in cultivating collective agency for a “deeper democracy.”

Contextualizing education for democratic participation in Gwangmyeong

The fabric of society in Gwangmyeong

Gwangmyeong is a city southwest of Seoul. It is part of Gyeonggi province that surrounds Seoul and of the Seoul metropolitan area. In Figure 13 below, the central area is Seoul, and the surrounding grey area is Gyeonggi province. The area marked in orange is

Gwangmyeong, which is relatively close to Seoul and easily accessible through public transport. This position is one of the reasons that Gwangmyeong is known to be a “bed-town” for people who work in Seoul and commute from Gwangmyeong. According to the statistical data illustrated in Figures 14, 15, and 16 below on the economic statuses and perceptions of households in Gwangmyeong in 2021, the composition of households is mostly middle class, with the highest two categories of average monthly household income ranging from $2,000,000 \leq (\text{income}) < 4,000,000$ KRW comprising 31.7% of the population. In total, 77.7% of residents have income, with 42.6% moderately satisfied with their income and 29.1% unsatisfied. This figure is very slightly higher than the average across Gyeonggi province in 2021. The perception of social class reflects the trends in average monthly income, with 46.3% identifying as middle-lower class and 25.6% as middle-upper class, comprising a total of 71.9% identifying as middle class. Whereas the proportion of residents who identify as the lowest class (4.9%) is lower than the average in Gyeonggi province (7.4%), the overall percentage of residents identifying as lower class (both lower-upper and lowest) is 24.9%, similar to the 25.5% average in Gyeonggi province. When considering the difficulty of maintaining livelihood, 9.9% reporting facing difficulty “very often,” and 36.0% answered “sometimes,” comprising 45.9% of residents experiencing some difficulty in maintaining livelihood.

Figure 13. Map of the Seoul metropolitan area, including Gwangmyeong



**Figure 14. Annual monthly income by household, Gwangmyeong City
(Gwangmyeong city and Gyeonggi province, 2021)**

Category		Average Monthly Income by Household (unit: %)									
		< 500,000 KRW	50 ≤ 1,000,000 KRW	1,000,000 ≤ 2,000,000 KRW	2,000,000 ≤ 3,000,000 KRW	3,000,000 ≤ 4,000,000 KRW	4,000,000 ≤ 5,000,000 KRW	5,000,000 ≤ 6,000,000 KRW	6,000,000 ≤ 7,000,000 KRW	7,000,000 ≤ 8,000,000 KRW	> 8,000,000 KRW
2021		3.8	11.2	16.0	17.7	16.6	12.3	7.8	5.2	2.9	6.5
Gyeonggi province	Southern	3.7	10.6	15.5	17.7	16.8	12.4	7.9	5.4	3.0	7.0
	Northern	4.1	12.9	17.7	17.6	16.0	12.1	7.4	4.9	2.5	4.8
Gwangmyeong city		5.2	10.7	13.8	16.5	15.2	11.4	9.5	6.2	3.3	8.2

Source: Gyeonggi Social Statistics, 2021

**Figure 15. Income satisfaction and extent of the difficulty of maintaining livelihood,
Gwangmyeong City
(Gwangmyeong city and Gyeonggi province, 2021)**

Category		Income Satisfaction (unit: %)						Difficulty of Maintaining Livelihood (unit: %)				
		has income	Highly Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Moderate	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	N/A (no income)	None at all	Not very often	Sometimes	Very often
2021		81.8	8.8	28.2	41.4	17.7	3.9	18.2	13.9	40.0	35.5	10.5
Gyeonggi province	Southern	82.2	8.5	27.9	41.3	18.1	4.1	17.8	14.7	40.3	34.8	10.2
	Northern	80.4	9.7	29.1	41.4	16.6	3.1	19.6	11.7	39.1	37.6	11.6
Gwangmyeong city		77.7	6.6	29.1	42.6	17.8	3.9	22.3	13.0	41.0	36.0	9.9

Source: Gyeonggi Social Statistics, 2021

**Figure 16. Perceived identification with social class, Gwangmyeong City
(Gwangmyeong city and Gyeonggi province, 2021)**

Category		Perception of social class (unit: %)					
		Highest	Upper-lower	Middle-upper	Middle-lower	Lower-upper	Lowest
2021		0.5	2.6	27.4	44.0	18.1	7.4
Gyeonggi province	Southern	0.5	2.9	28.4	43.2	17.6	7.4
	Northern	0.4	1.8	24.7	46.2	19.7	7.2
Gwangmyeong city		0.3	3.0	25.6	46.3	20.0	4.9

Source: Gyeonggi Social Statistics, 2021

Despite the high percentage of commuters in Gwangmyeong (Gwangmyeong city, 2017), the civil society in Gwangmyeong has firm roots. There are multiple local-based civil society organizations, including the Gwangmyeong Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice, Gwangmyeong YMCA, Gwangmyeong YWCA, and Gwangmyeong Women's Hotline. Many of these large organizations in the community are local branches of the respective organization, but are run independently and have developed unique paths within the context of Gwangmyeong. Furthermore, these civil society organizations have long worked together through the Gwangmyeong Citizen Association Conference, which includes all of the organizations mentioned above. Activists created the Gwangmyeong Citizen Association Conference based on an awareness that even though their specific organizational goals differ, there are issues in Gwangmyeong that need cooperation and that building a shared platform would be beneficial. One of the achievements of the Gwangmyeong Citizen Association Conference was the movement to revise the Gwangmyeong City Urban Planning Ordinance in 2001. This effort involved petitions to revise the previous ordinance on the issue of the construction of roads in residential and commercial areas. This case is regarded as a meaningful instance of grassroots local autonomy and a manifestation of participatory democracy. Such experiences of activism, whether a person directly participated in the movement or not, foster an atmosphere amenable to activism and create a sense of community that goes beyond an administrative designation of the city.

A rich and vibrant civil society could not have been achieved solely through the work of full-time activists in civil society organizations. Their successful activities are buttressed by the participation of community members. An important organization that particularly seeks to build

ongoing relationships with community members is the Gwangmyeong YMCA, where educators focus on organizing education activities with community members. Other civil society organizations in Gwangmyeong consider the Gwangmyeong YMCA to be specialized in education activities. Their activities are also important markers for how democratic citizenship education has developed and materializes in the community.

The lifelong education system in Gwangmyeong

The route to democratic citizenship education established in Gwangmyeong was through the state-led system of lifelong education that began to develop in the late 1990s. In this section, I explore how the interest in lifelong education developed in Gwangmyeong, which serves as a basis to understand how seeds for democratic citizenship education were developed from organizations engaging in lifelong education.

Public officials in Gwangmyeong city began to have an interest in lifelong education in the late 1990s, as exemplified in the mention of lifelong education in the Long-term Development Goals of 1996 (Gwangmyeong City, 1996). This yearning for lifelong education was fueled by the relative lack of education institutions in the area at the time. Many public documents during the era point out the lack of infrastructure for education as a key challenge to overcome (e.g., Gwangmyeong city & Gwangmyeong Center for Lifelong Learning, 2001). The fact that there is no higher education institution in Gwangmyeong is continuously noted in these documents. In 1998, there was only one library in Gwangmyeong city. With many families living in the area with the breadwinner commuting to Seoul, people had high aspirations to enhance both the quantity and quality of education available to them. Responding to such demands, Baek Jae-Hyun, elected as the mayor of Gwangmyeong for the 1998–2002 term and

re-elected for 2002–2006, put forward an agenda to make Gwangmyeong a “Learning City.”

This agenda led to the establishment of the “Gwangmyeong City Ordinance on the Establishment and Operation of the Gwangmyeong Lifelong Learning Center” in 1998, which provided the legal framework for the local government to systematically approach various types of lifelong learning infrastructure from an integrated point of view.

It is worth noting that the term “Learning City” was unheard of in 1998. Although learning cities have since become a prevalent concept worldwide, this was not the case when Gwangmyeong city declared itself as a “Learning City” in 1999. Many interviewees from the Gwangmyeong LLC talk with pride about the fact that Gwangmyeong city declared itself as a learning city even before the Korean state added “Learning Cities” to the policy agenda in the 2000s. The full details of the Declaration are quoted and translated in Table 11 below. The Declaration signifies the importance placed on enhancing lifelong education opportunities in an era when other priorities, such as economic development, were dominant.

Table 11. Declaration of Gwangmyeong as a Learning City

We, the Gwangmyeong Lifelong Learning Center, declare that: (March 9, 1999; Gwangmyeong City)	
There is neither a beginning nor an end to learning.	To pursue genuinely free and meaningful happiness, and to foster a community where we live together with neighbors, we recognize that there is neither a beginning nor an end to learning and seek to learn for life.
We are all agents of lifelong learning.	Gwangmyeong citizens recognize that they are all agents of lifelong learning. We seek to learn the foundations of humanity and love within the family, imagination and knowledge that prepares for change at schools, and how to live with neighbors within communities.
We will foster Gwangmyeong city as a proud city where people can learn and live for life.	Gwangmyeong city will be built to become an environmentally-friendly city with greenery and convenient living spaces, an economically autonomous city that could demonstrate its capacities, a cultural city where nature and history co-exist in a unique mixture, and a city based on the philosophy of the common good.

	In this way, its citizens will become proud of the city where they can learn and live for life.
We engage with a mind of togetherness.	Citizens of Gwangmyeong and Gwangmyeong city will make all the areas of Gwangmyeong as potential sites for lifelong education where anyone can learn what they need anytime and anywhere. Let us learn for life with each person as an agent, and with many people working together.
We aim for a happy and sophisticated life.	We believe that this is truly necessary to live a happy and sophisticated life and declare Gwangmyeong city as a Lifelong Learning City.

Source: Gwangmyeong LLC website (<https://lll.gm.go.kr/lll/contents.do?key=137>)

This Declaration did not remain a mere statement. Public resources were invested into educational infrastructure beyond schools. While the LLC began as a team within the Gwangmyeong local government in 1999, a separate building dedicated to the LLC was constructed from 2000 to 2001. After successful construction of the center, public resources from the Gwangmyeong local government continuously flowed into the center. The local government allotted approximately 10 billion Korean won (approximately 80 million US dollars) to the center annually (Gwangmyeong city & Gwangmyeong Center for Lifelong Learning, 2001). Researchers devised long-term plans for the LLC, and aspirations to make the best of the opportunity led public officials to seek professional expertise beyond that of bureaucrats. As a result, the management of the LLC was contracted out to external bodies, with competitive processes to select the body in charge of the center. The result was that the Gwangmyeong LLC was contracted out to two universities over a 9-year period: Sungkonghoe University and Sogang University. The unique philosophies of these universities opened up opportunities for activities inclined towards democratic citizenship education to emerge. After 9 years of contracting out the management of the LLC to universities, the LLC transitioned to direct management by the local

government in 2011. Education at the LLC includes diverse categories, such as education for parents, early childhood education, vocational education, and education for the elderly.

According to the body in charge, there are at times differences in the education activities that are introduced and promoted. Overall, the LLC provides a wide range of education opportunities at little cost to learners, as the education programs are publicly funded.

Years of such educational opportunities have influenced the identities of people living in Gwangmyeong. During my fieldwork in 2021, I frequently heard about Gwangmyeong being “the first Lifelong Learning City” in Korea as I was traveling within the city. The current mayor of the city is from the Democratic Party, one of the two major political parties in Korea. A mayor from the same party initially implemented the Lifelong Learning City initiative in Gwangmyeong, which may be one of the reasons that the LLC is currently emphasized. However, throughout Korea, the Lifelong Learning City initiative has taken off as an initiative that mayors prioritize, regardless of their political parties. This widespread attention is because the initiative is construed as a potential way for politicians to “come into direct contact with” potential constituents. The LLC, with an even newer building constructed in 2020, has become a major hub in Gwangmyeong, with people from different age groups moving in and out of the building – taking classes, borrowing books, or using the open study spaces. Park Seung-Won, who is the mayor of Gwangmyeong City from 2018 to 2022, worked as the Secretary-General of the Gwangmyeong LLC in 1998. Although there may be ebbs and flows in support towards lifelong learning in Gwangmyeong, the continuous growth of resources such as independent, renovated education spaces and buildings indicates that lifelong learning has become a major fabric in the local context of Gwangmyeong.

Another important dynamic to consider regarding the state-led lifelong education system in Gwangmyeong is the municipal level of influence, which is external to the Gwangmyeong local government. In the late 2000s, institutes for lifelong education and learning begin to be established at the national and municipal levels. The National Institute for Lifelong Education emerged in 2008, followed by institutes for lifelong learning at municipal levels. The Gyeonggi Institute for Lifelong Learning was established in 2011. Given that local LLCs had already been widely established throughout various regions in Korea through local government funding, institutes for lifelong learning generally aimed to work among locals within the municipal government to ensure the effective provision of lifelong learning. While the Gwangmyeong LLC and the Gyeonggi Institute for Lifelong Learning are independently run, funding from the national level is sometimes allotted to the local level through projects. This structure is particularly relevant when looking into democratic citizenship education, because the Gyeonggi Institute for Lifelong Learning began a project to work with local LLCs to run centers for Democratic Citizenship Education in 2020. This project connects to the recent discourse on “intermediary supporting organizations,” which I discuss in the next section.

The question of “intermediary supporting organizations”

The concept of “intermediary supporting organizations (중간지원조직)” emerged as a buzzword in governance and civil society in Korea in the 2000s. In the 2010s, many types of intermediary supporting organizations emerged in Korea in the fields of social economy and community building, which were key areas of focus among politicians who were elected into office at the time. Many scholars have investigated intermediary supporting organizations through concrete examples in Korea, including suggesting typologies of intermediary supporting

organizations (Kim, Ki-Tae, 2019), research diagnosing current problems and possible directions for intermediary supporting organizations in the area of social economies (Kim, Hak-Sil, 2014; Kim, Tae Young, 2016), and studies that discuss the limitations of intermediary supporting organizations in community development primarily as transmitters of public policy rather than working for the benefit of civil society actors (Kim, Bo-Ram & Choi, Jeong-Min, 2017; Ko, Kwang Yong, 2014; Park, Se-Hoon, 2015). However, while there is an abundance of research on the topic of intermediary supporting organizations in the Korean scholarship, how these types of organizations operate still remains ambiguous, and the concept of intermediary supporting organizations has mostly been implemented and understood as organizations established by the state to complement its goals through the participation of civil society actors (Park, Young-Sun & Jeong, Byung-Soon, 2019).

The discourse of intermediary supporting organizations in Korea is influenced by the Japanese model of Non-Profit Organization (NPO) centers, which emerged as a framework to systematically support civil society after the Kobe earthquake of 1995 (Park, Young-Sun & Jeong, Byung-Soon, 2019). NPO centers in Japan incubate budding NPOs, mediate between resources and NPOs, and support the development of management at NPOs (Joo, Seong-Su & Yi, Young-Jae, 2012). Another parallel to intermediary supporting organizations in Korea are “infrastructure organizations” in the US (Park, Young-Sun & Jeong, Byung-Soon, 2019). Infrastructure organizations in the US nonprofit sector began to develop in the 1970s, with their growth slowing down in the 2000s (Abramson & McCarthy, 2012). However, the typology of nonprofit infrastructure organizations in the US is considerably different from the state-centered approach to intermediary supporting organizations in Korea. Infrastructure organizations are divided into three typologies according to their service focus: infrastructure for the nonprofit

sector (e.g., advocacy, public education, member support), infrastructure for nonprofit organizations and their staff (e.g., trainings, consultations, management guidance), and infrastructure for local communities (e.g., building social capital, cross-sector collaborations; Prentice & Brudney, 2018). Thus, even though scholars in Korea often draw on examples from Japan and the US to explore the concept of intermediary supporting organizations, I understand this specific type of organization as a unique manifestation within the context of Korea. While there are similarities in that these organizations seek to promote activities in civil society, a key defining characteristic of the “intermediary” is that the organizations are often established by state institutions and invested with public money for the stated purpose of “bridging the state and civil society.”

Several scholars have described the problems that intermediary supporting organizations face due to their ambiguous status between the state and civil society. Byeongsun Jeong and Wonsill Hwang (2018), for example, point out limitations such as the competition among civil society organizations to become hosts of the intermediary supporting organization, which in fact runs contrary to the collaborative facilitation of civil society; the lack of financial independence to support the sustainability of the organization; difficulties in facilitating collaboration between state and civil society organizations as well as among civil society organizations; and the peripheral function allotted to these organizations as supplementing public policy goals rather than representing the interests of civil society actors. The lack of resources and potential conflicts with state institutions have also been mentioned in other studies that analyze the current limitations of intermediary supporting organizations (Cho, Chul-Min, 2016; Kim, Minchan & Nam, Jae-Geol, 2021).

The idea of creating an intermediary supporting organization for democratic citizenship education emerged amidst the increased interest in these organizational formats. Within debates on the role of intermediary supporting organizations to facilitate civil society activities, the focus on education adds further dimensions to consider. There are questions of what it means to “support” education activities and exactly what kinds of agents the organization should mediate between, such as mediating between potential learners and organizations offering citizenship education programs. What does mediation between state institutions and civil society organizations look like in the area of citizenship education? Many areas are open for discussion and adaptation based on the project for centers of DCE put forward by the Gyeonggi Institute for Lifelong Learning. The project involves funding support by the Gyeonggi Institute for Lifelong Learning, which is matched with local government funding. The approach to form intermediary supporting organizations seeks to tap into the expertise in civil society for the purposes of facilitating and supporting citizenship education activities, which is similar to how the management of the Gwangmyeong LLC was contracted out to universities in its initial years to tap into expertise on adult education. Many aspects remain undecided regarding what it means to support democratic citizenship education, which equates to significant autonomy.

Thus, the concept of intermediary supporting organizations applied to the field of democratic citizenship education creates an in-between space between the accumulated experience of democratic citizenship education in civil society and the established practices of allotting public funding to promote a wide range of education activities in Gwangmyeong city. This ambiguous in-between space is filled through the efforts of educators, activists, and bureaucrats in Gwangmyeong. Understanding interactions between these actors requires a

historical understanding of democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong, which is discussed in the following section.

Trajectories of democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong city

Development of an activity system for democratic citizenship education at the Gwangmyeong YMCA

The Gwangmyeong YMCA was established in 1994 through the leadership of Lee Young-Yi, an activist who had worked at another branch of the YMCA in Bucheon to learn grassroots organizing practices. During the initial phases of constructing, contextualizing, and building the characteristics of the Gwangmyeong YMCA, Lee Young-Yi's contributions were crucial. She recalled her motivations for beginning to engage in citizens' movements and grassroots movements as follows.

I took part in labor movements up until 1992, and realized that intelligentsia such as myself taking part in labor movements has lost its meaning. [The] time had come that workers could take the lead in labor movements. Legally and contextually, methods had been institutionalized. Meanwhile, I also began to question if class-based labor movements could ... liberate people in other classes as well. With the labor movement increasingly focusing on unions, I thought that it would be difficult to expand into movements that could encompass a wider range of people. That's when I began to think about citizens movements and grassroots movements. ... The model of Bucheon YMCA to be led by citizens, exposing the problems of the community, solving the problems, and even going into the city

council was inspiring for me. It was something that I had been looking for. (Lee Young-Yi)

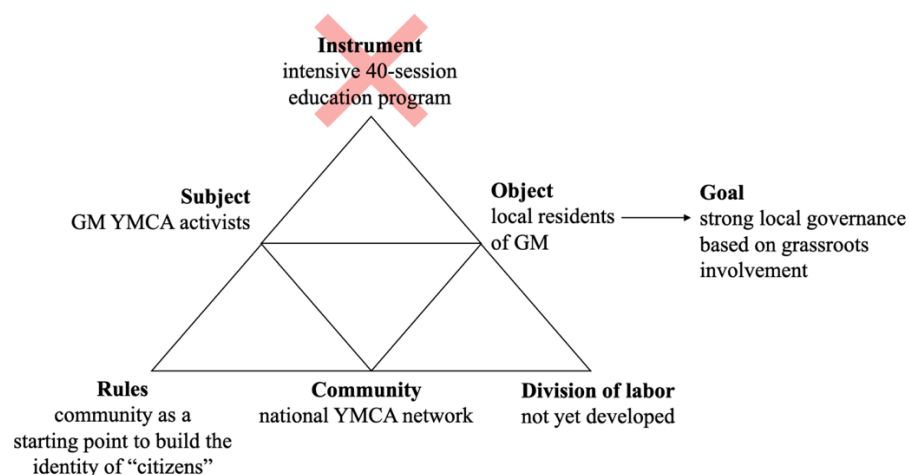
Lee's pivot from labor movements to citizens' movements was intentional. Considering that labor movements start from the standpoint of the working class, Lee wondered whether a broader identity shared by people living in a democratic society could become a starting point for organizing. However, this idea did not mean that the identity of "citizens" would be an all-encompassing concept with no starting point. The community became a starting point from which people identify commonly shared problems and find collective ways to deal with those problems. The YMCA was well known for its connections with grassroots movements, with its branches in local communities often becoming hubs for such activities, albeit with variance.

Coming into the Gwangmyeong region, Lee Young-Yi was eager to meet with people in the community and potentially recruit members who would join her cause. Her eagerness manifested in the first education program she designed at the Gwangmyeong YMCA.

Since local governance had only been re-established in the 1990s in Korea, I thought that many people would be unfamiliar with what it means. ... It would require people to participate more actively and to have a perspective about how the local community should move forward, so I selected a few topics and organized a program with 40 sessions. ... I printed out 50,000 leaflets and put them on so many doors. With all these efforts, only one person came. ... I had not thought about the program from the perspective of people living their daily lives. I was young and I did not have my own family at the time. I had only thought, normatively, that "This is what people should learn for them to become critically conscious." (Lee Young-Yi)

Her first attempt to run an education program failed. She felt firsthand the need to adjust her mindset in sync with people who lived in the community – people who may have walked past massive demonstrations calling for an end of the dictatorship in the 1980s. The participants she sought could not be expected to devote a major proportion of their lives to activism. It was necessary that the organizing resonated with problems they faced in their daily lives while fitting into the rhythms of their lives. An analysis of her initial attempt to build an education program is possible by drawing on activity theory (see Figure 17 below). The initial attempt by Gwangmyeong YMCA activists to build an activity system did not work. In particular, the instrument– an intensive 40-session education program to develop the competencies of citizens – was not effective in connecting YMCA activists with local residents of Gwangmyeong. As a new organization in the region, it was important for the activities launched by the Gwangmyeong YMCA to “blend in” with the existing activities of the residents.

Figure 17. Activity system of the program initially designed at Gwangmyeong YMCA



Thus, the YMCA activists embarked upon a different approach to connect with local community members, learning from this experience. The YMCA was and is well known in Korea for its early childhood education programs. In some regions, the local branch of the YMCA specializes in these areas, without much connection to organizing. Lee Young-Yi, drawing on the resources of the YMCA, began to offer early childhood classes, which created opportunities for her to interact with parents, particularly mothers. She recognized that community organizing also directly relates to feminist movements, because the majority of people who actually interact within a community are women. This tendency was exacerbated at the time by the fact that most households had breadwinners who commuted to and from their workplaces in Seoul, often late into the nights, in an era when the workweek was from Monday to Saturday in Korea.

I would talk with the mothers, mostly housewives, that we need to learn about the society more. That we can study and learn about society together, and in that way, they would be able to know more about problems in the education system. ...

Also, at the time, there were hardly opportunities for housewives to learn things.

They were beings that are isolated and alienated in their own homes. This attracted them. ... They had no names. Even within apartment complexes, they would only be known as the “Unit ### *ajumma*”²³ without any name. (Lee Young-Yi)

Thus, education programs at the Gwangmyeong YMCA for mothers meant more than sharing and learning information. Fourteen members joined the Gwangmyeong YMCA through the efforts of Lee, who created a group called *Han-Ultari*. For this group, studying and learning

²³ The word “*ajumma*” in Korean language is a term for referring to middle-aged or married women, often used in a derogative way.

was not a separate activity from the participants' lives. The program seeped into their lives. For YMCA programs, there are always sets of cultural activities in every class, including singing, meditating, and reflecting on the way that participants have lived their life for the past few days. After these activities, the program moves onto specific activities for the class. These cultural practices turn education programs into venues for interpersonal relations, where people realize that the "trivial" issues that they face in life are in fact shared problems. Although no formal curriculum was assigned to the *Han-Ultari* programs, the issues discussed naturally led to related learning activities. For example, participants engaged in campaigns to facilitate the use of reusable bags for groceries, visited local greenbelt areas that were polluted, and voluntarily attended city council meetings. This was the model that Lee learned at the Bucheon YMCA.

