**The London School of Economics and Political Science**

# The Politics of Struggle in a State–Civil Society Partnership: A Case Study of a South Korean Workfare Partnership Programme

**Suyoung Kim**

# Declaration of Authorship

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

Suyoung Kim

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# Acknowledgements

# Abstract

This research investigates the dynamics of the on-going conflict in the state–civil society partnership in South Korea. In recent decades, partnership has become a central strategy for welfare provision worldwide. In accordance with this trend, the Korean government has invited numerous civil society organisations to become local welfare agencies. The workfare programme (called the SSP) is a typical example of such partnerships. Because a large number of anti-poverty organisations have become frontline SSP Centres, the SSP is widely regarded as an icon of participatory welfare.

However, contrary to the ideals of democratic governance, some critical studies have argued that collaboration with the state can render civil society agencies susceptible to state demands, gradually undermining their role as advocates for disadvantaged people. In light of such claims, this study has explored the actual politics of the SSP partnership by: 1) analysing policy documents; 2) conducting interviews with 42 actors in the SSP system; and 3) observing a Centre.

This research confirms that partnership does not always guarantee a democratic relationship. SSP Centres have gradually been subjected to state intervention, and their open confrontation with the state has evidently abated. Yet SSP Centres have not completely lost their autonomy and spirit of resistance: rather, they have adopted informal and unofficial forms of resistance while maintaining apparent conformity with the state. These street-level activities constitute SSP Centres' emancipatory role in defending the life-world of poor people against the capitalist state.

The implication of this study for the politics of partnership is that current forms of state–civil society partnership need not entail the 'mutual coproduction' or the 'complete co-option' of civil society to the state. Partnership can be a site of 'complex struggles' where civil society actors continue to counteract the control of the dominant system in inflected ways.

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# Romanisation

The Romanisation of Korean words in this thesis follows the Revised Romanisation System proclaimed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Korea in July 2000. Some authors' names and terms might be spelt out according to other Romanisation systems if they appeared as such in original publications. When referencing primary sources in Korean language, its bibliography details include titles translated into English, followed by the Romanised forms of titles.

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ADCWU | Asan Daily Construction Workers Union |
| ASH | Anglican Sharing Homes |
| CACO | Christian Association of Community Organizing |
| CEM | Christian Ethics Movement |
| CLLSC | Corporation Leftovers Love Sharing Community |
| COUP | Catholic Organization Urban Poor |
| CNSA | Christian Night School Association |
| ESC | Employment Service Centre |
| FTA | Free Trade Agreement |
| GIA | Government Information Agency |
| ICA | International Cooperative Alliance |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| JHAMILC | Jeonju Headquarters for the Actualisation of National Minimun Income and Living Costs |
| KASSPC | Korean Association of Self-Sufficiency Promotion Centres |
| KAVA | Korean Association of Voluntary Agencies |
| KBAI | Korean Board of Audit and Inspection |
| Korean CIA | Korean Central Intelligence Agency |
| KCSI | Korea Christian Society Institute |
| KCSWLRM | Kyeongnam Council for SSP Workers' Labour Rights Movement |
| KCTU | Korean Confederation of Trade Unions |
| KDI | Korean Development Institute |
| KEIS | Korea Employment Information Service |
| KIHASA | Korean Institute of Health and Social Affairs |
| KIWC | Korean Institute of Workers' Cooperative |
| KOCER | Korean Centre for City and Environment Research |
| Korean CIA | Korean Central Intelligence Agency |
| KPPA | Korean Press Photographer Association |
| KUPC | Korean Underground Public Corporation |
| KWCWS | Korea Workers' Compensation & Welfare Service |
| KWWA | Korean Women Workers Association |
| LP | Livelihood Protection |
| National Alliance | National Alliance of Movements against Poverty and Unemployment |
| NBLG | National Basic Livelihood Programme |
| NHRCK | National Human Rights Commission of Korea |
| MOL | Ministry of Labour |
| MOGAHA | Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs |

| | |
|---|---|
| **MOGL** | **Ministry of Government Legislation** |
| **MOHW** | **Ministry of Health and Welfare** |
| **MOPB** | **Ministry of Planning and Budget** |
| **MSJJ** | **Memorial Society for Jeonggu Je** |
| **PCNSWU** | **Preparation Committee for National SSP Workers' Union** |
| **PSPD** | **Peoples Solidarity of Participatory Democracy** |
| **PWP** | **Public Work Programme** |
| **RIKS** | **Research Institute of Korean Society** |
| **SDI** | **Seoul Development Institute** |
| **SGFR** | **Study Group for SSP Female Recipients** |
| **Solidarity Assembly** | **Solidarity Assembly for National Basic Livelihood Enactment'** |
| **SPCH** | **Seoul Policy Council on Homelessness** |
| **SSP** | **Self-Sufficiency Programme** |
| **SSP Centre** | **Self-Sufficiency Promotion Centre** |
| **SSP Fund** | **Self-Sufficiency Preparation Fund** |
| **TPWP** | **Temporary Public Work Programme** |
| **UIM** | **Urban Industrial Mission** |
| **WVK** | **World Vision Korea** |

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

## 1.1 Statement of the Research

*1.11 Research Subject: State–Civil Society Partnership*

<u>Global Prevalence of State–Civil Society Partnership</u>: The aim of this research is to investigate the political role of civil society organisations in state–civil society partnership. Over the last several decades, interest in state–civil society partnership has increased around the world. In particular, civil society organisations—variously labelled as the third sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), nonprofits or voluntary organisations—have attained academic and political attention as the most desirable partners for public welfare delivery in both developed and developing countries.

In developed countries, civil society organisations have long played a substantial role in social service provision. However, while in the past most analyses of welfare states paid little heed to civil society organisations, considering them "the vestige of pre-welfare state institutions" (White 2006 p. 45), state–civil society partnership are now being heralded as an alternative model to state-led welfare administration. This rediscovery was triggered, in part, by growing scepticism about the efficiency of welfare states (Johnson 1987; Peters and Pierre 1998). Beginning with the liberals, there was increasing recognition that societal problems could not be solved by the state alone. As epitomised by popular policy discourses such as Thatcherism, the Third Way and Big Society, both the Right and the Left began to comment on the corrosion of state-centred welfare, and accordingly, an unprecedented degree of attention has fallen on voluntary organisations (Alcock 2010; Giddens 1998; Lewis 2005; Waine 1992) As part of massive welfare reforms, European governments have turned to the third sector to provide an expanding array of welfare services formerly assumed by the state (e.g. job-training, employment placement, day care or regeneration projects) and have started to invest material and political resources to promote state–civil society partnership.

Civil society organisations are also very much in fashion in developing countries. Due to the international influence of donor countries, developing countries

have imported the partnership model into their policy programmes. Promoting the international donor community's 'New Policy Agenda', donors invite NGOs to be implementers of donor-driven poverty reduction projects, bypassing the government (Hulme and Edwards 1997). Internal political changes have also stimulated the rise of civil society organisations as public policy partners. After the collapse of the Communist Bloc, civil society agencies in Eastern Europe played a crucial role in reconstructing society (Glenn 2003). As for many Latin American and Asian countries, civil society organisations also acted as influential policy actors, liquidating the vestiges of authoritarian states after democratisation (Foley and Edwards 1996 p. 38). What Salamon termed "the global associational revolution", that is, the international upsurge of civil society associations in the public policy arena, is now underway (1993a).