However, this model ran into a problem when Lee sought to expand the groups to match the increase in interests. She planned approximately 15 groups with five to six members in each, potentially to be run by the people who had been part of *Han-Ultari*. One caveat she did not consider was that the members of *Han-Ultari* were not ready to become leaders. Lee had such a key presence in the meetings that new candidates to take on leadership roles did not emerge. Thus, Lee implemented a major change in her approach. She created the 15 groups even if leaders could not be assigned beforehand. She called these groups "*deungdae* (lighthouse)," with members of each *deungdae* referred to as "candles" lighting the lighthouse. On the first day of the group, a person is chosen to serve as the leader of *deungdae* for the year, with the promise that another person will serve as leader the next time. The leader of the group attends monthly meetings with full-time activists at the Gwangmyeong YMCA, chooses reading materials for the group to read, and manages the group on a day-to-day basis. This approach creates a cycle of leadership, where "candles" who have benefited from the work of the leader gradually assume

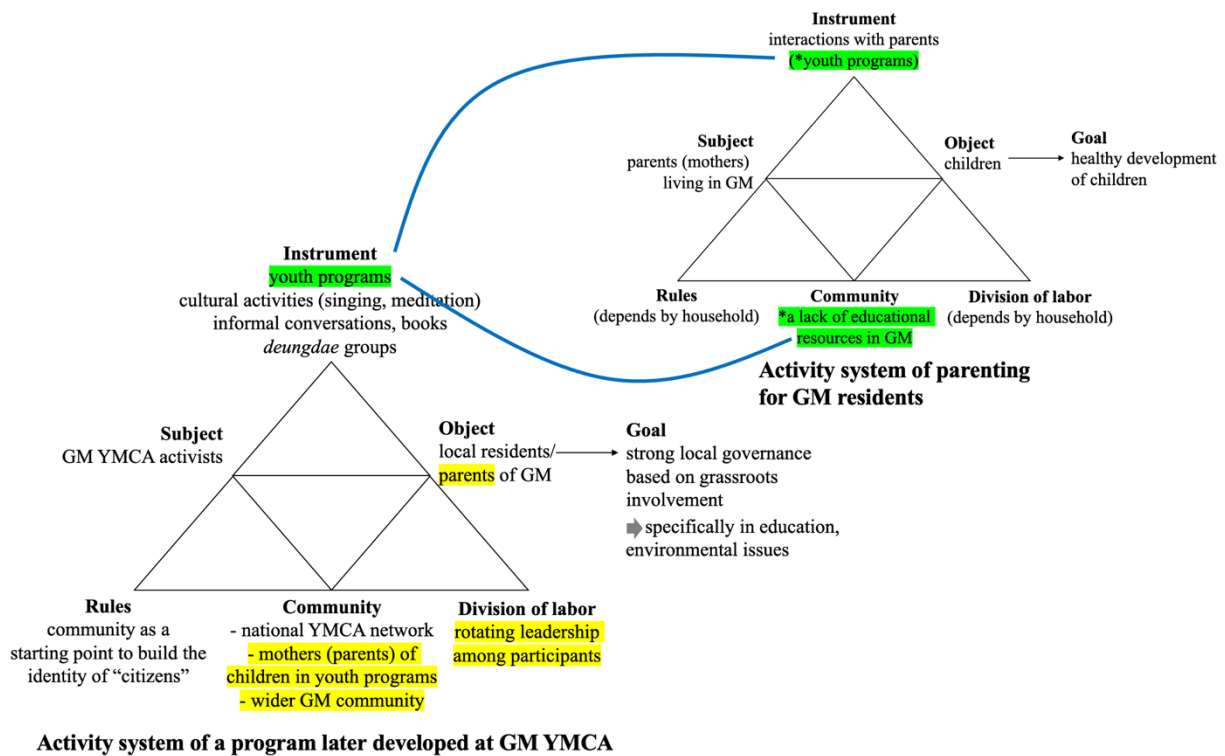
the leadership role with gratitude to the previous leader. This approach is a way to produce leaders from the members of the Gwangmyeong YMCA. Although activists at the Gwangmyeong YMCA did not explicitly name this type of education “democratic citizenship education,” they have retroactively acknowledged that the education activities of *deungdae* represent the key philosophy of democratic citizenship education at the Gwangmyeong YMCA.

A major strand of activism that developed from *deungdae* groups focused on corruption within schools. The issue of teachers taking bribes from parents touches upon the lives of many parents. “Mothers would worry whether not giving bribes would negatively affect their children. As they expected, they would hear from their children of teachers asking ‘Hey, why doesn’t your mother visit the school these days?’” shared Lee. While concerns around whether or not to give bribes are often considered personal matters, members of *deungdae* discussed this issue after they saw a documentary on the seriousness of bribes at schools in Korea. This discussion paved the way for the parents to engage in a collective problematization, and even to organize rallies calling for an end of the culture of bribing teachers in residential areas in Gwangmyeong as well as in front of an elementary school that was well known for its bribing culture.

The activity system for the *deungdae* group at the Gwangmyeong YMCA is illustrated in Figure 18 below. The activity system forges connections with already existing activity systems of residents living in Gwangmyeong – namely, parents (mothers). The sections highlighted in green in the figure indicate ways in which the activity system developed at the YMCA connects with parenting activities. Parents in Gwangmyeong were previously interested in youth programs, but disappointed in the lack of resources available for them. It was this missing link, or “in-between space” in activity that the Gwangmyeong YMCA filled through its youth programs. However, the youth programs also became an “instrument” that Gwangmyeong

YMCA activists could draw on in their attempts to engage in democratic citizenship education with adults. Activist-educators could specifically identify parents living in Gwangmyeong compared to relying on a broad range of potential participants as local residents in Gwangmyeong. This instrument not only built a community among mothers (parents) of children enrolled in youth programs, but created an informal word-of-mouth network across the Gwangmyeong community. Although there were some adjustments made over time, a division of labor developed for the democratic citizenship education program of *deungdae* groups that included a process of rotating leadership among the participants. At this stage, the participants in the *deungdae* program had dual identities, firstly as mothers (parents) in the program, but also as local residents of Gwangmyeong interested in public issues such as the local council or environmental pollution. This dual identity led them to take action through interactions in the community fostered through the *deungdae* program, specifically focusing on education and environmental issues. The example discussed above demonstrates how the education program of *deungdae* enabled people who did not identify as activists to develop a series of social actions, organizing and participating in rallies to call for an end to bribery at schools.

Figure 18. Activity systems of Gwangmyeong YMCA and parents in Gwangmyeong



However, the rallies against bribery at schools triggered fierce backlash from teachers at schools. Teachers identified the organizers of the rally as Gwangmyeong YMCA members and discriminated against children whose parents were members. This backlash prompted activist-educators and members at the Gwangmyeong YMCA to seek alternatives for their activities.

The backlash was huge. The teachers at [the elementary school] were so angry. They figured out that the participants of rallies are YMCA members. Then they engaged in extensive work to figure out and target parents who are members of YMCA. ... Teachers would abuse the children verbally, as well as physically – hitting their children’s palms for no good reason. ... We did not give up and tried to go into Parents’ Steering Committees that became established from 1998 [that had the authority to foresee budgets of the school]. ... However, a majority of

people who occupied the Steering Committees had been building positive relations with teachers for a long time ... and they would discuss issues such as what to prepare for teachers' lunches for field trips. ... When parents from the YMCA would make suggestions to change destinations for field trips for more educational purposes or to collectively buy uniforms to lower the price ... teachers would accuse them of being commies (*bbalgaengyi*). (Lee Young-Yi)

Collective power garnered through *deungdae* groups led to organized activities and rallies calling for cultural and systematic changes. However, the reasonable calls from parents to ban bribes from public schools were met with fierce oppression, which negatively impacted activists' children. Participation by mothers on Steering Committees to enhance democratic decision-making at schools was met with resistance that limited the legally defined boundaries of decision-making. Only trivial matters such as teachers' lunches were discussed, leaving crucial issues such as budgets or educational content solely to the decision-making of teachers and staff. YMCA members' efforts to practice their rights within schools were deemed as communist, framed by the Red Scare that still existed in Korean society in the 1990s.

The limitations that YMCA activists and members felt during this period led them to envision an alternative school. At the time in the 1990s, alternative schools did not exist in Korea. The Gwangmyeong YMCA had been running weekend schools for the children of its members, with a focus on building close relationships with nature and collective labor. Based on extensive demands from YMCA members, particularly members who had actively participated in the anti-bribing campaigns, YMCA activists decided to embark upon a project to establish an alternative elementary school. The law prohibited alternative schools and imposed fines on both

the schools and parents who send their children to the schools, but activists and members nevertheless proceeded with the unprecedented endeavor.

We did not want to run an alternative school in the first place. I did not think that alternative schools would change the minds of citizens to embrace the wider public. It's because the nature of parents who send children to schools (*hak-bumo*²⁴) is inherently selfish. They primarily care about what's best for their children. ... That's why I put a condition for people to send their children to this school. It's that they need to become activists in the local community, engaging in citizens' movement activities in order for them to send their children to the school.

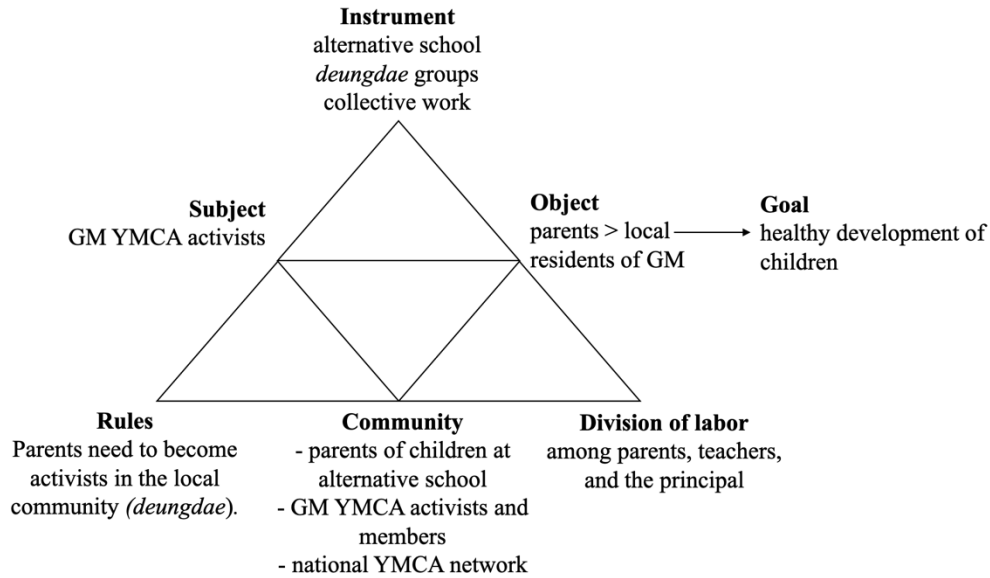
Naturally, participating in *deungdae* was the dominant option. (Lee Young-Yi)

Through this process, an alternative school with kindergarten and elementary levels emerged at the Gwangmyeong YMCA. Starting from *deungdae* groups, this school created another activity system, as illustrated in Figure 19 below. Connections were made between the alternative school and the *deungdae* groups. However, whereas participants' identities as parents and as local residents in Gwangmyeong co-existed in *deungdae* groups, the problematization of schooling that resulted in the development of the alternative school centralized participants' identities as parents more than as community residents. Moreover, the foremost goal became the healthy development of children, moving away from the goal of grassroots-empowered local governance. This distance from the goal of grassroots activism was exacerbated by the fact that creating an alternative school demanded a strategy of "escaping" the status quo, applying Olin-

²⁴ Whereas the concept "parents" in English is translated into "*bumo*" in Korean language, Korean also has a term that refers to parents who have school-age children – "*hak-bumo*." The prefix "*hak*" has a meaning that refers to schools. Compared to the word "*bumo*," "*hak-bumo*" is often associated with interests of parents that particularly pertain to education and schooling issues.

Wright's (2019) strategies for resisting capitalism. Although the target of resistance was public schooling in this case, the creation of an alternative school employed the strategy of escaping.

Figure 19. Activity system at the alternative school run by Gwangmyeong YMCA



Thus, the goal of the activity shifted away from local governance, which had been a key goal for activist-educators at the Gwangmyeong YMCA. While *deungdae* groups are still active, activists working at the Gwangmyeong YMCA state that the peak of this model, which was from the late 1990s to early 2000s, has passed. There have been changes in context. Not as many mothers are full-time housewives, many people engage in some kind of part-time work, and the cultural arena has expanded to provide ample opportunities for adults to spend their time. Covid-19 marked a critical hit on *deungdae* activities, which relied on intimate relations built through weekly face-to-face interactions. Moreover, although alternative schools developed a distinct path and are still run by the Gwangmyeong YMCA, the extent to which their current activities are connected with *deungdae* groups seeking to foster local governance is questionable.

Despite the practical difficulties in continuing these education activities, the philosophy and foundations sowed through practices at the Gwangmyeong YMCA have been important in the development of democratic citizenship education in the area. In particular, the trajectory and changes of programming by the Gwangmyeong YMCA offer insights into developing activity systems in a local community. An analysis of the activity systems indicates that activist-educators capitalized on “in-between space” by building parenting activity systems for residents. The lack of education resources was an in-between space in which activist-educators sought to engage, not only through the well-known youth programs of the YMCA, but also by connecting such program offerings with adult education activities. This example illustrates that it is not just in the discrepancies *between* two given activity systems that in-between spaces emerge, as in the case of PSPD between organizing work and education work. There may also be gaps *within* an activity system that an activist-educator can identify, make explicit, and fill with education activities. However, as the example of the alternative school demonstrates, the nuances of a program can significantly change if other goals become more prominent in the activity. This finding provides insights for the strategy of “escaping” the status quo (e.g., capitalism) suggested by Olin-Wright (2019). It is important to be sensitive to changes in the goals of an activity, particularly in strategies of “escaping,” and if there are changes, to develop ways to encompass the activity under both its initial goal and the new goal.

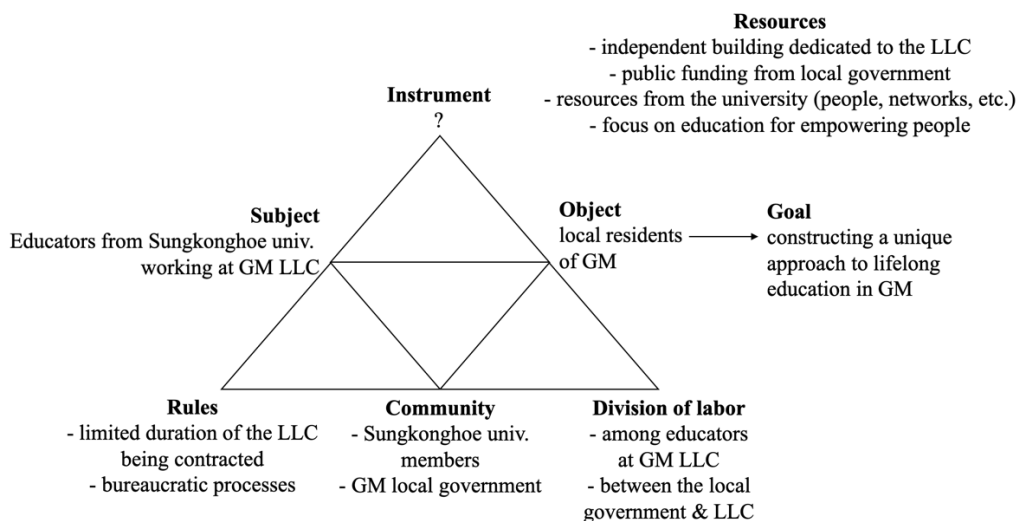
The activities of *deungdae* groups at the Gwangmyeong YMCA comprise an important development of democratic citizenship education specific to the region. This case illustrates how democratic citizenship education can develop through the problematizations shared by local community members and resulting collective action. Another important pillar of democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong is the LLC, which is discussed in the next section.

Development of an activity system for democratic citizenship education at
Gwangmyeong Lifelong Learning Center

After the declaration of a Lifelong Learning City in 1999, the Gwangmyeong local government began to embark upon projects related to lifelong education. First, an LLC was established within the local government. Despite controversies about how its work was distinct from other structures, such as the Community Service Center and women's centers in the community, the LLC began offering courses related to lifelong education and started designing 5-year plans for the Lifelong Learning City. The breadth of lifelong education activities took off in full scale when a new building was built and dedicated to be used as the LLC. The building had four floors and a basement floor, which meant that a separate space was dedicated in the city primarily for lifelong education activities. As lifelong learning activities were allocated to the independent space of the LLC, the Gwangmyeong local government was only in charge of managing the center, such as allotting public funds and conducting annual evaluations. The government decided to contract out the management of the LLC to civil society actors, particularly because of the consistent overlapping with other departments that also offered education opportunities to local residents (Gwangmyeong city & Gwangmyeong LLC, 2001). The hope was that professionals, not bureaucrats, would help ground the new endeavor to build a Lifelong Learning City, with the LLC as its central body. Through a competitive process, Sungkonghoe University became the contractor of the Gwangmyeong LLC for three years from 2002 to 2004 and then another three years from 2005 to 2007 after being granted an extended contract.

When Sungkonghoe University began the contract to run the Gwangmyeong LLC, the potential activity system for education was as shown in Figure 20 below. The goal was to construct a unique approach specific to lifelong education in Gwangmyeong in correspondence with the city's aim to become a Lifelong Learning City. Although the institutional declaration was made, the specific details and practices remained ambiguous. Because both the local government and Sungkonghoe University became involved in running the LLC, the available resources expanded, from local government funding to people and networks from the university. Based on the 3-year limited duration of the LLC contract (with opportunities to extend the contract) and the need to meet bureaucratic standards, it was left to the educators from Sungkonghoe University to fill in the gap in the activity system regarding how to connect with local residents of Gwangmyeong.

Figure 20. Initial structure of activity systems at the Gwangmyeong Lifelong Learning Center



The connection to democratic citizenship education at the LLC arose from the backgrounds of the educators from Sungkonghoe University. The university explicitly positions

itself on the progressive left in Korean society, with an emphasis on creating opportunities for social change through education. The educators from Sungkonghoe University shared Freirean roots that sought to revive and empower humanistic roots. In addition, the educators shared explicit critiques of capitalism as threatening the dignity of people's lives. Their interpretation of education and how education connects to social action resonates with the overall direction pursued through democratic citizenship education. These commonalities contributed to how educators at the Gwangmyeong LLC during the first phase of the contact conceptualized the approach to lifelong education. They pursued the goal of defining lifelong education through the lens of empowering the marginalized and building steps toward social action, thereby embedding the core values of democratic citizenship education in the conceptualization of lifelong education. This focus contrasts with the institutional guidelines specified in the Lifelong Education Act in Korea, which addresses "citizen participatory education," often considered as "synonymous" with democratic citizenship education, as only one of the many topics covered through lifelong education, along with other categories such as vocational education and literacy education.

Moreover, the fact that educators from Sungkonghoe University focused on the empowerment of people from the bottom-up and the fact that the Gwangmyeong LLC funded by the local government was the site to construct such activities meant that the Gwangmyeong region and residents living in this area became the focus of attention for educators from Sungkonghoe University. In this way, the initial activity system at the Gwangmyeong LLC exhibited similarities with the activity system launched by the Gwangmyeong YMCA. However, the ways in which educators at the Gwangmyeong LLC filled the gap within their activity system proceeded differently from the Gwangmyeong YMCA. Whereas YMCA activist-educators

attempted to find ways that they could fill the gap within a particular group of residents (mothers and parents), it was difficult for the Gwangmyeong LLC as a publicly funded organization to devote all of their resources to one particular group. Educators at the LLC needed to “fulfill” some expected roles to provide a wide range of nonformal education opportunities (e.g., hobby-related programs, vocational programs,) while also thinking of possible ways that they, as specifically contracted educators, could make unique contributions to the city. The educators therefore drew on their specific expertise, which could distinguish them from other potential providers of education in the area. Educators at the LLC specifically drew from innovative cases from other regions or abroad to inform innovative approaches toward education in Gwangmyeong. I focus on two specific initiatives launched by educators from Sungkonghoe University at the Gwangmyeong LLC: the *Guru* system, which is a local exchange trading system that involves education activities, and a Korean version of “folk high schools,” inspired by practices in Denmark.

Inspired by examples from Japan and other regions in Korea, activists-educators from Sungkonghoe University began introducing the *Guru* system in 2003 through public conferences on local exchange trading systems for the purpose of building communities. Activist-educators from Sungkonghoe University and the local community visited Japan in the same year to directly observe and learn how local exchange trading systems are run. The *Guru* system was then implemented in 2004. The idea of the local exchange system was to connect education activities. The currency was based on the time spent in an activity and could be used to exchange time spent with another community member’s time. For example, a child volunteering to help another student for an hour would earn an hour’s worth of the *Guru* currency. With this currency, the child could enroll in an education program in the *Guru* system to take a violin lesson for an hour

– which gives the educator an hour’s worth of currency as well. The system also included local shops and even an affiliated hospital that would allow people to “pay” a certain amount with the *Guru* currency.

The current reality we face is a capitalist society and the market all around. ... The system we tried to implement is *not* complementary to this capitalist system. It’s an *alternative* mode of currency. That community members can create currency by themselves and that the values within a community, use-values, will not be leaked out of the community, that it gives community members to live together, possibly to decrease unemployment. ... In the current Korean society, do you think the same amount of time spent is the same, for example, between a graduate student and a professor? No. It’s a hierarchical society [that the value of time is considered to be different across hierarchies]. However, the local exchange currency system – inspired by Edgar Cahn’s time dollar – sees time as an invaluable fragment out of my life and your life, ... regardless of your status in society. (Ko, Byung-Heon)

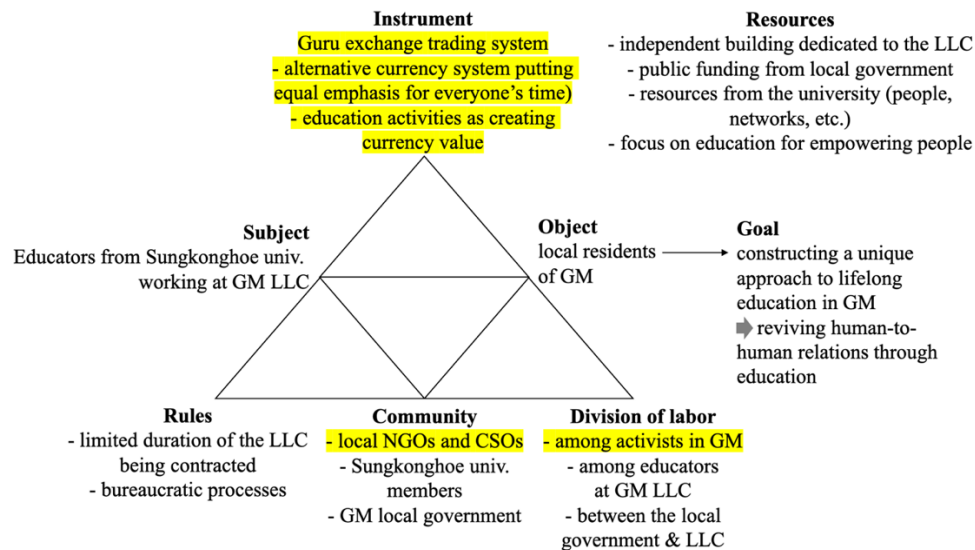
Ko emphasized that activist-educators from Sungkonghoe University sought to create fissures within the community in order to inspire novel approaches to alternatives. Ko described the aim as “to have children and people understand a healthy relationship to build with money so that relationships with people are not threatened, so that the process of production does not result in people becoming alienated – which I think are all what democratic citizenship education is about.” Activist-educators reflected that it was a tough task to have the innovative *Guru* system take roots in the community.

The basic advantages of local currencies are of course the alternative economic activities, but what we prioritized overall was building human relations. Through

this [Guru system], people in the community who have never met before come to meet each other and get to know each other. They realize “Oh, I didn’t realize that I have so many good people around me.” ... In this way, we wanted to break down the contracted relations through money that predominates a capitalist society, and have people as citizens get to know each other’s experiences and stories. These forms of building relations were the most important, but it was not easy. People were too much entrenched in the capitalist system throughout their bones, and also within a massive system of profits and losses. (Lee, Byung-Gon)

With the *Guru* system beginning in 2004 and Sungkonghoe University’s contract ending in 2007, there was not enough time for the system to establish a firm foundation. Activist-educators also faced difficulties in expanding the system because of the entrenched thoughts of community members who were so accustomed to the capitalist system of profits and losses. Although the *Guru* system ultimately remained an innovative approach and was never widely adopted, the case illustrates how Sungkonghoe University sought to challenge norms through designs that went beyond the provision of programs and sought to facilitate informal learning among people who participated in the *Guru* system. The limitations of the *Guru* exchange trading system are made explicit by analyzing its activity system, illustrated in Figure 21 below.

Figure 21. Activity system of the *Guru* exchange trading system at the Gwangmyeong LLC



Although educators at the Gwangmyeong LLC sought to build support and enthusiasm for the *Guru* exchange trading system through public forums for residents, these efforts did not garner enough support to sustain the *Guru* system. However, the international workshops that the Gwangmyeong LLC launched – with educators from the LLC, local activists from NGOs and CSOs, and public officials in the Gwangmyeong local government – were effective in building support from the educator and organizer levels. Thus, local NGOs and CSOs emerged as new parts in the activity system participating in the division of labor for the *Guru* system. However, educators faced barriers, as local residents – even those who were relatively interested in the *Guru* system – interpreted its proposed exchanges in terms of capitalistic assumptions toward value. The notion that everyone's time has equal value and that education activities create currency did not “stick” for a sufficient number of residents. Exacerbated by the end of the contract, this attempt to fill in the gap within the activities at Gwangmyeong LLC was short lived.

A second initiative implemented by activist-educators from Sungkonghoe University was a Korean version of “folk high schools,” which they called “citizens’ universities (*shimin-daehak*).” This initiative was mainly inspired by Grundtvig’s *fachhochschule* in Denmark.

Fachhochschules comprise a very important status in Denmark’s adult education, in Denmark’s history of raising consciousness and cultivating citizens in the modern civil society. ... The goal of education here is not the transmission of certain knowledge. It’s to stop engaging in one’s own work, go into a *fachhochschule* that provides room and board and *actually meet* other citizens. Meeting with other citizens is very important. They live together, eat meals together, share their experiences, ... and discover other citizens. Based on this newly discovered, collective awareness, they begin engaging in something meaningful in the society. (Lee, Byung-Gon)

The focus of *fachhochschules* was similar to the aims of the Guru system – to have people meet other people in the community who are different from them. Rather than existing as isolated individuals separate from “the others,” interacting with others is expected to knock down boundaries and help build communities. As the focus of the “citizens’ university” was to cultivate activists in the community through education, more emphasis was placed on making connections with the Gwangmyeong region than connecting to academic credit-banking systems. A key course at the university was “Regional studies on Gwangmyeong,” led by an expert on the history of the region. People who had lived in Gwangmyeong for a long time but did not know much about its history could connect their experiences with the local history. This connection could foster a sense of community among enrolled learners, which could prompt them to care more about issues in the community.

Whereas the educators' focus in introducing *fachhochschulen* was on its potential as a public form of nonformal education enabling people to get to know people from different backgrounds and develop relations with them, the focus of the "citizens' university" attracted the interest of both public officials and local residents who had long yearned for increased higher education opportunities in the Gwangmyeong region. This idea is reflected in the 2006 annual report of the Gwangmyeong LLC, in which the citizens' university is described as "an alternative higher education institution" (contents page). The content covered in the program included several disciplines, such as "Expressive arts psychotherapy," "Start-up business and management," "Visual media," and "Humanities." These classes did not award official higher education "credits." However, the program offered content that could be devliered at the higher education level, held semester-based classes, and celebrated graduation ceremonies. Contrary to the initial attempts to stimulate people to meet "others" in *fachhochschulen*, programs offered at the citizens' university made clear whether they were open to "the general public" or "social welfare beneficiaries" (see Table 12 below).

Table 12. Details on the Gwangmyeong citizens' university from the LLC's annual report (2006)

Semester	Program	Target	# of class sessions	Max. capacity	Enrolled	Graduated
1 (April~ June)	Expressive arts psychotherapy	General public	14	20	20	-
	Start-up business and management A	General public	10	10	7	-
	Start-up business and management B	Beneficiaries	10	10	8	-

	Visual media	General public	10	10	7	-
	Humanities	Beneficiaries	7	10	8	-
	Total		51	60	50	-
2 (July~ Dec.)	Expressive arts psychotherapy	General public	25	20	14	14
	Start-up business and management	General public, Beneficiaries	26	10	10	7
	Visual media	General public	14	10	7	7
	Humanities	Beneficiaries	15	10	7	7
	Total		80	50	38	35

Given that publicly funded lifelong education institutions in Korea tend to be more widely used by middle-class people (particularly women) with the time and resources to take nonformal education classes (Choi, Don Min, et al., 2008), the designation of target learners for different programs was an attempt to “ensure” the participation of people from lower classes – identified by whether they receive social welfare benefits or not – by designating particular programs for them. The programs dedicated to social welfare beneficiaries were influenced by another model from abroad: The Clemente Course for the Humanities in the US. In January of 2006, the Gyeonggi Foundation for Culture and Sungkonghoe University co-hosted an international seminar that invited Earl Shorris, the founder of the Clemente course, to Korea. Shorris (2006) spoke about how the humanities, which seem unrelated to empowering the poor, in fact serve this goal by changing externally imposed attitudes and values that the poor have absorbed throughout their lives. He connected the transformative potential of humanities to freedom and democracy in politics.

The humanities free us from the routine of repetitive thinking. ... Repetition, the mechanical aspect of life without freedom, is contrary to the humanities, contrary

to the human aspect of life, which is to be free, to be unlike the animals, who are oppressed by their limitations. ... In a democracy we must always be thinking anew of how best to run the country. In a democracy we are always reconsidering the candidates, the political parties, a democracy is stabilized by its ability to change, a democracy is always renewing itself as the people renew themselves, a democracy is made of people who think about the world. (Shorris, 2006, pp. 77-78).

This philosophy influenced the focus on social beneficiaries at the citizens' university. The limited resources (e.g., human resources and time) at the Gwangmyeong LLC also resulted in the Clemente course being "incorporated" into the citizens' university framework. The "Department for Start-up Business and Management," which targeted social welfare beneficiaries, was thus established at the Gwangmyeong LLC under the citizens' university. A total of 8 million won (approximately USD 6,330) was allotted for running the department for social welfare recipients. The department connected business programs and humanities programs, with the participants required to take two 2-hour classes each week – one business class and one humanities class– for a year (40 weeks). The program required a significant amount of dedication, but the courses were all offered free of charge for social welfare beneficiaries. These rationales for funding was the background that led to the differentiation of "target participants" in the programs offered at the citizens' university. The social welfare beneficiaries were in a separate "track" from general citizens.

It would have been ideal to run the Clemente course as a separate project ... but due to the limitations of time and workforce, ... It could be said that the

participants for the Clemente course were ‘inserted’ into the Gwangmyeong citizens’ university. (Lee, Byung-Gon)

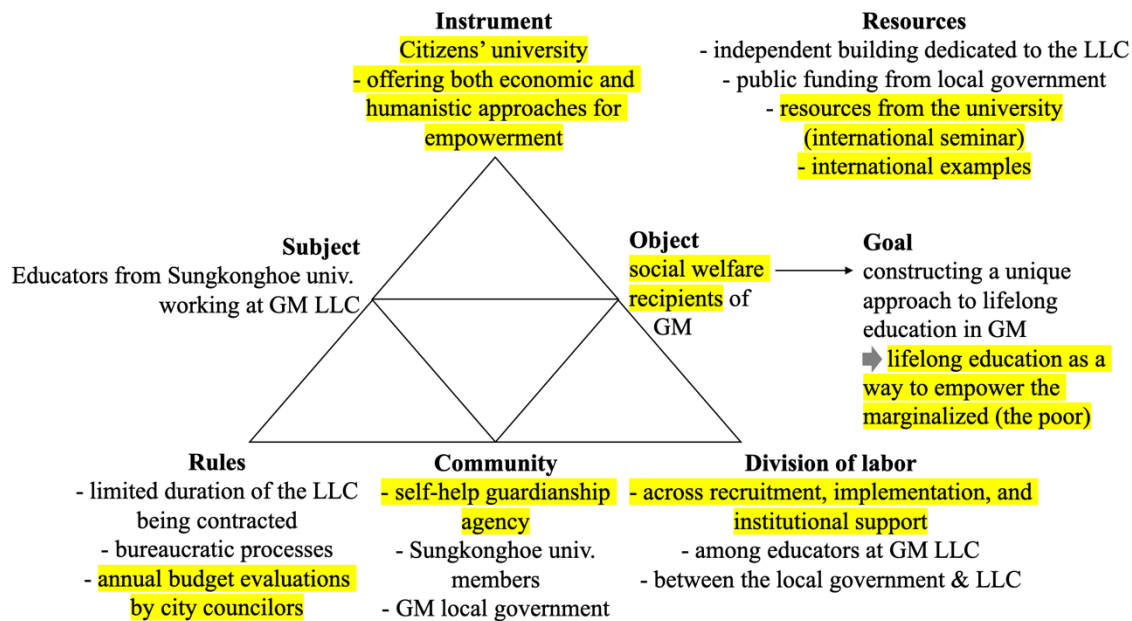
Although the number of people enrolled in programs dedicated to social welfare beneficiaries was not high, with 7–8 people per semester, educators and networked collaborators in the Gwangmyeong community shared that even achieving that number was a tough task. Concerted efforts took place across different organizations, such as the social welfare department in the Gwangmyeong local government and the self-help guardianship agency (Lee, Byung-gon, 2006). For example, the self-help guardianship agency would look for social welfare beneficiaries who would be interested in taking the courses. Although it was difficult to elicit motivation, the social welfare department lowered the barriers for participation by recognizing the time spent to take the courses as required “self-help working hours” for social welfare recipients. Despite the concerted efforts made by multiple actors and positive feedback from participants who enrolled in the series of programs under the “Department for Start-up Business and Management” for social welfare recipients, educators at Gwangmyeong LLC could not evade questions from Gwangmyeong city councilors about whether the small number of people enrolled was an “appropriate” use of the local government’s funding.

Meanwhile, activists in Gwangmyeong civil society remained ambiguous about whether these attempts by activist-educators from Sungkonghoe University truly sought to build the community of Gwangmyeong. The innovative attempts often involved drawing on examples from other countries, which activists in the community felt were extraneous to Gwangmyeong and did not “connect” with actual realities that resonate with people living in Gwangmyeong. This discrepancy in opinions reflects the question of how the Gwangmyeong LLC should position itself relative to the fabric of civil society organizations in Gwangmyeong. Does the

Gwangmyeong LLC occupy a parallel status with civil society organizations, and in particular to civil society organizations that focus on education activities such as the Gwangmyeong YMCA? The efforts of activist-educators from Sungkonghoe University could be interpreted as an attempt to find a niche within Gwangmyeong society that blended previous efforts in civil society and experimental new efforts. In other words, at this stage, there was an implicit notion that regarded the Gwangmyeong LLC as serving a similar role in providing education opportunities for social change to civil society organizations such as the Gwangmyeong YMCA. A distinction was made between programs offered at the Gwangmyeong YMCA and programs offered at the LLC regarding the character of programs. From 2007 to 2010, the management of the Gwangmyeong LLC was contracted out to Sogang University. The general structure and programs of the LLC established during the Sungkonghoe University period was maintained with some additions, including the credit-banking system for higher education and a focus on foreign language programs. Yet, the key philosophy of activist-educators – cultivating human-to-human relations that could work against an increasingly alienated society – faded away. What remained was an extensive range of education programs provided through the Gwangmyeong LLC.

The activity system for the Gwangmyeong citizens' university, particularly for the department for social welfare recipients, is depicted in Figure 22 below.

Figure 22. Activity system for the Citizens' University program for social welfare recipients at the Gwangmyeong LLC



The self-help guardianship agency was closely related to the “object” of the citizens’ university – social welfare recipients who were potential participants for the program. This close connection enabled the agency to identify a substantial number of participants, although the resulting number was not high as the expectations of city councilors. Although the approach was similar to the first attempt to establish the Guru system at the Gwangmyeong LLC in terms of taking insights from international examples and introducing an “instrument” to fill the gap in educational activities, the citizens’ university had denser networks that spanned across not just educators and organizers, but also potential participants (albeit few in number). The abstract goal of “constructing a unique approach to lifelong education” was concretized into drawing on lifelong education to empower the marginalized, particularly the poor. Although the notion of empowerment as articulated by Earl Shorris connects with the core values of democratic citizenship education and its aims related to political action and participation, this aspect could

not blossom at the Gwangmyeong LLC. Shorris (2006) acknowledges that it is a long process for economic and humanistic empowerment to develop into political empowerment where people become interested in the politics that impact their lives and seek to take action. Continuing pressures by local government councilors regarding the usage of local government funding and low enrollment and the fact that the extended contract for Sungkonghoe University was soon coming to an end made it difficult for the initial goals underlying the citizens' university to develop into political empowerment of marginalized individuals.

When the contract for Sungkonghoe University ended after six years, another university – Sogang University – took over the Gwangmyeong LLC. Educators from Sungkonghoe University noted that the main institutional “frameworks” that they established were expected to carry on even as the contractor changed. For example, the Gwangmyeong citizens' university continued during the Sogang University era. However, the specific content and philosophy embedded in the citizens' university changed significantly to resemble that of other higher education institutions. A 2008 report on the development of programs for Gwangmyeong citizens' university written by educators from Sogang University and published by the Gwangmyeong LLC includes extensive guidelines on how different “departments” in the citizens' university would be developed and what kinds of programs would be offered. A major change was to enable the programs to be accredited through the credit banking system. The report also briefly noted an underlying tension among related actors in the Gwangmyeong region: “Some people *misunderstand* that for lifelong education *not* regarded as a community revitalization project and only focusing on the expansion and operation of programs as doing the work that *should not* be done by the field of lifelong education” (Choi et al., 2008, p. 5, emphasis by researcher). Unraveling this complex sentence results in the following: “It is okay for lifelong

education not to be regarded as a community revitalization project and only to focus on the expansion and operation of programs.” Thus, the three years of contracting out to Sogang University resulted in an extensive expansion of the programs offered. The initial connections of some initiatives during the Sungkonghoe University period diminished, leaving only the institutional “shells,” such as the citizens’ university, to be occupied with a completely different set of practices.

Emergence of endogenous and exogenous awareness of in-between spaces for democratic citizenship education

Different approaches to fill in the “gaps” of activity systems through democratic citizenship education at the Gwangmyeong YMCA and the Gwangmyeong LLC. However, this parallel development of democratic citizenship education through different activities in different organizations made explicit the “in-between spaces” that existed between their activities. The Gwangmyeong YMCA, while developing a new attempt to run alternative schools, became aware of the different directions that the alternative school would head in comparison to their initial motivations to cultivate grassroots local governance. At the Gwangmyeong LLC, changes in actors in charge of the organization (Sungkonghoe Univ → Sogang Univ. → direct management by local government) led to movement away from the initial attempts approximating democratic citizenship education. However, actors existed within the Gwangmyeong LLC who were aware of the importance of approaching the task of democratic citizenship education from an angle different from hosting such activities within the LLC. Amidst these parallel developments, there emerged both endogenous and exogenous awareness of the in-between spaces for democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong. The boundary

of endogeneity and exogeneity is based on whether awareness emerged from within Gwangmyeong city or not. In this section, I discuss how these different sources of awareness emerged and coalesced in Gwangmyeong.

Endogenous awareness and the emergence of the Gwangmyeong Network for DCE

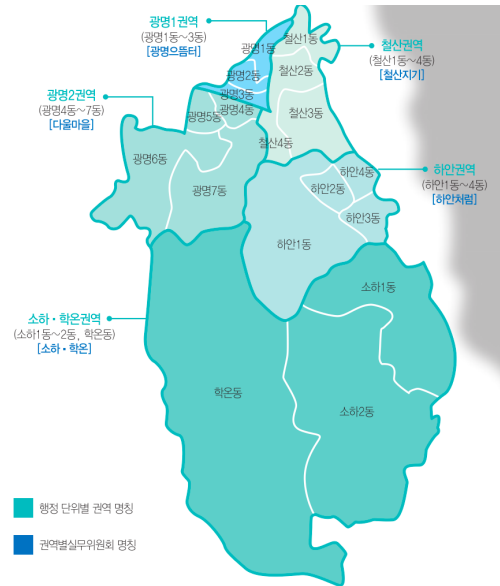
In terms of the trajectory of democratic citizenship education at the Gwangmyeong LLC, another important tipping point emerged after the LLC shifted from a contracted model to a model directly run by the local government. The fact that the LLC was fully funded by the local government but that it seemed to be a separate organization run by external actors was problematized by city councilors. This problematization led to a model where the LLC is directly run by the Gwangmyeong local government, but with the head of the LLC employed from outside of the government to ensure a professional approach to lifelong education. All other people working at the LLC would be bureaucrats of the local government. The first head of the LLC employed after the transition to direct management by the local government was Shin Min-Seon, a professional in lifelong education with extensive field experience.

She really worked to listen to members of the community, took time to meet with people and follow them. ... she is a person who works on her feet. What she did was that she divided Gwangmyeong into districts [based on conversations with activists in the community]. What these districts did is to gather various civil society organizations in the district – ranging from progressive to conservative – and sought activities or democratic citizenship education that they could engage in together. (Lee, Young-Yi)

As a member of the Gwangmyeong LLC Steering Committee from the very beginning, Lee Young-Yi recalled this effort by Shin Min-Seon as notable. The districts work separately from administrative districts and are still used today, with committee meetings on lifelong education in each district taking place on a monthly basis (see Figure 23 below). This approach suggests a shift away from positioning the Gwangmyeong LLC as a provider of education programs to a role that draws on and connects various civil society organizations that are already active in the community. In particular, the status of the Gwangmyeong LLC as a public institution directly run by the local government grants it the potential to be more flexible in reaching out to civil society organizations with different political orientations – ranging from progressive to conservative.

However, the Gwangmyeong LLC as an organization became increasingly bureaucratized. The head of the LLC became a bureaucrat's position, no longer a position for an external professional, which influenced democratic citizenship education activities at the LLC. Bureaucrats tend to follow the legally identified areas of lifelong education designated by the Lifelong Education Act. The Lifelong Education Act identifies six categories of education: education supplementing schooling credentials, adult literacy education, vocational education, humanities education, cultural and arts education, and citizen participation education. Based on this approach, democratic citizenship education is understood as a *type* of education program, contrary to the initial approach taken at the Gwangmyeong LLC that characterized the nature of lifelong education from the perspective of democratic citizenship education. This shift in perspective significantly narrowed the spectrum of democratic citizenship education. Other programs with greater demand from general citizens become the majority of programs provided through the LLC.

Figure 23. Districts used at the Gwangmyeong Lifelong Learning Center



Source: Gwangmyeong LLC annual report (2013, p. 11)

The Gwangmyeong Network for Democratic Citizenship Education is a key route through which the LLC is rooted into the local community. The discussions that led up to the network began in 2016–2017, when local civil society organizations became increasingly interested in pursuing the enactment of ordinances for democratic citizenship education. When efforts to enact national laws to support democratic citizenship education ran into a stalemate (Jung, Hayoon, 2014), some activists began taking on the task of establishing ordinances for democratic citizenship education in the local regions. Such discussions had also begun in the Gwangmyeong region. At the time, the head of the Gwangmyeong LLC was Shin Min-Seon, and she suggested organizing a taskforce with civil society organizations and local organizations interested in democratic citizenship education, including the Gwangmyeong LLC. As the Gwangmyeong LLC had resources such as spaces for meetings and people to assist with

administrative tasks, the LLC assumed the role as the secretariat of the taskforce. While the Ordinance for Democratic Citizenship Education was established separately from the taskforce's efforts, the taskforce continued to build networks among organizations that were interested in democratic citizenship education. After approximately two years of preparation, the Gwangmyeong Network for Democratic Citizenship Education was established in 2019. The organizations involved in the network as of 2020 are listed below. Public institutions are marked with asterisks (*).

- *Gwangmyeong LLC
- Gwangmyeong YMCA
- Gwangmyeong YWCA
- Gwangmyeong Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice
- Gwangmyeong Solidarity for Education
- *Gwangmyeong Office of Education
- Gwangmyeong Network for Hope in Education
- Gwangmyeong Residents' Group for Democratic Citizenship Education
- Gwangmyeong Association for Small-Scale Libraries
- *Joeun Chingudeul* Corp.
- Gwangmyeong Association for Community Children's Centers
- * Gwangmyeong Youth Center
- Gwangmyeong Women's Hotline
- *Didim* Youth Activity Center
- Gwangmyeong Council for Sustainable Development
- *Haeohreum* Citizens' School

- Korean Association for Lifelong Educator, Gwangmyeong branch
- Gwangmyeong *Mannam-ui-zip*
- Gwangmyeong Education Community
- Gwangmyeong Center for Democratic Citizenship Education

Active participants in the network shared that the monthly meetings go beyond a formality. Members talk about their unique activities in their organizations from the perspective of democratic citizenship education – how their activities relate to democratic citizenship education. Every organization has a different specialized area of focus, with some organizations focusing on problems within schools or building safety nets through education in the community. Regardless of the different emphases, the meeting is an arena for members to discuss democratic citizenship education and share activities in their respective organizations as they are being planned.

Exogenous awareness and coalescence with endogenous practices

Amidst this narrowing down of democratic citizenship education within the boundary of the Gwangmyeong LLC, the initiative to run centers for democratic citizenship education was launched by the Gyeonggi Institute for Lifelong Learning at the municipal level. This new initiative sowed its seeds in the in-between spaces provided by the historically accumulated experiences of education activities in the Gwangmyeong region. On the one hand, activist-educators at the Gwangmyeong YMCA developed their own activity system with their interpretation of democratic citizenship. The activity connects parents in the community to build small-scale groups and address collective problems that they face in daily lives. On the other hand, through nine years of contracting out the management of the center and transitioning into a

direct management model, the Gwangmyeong LLC established its position as a key public provider of nonformal education activities in Gwangmyeong. Although its approach to democratic citizenship education has fluctuated, the Gwangmyeong LLC became a stable public institution in the region, enabling it to connect with national and municipal efforts related to lifelong education. The Center for DCE emerged as a link that brought attention to the in-between space between different trajectories of democratic citizenship education activities at the Gwangmyeong YMCA and publicly funded nonformal education at the Gwangmyeong LLC.

Because of the participation of public institutions in the Gwangmyeong Network for Democratic Citizenship Education, such as the Gwangmyeong LLC, related policies are shared with members on a direct basis. This was exactly the case when the Gyeonggi Institute of Lifelong Learning announced its plans to support centers for DCE in local regions.

Initial discussions about contracting the center [for Democratic Citizenship Education] was first discussed through the Network. We talked about how it won't be the best scenario for an organization external to Gwangmyeong contracting the Center. Members of the Network mutually shared that democratic citizenship education needs to be led by organizations that knows the community very well and that can unfold their activities from within the community. Members of the Network then talked about which organization should be recommended to run the Center and members wanted YMCA to take the lead. (Pyo, Hana)

At first, I first thought that members of the Network might result in member organizations implicitly competing against one another because it involves public funding and money to support wages. However, this was never the case. The

accumulated experiences of getting to know each organization better meant that members all knew about the resources that each member organization has and thought it best for YMCA to take it. All the members were very willing about the decision. (A member of the Network)

Thus, even though the initiative of the Center for Democratic Citizenship Education was an external stimulus, it was rearticulated through the already established network that had developed in the Gwangmyeong region. Rather than an external entity “coming into” the region with a stated goal of “connecting” or “supporting” the organizations without prior knowledge about the context, the working knowledge of each organization accumulated through the network seamlessly connected with the initiative to create a center. The center also became a part of the network, meaning that decisions made at the center are continuously shared with members of the network, while the center receives opinions from network members on how best to support and mediate among organizations for the purpose of enhancing democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong. Despite the fact that “intermediary supporting organizations” remain an abstract concept, a mechanism has taken root through the Network for Democratic Citizenship Education for related actors to collectively discuss ways to develop what such an organizational format would mean in the Gwangmyeong community.

Filling in-between spaces through the Gwangmyeong Center for Democratic Citizenship Education

The Gwangmyeong Center for DCE is an attempt to form an intermediary supporting organization. As a project run by the Gyeonggi Institute of Lifelong Learning, five local regions in the Gyeonggi municipality were granted funding to run the center on a contractual basis. The

Gyeonggi Institute of Lifelong Learning initially attempted to take on the role as an intermediary supporting organization by itself in 2018. However, because of the wide diversity of democratic citizenship education activities in the local regions within the Gyeonggi municipality, the institute confronted difficulties in becoming a “hub” that mediates and supports activities and organizations that have already accumulated extensive experience in democratic citizenship education. A pivot was made by people working at the Gyeonggi Institute of Lifelong Learning to have intermediary supporting organizations tailored to the local contexts, which led them to reposition the project at the local level. As discussed in a previous section on intermediary supporting organizations, details on *how* such types of organizations mediate among other organizations and support them remains ambiguous. However, this experimental type of organizational format provides flexibility for local actors to fill the in-between space it provides. The Gwangmyeong Center for DCE illustrates different strategies that activist-educators employ to fill this in-between space: building curricula as shared commons and reclaiming the semantics of the “political” in democratic citizenship education.

Constructing curricula as shared commons

The activist-educators at the center initially focused on getting to know organizations in the community by making in-person visits, hearing about their practices, and sharing these practices with the public. Along with these efforts to build relationships with organizations, activist-educators at the Gwangmyeong YMCA also thought about the ways in which their work of running the center would benefit *themselves*.

We focused on the question of what being contracted the Center will leave for the Gwangmyeong YMCA as an organization. The Center is contracted out so it’s

bound to end sometime. If we don't want to feel disappointed when that time comes, we also need to plan for what our engagement will leave for us. It could be through people, it could be through our members having more opportunities to learn and grow. (...) And we thought that we could rearticulate our twenty years' worth of educational practices through this opportunity. We did not label it as "democratic citizenship education," but how to empower citizens have been the focus of our education for the last 20 years. (Pyo Hana)

Thus, activist-educators at the Gwangmyeong YMCA decided to look through their 20 years' worth of education activities represented by *deungdae* and coded the data to extract key themes that characterize their accumulated practices. The goal was to make explicit the implied values of democratic citizenship education in their programs, leading to components of a curriculum, which would be shared across the Gwangmyeong Network for Democratic Citizenship Education as well as with the public. This initiative was a tailored way for the center to support civil society organizations and groups in the Gwangmyeong community, which included many small-scale groups or organizations that engaged in education activities but felt burdened to allot people dedicated to democratic citizenship education. Leveraging the experience accumulated at the Gwangmyeong YMCA to build a curriculum to be shared with the community was a way to reflect on activities within the organization on the one hand and to identify the most effective way to share its resources with other actors in the community on the other hand.