One of the most remarkable qualities of the global associational revolution is that in addition to traditional voluntary service organisations, progressive voluntary action organisations like social movement groups are joining in the partnership trend. Traditionally, social movement organisations would stand for resistance against dominant political-economic power. In recent years, however, welfare reforms in Western states, the collapse of communist parties in Eastern Europe and the political democratisation of Asian countries have led their respective governments to co-opt individual activists as members of state bodies. Moreover, at the organisational level, governments have increasingly allied themselves with social movement organisations to augment the amount of public resources and grassroots channels for service delivery (Giugni and Passy 1998 pp. 85-86). For instance, in many countries, feminist movements have been greatly engaged in administering gender-related programmes, acting as local service centres tackling gender discrimination, domestic and sexual violence or abortion (Porta and Diani 2006 pp. 234-235).

Prevalence of Partnership in South Korea: In terms of the recent proliferation of partnership, South Korea is by no means exceptional. Often termed "community-based welfare", "democratic governance" or "participative welfare", state–civil society partnership has gained popularity as the next-generation welfare delivery model (MOHW 1999c; SDI 2001). One of the most conspicuous trends in Korean partnership is the active cooperation of former social movement groups with the state

for the purpose of welfare administration. During the nation's long authoritarian regime (from 1945 to 1992), civil society was severely suppressed and censored by military governments. Social movement organisations had acted outside of the formal policy arena, confronting the military state. Since 1992, however, democratisation has steadily changed the structure of the relationship between the state and civil society. With the success in consecutive presidential elections of previously anti-government leaders Youngsam Kim, Daejung Kim and Moohyeon Rho, social activists have experienced increased involvement in state bodies (Cho 1995; Kim, E. 1999).

The partnerships between state and anti-poverty organisations in welfare services have also been fashioned in accordance with this democratic mood. Since the previous authoritarian state was quite indifferent to providing welfare for poor people, democratic governments needed to make up for the insufficient social services available to them. To expand social services, the government actively sought collaboration with local anti-poverty organisations, which had acted as poor people's advocates during the authoritarian regime. Since anti-poverty organisations were organising free childcare centres, night schools or free clinic centres in urban slums, the government invited them to participate in the design of various poverty-reduction projects for poor neighbourhoods. For instance, when the Daejung Kim government launched the Homeless Shelter Programme in 1997, nationwide anti-poverty associations like the 'Anglican Sharing Homes' (ASH) played a crucial role in devising the public shelter system and founding local homeless shelters (SPCH 2000). The Community Childcare Centre Programme, initiated in 2003 by the Moohyeon Rho government, is also a partnership project managed with the cooperation of the state and anti-poverty organisations, such as member organisations of the 'Christian Association for Community Organizing' (CACO) and the 'Catholic Organization Urban Poor' (COUP) (CLLSC 2002).

Among the state and anti-poverty organisation partnership projects, the Self-Sufficiency Programme (SSP), which is the subject of this research, is the most historic, representative and largest of this kind (Kim, H. 2000; Kim, S. 2001; Lee, S. 2000, 2004). The SSP is a workfare programme piloted in 1996 "to provide the unemployed poor with compulsory public work projects in return for benefits and promote their economic self-sufficiency" (MOHW 2003 p. 67; KASSPC 2004 p. 1).

However, unlike the British Job Centre Plus, its frontline agencies, called Self-Sufficiency Promotion Centres (hereafter, SSP Centres), are run by local civil society organisations. According to 2008 statistics, 242 local SSP Centres were commissioned to civil society organisations nationwide, offering 2,695 public work projects for 25,801 SSP recipients (MOHW 2008a). Thereupon, anti-poverty organisations belonging to the ASH, the CACO and the COUP have been widely involved in administering SSP Centres (KOCER 2000 p. 6). In this way, civil society organisations are "mainstreaming" from a periphery to the locus of welfare policies in both South Korea and the rest of the world (Kendall 2000; Sin 2002). However, it appears that classical political theory on civil society does not pay detailed attention to the flourishing of state–civil society collaborations.

*1.12 Motivations of the Research: Challenge to Independent Civil Society*
Classical Interpretation of Independent Civil Society: It is not an exaggeration to say that that civil society has always been a central issue in modern social sciences. In modern political theory, civil society has been traditionally understood as the (third) sector, distinctive from both the state and the market. As Habermas illustrated, the institutional core of civil society is constituted by "nongovernmental and noneconomic associations" (1996 p. 366), which are "voluntary unions outside the realm of the state and the economy" (1992 p. 453). Of course, this does not mean that every organisation in civil society has always countered the state and the economy. Nonetheless, civil society agencies have been assumed to have at least some form of autonomy and independence from state and corporate power, regardless of whether they confront or uphold the political-economic power.

This vision of civil society organisations as a distinctive sector has deep roots. Although apparently diverse, most classical debates on civil society have been premised on the assumption that civil society *is*, or at least *should* be, distinguished from the public and private sectors. For example, liberal political scholars like Alexis de Tocqueville have considered voluntary associations as a bulwark against the state's tendency to expand its reach. Tocqueville argued that the primary role of civil society organisations was to limit the power of the state and to enhance democracy, diversity and freedom (1964).

Structuralists like Marx, Althusser and Foucault have also sought the

liberation of civil society. Unlike liberal thinkers, they claimed that so-called 'civil' society actually functioned as a tool for sustaining dominant classes, ideologies and discourses. Marx argued that civil society was occupied by the dominant class (the 'bourgeoisie'), whose ultimate aim was to suppress the subordinate class (the 'proletariat') (Marx 1978; Marx and Engels 1970). Althusser also viewed civil society associations such as voluntary associations, churches or schools as "ideological state apparatus", rather than as a defence against state power (1971). Even Foucault contended that all the social entities of civil society, the state and the market are interwoven, constituting a fine network of surveillance over the daily life of individuals, akin to Betham's Panopticon (1979). Hence, these structuralists' common view was that there were no autonomous civil society actors who were truly autonomous from the dominant power. However, the ultimate aim of structuralists was not merely to wallow in despair over the current condition of civil society. What they longed for in the end were the 'possibilities of resistance' arising from civil society: Marx and Althusser yearned for 'emancipatory projects' to construct a liberated society free from the control of capitalist states, while in the third volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault likewise devoted considerable attention to the reflexive autonomy of civil society subjects (1986).

Gramsci (1971) and Habermas (1981; 1987), who integrated the two contrasting viewpoints, focused more on the distinctiveness of civil society agencies. Like Marx, Gramsci regarded civil society as a bedrock for the capitalist state's status quo. However, he wanted to highlight the potential for civil society to be functioned as the realm of contesting ideas, in which existing hegemonic power could be challenged by counter-hegemonic dissent. Similarly, Habermas acknowledged that the "economic-administrative complex" of the system tended to colonise the space of civil society (1981 p. 33). At the same time, however, he asserted that civil society associations could be a shield from the effects of the dominant system. In this way, "the civil society argument" emphasised the space of civil society as distinct from the political-economic structure (Walzer 1998).