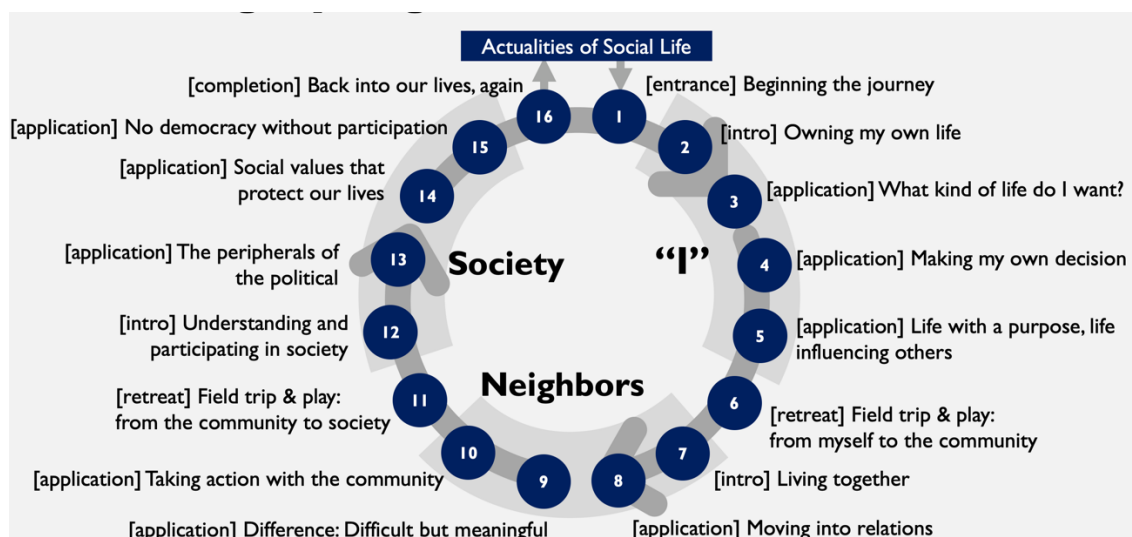
Making and sharing curricula is not a common practice, particularly when relationships among organizations are competitive. It is often the case that civil society organizations working for good causes face implicit "competition" with other organizations because of the sheer

number of people interested in participating and the fact that their time is limited. However, it was possible for the Gwangmyeong Center for DCE to overcome these tendencies. First, the already established network had broken down the tendency for competition by encouraging members of different organizations to share information about their organizations and the practices *as* they were being planned. This effort prompted the network to organize large-scale activity across the member organizations, beyond a mere sum of separated activities in each organization. Second, although the education activities of the Gwangmyeong YMCA were analyzed and rearticulated into a curriculum, the curriculum itself does not copy the actual education practices at the YMCA. As previously discussed, what characterizes education activities in *deungdae* are the cultural practices of singing, meditating, intimate discussion, as well as the continual development of leadership among all participants. These aspects were not captured in the process of building a curriculum. To make the curriculum sharable, a focus was put on the content and materials that could be utilized when organizing a program. Through this process of analysis, activist-educators and researchers developed the Gwangmyeong Basic Curriculum for Democratic Citizenship Education.

According to the research report on the curriculum (Kang, Jeong-Mo, et al., 2020), the curriculum is comprised of three themes (see Figure 24 below): I (Democracy and I), Neighbors (Democracy and relations), and Society (Democracy and the community). The first theme focuses on components necessary for people to live dignified lives as agents in society. The second extends this awareness to relations among people – what people need to live together while interacting with and building relations with one another. The third theme involves workshops that address actual needs within the community and society. Each theme contains four programs, including one introductory and three applicatory programs. The curriculum is

organized in a cycle where the three themes are connected with reflective opportunities or retreats. The whole curriculum consists of 16 programs in total, but it has been designed such that components of the curriculum can be easily selected to be organized into a lighter version of the curriculum.

Figure 24. Gwangmyeong Basic Curriculum for Democratic Citizenship Education



For each of the 16 programs, a detailed syllabus outlines the overall structure of the class. The syllabus includes classroom activities, the recommended time to allot for these activities, and tips for educators who will utilize the syllabus. Below is an example of a syllabus provided for a session, with its contents in Figure 25. This example illustrates the extent of resources provided through the curriculum.

Session 14. [application] Social values for protesting in our lives

Learning Goals

[value] Internalize an attitude that seeks values of public good.
 [knowledge] Understand the diverse origins, meanings, and mechanisms of social values.
 [capacity] Embody the principles of social change and learn to apply them to his/her own field.

Time: 90 minutes

Keywords: #public_value #social #citizen_participation

Contents

Figure 25. Contents for a module in the Gwangmyeong Basic Curriculum for DCE

Topic	Contents	Method	Time (mins)
Opening	Introducing the session - keywords and contents #public_values #social #citizen_participation	lecture	5
Welcoming	Board game on social values - Get acquainted with various words related to social values through games such as “escaping,” “taking away,” and “making sentences.”	activity	10
Conversations	Imagination - Select one card with a social value and imagine what kinds of changes will occur in the community if they are realized. - What kind of benefits will I/my family/my organization will have?	conversation and participation	15
Thinking	Lecture - significance of social values: harmonization between public and private benefits - definitions, contents, origins of social values - expansion and realization of social values, role of civil society and citizen participation	lecture	20
Break			10
Reflection	Discussion - What kinds of social values do public institutions in Gwangmyeong aspire to achieve?	conversation and participation	20
Plans for Practice	- What would you choose as the social value that you want to pursue for the next 10 years? Why? (Which values relate most to my life?)	conversation and participation	10

Tips for Educators

- Social value cards for the game are not for sale and can be obtained by contacting npo@nposchool.com
- Specific details for using the cards is shown in the following video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wL65zhde3uA&t=24s>

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Activist-educators developed the Gwangmyeong Basic Curriculum for Democratic Citizenship Education as a shared commons among organizations in the region. The curriculum

represents a way to gather the unique trajectories of democratic citizenship education developed through the work at the Gwangmyeong YMCA from within the organization and beyond the boundaries of the organization, with a wider community of organizations and groups. Although it remains to be seen how the curriculum will be utilized by other organizations, it has sowed seeds for various groups and organizations to become small hubs for democratic citizenship education. Even if only a fragment of the curriculum is practiced in an organization, the activities offer a framework for an individual developing relations with neighbors and engaging with society.

Reclaiming “the political” in democratic citizenship education

After developing the basic curriculum, activist-educators wanted to expand the participatory aspects in the curriculum. The basic curriculum includes discussions about participation and questions that prompt learners to think about participation, but activist-educators felt that a more practice-oriented curriculum could be developed. Thus, activist-educators and researchers gathered once again to develop an “advanced” curriculum that is more oriented towards action through the themes of I, neighbors, and society. As researchers and activist-educators invited activist-educators in the Gwangmyeong region and engaged in focus group interviews (FGIs) to develop the curriculum, they realized that this curriculum need not be fixed as an “advanced” curriculum that follows after the “basic” curriculum.

The key realization through the process of FGIs and building the curriculum through research was that facilitating participation through democratic citizenship education is in fact political education.

We would gather in the Center and talk about “Then what is politics? ... What is politics in our interpretation? What is political education?” ... I think that

regardless of the end result of the curriculum, the process that allowed us to talk about this topic was very important. ... Whenever I go to a public event that discusses political education, I directly experience how much the vision for political education differs among people. The National Election Commission in Korea would say that you need to teach about how to vote in political education. Bureaucrats from Offices of Education would say that you can never talk about politics at schools. ... Our approach is so much different from these discourses. The political education we talk about is *how to live my life politically*. ... It's about enhancing the political competencies of people. What can they politically achieve what they want and need in their lives? (Pyo Hana)

The quote above indicates the complex dynamics around the interpretation of “the political” in Korean society. Some actors, such as the National Election Commission, view politics primarily from the perspective of institutional politics, where the key objective in educating people about politics is facilitate voting. For schools, the concept of “political education” triggers red flags due to the fear of interfering with the principle of “political neutrality” required of teachers. In this interpretation, “political neutrality” is equated with not being political at all. Amidst this context that limits the scope of political education, it is meaningful that activist-educators and researchers working at the Gwangmyeong Center embraced the concept of “political education” in their advanced curriculum for democratic citizenship education. Although activist-educators engaging in other examples of democratic citizenship education are often aware that the education is political, it is not often the case that they willingly label education as “political education.” Thus, the fact that the advanced curriculum was called the “Gwangmyeong Citizens’ Political Education Curriculum” is

meaningful in that activist-educators explicitly reclaimed the concept of the political in democratic citizenship education. The aim of democratic citizenship education to empower people in their lives, with their neighbors, and in society is not limited to raising cognitive awareness. The expectation is that people will be able to live their lives from a political perspective, problematizing issues and taking action rather than acquiescing and taking the situation for granted.

This reclaiming of “the political” in democratic citizenship education is shared among activist-educators in the Gwangmyeong Network, who interpret their education activities as part of democratic citizenship education.

I think that the very nature of our lives is political. ... Political education is not education at political parties. Some people argue that education for political parties should happen within the parties and think that is political education. However, political education is not that. I believe people who argue like that have a misleading understanding of political education. (Joo Mi-Hwa, Gwangmyeong Network for Hope in Education)

I don't distinguish between the two [democratic citizenship education and political education]. Broadly speaking, I think that education related to people's political maturation, to enhancing political consciousness can all be referred to as democratic citizenship education. ... When you see the Ordinance [on Democratic Citizenship Education], the definition includes education that leads to action. (Seo,

Won-Hee, Gwangmyeong Residents' Group for Democratic Citizenship
Education)

Members who are part of the Gwangmyeong Network for Democratic Citizenship Education fully support the reclaiming of “the political.” They believe that democratic citizenship education is no different from political education and that an arbitrary distinction narrows the application of the concepts. A shared understanding of political education among these activist-educators is that “the political” is no longer restricted to institutional politics dominated by political parties. It can start from the daily lives of people, and the activist-educators emphasize that it is important to embed this awareness in approaches toward political education.

According to the final report of the “advanced” curriculum (Kang, Jeong-Mo, et al., 2021), the Gwangmyeong Citizens' Political Education Curriculum begins from the awareness that the three themes in the basic curriculum are all connected through the theme of “politics.” Politics is not restricted to one area, such as “society,” but can derive from the theme of “Democracy and I” or “Democracy and neighbors.” The advanced curriculum is organized into eight sessions, which address the actions that a person can take in each theme. A brief explanation of the eight sessions and learning goals is provided in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Overall structure of the Gwangmyeong Citizens' Political Education Curriculum

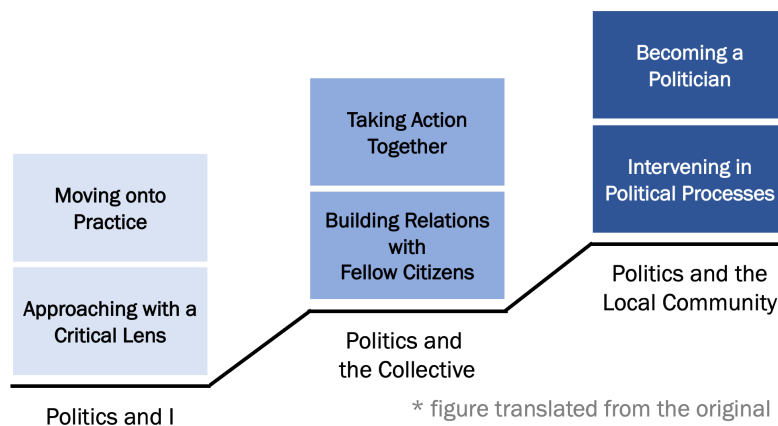
Theme	Session	Learning Goal(s) and Keywords
Opening	1. Why politics? Our lives and politics	- Inspire motivation to learn about politics and cover the overall contents to be covered in the curriculum. #concept of politics #PoliticalAwareness #Life&Politics
Politics and I	2. Developing critical awareness	- Build a foundation to have one's own perspective to think critically about the relations between oneself, the society, and history. #KoreanHistory #CriticalAwareness #ConstitutionalValues #DemocraticRepublicanSystem

	3. Moving onto practice	- Seek plans for action to express one's opinions based on one's own rights and values. #problematization #understandingGwangmyeong #PoliticalQuestions #ParticipatoryCompetencies
Politics and the Collective	4. Building relations with fellow citizens	- Understand collective decision-making processes through tuning one another's mutual benefits, empathy, and consensus, and through democratic communications. - Figure out ways to form various political networks, groups, organizations with fellow citizens who will take action together. #InformationLiteracy #DemocraticCommunication #Tuning&Consensus #Empathy #RelationBuilding
	5. Taking action together	- Practice ways to act together in order to realize the collective needs and values of citizens in solidarity. #Organizing #StrategiesforParticipation #SocialParticipation #OrganizationManagement
Politics and the Local Community	6. Getting involved in political processes	- Understand mechanisms through which citizens can directly intervene in political processes, beyond the limits of representative politics. #PoliticalLiteracy #PoliticalCompetencies #Co-governanceParticipation
	7. Becoming politicians	- Enhance understanding about political processes by thinking from the perspective of politicians who deal with public issues based on their representative authority. #RunningforOffice #ElectionStrategies #PoliticalActivity #UsingPower #FairDistributionOfResources
Closing	8. Politics, how? My political life	- Reflect on the learning contents and plan for one's own political life onwards. #PoliticalExistence #PoliticalVision #PlansforPoliticalAction

The curriculum encompasses various spectrums of political action, ranging from expressing one's opinions, to organizing collective groups for action, directly participating in political processes, and assuming the role of politicians. The purpose is to convey a message that these types of political action comprise a continuum. Whereas politicians are often viewed as "elites" who engage in "qualitatively different" actions than general citizens, the inclusion of indirectly assuming the role of a politician enables people to think critically about politicians' actions, questioning whether politicians' decisions or actions are the best that they can do.

In a public forum presenting the curriculum to actors in the community as well as to several city councilors in Gwangmyeong, I observed an interesting dynamic. The researchers used the figure below to present the overall structure of the curriculum. The structure is depicted in a step-by-step format, with the stage of “Politics and I” as the starting point, through “Politics and the Collective” onto “Politics and the Local Community” (see Figure 26 below). Several city councilors noted that “The figure gives the impression that the final stage of Politics and the Local Community is ‘more advanced’ than the initial stage of Politics and I,” and that “Such representation of the curriculum may lead to misleading notions that learners are to proceed to move onto the final stages [of becoming politicians].” City councilors and some bureaucrats in the forum suggested that a horizontal model, rather than a step-by-step model, may be more appropriate to “prevent misunderstandings.”

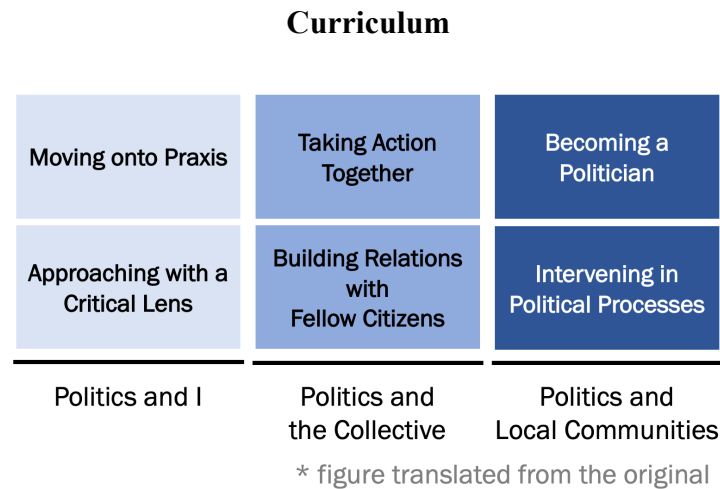
Figure 26. Initial figure representing the Gwangmyeong Citizens' Political Education Curriculum



The researchers responded to these suggestions that they do think that the latter stages of action in the theme of Politics and the Local Community are qualitatively different from

actions taken in the theme of Politics and I. Yet, they were also willing to adjust the model if it would prevent “misunderstandings” about the curriculum. As a result, the model was modified into a horizontal model as depicted in Figure 27 below in the final report of the curriculum.

Figure 27. Modified figure representing the Gwangmyeong Citizens' Political Education



In presenting the Gwangmyeong Citizens’ Political Education Curriculum to the public, it is expected that the curriculum will clash with different understandings about political education. The city councilors’ responses are reflective of how they perceive political education. For example, they tend to think of political education in terms of political parties. This is the reason that one of the councilor asked whether “the end goal is to educate politicians.” As agents of institutional politics, they tend to interpret political education from their perspective; thus, there is a need for further efforts to have them understand the need to educate general citizens as political agents in their daily lives. The focus on providing education for “the people” directly relates to awareness of the currently limited roles that political parties play in representing the interests of people. Citizens’ movement activists seek to deal with this limitation by focusing on the empowerment and mobilization of people in society, who they regard as key actors for

mobilization as well as potential constituents who can pressure politicians. The fact that city councilors commented that the initial figure could “create a misleading notion” that the latter stages are more advanced levels signals their assumptions about political participation increasing among “non-professionals” in politics: that people being able to express their opinions in their personal lives is just as important as people being able to take direct actions to intervene in the political processes of the local community. This is the very notion that activist-educators in Gwangmyeong aim to address through the curriculum of political education. Despite apprehensive comments that may be raised, the Center for DCE, researchers, and activist-educators within the Gwangmyeong Network for Democratic Citizenship Education have built a firm foundation to reclaim the concept of “political education.” The semantic ambiguity afforded by the word “political” in the Korean language has in fact created a way for activist-educators to fill the in-between space between civil society in Gwangmyeong and the Gwangmyeong LLC as a public institution with their own interpretation of what it means to be political.

Deepening democracy throughout Gwangmyeong city

The organizations working on democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong city have different characteristics compared to PSPD. Whereas in-between space is created within PSPD due to the discrepancies in the organization of work between organizing and education activities, both the Gwangmyeong YMCA and Gwangmyeong LLC prioritize education activities as their main focus. For the two organizations in Gwangmyeong, which seek to “seep into” the fabrics of the Gwangmyeong community, education activities are considered to be central in making connections with the local residents. In their initial introduction into the

Gwangmyeong region, both organizations sought to devise ways to connect with local residents and make their activities “attractive” for potential participants.

While the initial task was to understand the Gwangmyeong Center for DCE, analysis of texts within the center led to a need to understand the relationship between the Gwangmyeong YMCA and Gwangmyeong LLC, particularly in the area of democratic citizenship education. Activist-educators who have worked or work in Gwangmyeong city agree that public resources can and should be allotted for democratic citizenship education activities. Such funding has been made possible through interactions with lifelong education institutions, although citizenship education by educators at lifelong education institutions remain minimal. However, the commonality between citizens’ movement organizations focusing on grassroots organizing such as the Gwangmyeong YMCA and local public institutions such as the LLC is the basis of serving residents living in the local area and increasing the sense of community among residents. This basis is where the interests of activist-educators and public officials working as educators align. Even when new approaches are introduced or current approaches to democratic citizenship education are intensified, the focus lies on whether the activities connect with the community. Starting from engaging residents in Gwangmyeong to collectively discuss the everyday issues they face, activist-educators in Gwangmyeong have realized the need to explicitly address the social-oriented character of democratic citizenship education. While people exhibit individual motivations and interests, activist-educators prioritize expanding this breadth of interest into the collective and social dimension. The call to embrace democratic citizenship education as “political education” is based on this awareness.

With goals that resonate with the values of democratic citizenship education, activist-educators at the Gwangmyeong YMCA seek to offer education activities to build grassroots local

governance. However, activist-educators' initial attempts revealed the importance of heeding to the daily activities of local residents. In their second attempt, activist-educators identified missing activities related to parenting in the Gwangmyeong region, providing youth education programs to build direct relations with mothers and parents in the area. To foster individual-level liminality, the activist-educators connected the notion of parenting to social action: encouraging parents to become socially aware in order to make the community environment better for their children. This effort led to adult education activities through the *deungdae* group, with cultural programming and informal conversations leading to collective problematization of issues such as bribery at schools and environmental problems in the local area. Although connecting individual motivations for parenting with social awareness was powerful inspiration for taking action, pushback threatened the safety of participants' children and families, which led to reprioritizing individual goals to foster the best conditions for their children's education. Thus, the examples of designing approaches to democratic citizenship education at the Gwangmyeong YMCA illustrate the tricky balance between individual and collective and social dimensions in democratic citizenship education. In the case of PSPD as an advocacy-based organization, the motivation to encompass different levels of activism – from individual to organized levels – was strong, with efforts to broaden the category of “activists” who participate in social actions without being tied to a specific organization. However, the case of the Gwangmyeong YMCA, which prioritizes local grassroots organizing, demonstrates that regardless of whether a person is affiliated with an organization, the goals of democratic citizenship education activities may become limited to organizing for individual interests. Thus, a key puzzle that emerges through the experiences at the Gwangmyeong YMCA is how to better connect individual goals with collective or socially oriented goals.

Democratic citizenship education at the Gwangmyeong LLC has exhibited ebbs and flows. With an increased interest in publicly funded nonformal education under the state-led approach to lifelong education, the Gwangmyeong local government allotted resources to develop unique approaches to lifelong education specific to the region. The local government contracted out the operations of the LLC for this purpose, resulting in the progressive Sungkonghoe University running the LLC for six years. Activist-educators who worked at the LLC during this era prioritized educational values that pertain to democratic citizenship education – empowering the marginalized through education and enablingg them to take social action through education. While providing a wide variety of programs expected of LLCs, activist-educators also implemented novel approaches that embedded their aspirations for how education could make “dents” in society. The introduction of the Guru local exchange trading system and the citizens’ university inspired by *fachhochschulen* in Denmark and the Clemente courses in the US reflects how activist-educators at the Gwangmyeong LLC sought to realize education activities that could create alternatives to the capitalist society and revive humanistic values that could empower people to question the status quo. Thus, whereas the Gwangmyeong YMCA chose to identify missing components in the activities in the daily lives of Gwangmyeong residents to fill with their education activities, activist-educators at the Gwangmyeong LLC focused on leveraging the unique resources available to them (particularly international connections) to introduce novel approaches into Gwangmyeong. The fact that the LLC’s operations were based on a contract may have also affected the differences in strategies between the YMCA and the LLC. The implementation of novel activities required intensive processes of collaboration with organizations in the community, such as local NGOs and the local government. Thus, compared to the YMCA, where activist-educators sought to directly

connect their activities with the daily activities of potential participants, the LLC adopted an indirect method of connecting with related actors in the implementation of education activities to reach out to potential participants. While the institutional framework, or institutional “shells,” that were created by activist-educators from Sungkonghoe University remained at the Gwangmyeong LLC after the contract’s conclusion, only the “shells” remained. Programs of the citizens’ university was filled with an extensive focus on the variety of programs offered, with the emphasis on humanistic values and empowerment diminishing as a result of the change in management.

While the organizations faced different challenges in implementing democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong city, the trajectory of education activities at the Gwangmyeong YMCA and Gwangmyeong LLC illustrate the in-between space between organization-based activities for democratic citizenship education. Endogenous awareness about the inter-organizational dimension for democratic citizenship education among activist-educators resulted in the Gwangmyeong Network for DCE. The creation of the network was quickly met by input from the municipal level to create local centers for DCE as “intermediary supporting organizations” that could support other local organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education. Through this process, the in-between space for democratic citizenship education at the inter-organizational level became a space to be filled through the activities of the center along with support from the network. How activist-educators filled the in-between space for democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong city is summarized in Table 14 below.

Table 14. Filling the in-between space for democratic citizenship education in Gwangmyeong city

	Gwangmyeong YMCA
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How do activist-educators design and implement activities of democratic citizenship education activities? (How do activist-educators design and implement individual-level liminality?)	1) Identifying and connecting with missing components in the activity systems of potential participants
	2) Connecting individual-oriented notions of parenting to social dimensions
	Gwangmyeong LLC
	1) Drawing on resources unique to the educators to introduce novel approaches
	2) Building relations with related actors involved in the implementation of educational attempts to foster motivations among potential participants
Endogenous and exogeneous identification of in-between space between organization-based democratic citizenship education activity systems in the Gwangmyeong region ➔ Gwangmyeong Center for DCE (Gwangmyeong Network for DCE)	
What kinds of visions and processes for deepening democracy are embedded in activities of democratic citizenship education activities? (How do activities from within the organization go beyond the organization?)	1) Constructing curricula as shared commons
	2) Reclaiming “the political” in democratic citizenship education

In particular, what became evident for activities at the Gwangmyeong YMCA and Gwangmyeong LLC was the difficulty of cultivating and sustaining community-wide actions through democratic citizenship education. Their education activities created certain levels of individual liminality, where participating learners transitioned from isolated individuals to socially aware community members, or where learners went through alternative experiences that they would not have experienced otherwise (e.g., *Guru* exchange system, humanistic education for social welfare recipients). However, it was difficult for individual-level liminality to move beyond that level and for socially oriented directions to be sustained under oppressive conditions. The in-between space made evident through the network and the center allowed activists, educators, and activist-educators throughout the Gwangmyeong community to convene and

share opinions about addressing this dilemma at the inter-organizational level. This in-between space was filled through two approaches. First, the organizations constructed shared curricula to be freely adapted and provided resources for activists, educators, and activist-educators across different organizations. Members in the network not only include organizations whose work is dedicated to democratic citizenship education, but also activist organizations and groups for which education work is peripheral. Acknowledging the lack of resources for these actors to develop democratic citizenship education programming, the center developed core curricula based on key philosophies of democratic citizenship education. Second, a series of FGIs during the process of developing the curricula led to shared awareness among participating actors about the need to reclaim the concept of “the political” in democratic citizenship education. This reclamation involves not only efforts to argue against the depoliticization of democratic citizenship education that centers around the “ethics and morals” required for “model citizens,” but also embracing the socially oriented direction in the word “politics.” Members of the network explicitly embrace democratic citizenship education as political education for citizens, sharing an orientation toward collective and social levels of political participation, which are embedded in the curricula that they developed. Whereas the network and the center are in the process of constructing a united front to reclaim democratic citizenship education as “political education,” tensions arise when presenting this idea to people outside of the network, such as local city councilors, who question the need to prioritize the social level of participation beyond the individual level. However, it is significant that the members of the network share a pursuit for democratic citizenship education to develop into collective and social levels of participation, rather than remaining in individual levels.

Based on the activities at the Gwangmyeong YMCA, what does deepening democracy mean for its activist-educators? What kinds of visions for deepening democracy do the activist-educators embed in the activities? Rather than focusing on specific agendas for deepening democracy to be covered as content for democratic citizenship education, activists and educators at the Gwangmyeong Network for DCE focus on embracing the emphasis on political participation in the characterization of democratic citizenship education activities. This focus elicits collaboration among organizations in the community with different backgrounds and emphases on education, including lifelong education institutions, libraries, civil society organizations with a marginal emphasis on education, and organizations dedicated to democratic citizenship education. Thus, the case of Gwangmyeong city illustrates an alternative approach to cultivating collective agency at the inter-organizational level through which education activities are not only instruments for organizing, but comprise the topic for organizing across organizations. In terms of a wider application, I argue that the characterization of activities involved in cultivating collective agency (such as “mobilization” or “organizing”) can offer potential directions for cultivating collective agency from within and beyond organizations. In Gwangmyeong, the shared understanding of the goal of democratic citizenship education to cultivate political participation at the community and social levels was the basis for rejecting views that consider individual levels of political participation to be “good enough.” This case shows that for institutional forms of democracy to be “deepened” beyond electoral participation, arguing for the plurality of issues encompassed under the umbrella of “democracy” or plurality of political action at the individual, community, social levels may not be sufficient. My argument derived from the case in Gwangmyeong city is that a clear understanding not just of the plurality,

but of the orientation toward the social levels of political action is an important arena in cultivating collective agency for a “deeper democracy.”

7. Deepening democracy at the Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE

The Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE started among activists who engaged in the sub-division of grassroots community organizing within citizen' movements in the 1990s. What distinguishes the activists at SIDE is that at SIDE, activists who had been part of different organizations convened under a common recognition of the rigidity and limitations of traditional organization-based approaches to collective agency. Thus, the inclusion of the word "project" in the name signifies the search for alternatives to traditional organizations, with more emphasis on the competencies of activist-educators with accumulated expertise specific to the field of democratic citizenship education. Activist-educators initially created the Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE in 2015 as a loose network of activists who dedicate themselves specifically to democratic citizenship education activities. In fact, these activist-educators' experiences are closely aligned with the development of activist work that are specifically dedicated to promoting democratic citizenship education across the country. The activist-educators at SIDE are open to working with the state, including lifelong education institutions (although it is rare to find lifelong education institutions prioritizing democratic citizenship education within the content of adult education). In fact, the activist-educators at SIDE actively seek to engage with educational opportunities connected to in-between spaces for democratic participation created at various types of state institutions at the national, regional, and local levels. Although the headquarters are in Seoul, SIDE's activist-educators travel on a day-to-day basis in busy times to offer education programs throughout the country. This wide range of activities is made possible through their past experiences at traditional organizations in community-based organizing, which were characterized by a strong emphasis on affiliated structures at regional and local levels under the umbrella of a national organization. The informal

networks cultivated through their years of work at these organizations provide a basis for these activists to gain inroads into and accumulate localized knowledge of democratic citizenship activities in different regions.

The activities of the organization hinge upon actively engagement in in-between spaces that are already created in state, municipal, or local governments and related public institutions. These in-between spaces emerge from the discrepancy between bureaucratic ways of organizing activities versus new attempts to incorporate “democratic participation” into various state, municipal, or local entities. Compared to large-scale citizens’ movement organizations where democratic citizenship education is one of the activities of the organization, SIDE’s exclusive focus on democratic citizenship education makes it easier for governments and public institutions to collaborate with the project. Furthermore, the in-between space is identified by the requesting organizations, prior to SIDE’s engagement, which means that there is less room for activist-educators at SIDE to experiment. Many of the contents and mechanisms for organizing education activities are under the influence of the requesting organization (e.g., the local government, public institutions). Thus, a main task for activist-educators at SIDE is to engage in these in-between spaces while taking as much control as possible to fill the spaces with their accumulated experience related to democratic citizenship education. The types of in-between spaces and required activities differ according to the collaborating entity. Most cases involve running education programs for the general public or specifically for educators, and some involve research activity that focuses on democratic citizenship education.

How do activist-educators at SIDE seek to deepen democracy? The strategies that activist-educators at SIDE implement to fill in-between spaces for education activities and research work differ. When invited into in-between spaces for education activities, the activist-

educators at SIDE have developed unique repertoires of modules that reflect their accumulated expertise in the field of democratic citizenship education as a way to gain power in the in-between spaces. These modules reflect their shared liminal experiences from traditional citizens' movement organizations. For example, the module for "mini-public" programs involves the use of pre-program surveys, specific ways of organizing discussions, and methods to collect the opinions of participants. Activist-educators at SIDE share an understanding of the flow of these education programs, which is similarly applied to different in-between spaces. Rather than developing completely different modules for each different in-between space, they strategically draw on modules to develop a division of labor among activist-educators, which enables them to effectively respond to volatile situations in the field while securing time to get accustomed to the different contents to be dealt with through education programs. They assert power within the in-between spaces by demonstrating their expertise in balancing the appropriate quality of discussions among a large group of participants while also ensuring that certain "results" can be achieved within a limited amount of time to meet the expectations of requesting entities. For invitation into in-between spaces for research, activist-educators gain relatively more power because the research activity often involves SIDE activist-educators organizing a team by themselves (granting them autonomy) to connect the research to the wider community of activist-educators who are dedicated to democratic citizenship education throughout the country. In other words, the community they draw on for the activity system enables them to gain more power in the research activity. Thus, activist-educators at SIDE seek to deepen democracy by investing in ways that they can gain more power within in-between spaces and thereby shape education or research activity according to what they view as crucial to the practices and development of the field of democratic citizenship education.

What does deepening democracy mean for activist-educators at SIDE based on their activities? They focus on the need to engage in various types of in-between spaces that are emerging within governments and public institutions. Although the extent to which these opportunities arise may depend on the political orientations of the government and although there are many aspects of the in-between space that are predetermined, activist-educators believe that it is still important for them to enter these spaces and gain leverage in order to assert their perspective on democratic citizenship education practices. A main point that they focus on is to bring democratic debates and discussions to a wider range of people, for people to express their own opinions even when they disagree with another person. The modules at SIDE are designed to make the expression of disagreement easier. Engaging with in-between spaces in governments and public institutions enables activist-educators to come into contact with a wide range of people, who may have diverse political orientations and who may not have voluntarily elected for democratic citizenship education. Rather than building the collective agency of general people through the organization, SIDE's activities are directed toward increasing the exposure of general citizens to democratically oriented discussions and debates. Collective agency is emphasized across the activist-educators who are engaging in democratic citizenship education, who activist-educators at SIDE regard as key actors for exerting power in the in-between spaces within governments or public institutions. Moreover, activist-educators at SIDE are aware of regional discrepancies in the development of democratic citizenship education activities and regard it important to build bridges across different regions for activist-educators in democratic citizenship education to enhance collective agency throughout the country. Their activities contradict assumptions that position civil society as a separate category to the state. Rather, they are aware of the tensions within the state and society as a whole and that government initiatives

for “democratic participation” can simply be glossed over. They believe that engaging in in-between spaces within governments and public institutions, although not without limitations, is an important route for deepening democracy. Thus, democratically empowered decentralization as articulated by Olin-Wright (2010; 2019) is considered an ideal goal for these activist-educators, but there is a long way to go. Governments and public institutions need to invest more time and resources into these activities, while general people need to become more confident in expressing their own opinions. The current concentration of democratic citizenship education capacities in the capital and metropolitan regions is also a challenge to overcome. Thus, activist-educators at SIDE seek to deepen democracy by strengthening the currently available practices of democratic citizenship education through engaging in in-between spaces or building networks of collaboration across activist-educators dedicated to democratic citizenship education across the country.

Contextualizing Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE

A search for activism beyond organizations

The large-scale candlelight rallies against the import of US beef that was suspected to be infected with mad-cow’s disease represented a key turning point not just for activist-educators in citizenship education, but for activists in Korean society. The massive scale and participation of people in the rallies shocked activists and organizers. One of the reasons for the widespread participation was the fact that the issue touched upon a sense of safety among general citizens, particularly mothers with little children. The issue was directly related to the food that their children’s eat. During the 2008 rallies, the term “stroller troops” was often used in newspaper

articles²⁵ to refer to mothers who joined the rallies with their children in strollers (see Figure 28 below). The image of mothers and children joining the rallies directly contrasted with images of hard-core union members with headbands chanting slogans together. Another defining characteristic of the 2008 candlelight rallies was that many people who participated in the rallies did not identify as members of citizens' movement organizations (Lee, Hang-Woo, 2012). Social networking websites and online communities were effective in spreading the news about rallies and drawing people out to participate. This was the reason that the number of participants far exceeded the expectation of full-time organizers. It was general citizens, through informal online networks and small groups, who initiated large-scale rallies, with traditional civil society organizations and full-time activists responding afterwards to fill in with the administrative tasks. At the rally's peak, the number of people participating was estimated to be 700,000 based on organizers' records and 100,000 based on police records.

Figure 28. Photo of “stroller troops” going to the Seoul agora, June 1, 2008



Source: <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/3166679#home>

²⁵ For example, the following is a newspaper article from 2008 using the term “stroller troops:”
<https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/3166679#home>

Marking a significant turning point in the history of Korean social movements, the fact that traditional civil society organizations had to *react* to the rallies rather than *leading* them shook many organizers. They were positively shocked by the mobilizing power across general citizens through the use of online technologies. This shock prompted many organizers to reflect on the strengths and limitations of traditional large-scale organizations. Whereas these organizations had substantial resources that could help organizing, their fixed structures meant that they could be perceived as rigid and hierarchical. These types of organizations contrasted with new small-scale and flexible units of organizing that could “spring up” and disperse, facilitated by the use of online technologies.

Whereas 2008 marked a significant shift in Korean activism that influenced PSPD and the Gwangmyeong YMCA, it had the most significant impact on activist-educators at Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE. As a small-scale citizens’ movement organization registered as an NGO, SIDE has approximately three to four full-time activist-educators and approximately 30 to 40 dues-paying members mostly comprised of activists who join the projects as facilitators or lecturers depending on their availability. Among the full-time activist-educators, one activist-educator identifies closely with the activism of the 2008 candlelight rallies. He was one of the key organizers who “reacted” to the large-scale rallies and offered support to sustain the rallies as an organization-based activist. He “MC-ed” at one of the stages during the candlelight rallies. During the candlelight rallies, stages were established in the agora so that people who gathered for the rallies could enjoy performances, speeches, or guest lectures. As an MC for one of these stages, Haeddum recalled how he was cautious to be sensitive to the different dynamics in the 2008 rallies compared to previous protests or demonstrations.

I did not use aggressive, loud tones to make it seem like I was “stirring up” the “crowd.” My tone was not aggressive at all. It would be like any other talk concert, where I would invite people to perform, to speak on the stage, and ask the audience whether they agree with what was discussed on stage. (...) Sometimes, another person would volunteer to serve as the MC so that I could take some rest. However, if the person would seem like inciting or use slogans similar to past protests, the people in the agora would make complaints for the person to get off the stage. “Bring the previous MC back!” – they would say. (Haeddeun)

Haeddeun emphasized that he became aware of the agency that each individual has and also the sense of suspicion individuals have regarding citizens’ movement organizations. Individuals who joined the rallies as “citizens” were cautious not to have their protest against US beef, for which health issues were the central concern, “derailed” by other political agendas of progressive and conservative politicians or “professional” activists. He recalled that participants in the rallies did not even allow activists from citizens’ movement organizations to hold up their organizations’ flags in the agora, with people shouting at activists to “take their flags down.”

A key takeaway from the 2008 candlelight rallies was that more attention needs to be paid to the capacities of individual citizens. How individuals learn about society and form their perspectives became important, which is not always the result of formal or nonformal education. Much of people’s awareness is instead based on informal learning experiences within their lives. In other words, it may not be the case that people take part in traditional civil society organizations and that democratic citizenship education occurs through these organizations. How to reach out to general people who are not bound to any organization became a key issue among activists as well as activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education.

Whereas the candlelight rallies made activists wonder about activism beyond the boundaries of citizens' movement organizations, the limitations of these organizations also became clearer, as "active organizers" in the rallies were arrested by the Lee Myung-bak government. Even though activists who organized the stages or led the activities on the stages were "reacting" to the large-scale rallies that had already occurred, the government identified key activists for arrest, including Haeddeun. The citizens' movement organization in which Haeddeun was engaged was reluctant to help or defend him. The leadership of the organization was hesitant to embrace Haeddeun as part of the organization and for his activities to be seen as representing its cause. This experience led to a disorienting dilemma not only for Haeddeun, but also for other activists who did not agree with the stance of the organization. Many activist-educators at SIDE shared the disillusionment toward organizations reflected in Haeddeun's experience. Citizens' movement organizations were becoming a barrier to engage with a wider category of potential activists as "citizens" and individuals, and the rigidity and limitations of organizations was increasingly evident. This turning point inspired activists to envision possibilities for activism beyond traditional forms of citizens' movement organization, which ultimately resulted in SIDE.

Emergence of in-between spaces for democratic citizenship education at the interstices of the state

Along with the criticism of organization-based activism, another context that is important for understanding SIDE is the emergence of in-between spaces for democratic participation at the local, regional, and national levels of the state. Such spaces had been increasing since the 2000s (Joo, Sung-Soo, 2004; Park, Hee-Bong, 2006), but significantly

increased in 2018 with the Moon Jae-In government. The Moon Jae-In government²⁶ attempted to embed processes of deliberative democracy into the government's decision-making. By creating committees for deliberation and through deliberative polling, the government sought to reach a consensus about Shin-Kori nuclear reactors in Korea. Concerns about using nuclear energy had increased in Korea since the Fukushima nuclear accident of 2011, with activists calling for the closure of old nuclear power plants and arguing against building new ones. However, nuclear energy was a major pillar of energy policy in Korea, with a lack of fossil fuels or oil to support increasing demand for electricity. The Moon government organized a committee to represent public opinion about the issue, arranged for this committee to be informed of all angles related to the issue by professionals, tasked the committee to deliberate on the issue. This initiative was often referred to as the “process of drawing on public opinions (*kong-ron-hwa*),” and is related to what activist-educators would call “public sphere programs,” drawing on Habermas's concept of the public sphere. The committee ultimately decided on the closure of the Shin-Kori nuclear reactors.

On the one hand, the process of deliberative polling concerning the Shin-Kori nuclear reactors illustrated a new way of reaching consensus on a controversial issue. On the other hand, the effort attracted criticism about the limitations of the process (Chang, Hyunjoo, 2020), and the new Korean government in 2022 was expected to nullify the decision of the closure. Although there is controversy about the legitimacy of decisions made through a deliberative process and mechanisms to directly engage people in the decision-making processes of the government, this initiative sparked many local governments and public institutions to implement similar approaches to increase people's participation in governance.

²⁶ Moon Jae-In, previously a member of the Democratic Party in Korea, served as the president from 2017 to 2022.

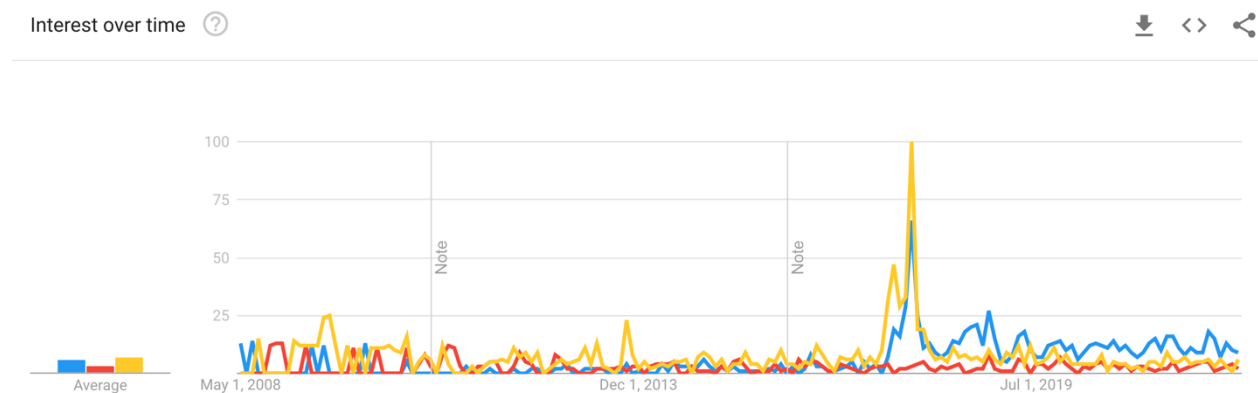
The increase of “mini-public programs” in a way expanded its “market.” Many entrepreneurs became interested in this new “market” of public sphere programs, emphasizing their “fancy” digital equipment and technology that could be used to gather opinions in an instant. However, is that what deliberation is? Are those technologies enough to ensure that people readily engage in deliberation?

(Haeddeun)

The increase in demand for “mini-public” programs attracted many entrepreneurs to the field. The industrial actors involved in mini-public programs often employed digital technology and equipment to facilitate and manage collective decisions through deliberation. Alongside these market-oriented actors, activist-educators in democratic citizenship education also became interested in public sphere programs as an opportunity. The widespread implementation of such programs meant increased opportunities for general citizens to get involved, thereby broadening opportunities for informal, experiential learning through deliberations, debates, and decision-making. Other attempts to implement deliberative polling included the presidential bill for constitutional amendment and the revision of university entrance systems, which achieved different levels of successful implementation (Seo, Bokyeung, 2018). Mechanisms for people’s participation in governance had previously existed in local communities, including through the work of civil society organizations, but these mechanisms expanded to government at the national, municipal, and local levels (Cho, Hee Jung, 2018). For activist-educators who seek to find ways to reach into the lives of the general public and people who are distant from civil society organizations, these routes for deliberative participation facilitated by the government became an important opportunity. Although no statistical data exists about “mini-public” programs and their growth, I infer an increase in the interest in such programs through the

analysis in Figure 29 below. For “mini-public” programs, a term often used to refer to the process of deliberation is *kongron-hwa*. A close translation into English for *kongron* is “public opinion,” and the word is frequently used when referring to Habermas’s notion of the “public sphere” as *kongron-jang*. The suffix *-hwa* in Korean refers to “a process of becoming.” Thus, *kongron-hwa* can be translated as “the process of making public opinion,” referring to discussions and debates. I compare the trend in Google search queries for “*kongron-hwa*” with that of “*kongron-jang* (public sphere)” and “*Shin Kori* (name of the nuclear power plant involved in the case of 2018).” The blue line represents the trend for *kongron-hwa* (process), the red line for *kongron-jang* (public sphere), and the yellow line for *Shin Kori*.

Figure 29. Trends for words *kongron-hwa*, *kongron-jang*, and *Shin Kori* in Korean (January 5, 2008 – March 25, 2022., Google Trends data)



The search volume trends are relatively indistinguishable until October 2017, when the mini-public program for *Shin Kori* nuclear power plants ended (October 20) after 89 days of activities within the mini-public committee. The search volume for *Shin Kori* dropped soon afterwards, back to its previous level. October 2017 was also the highest point for *kongron-hwa* search queries. However, even after the drop in interest in *Shin Kori*, the search volume for *kongron-hwa* remained at its peak. It was also consistently higher than search volume for

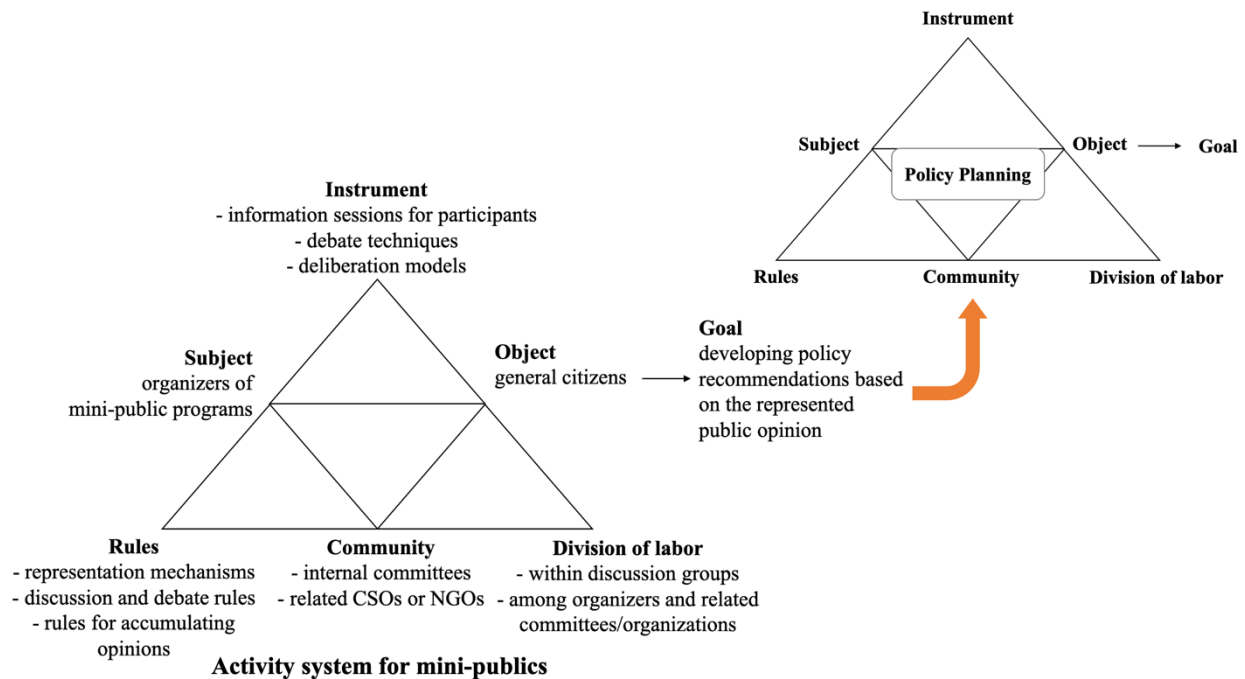
kongron-jang, meaning that there was substantial interest in *kongron-hwa*, or the process of building public opinion through discussions and debate.

Mini-public programs have the potential to become an activity system that operates separately from state processes for developing and implementing policy. They share characteristics of accumulating public opinion into policy recommendations, which is considered a resource for policy-makers. The role of such programs in shaping policy is currently in the beginning stages. However, as shown Figure 30 below, mini-public programs work as a separate activity from processes within the government for developing and implementing policies. The people in charge of running mini-public programs are often invited from outside of government agencies, with expertise and resources for organizing debates and deliberations. The general goal of the activity system is to develop policy recommendations through public opinion. Mini-public programs hosted by government institutions that go beyond this goal of developing policy recommendations have not been established in Korea. Compared with participatory budgeting initiatives, which allot budgets for participating citizens to assign through deliberation, mini-public programs provide less room for participants to have a direct influence on the resulting policy outcomes. Yet, whereas participatory budgeting initiatives have taken place primarily at the local government level in Korea (Lim, Dongwan, & Yoon, Sungil, 2022), mini-public programs tend to be more flexibly used, even at the national level, as demonstrated in the *Shin Kori* example.

In short, it is evident that opportunities to increase the participation of general citizens in policy processes have increased in Korea. Considering that the operation of mini-public programs is often contracted out to CSOs, NGOs, or enterprises, mini-publics become an in-between space, between the activity system of related entities and that of government policy

planning. Such programs become a way for actors outside of the government to engage in the interstices of the state.

Figure 30. A general activity system for mini-public programs



Trajectory of democratic citizenship education leading up to, and through Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE

Development of the field of democratic citizenship education in Korea

The Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE is a small-scale organization registered as an NGO in Korea. A unique characteristic of SIDE is that it is comprised of a group of full-time activist-educators working at the organization as well as a pool of activist-educators who are members of the organization and occasionally “join together” in projects with the full-time activist-educators. Before detailing the organization of work at the organization, it is important to

understand the trajectory of experiences that led activist-educators to establish this experimental type of organization.

The analysis of SIDE explores the history of organizing democratic citizenship education in Korea. Activists dedicated to democratic citizenship education are dispersed across several civil society organizations, namely the nationwide network of the YMCA and Young Korean Academy (Hung Sa Dahn), which have been engaging in education activities since the Japanese colonial period and throughout the modern history of Korea. Both organizations are nationwide and comprised of several branches with a wide range of autonomy. Many activists who specifically focus on democratic citizenship education as an area for mobilization are affiliated with or have been affiliated with these organizations. The organizations each boast a wide-ranging network with likeminded activists across South Korea.

Activist-educators at SIDE focusing on the area of democratic citizenship education are connected by shared experiences of participating in workshops dedicated to the field. Though grassroots practices of democratic citizenship education expanded throughout Korean civil society after democratization, activist-educators had a thirst for education beyond the dissemination of knowledge to a wider public. Activist-educators began to question how education itself could become democratic. This thirst was quenched by workshops and collective organizing that began to emerge in the late 1990s and by international approaches to democratic citizenship education.

In 1998, civil society organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education created a coalition called the Democratic Citizenship Education Forum. This coalition published a guidebook on political education methods in 1998 and hosted a series of “methodology workshops” in connection with the Korean Civic Education Institute for Democracy, which is

affiliated with the National Election Commission, from that point until 2002. Whereas individual organizations engaged in education activities tailored their work to their specific organizations, the initial attempt by activist-educators to build a collective basis for democratic citizenship education was to focus on pedagogical methodology as a shared resource.