Following these theoretical traditions, civil society in the late twentieth century has been generally conceptualised as reflexive on the dominant power, transformative of existing social orders and potentially emancipatory towards a more political democracy and social economy. As Cox aptly summarises, "civil society has

become the comprehensive term for various ways in which people express collective wills independently of (and often in opposition to) established power, both economic and political" (1999 p. 10). This widely recognised usage has received impetus from social movements against Stalinist states in Eastern Europe and against authoritarian states in Asia and Latin America. As Cohen and Arato have explained, such anti-government social movements constitute the quintessential image of independent civil society (1992 p. 492).

Challenge to the Independent Civil Society Model: In recent years the state–civil society partnership however has come to challenge the classical model of autonomous civil society because "blurring boundaries" are the key ingredient of partnership (Henman and Fenger 2006 p. 11). As Palola and her colleagues have claimed, "with the emergence of various partnership networks, there is no longer any need to make traditional distinctions, divisions and categorisations—for instance, between the public and the private or the economy and the social—but different processes and dimensions intertwine to an ever greater degree" (Palola, Rintala, and Savio 2006 p. 8). Of course, civil society organisations would have substantial interactions with the state or the market even before the prominence of partnerships. However, multi-sectoral interdependencies are increasingly accentuated in partnering societies to the extent that sectoral borders are becoming porous and transcendable (Billis 2010).

This research was motivated by the wavering concept of 'independent civil society'. Indeed, the state–civil society partnership and the resultant erosion of sectoral boundaries bring critical questions to the conventional understanding of civil society, such as whether civil society actors could maintain their autonomous values, distinctive identity and the spirit of resistance against the dominant system, and how the political role of civil society organisations could be redefined in the era of partnership. Traditional civil society theory does not directly address the new interacting phenomena, and thus does not offer profound answers to the queries.

The questions on the role of civil society organisations are especially critical to Korean welfare partnerships. As former leading anti-government activist groups, anti-poverty organisations from the ASH, the COUP, or the CACO pursued a revolutionary path during the authoritarian regime. However, since democratisation,

they came to be institutionalised as state-sponsored welfare agencies. Habermas had earlier argued that civil society organisations should play a pivotal role in countering the more insidious effects of welfare states, such as bureaucratisation and monetarisation (1981, 1987). Yet in the era of partnership, civil society associations themselves come to be actively involved in welfare administration as service agencies. It was in this context that this project set out to investigate the political role of anti-poverty organisations in the Korean workfare partnership, questioning '*whether the emancipatory potential and the spirit of resistance are still valid in SSP Centres run by anti-poverty organisations, and if so, in what ways.*' Through a scrupulous case study of the SSP partnership, this study is intended to discuss the meaning of civil society in the era of partnership.

*1.13 Purposes of the Research: Rethinking Civil Society in Partnership*
To answer the above questions, this study first formulates three analytical lenses regarding the role of civil society organisations in state–civil society partnership. Existing discourses of partnership have mainly viewed the politics thereof from two conflicting standpoints. The first is what this study defines as 'the mainstream policy viewpoint', which assumes a state–civil society partnership of 'mutual democracy' and 'co-governance' between equal partners. This viewpoint supposes that civil society agencies serve as participatory media through which to propagate grassroots democracy in the public welfare system, having their roots in liberal political theory, which holds that voluntary associations enhance democracies.

Conversely, what this study categorises as 'the critical viewpoint' focuses on the deterioration of the radical potential of civil society actors in partnership. Unlike the dominant assumption, it claims that partnership is highly likely to drive civil society organisations to fall prey to the imperatives of the dominant power (Feldman 2003; Wolch 1990). Many critical studies have observed how civil society agencies come to bear more resemblance to state bureaucrats after receiving state funds, although they originally claimed to be distinguishable from the state. Under the theoretical legacy of structuralist ideas, the critical approach holds that partnership can be utilised as an advanced technique to regulate social actors.

Besides the two viewpoints, this study puts forward a third perspective: 'the alternative viewpoint'. Similar to the critical viewpoint, the alternative approach

recognises the domination–subordination relationship in partnership. However, it sheds more light on the persistence of civil society's autonomy by illustrating how seemingly subordinate civil society actors can retain the spirit of resistance in spite of the top-down imperatives of state policies. In other words, this viewpoint regards the state–civil society partnership as a perpetual battle between the dominant system and civil society actors. This approach is still in the embryonic stage, advanced only partially in a handful of case studies. For instance, we can say that some anthropological research on poverty reduction projects, which tries to unearth street-level discretionary acts and independent discourses of civil society agencies, belongs to this standpoint (Baines 2010; Lewis and Mosse 2006; Little 1999; Long 2001).

The purpose of this study is to test the three aforementioned analytical lenses through a detailed case study of the SSP partnership. Most existing case studies tend from the outset to select and be premised upon one of the viewpoints when analysing the position of civil society agencies in partnership. However, rather than squeezing the SSP partnership case into the mould afforded by one particular viewpoint, this study examines the three analytical lenses and determines which provides the most apposite analysis, supported by empirical evidence of the SSP partnership. Of course, as a single case study, this research does not pursue "statistical generalisation" that can be applied to all partnership projects. Nonetheless, this study is intended to develop "analytical generalisation", that is, to develop theoretical implications and intellectual insights that can offer an analytical framework for other partnership studies (Stenbacka 2001; Yin 1994)

Apart from the analytical generalisation, this study also provides the opportunity to examine a concrete partnership project of a late-developed East Asian country. There is a large volume of original work on the theory/practice of civil society and state–civil society relationships in non-Western contexts, particularly Asia (e.g. Chatterjee (2004) for India; Hedman (2006) for the Philippines). But while numerous studies have looked at civil society arrangements in developing countries in Southeast Asia, those in East Asian countries have been much less explored. Although the histories and characteristics of civil society in Japan (cf. Pharr and Schwartz 2003) and China (Howell 2004;White, Howell, and Shang 1996) have garnered more international academic attention in recent years, there has so far been little discussion of state–civil society relationships in South Korea. The state–civil

society relationships in late-developed South Korea may share a certain similarity with those of developed states of the West and developing countries in South Asia and Africa. However, they may have unique properties in that the characteristics of civil society and of the state are very different from those of other countries, given the nation's long history of authoritarianism and radical social movements. In this regard, the state–civil society partnerships in South Korea may have peculiar features worthy of discussion. This study thus serves as an early attempt to introduce East Asian welfare partnership cases and analyse their commonalities and peculiarities in comparison with other partnership projects in developing and developed countries.

*1.14 Research Questions*

To realise the aforementioned goals, this analysis has been subdivided into the following research questions:

1) Do anti-poverty organisations in the SSP partnership maintain a mutual relationship with the state, as assumed by the mainstream policy viewpoint, or have they come to be subject to the dominant policy system, as claimed by critical scholars?

2) Could SSP Centres sustain the spirit of resistance and autonomy in the SSP partnership, as demonstrated by the alternative viewpoint?

3) If SSP Centres could sustain the spirit of resistance, in what manner would they express their opposition?

4) What differences and similarities would the methods of resistance in partnership have in comparison with traditional forms of social movement?

5) What implications does this specific case study have for our understanding of the power dynamics in state–civil society partnership?

**1.2 Overview of the Research Design**

*1.21 Analytical Framework*

This study presents an analytical framework within which to investigate the power dynamics of, and the role of anti-poverty organisations in, the SSP partnership. Through a general literature review on partnership, this study identifies three putative roles of civil society organisations and three typical challenges that civil society

organisations might face in a partnership system. The three roles of civil society organisations are (1) political adversary against state power, (2) representative for marginalised people and (3) bulwark against capitalist market. The three compelling challenges to the civil society's roles, which are brought about by partnership, are, according to the critical viewpoint (1) depoliticalisation (the threat to the adversarial role against state), (2) bureaucratisation (the threat to the representative role for marginalised people) and (3) marketisation (the threat to the cooperative role against anti-capitalist forces). Applying this general framework to the SSP, Figure 1-1 illustrates the three possible collisions between the conventional roles of anti-poverty organisations and the growing influences of depoliticisation, marketisation and bureaucratisation that may be faced by activist-run SSP Centres.

To ascertain whether and in what ways SSP Centres can still uphold their liberating potential, this study concentrates in particular on analysing how SSP Centres struggle with the three-dimensional threats. By examining the political struggles in the SSP partnership in these three aspects, this study aims to propose a viewpoint of the political standing of activist-operated SSP Centres, whether they are mutual partners of the state, function as state apparatus or continue to act as inside activists against state policies.

**Figure 1-1 Possible Power Struggles in the SSP Partnership**
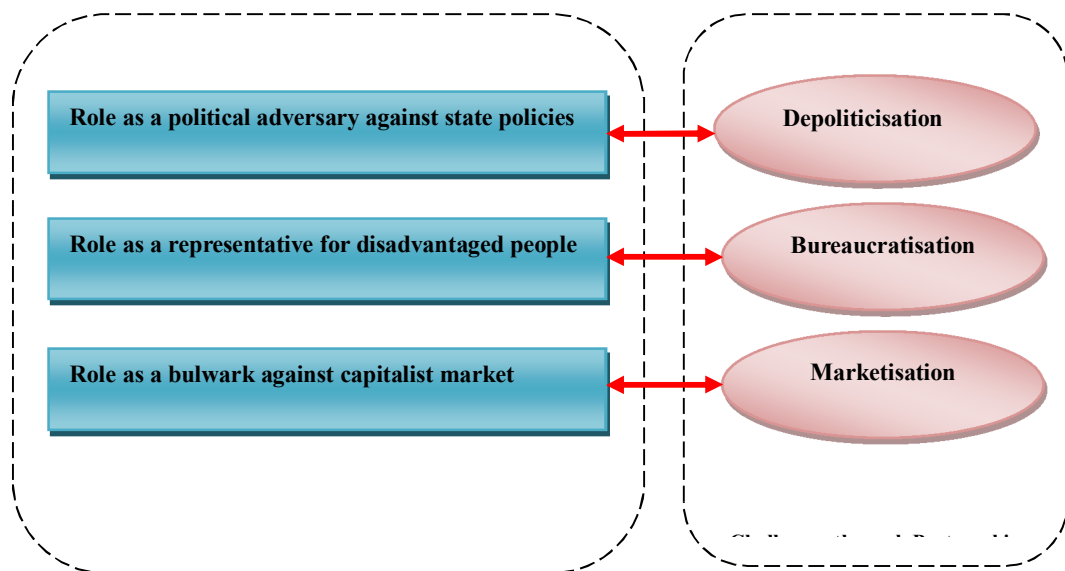


*1.22 Methodological Framework*

This research employs multiple data collection methods comprising document

analysis, in-depth interviews and participant observation. To identify the original values and goals of anti-poverty organisations, this research primarily examined the archives of the ASH, the COUP and the CACO for the period, 1964 to 1996. To delineate how the initial position has changed after the SSP partnership, this study utilises policy documents written between 1997 and 2011. These were mainly acquired from the offline and online databases of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) and the Korean Association of SSP Centres (KASSPC).

Second, this research also makes use of in-depth interviews with twenty anti-poverty activists working at SSP Centres. The interviews were intended to reveal how SSP Centres actually perceived and responded to the challenges of depoliticisation, marketisation and bureaucratisation at street level. However, if we only refer to the data garnered from anti-poverty organisations, we may obtain a one-sided story regarding their role. For this reason, auxiliary interviews were conducted with eight state officials and fourteen SSP recipients to juxtapose their opinions with the explanations of SSP Centre staff and to provide richer illustrations of the power dynamics in the SSP partnership. The interviews were conducted twice, in 2005 and in 2008, so as to establish whether there were considerable changes over time.

Lastly, participant observation was conducted from 10th November to 12th December 2008 at the Junim SSP Centre (pseudonym), a historically renowned SSP Centre run by a Protestant anti-poverty organisation. Working as a full-time volunteer at the Junim SSP Centre, the researcher tried to acquire a more vivid understanding of the street-level activities and discourses of SSP Centres. Using the multiple methods of data collection, this study aims to examine the politics of the SSP partnership from various perspectives.


### 1.3. Brief Summary of Findings

Through a case study, this research established that, contrary to the dominant assumption, the state–civil society partnership does not always guarantee a mutual relationship. Anti-poverty organisations in the SSP partnership come to be gradually subjected to state control, with intrusions from waves of depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation. However, the critical viewpoint likewise provides only a partial picture of the politics in partnership because SSP Centres have retained autonomy and the spirit of resistance. Certainly, open conflicts between

anti-poverty organisations and the state have dramatically disappeared after partnership. However, SSP Centres started employing informal, unofficial and street-level forms of resistance instead, while maintaining apparent conformity with state imperatives. Some might assume that such indirect forms of resistance are likely to be conservative survival strategies, serving to maintain the existing system. Nonetheless, this study shows how street-level resistance contains the emancipatory potential, defending the life-world of poor people against the capitalist state. The findings of this study prompt the conclusion that the state–civil society partnership does not always entail the 'mutual coproduction' or the complete 'co-option' of civil society to the state. Power dynamics in partnership are not a fixed image of the domination–subordination relationship: rather, they are complicated and protean. This study shows how the state–civil society partnership can be a site of complex struggles between the dominant system and civil society actors.

## 1.4 Outline of the Thesis Structure

The thesis comprises nine chapters. After this introductory chapter, chapters 2 and 3 survey the historical background of this research. Chapter 2 offers an overview of the state–civil society relationships in modern South Korean history, while Chapter 3 delineates more specifically the process through which the relationship between state and anti-poverty organisations has evolved into the contemporary SSP partnership.

Chapters 4 and 5 expatiate upon the research frameworks. Chapter 4 examines how existing literature defines the role of civil society organisations in welfare partnership and identifies three different perspectives, which are to be utilised as analytical lenses for this study: (1) the mainstream policy viewpoint, (2) the critical viewpoint and (3) the alternative viewpoint. It also identifies three challenges to civil society organisations commonly occurring in partnerships: (1) depoliticisation, (2) bureaucratisation and (3) marketisation. Chapter 5 outlines the methodological framework, which includes document analysis, in-depth interviews and observation.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present the research findings concerned with how SSP Centres have struggled against depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation in the SSP partnership. Chapter 6 discusses SSP Centres' struggles with depoliticisation, that is, the challenge to their adversarial role in relation to state

policies. Chapter 7 examines how SSP Centres cope with bureaucratisation, that is, the threat to their role as representatives for poor people. Chapter 8 notes SSP Centres' struggles with marketisation, that is, the menace to their communal ethos. Each chapter applies a similar narrative flow, composed of three sections. The first section of each chapter discusses the original values, goals and identities that activist-run SSP Centres previously expected to actualise. The second section expounds how their initial aspirations have been gradually weakened and threatened in the SSP partnership system. The final section explores how SSP Centres conduct various forms of resistance to restore their autonomy.