A workshop that is often mentioned among activist-educators focusing on democratic citizenship education is the Workshop Training for Facilitators in Democratic Citizenship Education, hosted by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation of Germany. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation is a German political party foundation that is associated with the center-right Christian Democratic Union. Although the associated party is considered to lean toward the conservative side in German politics, the Adenauer Foundation has provided Korean society with important inputs for democratic citizenship education based on their practices of political education. The Adenauer Foundation hosted several workshop trainings in the early 2000s, with each workshop taking place over two days. The subject of the trainings was pedagogical methods of democratic citizenship education for facilitators. The content of the 2001 workshop training materials (Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2001) was as follows:

Contents

- Breaking down walls
- Principles of political education²⁷
- Methods of political education 1
- Roles and attitudes of facilitators
- Methods of political education 2
- Methods of political education 3
- Theories of political education

²⁷ Democratic citizenship education in Korea was interpreted to parallel political education (Politische Bildung) in Germany. The Beutelsbach Consensus in Germany has been often brought up as principles to follow – which includes clauses of 1) prohibition against overwhelming the pupil, 2) treating controversial subjects as controversial, and 3) giving weight to the personal interests of pupils. However, even though international parallels are made between the two, the term “political education” in Korean language had rarely been explicitly used to refer to democratic citizenship education activities.

- Education that uses tools
- Law education
- Learning about the economy
- Environmental education
- Media education as a task for political education
- Multicultural learning

Each chapter of the materials is divided into subsections, with a majority of the subsections discussing potential activities for facilitators. For example, in the chapter on “Breaking down walls,” the subsections refer to the names of pedagogical techniques, such as “positioning of seats,” “posters,” “arrest warrants,” “meters for measuring the atmosphere,” “beehives,” and “lightening activities.” Many of the pedagogical approaches utilized by activist-educators have been inspired by this workshop training. The workshops also served another purpose of training approximately 30 facilitators per workshop and building relations among facilitators from different regions and organizations. The workshops became a collective experience that activist-educators in democratic citizenship education could identify with and reference as their specific area of expertise. The emphasis on pedagogical approaches led activist-educators to heed to examples from different countries, including study circles in Sweden and town hall meetings in the US.

Workshops and trainings among activist-educators fostered their practice-based expertise in designing and implementing programs as well as training new activist-educators. Along with the collective experiences of workshops and training, another agenda put forward by activist-educators working in democratic citizenship education was to mobilize for legislation dedicated to democratic citizenship education. Many coalitions, including the Democratic Citizenship Education Forum, submitted several drafts for a legal framework to support democratic citizenship education. However, despite several campaigns by coalitions of activist-

educators and scholars in support of the law in the 2000s, no legislation was enacted, partially due to indifference from a majority of politicians and partially due to fragmented bases to move the legislation forward. Efforts to push the legislation forward continue even today, although the impetus driving the agenda forward has ebbed and flowed over the years.

The activist-educators I came into contact with through the Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE share this trajectory. Even though they may work in different organizations, these shared experiences and relations make it easy for the activist-educators to collaborate with one another and participate in short-term projects together. These trajectories are important to understand how SIDE developed and how its activist-educators organize their work. Training and workshops specifically dedicated to democratic citizenship education connected activists from different organizations to convene under a shared umbrella.

Emergence of Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE

Although activist-educators working at SIDE were acquainted with each other over a long period, it was not until they participated in an education program offered specifically for activists who had been working for 5–10 years at non-profit organizations that their relationships began. The program, offered by the Seoul Non-Profit Organization Support Center in 2014, was titled “Leadership for Change.” The program sought to offer a collective opportunity for reflection on activities while planning how to develop and engage in future work. While the contents of the program included reflections on participants’ leadership styles, lectures about contemporary trends in Korean society, and workshops on how the participants’ respective organizations could and should change, what was more important was that deep connections developed over the seven months of the program. Many participants who took part in the

program shared motivations or backgrounds for engaging in democratic citizenship education activities. This group of people became the founding members of Democratic Civic Education SIDE as a loose network among activists.

In the period 2013–2014, a separate trajectory of organizing led to the enactment of the Ordinance for Democratic Citizenship Education in Seoul City. Although this effort occurred separately from activist-educators in democratic citizenship education who focused on legislation at the national level, the enactment of the ordinance was an important opportunity for activist-educators based in the Seoul area.

Through the ordinance, a legal basis for budgets and the establishment of institutions had emerged specifically for the field of democratic citizenship education in Seoul. ... While I was doing the work to support activists, I was in charge of building a Seoul-based network for democratic citizenship education until 2016. However, while I was doing this work, I came to realize something – the structure to support democratic citizenship education was coming into being, but the question of “Who can support the activists?” remained unresolved.

(Kkomjirak)

Many civil society organizations were utilizing education activities to interact with general citizens and to encourage them to take part in actions together with activists. However, the education activities were fragmented across different content areas (e.g., human rights education, environmental education). Although these activities shared the commonality of aiming to empower and facilitate people’s participation in politics, Kkomjirak recalled the difficulties she faced in seeking to build common ground with activists to bring together the different content areas under the larger umbrella of democratic citizenship education. “There are

many different definitions of democratic citizenship education, but my interpretation focuses on how participants learn the power of self-determination – not just remaining within the boundaries of the individual, but to expand the breadth that people can exercise their power as citizens.”

The initial attempt was to make something that’s *not* centered around full-time activists in an organization. To be with people who wants to work on something together – how we can build collaborative structures with these people. That was the initial idea that drove us at first and how we have evolved. We have prioritized that value so far, but we don’t think that we’ve found *the* answer. (Kkomjirak)

Many activist-educators who are currently or had been involved with SIDE really got close to each other during the *Leadership for Change* workshop offered by the Seoul NPO Center. It was an intensive program offered to enhance the capacities of experienced activists and for them to think about their future directions.

(Tangtang)

The motivation among activists to seek alternatives to traditional organizational formats led to the development of different approaches for organizing under SIDE. At first, SIDE started out as a network of individual activists. The initial motivations for launching SIDE are illustrated in its founding proposal in Figure 31 below. Through this document, the motivations and hopes for creating SIDE as a network were shared with interested activists. One motivation outlined in the proposal is to increase opportunities for democratic citizenship education at various levels of the government, including municipalities and local governments. The proposal also includes various types of movements that seek to foster grassroots organizing as a potential area for democratic citizenship education. The call for members to join is directed toward activists and

educators involved in democratic citizenship education. The founding members broadly envisioned “being on each others’ sides,” with plans to run monthly learning seminars with members. SIDE thus started as a network of activists and educators involved in democratic citizenship education who would learn together, plan democratic citizenship education activities together, and engage in opportunities to provide democratic citizenship education together. It is notable that in the founding proposal, democratic citizenship education at schools was also considered to be an arena in which members could potentially engage, which was not as evident in the other two cases in this study. Another characteristic that is reflected in the proposal is an emphasis on the individual autonomy of activists and the proposed format as an individual-based network. This emphasis reflects a critical stance toward traditional types of organizations that result in rigidity that restrict the autonomy of activists. Through the process of making SIDE and

Figure 31. Founding proposal of SIDE

**We invite you to join us for the Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE,
“to open our sides to connect with each other.”**

In the process of making the long-desired democracy into a more mature community, democratic civic education has played an important role. Unless we stop thinking about better futures and practices, democratic civic education will continue to expand.

In recent years, the field of democratic civic education is going through new changes. In institutional terms, Ordinances for Democratic Civic Education have been enacted in municipalities such as Seoul and Gyeonggi, as well as in many local governments (...) actively seeking to make foundations for facilitating democratic civic education. In community organizing movements, in movements for innovations in education, there are many attempts to connect with democratic civic education. In terms of contents, many different methods are being developed and expanded.

Amidst such tendencies, we invite you, as designers, educators, and activists in democratic civic education, to join us to share your experiences, fill in empty spaces and, become each others’ sides. Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE, with the underlying meaning of “being on the *sides* of citizens, democratic civic education at schools, and activists in civic education,” is an individual-based network that seeks to respect the autonomy of individuals as much as possible while suggesting and engaging in diverse practices and actions related to democratic civic education.

We seek to reflect upon ourselves so as not to alienate knowing from living, and to be with people who take actions, dream of, and make efforts to develop democratic sensitivity within relations.

Please join us in a project to open our sides for each other.
January 2016

drawing on informal relations developed from the “Leadership for Change” workshop, members started to engage in activities under the name of SIDE in 2016.

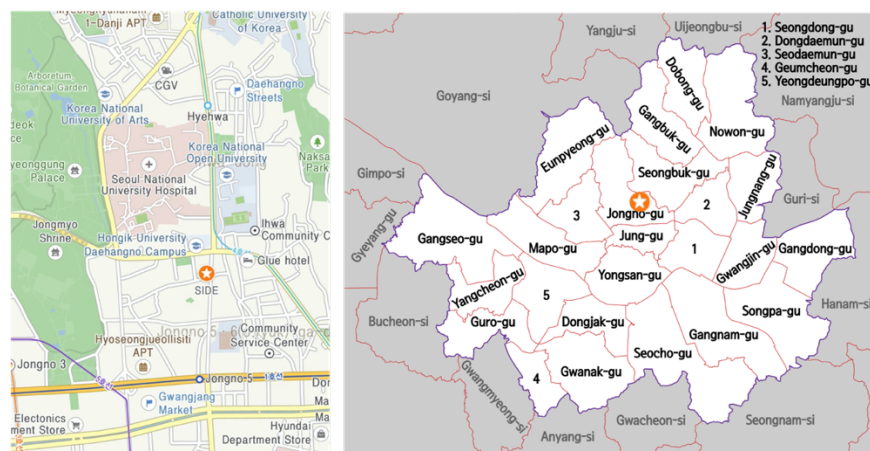
However, as the members attempted to engage in education activities together as a collective, they faced recommendations, or even demands, from public officials to register as an NGO. When activists sought to engage in spaces for democratic citizenship education within public institutions or governments, there was a limit to what kind of roles could be offered on an individual basis. Kkomjirak, the “representative” of SIDE, recalled when the members decided to register as an NGO.

At first, we didn’t even think of registering SIDE as an NGO. ... It was not because of our need, but because of demands from outside. We wanted to stay as this flexible collective of activist-educators ... but as the demand increased, we continuously got feedback that public institutions or local governments are limited in working with us if we remain in individual statuses. There are more opportunities if we obtain the status as an organization [NGO]. (Kkomjirak)

Even after registering as an NGO in 2017, the activities of SIDE remained similar, and the organization remained a network of individual activists interested in democratic citizenship education. This stability was largely possible because Kkomjirak took the responsibility for all the paperwork involved in registering and maintaining the NGO status. This status enabled activist-educators at SIDE to expand the boundaries for offering democratic citizenship education activities. In 2017, after registering as an NGO, SIDE worked on youth education projects requested by local governments and public institutions. SIDE started without a dedicated office space, but the growth in activities enabled the organization to rent out its own office in 2020 in Jongno-gu (see Figure 32 below). It is located near Hyehwa station and Korea National

Open University. The region near Hyehwa station also has the headquarters of other citizens' movement organizations such as the Civil Society Organizations Network in Korea, the Young Korean Academy or Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice.

Figure 32. Location of Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE



Source: Kakao map & Wikimedia commons

The broad goal of engaging in opportunities to offer democratic citizenship education and supporting each other as activist-educators became concretized into three areas of focus, which are outlined in the Table 15 below:

Table 15. Areas of focus at SIDE

Areas of focus	Details
Design and implementation of education activities	- designing and implementing programs for facilitators and designers in democratic citizenship education; conflict management and reflection - supporting education and activities for social participation of adolescents (e.g., youth organizations, committees for adolescence participation, local offices of education, etc.) - implementing conversation groups for a better democracy

Design and implementation of mini-publics	- designing and implementing various mini-publics for citizen participation - topics: democratic citizenship education, peace and unification, local autonomy in governance, community organizing, etc. - collaborations with: local governments, local offices of education, intermediary supporting organizations, NGOs, among others
Contents development and networking	- developing education contents for facilitating democracy - networking with organizations and groups related to democratic citizenship education

Source: SIDE homepage (<https://xn--689a688b.net/intro>)

Table 15 indicates that a major portion of education activities provided by SIDE focus on mini-public programs. Rather than subsuming these programs under the category of “Design and implementation of education activities,” mini-public programs have been separated as an independent category of work in the description. The focus area descriptions also explicitly mention local governments and local offices of education as collaborators, along with non-state organizations such as NGOs. Compared with the other two cases discussed in this research, SIDE most actively engages with the state at various levels (local, regional, national) and types (e.g., governments, offices of education, public institutions). Its trajectory of activities reflects this tendency, as detailed in Table 16 below:

Table 16. Trajectory of activities at SIDE

Year	Activities
2021	- education: 2021 democratic citizenship education facilitator program (collaboration with Korea Democracy Foundation) - mini-public programs: co-designing and implementation of peace and unification roundtable discussions (collaboration with National Unification Advisory Council)

	- mini-public programs: designing and implementation of Our Community Peace Planning (collaboration with National Unification Advisory Council) - education: implementation of introductory education and launching of the 2nd 100-person committee in Gunpo city - education: implementation of Lifelong Education Practicum (agreement with Myungji university) - mini-public programs: designing and implementation of the local forums for the Citizen Participation Sector of the National Education Forum - networking: audit organization in the Seoul Network for DCE - networking: supporting Citizen Declaration for Children in Seoul City, 2021 - networking: supporting 2022 policy recommendation movement for education policy - education: supporting DCE facilitator programs (Gangwon, Pusan) - education: implementing programs for local autonomy activists - research: research on democratic citizenship education programs for a handbook on democratic citizenship education (ordered by the Korea Democracy Foundation)
2020	- designing and implementing programs for mini-publics (collaboration with the Seoul Non-Profit Organization Support Center) - implementing the 2020 program for facilitators in democratic citizenship education (collaboration with the Korea Democracy Foundation) - co-designing and implementation of roundtables for peace and unification (collaboration with the National Unification Advisory Council) (...) - chair of the steering committee of the Seoul Network for Democratic Citizenship Education (secretariat) - opening of an office space for SIDE, <i>bulteok</i>
2019	- co-designing and implementation of roundtables for peace and unification (collaboration with the National Unification Advisory Council) - co-designing and implementation of roundtables for peace and unification abroad in the US, and in Germany (collaboration with the National Unification Advisory Council) - research on the development of curricula for democratic citizenship education (requested by the Gyeonggi Institute for Lifelong Education) (...)
2018	- research on improving curricula for the learning of community activists (requested by Seoul Support Center for Community Revitalization) - co-implementation of Gyeonggi Forum for Democratic Citizenship Education and roundtables (collaboration with Hue Management) - implementation of mini-publics for local autonomy in Daejeon (requested by Daejeon local government) (...)

2017	- designing and collaborative implementation of 100-person roundtables for career experiences of adolescents (collaboration with Pyungtaek Center for Career Development of Youth) - implementation of mini-publics for co-governance in Dongdaemun-gu and implementation of follow-up workshops (requested by Dongdaemun-gu government) - registered as an NGO
2016	- co-hosted education for activist competence enhancement at Civil Society Organizations Network in Korea
2015	- founding of Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE - creation of a network among activist-educators in democratic citizenship education

Source: SIDE homepage (<https://xn--689a688b.net/intro>)

Collaborating bodies such as the Korean Democracy Foundation and the National Unification Advisory Council are institutions funded by the state. The Korean Democracy Foundation was established in 2001 based on the enactment of an act to support the founding of a public institution under the Ministry of Public Administration and Security dedicated to continuing the history of pro-democracy movements that drove democratization in Korea. The National Unification Advisory Council is an advisory council of the president, which is tasked by the Constitutional Law to advise the president on public policy related to peace and unification. The Advisory Council for Peace and Unification originally dates back to 1981, with the current version dating back to 1987. Collaboration with these types of institutions demonstrates that SIDE engages with the state not only at local and regional levels, but also at the national level.

Moreover, although the headquarters of SIDE are based in Seoul, its activities span across the whole country. For projects that have a nationwide focus, such as running local forums for the Citizen Participation Sector of the National Education Forum (2021), SIDE offers multiple iterations of the program across different regions. The fluid nature of work at SIDE, in

contrast, allows activist-educators to engage in opportunities for democratic citizenship education throughout the country, which is not easily achieved by a single organization.

What makes possible the characteristics that are unique to SIDE? I delve further into this question in the next section through an analysis of two of the activities I observed and participated in during my study: 1) mini-public programs: design and implementation of local forums for the Citizen Participation Sector of the National Education Forum and 2) research for a handbook on democratic citizenship education ordered by the Korea Democracy Foundation (in bold in the table above). I argue that these activities represent action in the in-between spaces that are created within public institutions or state organizations. From the perspective of public officials, these spaces comprise a type of “invited space” (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007; Gaventa, 2006a), where activist-educators are invited to implement or design programs for citizens. However, developing these invited spaces into “in-between spaces” where the activities are organized in different ways compared to the previous activity systems remains an ongoing task for activist-educators engaging in the spaces. This tension concerning engaging in invited spaces and the extent to which the activities are already “set” in place influences the strategies that activist-educators at SIDE employ in their activities.

Activity system for democratic citizenship education at SIDE

Space is an important factor in the organization of work at SIDE. The establishment of an office space for activist-educators at SIDE provided a place for them to gather freely and conduct informal conversations and also resulted in an additional division of work among activist-educators, between those who come regularly into office and activist-educators who do not. The headquarters of SIDE are located in an office building in Seoul. Although there is no

exterior sign indicating the office, on the fourth floor, there is a sign on the door reading “Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE.” Underneath the sign is a quilt with “*bulteok*” written on it. *Bulteok* refers to the space that female divers at Jeju island traditionally create near the sea to block the wind and avoid exposure to the sun while they are resting between dives. In these spaces, divers come out of the sea to rest around a bonfire or change their clothing. Members of SIDE commonly refer to the office as *bulteok*, sharing the sense that it is a space where they can freely come and rest. The office is stocked with multiple types of coffee and tea, snacks, a full refrigerator, and a small sink where people can wash their cups and dishes. Kkomjirak, who is also in charge of the tedious work of paperwork involved in sustaining the NGO status, comes to the office nearly every day, often including the weekends, to keep *bulteok* clean and hospitable. Although other members assume some responsibility in managing the space, the difference lies in who comes to *bulteok* the most often. The office has one large table where 8–10 people can gather and six workspaces. People who regularly come to *bulteok* generally receive a workspace. Three to four workspaces are specifically allotted to activist-educators, with one to two workspaces left as floating workspaces to be shared among people who come on a less frequent basis. Some activist-educators who are considered regular members differ in the extent to which they come into *bulteok* for work. Some come only once or twice a week.

One reason why coming into work is flexible is because the work often involves travel. For example, Haeddeun is often out for business travel in various regions throughout South Korea, from the southern regions of the peninsula to areas just beneath the border of the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Work at SIDE operates on a project basis. Multiple projects are simultaneously taking place, and the composition of members in charge of the projects differs,

although Kkomjirak and Haeddeun are involved in almost all projects. The full-time staff, whose health insurance is covered through the organization, includes three to four people. A relatively fixed schedule among the full-time activists is the weekly Monday meeting. It is usually the case that many projects are being run simultaneously at SIDE, with full-time activist-educators working together with part-time members of SIDE. A full-time activist-educator is usually designated as the point person for a project, in charge of communications with the external collaborating organization as well as with other member activists at SIDE who take part in the project. It is at the Monday meetings that the staff members share details about the progress of projects and update other members of the staff.

While the Monday meetings offer opportunities for activist-educators to “catch up” on each other’s work, informal communication that occurs spontaneously on an everyday basis is also a key part of the work at SIDE. Many decisions are made through face-to-face communication in the office. Important dates are posted on the shared whiteboard calendar. Many members of SIDE have completed facilitator trainings. When these members are invited to take part in a project, details are shared with the members in a Kakaotalk phone messenger, often on an ongoing basis. Because projects led by SIDE often involve collaboration with another entity, such as a local government or public institution, the point-person in charge of external communication often receives sudden deadlines or requests from the collaborating entity. However, as activist-educators at SIDE are engaging with these entities on a project basis – compared to the contracting out of the management of the Gwangmyeong LLC by the Gwangmyeong local government – there is less room for activist-educators at SIDE to make adjustments. The potential for negotiations about the work or deadline largely depends on the relation that the point-person develops with the person in charge from the collaborating entity.

Requests for collaboration range from simple implementation of an already designed education program to the design and implementation of education activities (including mini-public programs). There are also requests for networking across organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education or research projects, in which the goals of the activity are specified, but many of the details are flexible. A distinction from the other two cases in this study is that when activist-educators at SIDE design and implement education programs, they explicitly adopt the role of educator or facilitator in the program. In contrast, lecturers and educators are usually invited from outside of PSPD, while activist-educators engage in the role of designing, planning, and supporting the implementation of programs. Activist-educators at SIDE do not place as much emphasis on educating learners on specific topics, except for when they are asked to teach about democratic citizenship education. When specific issues are addressed through a democratic citizenship education program, the focus is on the knowledge and opinions of participants, rather than knowledge being imparted upon the participants. In other words, the education activities center around the participation of the learners, with activist-educators acting as facilitators and educators.

One of the major factors that is negotiated when activist-educators at SIDE receive a request is the extent to which SIDE members have the authority to design and make decisions on the education program. On the one hand, in alignment with its motto that it will be on the “side” of efforts toward democracy, SIDE emphasizes that its activities do not seek to “take over” local efforts or organizations. Rather, the emphasis is on finding ways to help local organizations throughout South Korea. Thus, members at SIDE do their best to attend to the requests by local governments or public institutions to incorporate local activists, groups, or organizations in the process of designing or implementing education programs. Such efforts include retraining locally

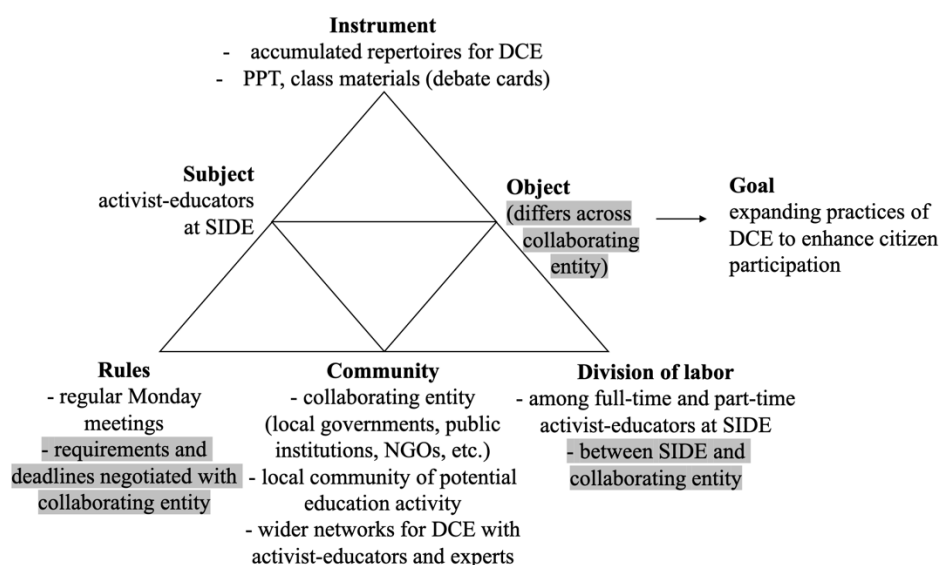
trained facilitators to be able to lead SIDE's education programs, providing local members spaces to talk, and designing programs that focus on educating (potential) leaders of the community rather than general programs for local residents. The activist-educators recognize that civil society reflects the unbalanced growth centering around the Seoul metropolitan area and that it is important to strengthen civil society in local and rural regions. On the other hand, the fact is that SIDE makes contracts with local governments or public institutions, and it is through government officials that requests for utilizing resources by local organizations are articulated. While SIDE has more "power" from having accumulated expert experience in democratic citizenship compared to local or rural organizations, it is often the case that members of SIDE have no choice but to run any last-minute sudden changes by the bureaucrats. Referring to a common Korean expression concerning the power dynamics between "*gahp*: the more powerful" and "*eul*: the less powerful," members of SIDE often lament how public officials working with them presume and insinuate that they are the "*gahp*: the more powerful" in this relationship.

It's important for us to endure the initial periods when bureaucrats think that they can require anything from us. What they think is that we are replaceable. In their perspectives, we're not the only organization offering these programs. ...

However, what we differ from companies that lack educational perspectives shows as we interact with learners. Just requiring participants to express their opinions right away is nearly never possible. It requires delicate processes of designing learning and we try to show our expertise as soon as we can to disrupt the *gahp-eul* relations. (Haeddeun)

Figure 33 illustrates a general activity system for the diverse range of activities (education, research, networking) that takes place at SIDE.

Figure 33. General activity system of the organization of work at SIDE



The components that are largely left “open” for negotiation with collaborating entities are marked in grey. Moreover, whereas activist-educators at SIDE share the goal of expanding the practices of democratic citizenship education to enhance citizen participation across different types of organizations and different regions, what activist-educators regard as core values to be maintained for democratic citizenship education may become threatened depending on the requirements from the collaborating entities. In the worst cases, activist-educators’ goals may conflict with the goals of the collaborating entities, which limits the extent to which activist-educators can transform the invited spaces into in-between spaces that connect local governments or public institutions with citizens outside of state organizations.

Transforming invited spaces into in-between spaces through SIDE

In this section, I discuss the strategies that activist-educators at SIDE employ to transform invited spaces in local governments or public institutions into in-between spaces through their activities related to democratic citizenship education. The findings are based on

two projects that I directly took part in through my fieldwork: 1) mini-public programs: design and implementation of local forums for the Citizen Participation Sector of the National Education Forum, and 2) research on democratic citizenship education programs for a handbook on democratic citizenship education ordered by the Korea Democracy Foundation. The mini-public programs for the National Education Forum mostly took place via Zoom because of Covid-19, with some “hybrid” options in different regions. I also had the chance to join additional mini-public programs implemented by activist-educators at SIDE that were conducted in person. Although there were differences between face-to-face programs and virtual programs, the difference was not as significant as one might expect. This may be because many people – including educators and participants – had already adjusted to the virtual format by late 2021. Thus, I do not distinguish between the strategies employed in virtual or in-person formats.