Lastly, Chapter 9 presents synthetic analyses of the political struggles of civil society organisations in partnership. By discussing the state's intervention and the street-level resistance of SSP Centres, this chapter provides theoretical implications for the politics of state–civil society partnership.

# Chapter 2
# State–Civil Society Relationships in Korean Social Welfare System

## 2.1 Introductory Statement

The aim of Chapter 2 is to present a historical overview of state–civil society relationships and the role of civil society organisations in the development of the South Korean social welfare system, before more closely looking into the formation of the state–anti-poverty organisations' partnership in the SSP system (Chapter 3).

Throughout Korea's modern history, diverse civil society organisations have been emerged, grown, changed and decayed. In particular, 'foreign aid organisations' (*haeoi wonjo danche),* 'government-permitted voluntary organisations' (*kwanin mingan danche),* 'people's movement organisations' (*minjung undong danche)* and 'citizens' movement organisations' (*simin undong danche*) have been recognised as the four representative types of civil society organisations in the context of Korea's modern history (Cho, H. 1998, 2001; Ju 1999; Kim and Jung 2000; Yu and Kim, H. 1995; Yu and Kim, J. 2001). They are currently bundled together under all-embracing terms such as "civil society organisations", "the third sector" and "NGOs" after such terms having been imported into Korean society from the West in the early 1990s. However, they actually have different historical origins, goals, and values from each other, being named differently in practical fields and in academia. Hence, we need to discern the roles of the four types of organisations to understand the meaning of civil society organisations in Korean welfare history, rather than generalising their roles on the basis of a singular merged entity. Also, in the sense that anti-poverty organisations have deep roots in people's movement organisations, it is necessary to compare and contrast the latter with other types of organisation in order to obtain background knowledge about the peculiar political implications of anti-poverty organisations in the Korean social welfare context. For this reason, this chapter maps the different positions of civil society organisations in relation to the state.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first explores the post-war period from 1945 to 1960, when a civilian dictatorial government led by Syngman Rhee controlled society. This section will look at the reason for the underdevelopment of

state welfare during this period and the role of 'foreign aid organisations' as the primary welfare providers. The second section is devoted to the period of military governments from 1961 to 1992. In this section, we will examine the introduction of the state welfare system and the contrasting roles of two types of indigenous civil society organisations – i.e. 'government-controlled voluntary organisations' and 'anti-government people's movement organisations'. The third section concerns the democratic regime lasting from 1993 to the present, when civilian political leaders were elected as presidents. This section will explore the expansion of the state welfare system and the emergence of 'citizen's movement organisations'.

## 2.2 The State–Civil Society Relationship during the Warfare Regime (1945–1960)

### 2.21 The State Side: Lack of State Welfare Provision

In the history of western welfare regimes, the Second World War is regarded as the crucial turning point at which the core structure of state welfare was (re)constructed (Briggs 2000; Esping-Andersen 1990; Lowe 1990; Titmuss 1976). Under the Beveridge Committee Report in 1942, the British Labour government initiated a wide range of welfare provisions aiming to rehabilitate their ruined society and achieve more social integration. For similar reasons, many European countries established relatively comprehensive social policies. Since the Second World War, what Archbishop William Temple coined 'welfare state', in contrast to 'warfare state', has become commonplace in western countries (Eisner and Morone 2003).

However, even after the World War, Korea had to remain a 'warfare state' because the Korean peninsula was immediately drawn into another global conflict, the Cold War. After becoming independent from Japanese imperialism in 1945, post-colonial Korea was put under UN trusteeship for three years. The trusteeship temporarily divided the Korean peninsula into two zones of administration: the northern part of Korea under the trusteeship of the communist Soviet Union and the southern part of Korea under the trusteeship of the liberalist United States.

As a counterpart to socialist North Korea, the South Korean government has politically suppressed the Left ever since the division, and the lack of influential left-wing parties has been one of the main reasons why the welfare state is underdeveloped in South Korea (Ahn and Lee 2005; Hong 1999; Kim and Sung

2000). In fact, until the mid-1950s, there were active leftists. The South Korean Labour Party was established in 1946 in South Korea and acquired a certain amount of political freedom within society. Although the liberalist President, Seungman Rhee, was strongly supported by the American government, the winds of the Cold War were not so severe before 1950. The South Korean Labour Party (representing the working class and peasants) could thus challenge the economic–political ruling bloc that consisted of such groups as the Liberal Party, the pro-Japan politicians, and the landed gentry. The National Council of Korean Trade Unions and the National Leagues of Farmers' Associations, which were voluntarily organised from the ground up, supported the South Korean Labour Party (Choi 1997). However, after the Korean War (1950-1953), the Left either migrated northwards or was purged by the Seungman Rhee government. The National Security Law, initiated in 1948, was also strengthened (Jeon 2005; Kim, Minbae 1999). Under the National Security Law, people who supported socialism or who recognised North Korea as a legitimate political entity were punished for 'threatening' national security. The fact that 550,915 people were punished under this law during the Korean War shows how exhaustively this law was applied (Kim, Sunhyuk 2000). Bongam Jo, the leader of the South Chosun Labour Party, was finally executed in 1958 for the violation of this National Security Law. Many autonomous progressive associations (e.g. the National Council of Chosun Trade Unions and the National Leagues of Farmers' Associations) were also oppressed and went into hiding or disbanded.

Ever since the Korean War, South Korean society has been on a war footing. Governments have constantly emphasised that the Korean War never officially ended, but that it was merely suspended. Stressing the importance of political stability, Seungman Rhee twice amended the Constitution – in 1951 and 1954 – so as to make his dictatorship legally justified. Through the amendments to the Constitution, he remained in power for 12 years (1948-1960), aided by the fact that any political opposition could be dismissed as pro-North Korean.

It is thus not surprising that the 'social security system' has been thoroughly supplanted by the 'national security system'. Social security programmes were introduced only to enhance national security. The first social security programmes were the Military Relief Act (1950) and Police Relief Act (1951), which involved special public assistance for the surviving families of the soldiers and police who

died or were wounded during the Korean War. The Civil Servants' Pension, introduced in 1959, was the only form of social insurance implemented during this post-war period. As social policy scholars Ahn and Lee state, the Civil Servants' Pension was also an instrument to retain officials' loyalty to the state (2005 p. 170).

Apart from the chosen workers such as soldiers, the police and civil servants, ordinary workers were exploited by the market without any safety nets. The primary concern of the Rhee government was to stimulate the national economy so that it would be greater than that of North Korea. As soon as the 'physical' Korean War was suspended, the two Koreas were plunged into 'economic' war to verify the superiority of their own ideologies. Until the mid-1970s, the South Korean economy had indeed lagged behind that of North Korea, since the infrastructure of the munitions' industry was mostly located in North Korea[1]. To outpace North Korea, therefore, South Korean workers were urged to endure low incomes and long working hours.

Rhee's liberalist stance also contributed to the underdevelopment of the state welfare system. The civilian Rhee government was significantly different from the following military governments. Whereas the military governments pursued state-led developmentalism, the Rhee government in effect pursued liberalist capitalism, which one may term "Korean laissez-faire" (Sonn 2004). With the firm backing of the American government, the Rhee government privatised all the banks, including the Central Bank, and minimised state intervention in the market. That meant that people's well-being was seen as a matter for the private sector, not the public sector. Although four basic labour-related laws – the Working Standard Law, Trade Union Law, Working People Committee Law and Working Dispute Coordination Law – were legislated for in 1953, the laws were hardly enforced in reality, and social welfare for workers was ultimately left for companies to decide themselves, as in the American system (Kim, D. 1998). These are the foremost reasons why no social insurance for workers was established during Rhee's reign.

*2.22 The Civil Society Side: Welfare Provision by Foreign Aid Organisations*
While the state interested chiefly in winning economic superiority over North Korean

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[1] Imperialist Japan built approximately 200 large-scale factories for the heavy chemical industry in North Korea in order to attack China (Sonn 2006).

'socialist evils', welfare provision was shouldered by non-state agencies, which were, at that time, foreign aid organisations. Many social policy scholars claim that family has traditionally taken responsibility for welfare provision in East Asian countries such as South Korea, given the Confucian value of the strong family bond (Jones 1990, 1993; Kim and Hong 1999; Rieger and Leibfried 2003; Walker and Wang 2005); however, family support was generally insufficient for poor people, especially in war-torn South Korea, as relatives were often too poor themselves to help their kin. As one of the lowest-income countries in the world, GDP per capita in 1950 was 67 USD, and more than 60% of the population suffered from absolute poverty during the post-war period (Ha 1989). Hence, assistance from foreign aid organisations was essential to compensate for the deficit in state welfare and family support. In other words, while the welfare state played a major role in rehabilitating the war-torn societies of the West, international NGOs functioned as key players in South Korea in the reconstruction of society and provision of social welfare in South Korea, just as they do in developing countries today. For example, 54 foreign aid organisations (e.g. the Church World Service, Christian Children's Fund, World Relief Commission, Catholic Relief Service, World Vision, Holt Adoption Agency, Foster Parent Plan, Compassion, United Nations Korea Reconstruction Agency and the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada) entered into South Korea right after the Korean War, and provided emergency relief. Their financial aid from 1953 to 1959 amounted to 13,148,655USD, and many tonnes of in-kind aid such as medical supplies, grain, and clothing were also supplied to destitute people by the organisations, as Table 2-1 reveals.

**Table 2-1 Relief Work of Foreign Aid Organisations**

|  | Cash (US$) | Aid Items (million tons) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Grain | Clothing | Medical Supplies | Others | Total |
| 1955 | 3,701592 | 20,126 | 8205 | 420 | 4671 | 33,422 |
| 1956 | 1,881,792 | 36,528 | 1991 | 135 | 1312 | 39,966 |
| 1957 | 1,903,352 | 114,756 | 4112 | 600 | 2456 | 121,924 |
| 1958 | 2,755,362 | 93,298 | 1952 | 93 | 16,638 | 111,981 |
| 1959 | 2,096,557 | 81,229 | 2466 | 320 | 1239 | 85,254 |

Source: MOHW (1965) extracted from Kim (2008 p. 828).

The main activities of the foreign aid organisations centred on establishing

social welfare institutions such as orphanages, nursing homes, shelters for the disabled and local social welfare centres for poor communities. The number of orphanages founded by the foreign aid organisations amounted to 400, accommodating 53,964 war orphans (Lee, M. 1994). Foreign organisations also introduced modern social work education to Korea in order to train local people as professional social workers. The Department of Christian Social Work, the first of its kind in Korea, was set up in 1947 at Ehwa Women's University with the help of Christian missionaries. Jungang Seminary (now Jungang University) opened its Social Work Department under the auspices of the YMCA in 1953. This was followed by the establishment of the Department of Social Welfare at Seoul National University in 1958.

Foreign aid organisations were thus hailed as "the Second Ministry of Health and Welfare" in Korea (KAVA 1995 pp. 77-79). The ratio of foreign aid to the annual budget of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) rose from 36.2% in 1958 to 61.6% in 1960. By 1961, the amount of foreign aid (216%) had grown to over twice the budget of the MOHW (Kim, T. 2008 p. 828). Given that state welfare programmes in this post-war period were mostly targeting war veterans, policemen and state bureaucrats, it stands to reason that welfare services for ordinary poor people were provided for the most part by foreign aid organisations.

It is interesting to note that the foreign aid organisations working in Korea during this period were mostly faith-based institutions. It is generally recognised that Confucianism is the primary value system shaping the Korean welfare system, just as Christianity is in the West. Drawing on Weber's comparison between Christianity and Confucianism (1958), Rieger and Leibfried have claimed that the social welfare history of Confucian-based East Asian countries may have fundamentally different bases from those of Christian-based western welfare states (2003). However, Christianity has clearly also influenced the evolution of Korean social welfare in the sense that most of the early Korean social welfare institutions were initiated by Christian aid organisations from overseas. It is evident that Confucianism has influenced Korean society in terms of people's general cultural mentality and lifestyle. However, only 0.2% of the total population (0.1 million out of 47.04 million in 2005) practise Confucianism as a religion (Statistics Korea 2005). Christianity, on the other hand, has directly influenced Korean society through the

founding of churches, social welfare institutions or philanthropic organisations. Such Christian-led organisations played an essential role in introducing social welfare services and modern social work education to Korean society both during and after the post-war regime, as we shall see in the following section.

## 2.3 The State–Civil Society Relationship during the Military Regime (1961–1992)

*2.31 The State Side: Introduction of State Welfare Provision*

The Rhee government could not maintain its political power forever, since anti-authoritarian demonstrations were common occurrences. Finally, after the 4.19 Students' Revolution in 1960, where 200,000 students and citizens congregated and demonstrated on the streets, the Rhee government was dismantled. Afterwards, a space for political liberation appeared to open up. However, the expectation for democracy was again deflated in 1961 by the military coup d'état directed by Junghee Park. Owing to the importance of national security, the military had been able to grow rapidly during the post-war period, having 0.6 million soldiers. Consequently, military leaders became the most powerful group in South Korea, and they became to see themselves as the political leaders of the nation. Beginning with Junghee Park's government, which lasted from 1961 to 1979, a series of military leaders such as Doohwan Chun and Taewoo Rho held political power in South Korean society until 1992.

As is well-known, state-planned developmentalism was the key feature of the Korean military regime (Amsden 1989; Cole and Lyman 1971; White and Wade 1988; Woo-Cumings 1999). Compared to Seungman Rhee, Junghee Park carried out highly centralised state-controlled economic plans. By consecutively launching a Five-Year Economic Development Plan from 1962 onwards, Junghee Park wanted to achieve rapid economic growth in order to justify his illegitimate coup d'état, and he thus attempted to engineer a state monopoly on the process of economic development. Under the first Five-Year Economic Development Plan from 1962 to 1966, the Park government re-nationalised banks and introduced the 'Industrial Zone Construction Law', under which a massive number of industrial factories were built in the Guro, Incheon and Pupyeong regions with subsidies from the state. For the Second Development Plan, the Park government focused on the heavy-chemical

industry and constructed the petrochemical industrial zone, Pohang Integrated Steelworks and Kumi Heavy Industrial Zone. The centralised Economic Development Plans were highly successful. GNP per capita rose from 80 USD in 1960, to 252 USD in 1970 and 1,592 USD in 1980. The growth rate of the manufacturing industry amounted to 20.3% (Lee 1999 p. 26). Compared to the average growth rate of developing countries (6.6%), it was a miraculous success, all but concealing the military regime's lack of political legitimacy.