Modules as a basis for flexibility and autonomy

The mini-public programs at SIDE initially seem complicated, with many different phases within a single program. The difficulty in implementing most requests for mini-public programs is that the requesting entities often only allot one session per region. For the local forums of the National Education Forum in Korea, one session was implemented for each of 12 areas in Korea (a total of 12 sessions), two sessions were implemented for relevant groups of actors in education policy (parents with school-age children, community-based education actors), and two sessions were implemented for people who had participated in previous sessions to talk about the processes they experienced and the new initiative to run National Education Forums. Although the approach of creating nationwide mechanisms for accumulating public opinion

about education policy is innovative and meaningful, there is room for improvement in the resources allotted for such initiatives to allow for more robust build-up and multiple sessions.

However, with the given opportunity to create programs for people from different regions to talk about the educational issues they face and share their opinions about education policy, activist-educators at SIDE work to design and implement mini-public programs to make the best of the limited time. The time given for each mini-public session is three to four hours. Within this limited amount of time, activist-educators unfold a program that seems complex at first sight. After a series of “greetings” from public officials, the program first involves a test-run of the process of discussing and gathering opinions. This test run is necessary because of differences that may exist among participants in their prior experience with mini-publics. In addition, when mini-public sessions happen through Zoom, there is an increased need to help participants feel comfortable about the unfamiliar processes. The test-run poses general questions to all participants, with at least four options provided for participants to select and think about their reasons for selecting the option. For example, in a region interested in creating more spaces dedicated to adolescents, a test run question is “What kind of space is needed for adolescents living in the region?” The options are 1) leisure and rest, 2) hobbies and club activities, 3) learning (team learning, small-scale projects, individual study space), 4) stages for performances or presentations, and 5) other (e.g., caretaking). These questions and options are designed by activist-educators in collaboration with local actors who are interested in getting involved. After time to read through and think, all participants are asked to write their thoughts in the Zoom chat, which results in replies piling up in the chat screen. The activist-educator leading the program looks through the responses and invites participants to openly talk about what they chose and why. After hearing from several, but not all, participants, a second question for the test run is

raised. After two questions, an overarching question is raised with more than 10 options and a voting link through which participants are required to select four options. For example, for the region discussed above, the overarching question is “What positive changes are expected when spaces are allotted for adolescents?” with 10 options including “expansion of participation by adolescents,” and “expansion of the rights and opportunities for adolescents to play and rest.”

After the votes have been cast, the participants are divided into small groups for discussion led by activist-educators from SIDE who take on the role of facilitators. In these small groups, a brief time is allotted for general introductions, along with two questions that are discussed in the same format as in the whole-group discussion. As there are approximately five to seven people allotted for each group, the role of the facilitator is to ensure that everyone gets a chance to express their opinions. Another important role of the facilitator is to welcome different ideas. This task is accomplished through subtle encouragement to people who have the “minority opinion” in each group. Someone who has the majority opinion may be invited to talk first, but different opinions will subsequently be illicit so that the majority opinion does not dominate. The options always include an “other” option, and facilitators pay attention to how people describe these options when selected. The opinions raised through small group discussions are recorded in writing by facilitators or (if available) note-takers. After the small-group discussions, another question for voting is shared. The question is the same for all groups. Thus, after having the chance to express their opinions and hear from others, participants gather together as a whole group to share their opinions on a common question.

Before going into the second small-group discussion, everyone gathers together in the Zoom meeting to view the poll data from the previous vote cast before small-group discussions. This step gives participants a sense of the vote breakdown and an awareness that their votes after

the first small-group discussion will also be announced. Each module includes two sessions of small-group discussions as well as the initial whole-group discussion to help participants get used to the process. After two rounds of small group discussions, all of the votes are announced. Through this step, participants gain a sense of the collective opinions. Although the public officials who “greeted” the participants often do not remain until the end of the program, public officials who are directly involved in implementing the program stay until the end and see how the votes are cast. They sometimes join the small-group Zoom breakout rooms to observe how the discussions are going and hear from participants. Specific details on opinions expressed in the small groups are documented by activist-educators facilitating each session and are conveyed to the public officials.

In this way, the mini-publics program is structured into modules by activist-educators at SIDE. Despite the limited amount of time, the module design grants all participants the opportunity to express their opinions, cast their votes on the issues discussed, and listen to people with different ideas. Many participants at first feel hesitant to talk about why they chose a particular option, because they have not been asked to publicly justify their positions before. However, through multiple iterations of the process within a program, and because of the four to five options provided, participants become comfortable with talking about their thoughts. The options designed by activist-educators may not be exclusive, particularly at the discussion stages. Some participants may ask if they must choose only one option, and activist-educators advise that they are welcome to select as many options as they wish. Thus, the purpose of the options given is not to identify the “best possible” option according to participants, but to serve as stepping stones for participants to express a wide range of opinions.

Compared to other education initiatives that seek novelty and innovative approaches, the programs at SIDE are characterized by their relatively stable operations. SIDE has honed the module structure for mini-public programs throughout the trajectory of its activities and thus has developed stable divisions of labor in the field. The shift to Zoom was a tough one, considering the energy that participants are more likely to feel when many people gather in the same space and talk together. Moreover, during face-to-face mini-public programs, colored cards are distributed to participants to hold in order to “vote.” The results of the vote are counted by supporting activist-educators, while the activist-educator in charge invites people holding up certain cards to express their opinions. The Zoom format has made it more difficult to “see” the overall trend in responses, as activist-educators use the chat to gather opinions. However, the main structure remain stable, whether it is through Zoom or in person. This structure gives activist-educators room to think about questions for discussion and options that will elicit diverse points of view. Considering that activist-educators have to engage with local governments and public institutions in different regions and contexts in Korea, the module structure offers them the stability while granting flexibility to develop questions and options tailored to each case.

The module for the mini-publics program is not limited to the boundary of three hours. Activist-educators at SIDE emphasize the importance of prior surveys on the topics to be discussed to get a sense of the ideas local to the region. Activist-educators use these surveys to design the questions and options for discussion in the main program. Another indirect role of the surveys is to indicate to what extent the collaborating entity (local governments, public institutions) is putting effort into recruiting participants for the mini-public program. Whereas activist-educators design and implement the programs, recruiting enough participants to run the programs remains within the realm of the collaborating entity. How the collaborating entities

advertise and explain the programs greatly influences the quality of discussions, as further addressed in the next section. The surveys thus allow potential participants to think about the topics for discussion prior to the program and grant activist-educators at SIDE the leverage to ask or nudge the collaborating entity (local governments or public institutions) to reach out to participants in the name of the “modules.”

The stability and adaptability afforded through the modules are important for activist-educators to defend and build their areas of autonomy within the activity system. During one of the local mini-public programs at the initial phase of the National Education Forum, there was a request from the collaborating public institution for activist-educators to implement the use of common Zoom backgrounds that state the name of the initiative and related public institutions among *all* participants. The collaborating institution announced that the registered participants would receive an email about technical support for the Zoom program that would announce the day when support would be available. The institution required activist-educators from SIDE to create the Zoom link and to be on hold for an entire day over Zoom to assist any participants who dropped in. This was a burdensome request, considering the workload among activist-educators at SIDE. It was not an efficient method either, as the activist-educators needed to stay on Zoom for more than 7 hours, waiting for any potential drop-ins. However, activist-educators had to comply with the request. In the end, not many participants dropped in for support. It was therefore impossible to ensure that *all* participants had the same Zoom background given the large number of people in the mini-public program. However, while a majority of participants did not join the preparatory session, the module utilized by activist-educators at SIDE was enough to ensure that no one would feel overwhelmed in using the necessary technology for participating. The step-by-step procedures and test run discussions helped. As for virtual

backgrounds, activist-educators shared the file and helped any participant who wanted to use the background, but had difficulties in achieving compliance through individual messages. From the perspective of public officials hosting this event, a group photo with everyone having the same background seemed like an “attractive” option, though not directly related to the goal of participatory discussions. Although the activist-educators did not have the leverage to decline the request at first, the stable operation of the module and division of labor among activist-educators granted them the leverage to later argue against the need for preparatory Zoom sessions for future programs.

Balancing “affordable” liminality in invited spaces

In the invited spaces, there are “affordable” and “unaffordable” types of liminality that activist-educators from SIDE can foster. The “unaffordable” types of liminality are a reflection of the *gahp-eul* (more powerful and less powerful) relations that were discussed in a previous section. Public institutions or local governments have a highly hierarchical structure, which also seeps into projects with external collaborators. An explicit manifestation of such *gahp-eul* relations appears in the demands that often emerge in a local mini-publics program. Although the mini-publics can be run seamlessly from the headquarters of SIDE in Seoul, there are some cases where the local collaborating public institution is adamant that activist-educators in charge of organizing the program should travel to the institution. No participant is expected to join in person. It is just the public officials and the activist-educators, along with high-level public officials who give greetings in the beginning of the program. Activist-educators are required to allot time for greetings from public officials, such as a representative from the National Education Forum, the superintendent of the region, the mayor of the local government, or local

councilors. Many of these greetings are not conducted in person, but via recordings. However, despite the limited time, playing these greetings videos or introducing the public officials are considered of utmost importance by requesting institutions, even if it means limited the time allotted for discussions among participants. Smooth operations of the greetings are an unnegotiable part of the programs, and particularly when higher-level officials come in person to give greetings, the collaborating entity tends to emphasize the need for activist-educators to be in the same space.

I joined in one of these “hybrid” sessions, where all participants joined online but public officials and activist-educators were gathered in the same room. Upon entering the room, the space reflected the hierarchy. First, there were many tables where people could sit, arranged in a square format (□) in the center of the room. Laptops were at each of the seats. In the front of the room, two seats were allocated – one for the main activist-educator in charge of MCing the program, and for the high-level public official coming to give greetings. At the right and left sides, public officials and invited speakers sat. Even though there were many seats available in the back, left, and right of the square, activist-educators who were necessary for smoothly running the system were positioned *outside* of the square, in a small corner with only two tables to work from. Furthermore, while water for the public officials was laid out, the essential equipment of LAN internet lines for activist-educators were not set in place. It was clear that the institution preferred to leave seats in the square empty than to give space for activist-educators to sit and work. This case illustrates the “unaffordable” areas of liminality when collaborating with local governments or public institutions. Such scenarios are referred to as the culture of *ui-jeon* (roughly translated as “ceremonial protocols”) in Korea, which embed the notion of who is more

powerful. If the program had taken place in person, this layout would also have been clear to participants, prompting informal learning about relations of power and differential treatment.

However, there are also “affordable” types of liminality that can be generated in invited spaces, particularly when designing and implementing interactions with participants. Such liminality rises from the fact that not many participants have had the chance to talk about their opinions about public policy (in education) in public arenas. They have individual complaints and opinions, which they stow until the next election for superintendent or local councilors. The design of the module fosters a new experience for participants. However, this experience is different from individual levels of liminality discussed in the cases of PSPD and Gwangmyeong city. For PSPD, the liminality that individual participants experience is related to their transition into explicitly identifying as activists or expanding their capacities as activists. The Gwangmyeong YMCA also helps citizens to become activists, whereas the LLC creates liminality through encouraging individuals to think about alternative ways of living and thinking. For individual participants who are participating in mini-public programs, the identity of “activist” and consideration of radical alternatives are not the main focus. Rather, the foremost category that connects the participants together is the identity of “citizen” interested in the related policy. What creates liminality for these individuals is not a change in their identities, but in the range of the activities in which “citizens” can engage. Mini-public programs lead to a redefinition of the range of political actions that general citizens can take when their opinions or complaints are not dismissed by public officials as mere “*minwon*”²⁸ (civil complaints),” but recognized as important opinions to be considered in designing policies.

²⁸ *Minwon* is the Korean word used to refer to complaints raised by general citizens. This term has negative connotations of being unnecessary or overly sensitive, something that public officials should ignore.

This redefinition is made possible through the explicit participant-oriented design of the mini-public programs. Rather than filling the program with one-way communication from educators to participants, the priority is ensuring as much time as possible for open discussions. This format creates room even for hesitant people to express their opinions with little concern for time and enables participants to hear different perspectives about an issue. Though such interactions among participants and the expansion of the role of citizens is an “affordable” liminality, there are barriers to making this process possible. The emphasis on participants results in significant ambiguity about how each mini-public program will proceed. In particular, as activist-educators at SIDE are not in charge of recruiting participants, they can only receive a rough estimate of the number of participants. In addition, the approaches that public officials employ often rely on “old-fashioned” methods of state-led mobilization for public events, with requests for participation spread through hierarchical organizational networks of public institutions. In fact, this was the case for some of the mini-public programs implemented by activist-educators at SIDE. In one case, participants joined, but a majority turned off their Zoom cameras. When activist-educators would attempt to talk with them, they would reply through chat that they were currently unavailable to talk and that they had joined to learn “by listening.” It turned out that the participatory nature of the program was minimally advertised, with many public officials joining to “listen” to the conversations through Zoom while multi-tasking. If the participatory nature is not emphasized, many citizens may also join in as they are traveling, which makes it difficult for them to fully participate. Another case showed a very limited number of people joining the mini-public program, which requires a certain threshold of people to have different breakout rooms for discussion and accumulation of opinions. It turned out that the news about the program was only circulated within public institutions, with no outreach to

organizations or groups outside of the government or public institutions. Some activists engaged in education issues joined in the program, saw the limited number of participants, and expressed their disappointment of not having directly received the information. Although mini-public programs emphasize citizen participation, the communication about the program had been limited to the network within state-led institutions.

Activist-educators at SIDE do their best to create “affordable” liminality even in tough situations. For the mini-public program with a limited number of people fully participating, activist-educators quickly adjusted the number of facilitators to run breakout rooms to guarantee the minimum number of people for discussions. Although such adjustment may not be easy in more rigid organizations, the fluid nature of SIDE allowed activist-educators to adjust their participation. For the second case with limited communication with local organizations, the activist-educators were open to comments made within the public forum and documented the feedback in reporting to the collaborating institution.

Another comment that is occasionally raised by participants concerns the lack of time to engage in deep discussion. Some participants express very critical opinions directed at the activist-educators. However, activist-educators too want more opportunities and more time to be allotted for citizen participation. However, for now, activist-educators at SIDE focus on what is possible: to engage in invited spaces for democratic citizenship education. Activist-educators emphasize the need to engage in these spaces given that market-oriented motivations for engaging in these mini-public programs is increasing. Activist educators argue that enterprises that marketize mini-public programs tend to emphasize high-tech equipment for immediate voting rather than discussions and caution against the potential dependence on high-tech equipment. The activist-educators at SIDE only employ technical software that is readily

available, such as Google Forms or PowerPoint, while relying on the specialized division of labor to make the process smooth.

Thus, the activist-educators at SIDE are currently working on engaging in invited spaces for democratic citizenship education with a focus on quantity throughout various regions in the country. The fact that SIDE is a small-scale organization that specifically focuses on and prioritizes democratic citizenship education as its means and goal has made it easier for the activist-educators to engage in invited spaces in public institutions and local governments compared to other citizens' movement organizations that put forward specific agendas that are considered "political." The emphasis of SIDE is on the participants and enhancing their participation in government, regardless of political orientation. Though the organization is registered as an NGO as a form of compromise, this status is not sufficient to grant autonomy and flexibility in SIDE's work. The division of labor and specialized module structure allows SIDE this leverage, even as a small organization. Moreover, even with its organizational status as an NGO that allows for engaging in invited spaces, SIDE's identity as a network of individual activist-educators working on democratic citizenship education still remains strong. This identity allows SIDE to act as a mediator across public institutions and activists, which is further discussed in the next section.

Mediator of accumulated networks and built networks

Interest in democratic citizenship education from public institutions is not limited to offering education programs, although a majority of institutions employ this format. Another approach that has been implemented by the Korea Democracy Foundation as a public institution is for the institution itself to become a type of "intermediary supporting organization" for

democratic citizenship education. Among the many departments within the foundation, there is a center dedicated to democratic citizenship education. Though the center's regular work involves providing public funding for a selected number of education programs, another approach has been to launch nationwide networks for democratic citizenship education, which took place in 2018. Through this effort, the center built 13 regional networks for democratic citizenship education across South Korea. SIDE is a part of the resulting Seoul network, along with many large-scale citizens' movement organizations focusing on democratic citizenship education, including the nationwide YMCA and the Young Korean Academy. In fact, SIDE was the chair of the steering committee for the Seoul network in 2020. It should be clarified that the network launched by the Korea Democracy Foundation is completely different from the Gwangmyeong Network for DCE. Whereas Gwangmyeong's network emerged from grassroots efforts to engage in the inter-organizational in-between space, the network launched by the Korean Democracy Foundation represents a top-down approach, even though the foundation is cautious not to dominate the process. In other words, the nationwide regional networks launched by Korea Democracy Foundation comprise a built network of organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education.

Although the overall network and participating organizations have been defined, the directions for the network to move forward remain open. In Gwangmyeong, the network developed through organizations sharing up-to-date information on their education activities, through which participants developed a common sense of democratic citizenship education and its connections to social levels of political participation. However, for the nationwide network, there is a limit to the opportunities that can be created for participants to regularly meet. There is also a lingering question involving the role of the Korea Democracy Foundation as the secretariat

of the network. In response to the question, a direction pursued among public officials was to form a national database for democratic citizenship education activities. There is currently no platform for such information. Individual organizations each have a target audience of potential participants, who they seek to reach out to through advertising and drawing on previous relations. Even for people interested in taking part in democratic citizenship education, the information is fragmented, requiring extra effort to search for these education opportunities. As building a collective database for democratic citizenship education is not a task that can be performed by a specific citizens' movement organization due to the lack of resources and status, this is the niche that the Korea Democracy Foundation seeks to fill. To do so, information about democratic citizenship education programs run by different organizations must be gathered. However, collecting information about the specific programs of each organization is tricky, particularly for a public institution. Activist-educators may not only question the need to collect this information, but also interpret the attempts as an intrusive campaign by the state to interfere in their activities. For this reason, officials from the Korea Democracy Foundation sought to find an organization that will take the lead in collecting baseline information for a database on democratic citizenship education programs.

The positioning of SIDE, as an organization that identifies as a collective of activist-educators working on democratic citizenship education, offers dual benefits for researching democratic citizenship education. On one hand, activist-educators working at SIDE have accumulated their own informal networks with other activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education. Thus, SIDE's activist-educators have built trust among activist-educators who may otherwise be cautious toward activities initiated by public institutions. On the other hand, there are new types of organizations that the Korean Democracy Foundation seeks to

integrate in the network: new, small-scale organizations that implement education activities with goals to foster citizen participation. These organizations include organizations that support the rights of immigrants and refugees in Korea, offering education activities for immigrants and refugees to adjust to their lives in Korea and also potentially expand their breadth of social action. However, the caveat is that organizations that specifically focus on certain agendas may not identify as engaging in democratic citizenship education. One of the requests from the Korea Democracy Foundation was to include as many of these new organizations as possible in the research. In this process, the fact that the research is sponsored by the public Korea Democracy Foundation likely helps to persuade organizations to provide information on their programs under the category of democratic citizenship education. While the Korea Democracy Foundation seeks to create in-between space within its boundaries, this aim cannot be achieved by the efforts of public officials alone. SIDE, as a registered organization that maintains its identity as a liminal network of activist-educators from different organizations related to democratic citizenship education, is an important collaborator in this process.

To effectively create an in-between space between the Korea Democracy Foundation as a public institution and activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education, SIDE proposed to host regional FGIs with key actors involved in democratic citizenship education. This proposal was approved by the foundation as part of other activities involved in the research, mainly focusing on communicating with organizations across the nation to gather information on their programs. Five FGIs were held via Zoom. The interviews offered insights into how the status of democratic citizenship education differs across regions while providing an arena for activist-educators to contemplate the extent to which democratic citizenship education is sustaining its identity as a social movement. The interviews included questions in three broad

areas: the current status of democratic citizenship education, the role of democratic citizenship education in citizens' movements, and the directions that activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education pursue. The FGIs provided an opportunity for activists in the different regions to share current activities in their area and identify problems that they face, and allowed activist-educators at SIDE to gain an understanding of the different types of dilemmas that activist-educators face in different regions. These insights are valuable for the Korea Democracy Foundation to understand when seeking to support different organizations across the country.

The regional FGIs revealed important dilemmas that activists dedicated to democratic citizenship education face. For example, activist-educators share the feeling that they are merely repeating the work of past activists from the 1990s, when citizens' movements were at their peak. Whereas organization-based activists are busy maintaining their historic work, newly emerging activists in different regions throughout Korea do not share a common philosophy for defining the public good. Thus, the distance between experienced activists and newly emerged activists is increasing. A participant in one FGI noted "potentially a generational divide among activists." This dilemma boils down to the question of "Participation for what?" The shared goal among activist-educators in democratic citizenship education has been to provide educational opportunities to prompt general citizens to participate in politics, learn more about democratic methods of communication, and appreciate the values of equality and freedom in democracy. This goal implies the shift, or the potential "division of labor," that was created between so-called "popular" movements such as labor movements and peasant movements and "citizens" movements in Korea. However, with activist-educators focusing specifically on the issue of democratic citizenship education and expanding its offerings, they run into the question of what

this increase in participation is meant to achieve in the long term. More citizens will monitor the work of the government, and more mechanisms will be created for people to participate in governing. Whereas activists have perceived this direction as an achievable goal through democratic citizenship education, they share questions about the extent to which these activities can create viable and desirable alternatives to the current elite-centered institutional politics.

In other words, activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education started out by focusing on the enhancement of participatory mechanisms as an achievable goal for a “real utopia.” This task remains ongoing today, with much work left to achieve the “real utopia” for participation. However, it is increasingly becoming apparent that this initial articulation of the “real utopia” has been tilted toward the question of achievability, potentially becoming distant from the further ideal of a desirable future direction to challenge the current situation. This results in current dilemmas that activist-educators share on the extent to which current activities shake the status quo. Although this dilemma is not clearly visible from the perspective of individual organizations, a bird’s-eye view of nationwide practices for citizenship education exposes this dilemma. Democratic citizenship education can indeed contribute to the confluence of different types of movements by guiding the directions for activists in citizens’ movement organizations to work with non-member citizens and engage them in political processes. However, there is another dimension under the confluence of movements: envisioning and sharing eventual real utopias as directions for change. This dimension connects back to the apparent “divide” within social movements in Korea in the 1990s that led to the development of citizens’ movements. The movements took different paths, but the paths are not incompatible to each other. The dilemma regarding future directions for democratic citizenship education among

activist-educators is a window into the potential for different paths to converge under a common goal of envisioning real utopias in Korea.

Deepening democracy from within and beyond SIDE

Returning to the overall analysis of activities at SIDE, the status of SIDE as a state-registered NGO with its origin as a network of individuals from different organizations led its activist-educators to engage in invited spaces of public institutions and local governments in attempts to transform them into in-between spaces and also paved the way for them to engage in a nationwide research project. Analysis of the organizational work by activist-educators at SIDE illustrates the diverse range of opportunities for democratic citizenship education opening up throughout South Korea. The texts that guide the organization of work at SIDE are related to the requirements of collaborating state agencies or public institutions with which SIDE works. While these state agencies and public institutions often have their own ways of organizing work established through official texts, I focused in this study on texts involved in the development of democratic citizenship education practices. Whereas the texts underlying the design of education activities are mostly drawn from the repertoire of education activities at SIDE, a key requirement particularly when running mini-public programs is to record the discussions held in break-out rooms, write a related report, and send the report to the collaborating state institution. Such texts then enter the deliberative cycle within the public institution, in which members of SIDE do not participate. Even when acknowledging the current limitations of mini-public programs as a conveyor of public opinion to public officials, activist-educators at SIDE seek to make the best of this opportunity to create experiences of liminality for participating individuals. Through interactions with public institutions in organizing democratic citizenship education activities, the

power relations between activist-educators and public officials become more visible. Thus, what activist-educators at SIDE emphasize to a greater extent compared to the other two cases is the importance of awareness of the power dynamics at play in the activities of democratic citizenship education. To gain as much leverage as they can in these interactions, activist-educators emphasize a stable foundation (e.g., curricula, repertoire) that they can work from to demonstrate their expertise in organizing education activities.

In terms of education activities, the extent to which activist-educators have autonomy in invited spaces is affected by the expectations and the culture of the local collaborating institution. The *gahp-eul* relation between the more powerful and less powerful is readily apparent, reflecting the hierarchical nature of public institutions and the relatively disadvantaged status of SIDE as the external collaborating organization. However, activist-educators seek to overcome this difference in power through a complex module for running mini-publics that runs smoothly based on the organization's well-established division of work. The module structure seeks to make the best of the limited time allotted for discussions by preparing participants in advance for how the process will proceed, breaking into small groups to enhance comfort in sharing and offer opportunities for everyone to express their opinions, and documenting the opinions of participants into an easily accessible format. The module also extends prior to the actual implementation of the program, requiring surveys to be distributed by the collaborating public officials. Although the format of the module may seem repetitive, this stable format offers activist-educators the flexibility to tailor discussions to different regional contexts while leaving room for autonomy won by demonstrating the stable operations of the modules. Throughout the education activities, activist-educators balance "affordable" and "unaffordable" opportunities to create liminality for participants. While the mini-public programs may seem insufficient to

provoke deep discussions for some participants, the focus of the activist-educators at the current stage is to increase the amount of exposure that people have regarding democratic discussions and offer ways for people to publicly express their opinions about policies.