This state-controlled economic growth was followed by the introduction of state welfare programmes. Except for the Employment Insurance, legislated for in 1993, most of the basic social security schemes (i.e. social insurance and social assistance) were initiated during the rule of the Park government. It enacted the first modern Korean social assistance scheme for ordinary people, the Livelihood Protection (LP), in 1961. The Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Law and Health Insurance Law were also introduced around this time (in1963 and 1964 respectively). Although the enforcement of the National Pension was postponed until1988 due to the 1973 international oil crisis, the National Pension Law was also legislated for in 1973.

However, there are several reasons why it may be incorrect to view these changes as indicative of South Korea finally transforming itself from a 'warfare state' to 'welfare state'. First, expenditure on social security such as social insurance, public assistance and social services was still meagre, accounting for just 0.71% of GDP in 1965 and 2.32% in 1985. Wilensky defines welfare states as those that spend 5% of GDP on social expenditure (1975). Most western countries exceeded this figure in the 1940s. Despite the so-called crisis of welfare states, social expenditure in European states was maintained at 25-30% of GDP. However, Korean social expenditure during the military regime was even lower than this level. Indeed, it was lower than for Latin American countries. Whereas Brazil and Chile spent 35.1% and 45.7% of their governmental budgets respectively on social security in 1983, the Korean government allocated only 5.9% of the total governmental budget to social security in the same year (Sonn 2004).

Second, the Korean government during this period did not have what we can call 'welfare statism'. As Walker indicates, the welfare state is not limited solely to social policies or institutional structure; it also embraces 'ideal' that society seeks to

achieve (1984). Western welfare states were founded on the social consensus that the basic responsibility for welfare was on the state. Social actors would also share certain notions and values backing the consensus, such as citizenship or social rights (Marshall 1992). These ideologies may be called the welfare statism of western welfare states. Even so, to modify welfare statism, alternative '-isms' such as Reaganism or Thatcherism were needed. The Korean developmental state, however, did not have such '-isms' to manifest the state's responsibility for social welfare. As Ahn and Lee have argued, South Korea lacked a meta-philosophy for the development of state welfare (2005).

Of course, there were certain motives behind the introduction of state welfare policies during this period. The first was to mitigate political illegitimacy by adopting a conciliatory measure (Kwon 1999). But there was another economic reason: the military governments wanted to utilise state welfare programmes as tools for their economic development strategy (Chung 2007; Kwon 2002, 2003). For instance, one of the reasons why the Park government introduced the National Pension in 1973 was to mobilise pension funds as financial resources to invest in the heavy-chemical industry (Chung 2007). Health insurance and industrial accident compensation insurance were also aimed at producing healthy and productive workers for industrial development (UIM 1979). As Deyo, a sociologist in Asian industry, stressed, South Korean social policies have been driven mainly by the requirement for an economic development strategy (1992 pp. 289-290); they "aimed to reinforce the position of productive elements in the society" (Holliday 2000 p. 708).

For this reason, people who were assumed to be less useful for industrial development were excluded from social protection. The coverage of health insurance in 1964 was restricted to regular workers in big factories and companies with 500 or more employees; it applied to less than 10% of the total population. It was far later, in the late 1980s, that farmers, fishermen, self-employed workers and others were included in the Health Insurance Scheme. Industrial Accident Compensation was also only available to regular employees in large-scale workplaces (26.6% of workers in 1970). Irregular workers and other marginalised people could not be protected by the scheme (Lee 1999 p. 28). In this way, even though the outward structure of the state welfare system was shaped during the military regime, most of the population fell

outside the remit of the state welfare system. In this aspect, the Korean state welfare structure resembled what Esping-Anderson portrayed as "the insider–outsider cleavage" between regular workers and others in conservative welfare states (1999).

In contrast to the deficient welfare provision, labour exploitation during the military regime was both intensive and systematic. The government wanted to offset the shortage of natural resources with an intensive labour force. In order to enhance labour production, the Park government thus encouraged factories to build dormitories. As Sonn describes, this was to arrange workplaces as if they were army barracks (2004). Owing to the intensive control of the labour force, average working hours were recorded as among the highest in the world, reaching 51.6 hours per week in 1970. According to the ILO, the Korean industrial accident rate in the 1970s (15.87%) was the highest among the countries where industrial accident rates could be measured. However, compared to the labour productivity growth rate (11.25%), the income increase rate (4.5%) was very low (Cho 1985 p. 263).

What then were the responses of civil society associations to the authoritarian developmental state, and what roles did they play during the military regime? Civil society organisations in this period can be categorised into two types according to their attitude towards the developmental state: on the one hand, there were 'government-controlled voluntary organisations (*ôyong danche)*'; on the other, there were anti-government, 'people's movement organisations (*minjung undong danche*)'. The next section will focus in particular on 'government-controlled social welfare institutions' and 'anti-poverty movement organisations', which are directly connected to the issue of social welfare for poor people.


*2.32 The Civil Society Side: Two Different Types of Civil Society Organisations*
Welfare Provision by Government-Controlled Social Welfare Institutions: During the military regime, most associations in civil society were dominated by the state. To sustain a long-lasting dictatorship, the military needed to prevent the emergence of independent and anti-state organisations from within society (Ogle 1990). Immediately following the 1961 coup, therefore, the Park government established the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (Korean CIA) as an important state apparatus for social control. Under the direct supervision of the President, the Korean CIA investigated almost every corner of society to suppress political opposition. Also, in

1961, the Park government introduced the 'Social Organisations Registration Law', which obligated civil society associations to register with the government. Moreover, to hinder the foundation of anti-government organisations, the government took an active role in planting pro-government organisations in various areas of society. Such organisations known as 'government-controlled (*ôyong*)', 'government-permitted (*kwanin*)' or 'government-circled (*kwanbyeon*)' organisations in South Korea, and most social welfare institutions belong to the government-controlled voluntary organisations.

The government-circled service delivery organisations demonstrate how civil society in Korea was steered by the military state. In general, rapid industrialisation, urbanisation and individualisation massively increase the social need for public welfare services for women, children, the elderly, disabled people and poor communities. As Cutright (1965) and Wilensky (1975) observed, industrialisation is an important backdrop for the development of state welfare services, replacing the roles of families and traditional communities. However, the Korean developmental state was relatively hard-hearted towards public welfare provision. As mentioned above, it expanded social insurance for workers to enhance labour productivity, yet for marginalised people the government preferred to utilise voluntary organisations in order to save the national budget, rather than directly expand its own state programmes.

To utilise existing voluntary organisations such as foreign aid institutions, the Park government first established the National Relief Coordination Committee in 1962. Through the Committee, the government wanted to allocate welfare service tasks to foreign aid organisations and manipulate them to perform their activities under the direction of the state. Such state intervention made it hard for foreign aid organisations to freely conduct their own missions, and it would lead ultimately to the withdrawal of most foreign organisations in the 1970s (KAVA 1995 p. 216). The departure of the Christian foreign aid organisations led to their social welfare institutions such as orphanages, shelters and local social welfare centres being handed over to domestic Christian philanthropic organisations and churches (Chung 2003; KIHASA 2006a).