Opportunities for activist-educators at SIDE to engage in research sponsored by a public institution arise from the status of the organization as a registered NGO and its continuing identity as a network of activist-educators. The fact that the activist-educators at SIDE were previously part of large-scale citizens' movement organizations affords them informal networks through which they can request information about education programs across different organizations engaged in democratic citizenship education. In addition, the collaboration with a public institution opens up potential to engage with new organizations under the umbrella of democratic citizenship education. Activist-educators at SIDE proposed the use of regional FGIs in this research, which created opportunities for activist-educators throughout South Korea to share their concerns, dilemmas, and hopes for the future. These FGIs revealed the different characteristics of democratic citizenship education across regions and enabled a bird's-eye view of the practices of democratic citizenship education. I find that the dilemma that activist-educators commonly face, demonstrated by the in-between space cultivated across organizations on a nationwide scale, shows potentials to build a wider confluence of activist work not only across organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education, but also for education activities to make connections with different organizations, institutions, as well as with different trajectories of movements in Korea.

8. Conclusion

This research centers on the question of how activist-educators in Korea engaging in democratic citizenship education cultivate directions for social change from within and beyond citizens' movement organizations. As this question calls for specific understanding of the trajectory of politics in Korea before and after democratization, I connect such manifestations of social movements in Korea as an effort to realize "real utopias" within a constrained political terrain that is still influenced by the remnants of the Cold War and shaped by the ways that institutional politics became estranged from general citizens and marginalized groups even after democratization. This research addresses educational activities developed through socio-historically embedded development of citizens' movements in Korea, where a key identity that broadly encompasses a myriad of movements is an appreciation of the history of democratization and an awareness that "deepening democracy" is necessary for people to actually feel the substantive values of equality and freedom within their everyday lives. Educational activities by citizens' movement organizations have developed in the name of "democratic citizenship education" in Korea, with a broad focus on enhancing the political participation of general citizens. The open-ended nature of citizens' movements to continuously identify new issues of inequality and axes of marginalization not limited to class interests has increased the need for citizens' movement activists to touch the lives of general people through democratic citizenship education. With the increase of network-based movement initiatives in the 2000s, citizens' movement activists working within "traditional" citizens' movement organizations increasingly faced the need to work from within but reach beyond their organizations.

In order to analyze the phenomenon of democratic citizenship education, I characterize the activity as seeking to cultivate collective agency through organizations, but not through the

traditional methods of social movement organizations. Whereas social movement organizations have sought to enhance the power of the organization through increased membership or establishing networks with other organizations, the activities of democratic citizenship education do not directly fit into these approaches. In order to analyze the seemingly peripheral or transitional nature of democratic citizenship education within citizens' movement organizations, I draw on the concept of liminality, which focuses on the process of "becoming." Through a discussion of how liminality connects with acts of resistance based on postcolonial and postmodern perspectives and related notions of interstices and interstitial change in critical theory, I develop a theoretical approach to analyzing democratic citizenship education in terms of individual, organizational, and social levels of liminality. Considering the relative weakness of the literature on liminality in addressing organizations as the category going through liminality, I draw on theory of expansive learning and CHAT to suggest a way to better analyze liminality at the organizational level. Here, I connect the concept of "in-between space" from the liminality literature with the concept of the ZPD from CHAT. Through this process, I pose three sub-questions: 1) Through which conditions and processes do in-between spaces for democratic citizenship education emerge and how do activist-educators engage in these spaces? 2) How do activist-educators design and implement democratic citizenship education activities? 3) What kinds of visions and process for "deepening democracy" emerge through the activities of democratic citizenship education?

My research included analysis across three sites and their activities related to democratic citizenship education. PSPD, an advocacy-based organization that developed in the 1990s, is a representative figure in citizens' movements. The organization engages in central issues in institutional politics, with a strong identity based on remaining outside of the

boundaries of the state in order to effectively critique the state. With an extremely well-developed organizational structure, the central departments are in charge of different areas of advocacy work, with activities focused on full-time professional activists. However, the PSPD's initial goal to eventually become a mass-based organization prompted its activists to venture into democratic citizenship education in the 1990s. The initial creation of an independent department for democratic citizenship education in the 1990s did not lead to education activities developing into a separate activity system. However, the re-opened Academy Neutinuamu later established a separate activity system from the central departments of PSPD. Through the in-between space created through this discrepancy in activities, activist-educators at Academy Neutinuamu seek to cultivate individual-level liminality among participants in education programs. However, through this process, liminality at the organizational level is cultivated, with Academy Neutinuamu seeking to become a transitory educational space for activists across different organizations, new issues and dilemmas for activism being addressed through learners, and the activities involved in implementing education programs eventually driving PSPD as an organization to broaden its definitions of democracy not just in concept, but through concrete and permanent changes. Considering the representative character of PSPD, addressing issues previously not directly connected to "democracy" in narrow versions of citizens' movements come to be addressed through the education activities at Academy Neutinuamu. This shift prompts changes among members and PSPD activists and also signals a symbolic change beyond PSPD as an organization to citizens' movements as a whole.

Whereas the case of Gwangmyeong started from my interest in the Gwangmyeong YMCA as a grassroots community organization established in the 1990s, its trajectory cannot be discussed without a comparative analysis of the Gwangmyeong LLC. The Gwangmyeong

YMCA and Gwangmyeong LLC have sought to position their democratic citizenship education practices within the fabric of Gwangmyeong society. The YMCA activist-educators, after an initial unsuccessful attempt, identified gaps in the activity systems of particular groups (mothers/parents) in order to draw connections to what they can offer as well as to connect individual motivations with social orientations. Activist-educators from Sungkonghoe University, who were the first to be contracted to manage the Gwangmyeong LLC, sought to fill the potential in-between space within the LLC by introducing novel approaches influenced by international examples. Considering the short-term contract, the activist-educators decided to employ a strategy to leverage unique characteristics as a progressive university. However, through the parallel development of such manifestations of democratic citizenship education, another level of in-between space emerged across the organizations engaging in democratic citizenship education. Through a confluence of endogenous and exogenous inputs to fill such in-between space, an organizational format of an “intermediary supporting organization” for democratic citizenship education became materialized as the Center for DCE hosted by YMCA through decisions made within the Gwangmyeong Network for DCE. A common dilemma that emerged across organizations was the difficulty of connecting individual levels of political participation with collective and social levels. To collectively address this issue, the Center for DCE developed common curricula to be shared across organizations and groups in the region that have an interest in democratic citizenship education but limited resources to invest. In addition, members of the network – including citizens’ movement organizations, community organizations and groups, and public institutions – reached an agreement on the need to directly address democratic citizenship education as “political education,” through which a direction of development from individual to collective and social levels is assumed. Whereas PSPD

developed in-between spaces within the organization itself to better connect with the public and other types of movements, the in-between space in Gwangmyeong developed through the relations that the organization cultivates with the community, which in turn opened another level of in-between space at the inter-organizational community level, which became a foundation to call for the redefinition of how the general public or other actors (e.g., city councilors) perceive democratic citizenship education.

The third case, the Democratic Civic Education Project SIDE, emerged from a coalition of activist-educators who had been part of traditional citizens' movement organizations. SIDE started as an endeavor to envision an alternative form of organizing that prioritizes the autonomy of activists and focuses exclusively on democratic citizenship education activities. This network of individuals is based on the liminal experiences created through education programs and workshops in democratic citizenship education. Through the members' expertise, they identify potential in state institutions, including local, regional, and national governments and public institutions, where there is growing attention to involving general citizens in policy processes. In such processes of involvement, there is often room for education activities in the form of mini-public programs, and it is in this area that SIDE specializes. In contrast to PSPD and the organizations in Gwangmyeong with their activities based in headquarters, activist-educators at SIDE venture into invited spaces in local and municipal governments and public institutions all across Korea. They draw on strategies to transform these invited spaces into in-between spaces between the state and general citizens through the flexibility and autonomy derived from their modules and through seeking affordable forms of liminality in terms of providing "new" experiences of publicly expressing opinions and engaging in debates to as many people as possible. Another way that activist-educators at SIDE engage with state institutions is through

research, for which they enjoy a specific advantage because of SIDE's status as a registered NGO and its identity as a collective of activists in democratic citizenship education. This advantaged position enables SIDE's activist-educators to cultivate research activities as an in-between space among fellow activists across the nation. FGIs conducted across different regions reveal collective dilemmas that activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education face, which point to differences that may exist in approaches to achieve "real utopias."

After analysis of the three cases, I pose five arguments that refer back to the theories I draw on for this research. First, in terms of the citizenship education literature, I argue against the tendency to narrow its definition by focusing on the content areas that are covered. I have identified four directions in which the citizenship education literature has been stretched: 1) "civic education" at schools about the basic responsibilities and rights of "citizens" in a democracy (Schugurensky & Myers, 2003; Korbey, 2019), 2) citizenship education for immigrants before obtaining legal citizenship in a country (e.g., Pohlmann et al., 2013), 3) "global citizenship education" that addresses issues such as climate change faced by "global citizens" across the world (Nikolitsa-Winter et al., 2019), and 4) Latin American approaches to citizenship education that prioritize how the marginalized struggle for a right to define their own rights (e.g., Dagnino, 1998; Yashar, 2005). With the exception of the fourth category, the three dominant approaches to defining citizenship education tend to be focused on the contents covered through education activities. However, what is key to understanding variants of citizenship education and placing them along a continuum rather than separated conceptual boxes is to understand the historical trajectories through which each iteration of citizenship education has developed. The partition among contents of citizenship education was the reason that democratic citizenship education in Korea did not fit into previous categorizations of

citizenship education in the literature, with no choice but to “squeeze” the context-embedded notion of democratic citizenship education under categories of “civic education” or to reference the German trajectory of “political education” to identify similarities with democratic citizenship education. The trajectories through which democracies have developed differ across countries, with different manifestations of citizenship education. It is time that these contexts are explored in the citizenship education literature to allow for a comparative approach to citizenship education that does not marginalize voices from countries with shorter histories of democracy.

Second, it is necessary to shed light into liminality at the organizational level in order to fully understand how individual experiences of liminality develop into approaches to create interstices for change at the social level. The concept of liminality starts from a focus on processes that individuals go through in a particular society, which is closely connected to the development of social identities. The focus on transitions and accordingly on “in-between” statuses or spaces offers important inroads into analyzing the conditions that could create such liminality to resist the status quo and achieve social change. In addition to scholars who examine the concept of liminality and seek to broaden its application (Thomassen, 2014), I discuss Bhabha’s (1994) articulation of liminality from a postcolonial and postmodern perspective and incorporate the approaches by Olin-Wright (2010; 2019) and Holloway (2010) as cases of liminality for social transformation from critical theory. While drawing on the concept of the “in-between space” by Bhabha (1994) that explicitly addresses the spatial dimensions of liminality, I connect the concept to CHAT in order to better position the concept amidst collective and organizational dynamics. Whereas the anthropological development of the concept of liminality began from culturally embedded processes of transition, the development of the concept proceeded into an emphasis on the experiences that people go through as they engage in

liminality and how they cope with ambiguities engendered through these processes. The postcolonial and postmodern approach, while starting from a problematization of postcolonial contexts and liminality created through related conditions, similarly develops into a focus on individual and potentially collective dimensions of liminality by suggesting that the previously colonized inhabit a different temporality compared to hegemonic powers. With the connection to psychoanalysis, the focus again is oriented toward the experiences of individuals. Meanwhile, liminality in critical theory resonates with the concept of liminality at the social level by highlighting gradual transitions that a society could experience. I point out that in the extensive literature pertaining to liminality, liminality at the organizational level – how organizations go through transitions – is important to connect individual experiences of liminality to liminality at the social level.

I have attempted to illuminate potentials for the unit of activity from Cultural-Historical Activity to become a mechanism for explaining how in-between spaces for resistance can emerge in situations other than postcolonial contexts. The differences between activity systems creates in-between spaces that activists and activist-educators can potentially engage in to design change. The cases in this study have shown that the differences in activity systems can emerge within a single organization, across several organizations, as well as an invited space potentially becoming in-between space through activists' efforts. I have specifically focused on how activist-educators fill this space through their education activities. Democratic citizenship education within citizens' movement organizations illustrates the processes through which activist-educators design experiences of liminality for participants to expand their understandings of activism while also stimulating changes within the organization and shaping how activists in the organization seek to influence change in society. In citizens' movement organizations

engaging in democratic citizenship education, organizational forms have shifted to find better ways to connect with general citizens, and these connections cultivated with individual citizens and activists prompt specific directions through which activists at organizations cultivate social change beyond their organizations.

Third, I argue that the unit of activity from CHAT is a useful resource to analyze the potential in-between spaces in which activists can engage. Whereas the concept of liminality establishes the process of transition as a topic of analysis, CHAT focuses on the question of how “newness” is created through past activities. It is a learning theory that analyzes learning as a collective process that engenders new ways of addressing contradictions. Identifying learning as a collective process is achieved through the articulation of activity as a unit of analysis, which conceptualizes activity through the lens of mediation. The gist of activity theory is that the full extent of individuals’ actions can only be understood by examining the activity system that the actions are a part of. I argue that CHAT is particularly useful for activist-educators who are at the forefront of connecting individual liminality with activities in their organizations and connecting individual and organizational liminality with potential for social change.

Through this study, I have illustrated two ways that the activity system concept can be utilized for activist-educators’ work. First, activist-educators can draw on the concept to analyze potential participants’ existing activities, to identify gaps in their current activities in order to inform education opportunities that are offered. In this way, the gaps can become in-between spaces where new attempts to deepen democracy can take place. Whereas these practices already underly the actions of activist-educators engaging in democratic citizenship education, CHAT and the unit of the activity system make the process clear and explicit. Doing so makes it easier for activists new to designing education to better position their educational attempts. Second, the

activity system concept offers an opportunity to analyze the actions involved in designing and implementing education programs by citizens' movement organizations. It identifies the potential instruments, division of labor, community, and inherent rules and addresses the relationships with other activities within a citizens' movement organization. This type of analysis demonstrates the development of education activities as independent systems and illuminates the role of education in citizens' movement organizations in cultivating collective agency beyond the boundaries of the organization by working with general citizens.

Fourth, by connecting practices of democratic citizenship education in citizens' movements with Olin-Wright's call for "real utopias," I argue for a need to further develop the pathways through which activists navigate their pursuits for "real utopias," from a focus on achievability to viability and desirability. Activist-educators in democratic citizenship education acknowledge that education activities are one of the achievable options for real utopias, but run into questions of the extent to which education creates viable and desirable alternatives to the elite-centered institutional politics in Korea. Particularly for citizens' movement activists, activists have perceived the direction of "deepening democracy" to be the first realistic goal for them to pursue, while decreasing emphasis put on critiques against capitalism. Whereas this change and a call to engage with the category of "citizens" has been the way that citizens' movement activists have distinguished themselves from popular movements, I point out that the two directions may not be as different from their initial distinctions. It is more of a distinction between how activists perceive of the processes and contents for social transformation, each embedding its own "real utopia." Thus, with activist-educators in democratic citizenship education now arriving at the question of the directions for change, there is room for coalescence

between the two trajectories of movements that have developed their own paths after democratization in Korea.

Lastly, the ways in which activist-educators in democratic citizenship education engage in their activities point to an important blind spot that has eluded the social movement literature. Sociologists have debated the roles of organizations in social movements, ranging from the approach that pits investment in organizations against investment in mobilization and protest (Piven & Cloward, 1977), to the approach to consider collective agency that leads to social movements through the lens of collective identity rather than organizations (Melucci, 1995; Polletta & Jasper, 2001), to scholars and activists who seek changes from rigid notions of social movement organizations (e.g., Behrens et al., 2004; Leach, 2013). While sociologists have identified approaches to make change in social movement organizations by developing concepts such as “union revitalization,” “prefigurative movements,” or “networked organizations,” the focus remains within the boundaries of a social movement organization. For example, the dimensions of union revitalization are 1) increasing membership, 2) enhancing bargaining power, 3) influencing policy-making processes, and 4) fostering internal enthusiasm to embrace new strategies or practices (Behrens et al., 2004). Scholars studying prefigurative politics describe the internal mechanisms and culture that are introduced into organizational structures to prevent the domination of power by the few (Leach, 2013; Osterman 2006; Voss and Sherman 2000). Other scholars point to the potential of networked organizational structures in cultivating nationwide or transnational movements that go beyond the breadth of one single organization (Smith, 2005; Eggert & Pavan, 2014). However, what is missing from these approaches to address the role of organizations in social movements is the issue of *how collective agency is cultivated*. While studies address the topic of how already activated collective agency could

effectively lead to broad social change through organizational structures, the starting points of collective agency have not been fully addressed in the literature. Who participates in these movements? Through what processes do they build a collective direction for agency? What is the role of activists in this process? These questions comprise the nuts and bolts for understanding how collective agency is cultivated in social movements.

I contend that, when prioritizing the question of cultivating collective agency, the main determination is not whether organizations are important for social movements; rather, it is how educational processes develop within the organizational structures of social movements. In other words, the educational work of social movement organizations and educators engaging in these processes are at the center of understanding the development of agency and the work of social movements. Democratic citizenship education in this study refers to the education activities that underpin the development of citizens' movements in Korea. Although the large-scale mobilizations that led to democratization in Korea in the 1980s illustrate an explicit expression of what collective agency can achieve, achieving democratization does not mean that collective agency has run its course. Instead, it was after democratization that the processes that underlie visible mobilization – the educational activities – came to be central in citizens' movement organizations. Democratic citizenship education offers an important angle for understanding how activists in citizens' movement organizations seek to develop and sustain collective agency to establish new agendas for democracy after the achievement of its institutional procedures.

Thus, the question raised about the extent to which education activities contribute to effective mobilization and social movements is misplaced. The underlying mechanism of social movements is education work. It is through such education work that collective agency – the basis for any mobilizations or protests – develops into social movements. In order to understand

the mechanism of social movements and how social movements seek to influence the broader society, it is necessary to analyze social movements themselves as an educational process rather than minimizing education work as an ancillary to, or instrument for, social movements. This shift in emphasis opens up the analytic angle for social movement scholars to understand how activist-educators design liminal experiences for individuals and how liminality created through interactions with individuals fosters opportunities for organizations to change. Through these processes, activist-educators develop directions for organization-based activists and individual activists to exert change in society through the work based within their organizations. The cases in this study demonstrate directions in which activist-educators in citizens' movement organizations pursue social change by broadening the agendas addressed by their organizations, by seeping into the activities within an existing community or engaging in invited spaces offered by state actors. Whereas each case highlights different directions for engaging with society, the directions have been built through the interactions of activist-educators with (potential) movement participants through their education activities. In other words, I conclude that the development of social movements – including the initial phases prior to explicit protests or phases of social movement abeyance – are best understood as trajectories of education activities.

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Appendix A. Interview Questions

Interviews were open-ended in their nature. However, I utilized semi-structured questions for interviews with activist-educators at each site. The questions are as follows:

[personal and work histories]

- How did you get involved in the current work that you do in relation to democratic citizenship education?
- What do you currently do for work? How long have you been doing the work?
- How do you interpret the various types of citizens' movements that have emerged in Korea?
- Have you been engaged in any types of citizens' movements?
 - If yes, can you walk me through your trajectory of social movement engagement?

[specific processes related to adult citizenship education: to full-time activist-educators]

- How is “adult citizenship education” understood at the place you work?
 - How are concepts such as “political participation,” “democracy,” “citizens' movements” positioned in relation to adult citizenship education?
- Can you walk me through the process that adult citizenship education programs are planned and organized?
 - Who do you talk with during the process?
 - What kinds of documents are used in the process?
 - Are there any institutional forms that you have to fill in during the process?
What do these forms require?

- Based on the list of adult citizenship education programs offered at your center, please describe for me the educational goals for each of them.
 - Were there any shifts in the initial goal of the program before, during, and after implementing the program? If so, what were the shifts?
- How are activities of adult citizenship education at the site you are working at related to other local, municipal, or national institutions? How are the activities related with other community organizations or citizens' movement organizations?
 - Can you give me examples of how these different institutions or organizations will interact with people working at your site?
- Can you describe how the work is organized to plan and implement adult citizenship education programs?
 - How is the work divided?
 - What kinds of external actors do you bring in? (e.g., teachers)
 - How do you work with external actors to plan and implement a program?

[specific processes related to adult citizenship education: to invited teachers]

- Can you walk me through the process through which you became a teacher at the current organization engaging in adult citizenship education?
- How have you communicated with activist-educators in planning and implementing the programs?
- How are the goals of the program reflected in its contents and pedagogy?

Appendix B. Interview Schedules

Table 17 showing interview schedules includes interviews conducted throughout the course of the whole study, including the pilot study stages. The schedules only include “formal” interviews that were conducted by setting a designated time for the interview, but the study is also based on a myriad of informal interviews and conversations held during the processes of participant observation. Some interviews were conducted with organizations or institutions that are not directly dealt in the dissertation. However, they comprise important data through which I was able to navigate the terrain of democratic citizenship education in Korea.

Moreover, the initial design of the research included interviews with learners. However, this initial scope was adjusted to focus on adult-educators, based on two reasons. The first is that discussing the histories of each organization, activist-educators’ work, and interactions with other organizations and institutions was itself a large amount of data to work from. The second is that I could not obtain access to learners at certain sites. To make the cases comparable, the dissertation eventually honed in on the work of adult-educators. Although not all the data from the interviews below were directly quoted in this research, these interview data will also become basis for further publications in the future.

Table 17. Interview schedules

#	Interview Date	Interviewee
1	2019.06.26.	Kim (public official at Gwangmyeong LLC)
2	2019.06.26.	Lee (educator at Eungpyung LLC)
3	2020.11.19.	Park (educator at Suwon LLC)
4	2020.11.26.	Park (educator at Suwon LLC)
5	2021.03.04.	Moon (learner at PSPD)
6	2021.03.11.	Yang (learner at Academy Neutinamu, PSPD)
7	2021.03.12.	Kim (learner at Academy Neutinamu, PSPD)
8	2021.03.16.	Lee Tae-ho (educator at Academy Neutinamu, PSPD)
9	2021.03.22.	Choi Myung-sun (Korea Confederation of Trade Unions, guest lecturer at Academy Neutinamu, PSPD)

10	2021.03.23.	Choi (learner at PSPD)
11	2021.03.25.	Hwa (learner at PSPD)
12	2021.03.25.	Moon (learner at PSPD)
13	2021.04.02.	Jang (learner at PSPD)
14	2021.04.05.	Lee (learner at Academy Neutinuamu, PSPD)
15	2021.04.06.	Lyu Hong-bun (activist-educator, Civil Society Organizations Network in Korea)
16	2021.04.15.	Lee Eun-joo (educator at Academy Neutinuamu, PSPD)
17	2021.04.28.	Kkomjirak (activist-educator at SIDE)
18	2021.04.30.	Lee Pil-gu (activist-educator at SIDE)
19	2021.04.30.	Lim (activist-educator at an intermediary supporting organization for democratic citizenship education)
20	2021.05.07.	Shin (researcher, educator, and administrative officer in democratic citizenship education at public institutions)
21	2021.05.13.	Kim (educator at Academy Neutinuamu, PSPD)
22	2021.05.27.	Lee Song-hee (activist-educator at Academy Neutinuamu, PSPD)
23	2021.05.28.	Joo Eun-kyung (activist-educator at Academy Neutinuamu, PSPD)
24	2021.06.22.	Han Chae-yoon (educator at Academy Neutinuamu, PSPD)
25	2021.06.23.	Kim Seung-hwan (activist-educator at Academy Neutinuamu, PSPD)
26	2021.07.02.	Hwang Mi-jeong (activist-educator at Academy Neutinuamu, PSPD)
27	2021.07.07.	Park (educator at Gyeonggi Institute for Lifelong Education)
28	2021.07.08.	Choi In-sook (activist-educator at Academy Neutinuamu, PSPD)
29	2021.07.09.	Ko Byung-heon (activist-educator at Gwangmyeong LLC)
30	2021.07.14.	Kim (past educator at Gyeonggi Institute for Lifelong Education)
31	2021.10.28.	Lee Byung-gon (activist-educator at Gwangmyeong LLC)
32	2021.10.29.	Pyo Hana (activist-educator at Gwangmyeong YMCA)
33	2021.11.03.	Tangtang (activist-educator at SIDE)
34	2021.11.03.	Haeddeun (activist-educator at SIDE)
35	2021.11.05.	Kang (invited researcher at Gwangmyeong YMCA)
36	2021.11.05.	Seo Won-hee (activist-educator at Gwangmyeong Network for DCE)
37	2021.11.23.	Park (public official at Gwangmyeong city government)
38	2021.11.26.	Jeong (activist-educator at Gwangmyeong Network for DCE)
39	2021.11.29.	Joo (activist-educator at Gwangmyeong Network for DCE)
40	2021.12.03.	Lee Young-yi (activist-educator at Gwangmyeong YMCA)

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- Kuk, H.-S., & Tarlau, R. (2020). The confluence of popular education and social movement studies into social movement learning: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 39(5-6), 591-604.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2020.1845833>
- Kuk, H.-S., & Holst, J. D. (2018). A dissection of experiential learning theory: Alternative approaches to reflection. *Adult Learning*, 29(4), 150-157.
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- Kuk, H.-S. (2018). The transformation of experiential learning from the practices of adult educators in Korea (평생교육사의 현장경험에서 나타나는 평생교육 이론과 실제의 타협 양상). *Korean Journal of Lifelong Education*, 24(2), 83-113. [In Korean]

Conference Proceedings

- Kuk, H.-S. (2020). Adult education and the state: A review of literature. *Proceedings of Adult Education in Global Times (AEGT)*. https://edst-educ.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/06/aegt_proceedings_upload.pdf

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 2021 | Dissertation Research Initiation Grant, Pennsylvania State University |
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