The indigenised social welfare institutions were immediately brought under state control. To systemically mobilise the domestic social welfare institutions to

complement the deficient public service provision, the government introduced the 'Social Welfare Institution Law' in 1970. The Law bracketed social welfare institutions into several categories such as facilities for children, for the aged, for the disabled or for single mothers, and ordered social welfare institutions to register with the state. If a social welfare institution met the state's criteria, it was officially recognised as a 'government-permitted social welfare institution' and was able to receive state subsidies. Under the Law, the state subsidised 50-80% of the operation costs of social welfare institutions, which were then supposed to deliver public welfare services on behalf of the state. Table 2-2 shows the number of social welfare institutions and their funding sources in 1990.

**Table 2-2 Government-Permitted Social Welfare Institutions in 1990**

| Types of Social Welfare Institution | Total Number | Financing Source | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | State | Voluntary |
| Welfare institutions for children (e.g. orphanages) | 268 | 55.5% | 44.5% |
| Welfare institutions for the community (e.g. social welfare centres) | 160 | 80% | 20% |
| Welfare institutions for the disabled (e.g. accommodations) | 121 | 75.6% | 24.4% |
| Welfare institutions for the elderly (e.g. nursing homes) | 88 | 82.1% | 17.9% |
| Welfare institutions for single mothers (e.g. shelters) | 56 | - | - |

Source: Lee (1998)

The partnership between local social welfare institutions as 'service deliverers' and the state as 'the funder' has been a conspicuous feature of the Korean welfare delivery system ever since the Social Welfare Institution Law was enforced in 1970. For example, in 1992, the last year of the military regime, 95% of public welfare services for children, poor communities, the elderly, single mothers and the disabled were being delivered through the channels of government-permitted voluntary social welfare institutions, while less than 5% of public welfare services were directly distributed through government offices. From the state's perspective, subsidising existing voluntary service-providing organisations was indeed cheaper than the state's direct involvement in service delivery; it helped economise public spending in operating state welfare agencies and recruiting street-level bureaucrats. Owing to the state's subsidy strategy, the military could minimise public spending on welfare services to a level of far less than 0.1% of GDP (e.g. 0.01% in 1965; 0.02% in 1975; 0.06% in 1985) (Lee 1999 p. 34).

However, the partnership between the state and social welfare institutions was marked by inequality. According to Articles 17–19 of the Social Welfare Institution Law, the state could enjoy legal rights to impose tasks on social welfare institutions and to intervene in every way in their management, such as with personnel decisions and budget spending. Conversely, the state-sponsored welfare institutions had no right to reject such state-imposed duties without strong reasons (Lee 1998). Due to their dependence on state funds, welfare institutions could not help but obey state commands. During the post-war period, welfare institutions used to be mostly financed by foreign donors. Yet, after the retreat of foreign aid organisations, the ratio of foreign aid to the annual budget of the MOHW dropped from 216% in 1961 to 14.6% in 1980, almost disappearing at 2% in 1991 (WVK 1993 pp. 203-209). As a result, almost all the remaining social welfare institutions had to rely upon state subsidies. Hence, social welfare institutions tended to hold pro-government or at least apolitical attitudes in order not to irritate the military, their chief financer. For this reason, social welfare institutions have been criticised by progressive activists for being "government-patronised organisations" (Kim, K. 2001). It is the same rationale that Taekyoon Kim used to describe social welfare institutions as "extended arms of the state" (2007 p. 133)

Political Resistance by Anti-Poverty Movement Organisations: Whereas most 'legal' civil society organisations were government controlled, there was another stream of associations flowing through in the form of 'anti-government movement organisations'. Progressive intellectuals played an essential role in founding such organisations (Lee 2005; Shin 1995). As discussed above, intellectuals' anti-government demonstrations commenced during the Rhee reign. However, where once they focused on directly overthrowing the ruling class, now their strategy involved mobilising subordinate classes for anti-government movements.

Several uprisings among downtrodden people caused this change in anti-government movements. As we have already discussed, the actual intentions of state welfare were not to protect the wellbeing of disadvantaged people, but to serve the interests of the ruling military bloc. Thus, grievances against the state could only come from subordinate people. Although hardly expressed in organised ways, their grievances sporadically exploded in extreme forms of action. For instance, a 22-year-

old sewing factory worker, Taeill Chun, burned himself to death in a marketplace in 1970, shouting "Act upon basic labour-related laws". In 1971, 50,000 urban poor people took part in the Gwangju Wilderness Revolt, burning police stations and shouting "Don't exploit the poor anymore". Such uprisings led dissident intellectuals to let go of their indifference to the lives of downtrodden people (*minjung*). *Minjung*, meaning 'common people' in an everyday sense, began to acquire a special place within circles of dissident intellectuals as constituting true historical subjectivity. Intellectuals identified 'workers (*nodongja*)', 'poor people (*binmin*)' and 'peasants (*nongmin*)' as core *minjung* strata (Han 1978; Han and Heo 1985), and started to try to organise *minjung* into key anti-government movement forces. Against this background, 'anti-government movements' came to be referred to interchangeably as '*minjung* movements (people's movements)' in Korea from the 1970s (see Abelmann 1996; Wells 1995 for more details of *minjung* movements).

The main intellectual group that sought to develop *minjung* movements was comprised of progressive clergymen. As discussed before, Christian churches were generally conservative or apolitical, focusing on philanthropic work and emphasising sacredness. However, having seen the state's severe exploitation of *minjung*, some progressive clergymen began to launch anti-government activism strategies. In 1974, 400 young Catholic priests formed an unofficial network called the 'Catholic Priests' Group for Justice' and started to lead anti-government movements. In 1973, Protestant associations of churches such as the 'National Council of Churches in Korea' and the 'Committee for Church and Society' expressed their anti-authoritarian stance. Although the military state had overtly oppressed secular organisations, it was relatively careful not to irritate 'the sacred sector' owing to the extraterritorial rights of churches and fears about international criticism. Thus, progressive Christian churches and associations could act as the centripetal force for *minjung* movements, providing gathering places and funds.

University students formed another group of progressive intellectuals. Having witnessed the *minjung*'s uprisings in the 1970s, students started to join in with the development of *minjung* movements. Particularly after the diary of the late sewing factory worker, Taeill Chun, was published in 1983 (Cho, Y. 1983), a great number of students began to devote themselves to *minjung* movements, spurred by the revelation that Chun had always dreamt of having university students as friends, so

that they could teach him about labour laws and social theories. Throughout the 1980s, student groups thus came to constitute the primary intellectual group in *minjung* movements.

Anti-government *minjung* movements generally began as internal seminar groups of these progressive intellectuals. Since undercover Korean CIA agents and policemen operated on campuses, Christian research institutions such as the Christian Academy and the Urban Industrial Mission and underground reading circles became the loci for seminar groups. At the meetings, they usually debated the future of a democratised Korea (see Park and Kim 1985 for details). Having witnessed the vice of state-monopolised capitalism, they viewed capitalism as the source of dehumanisation and alienation. Consequently, most of them came to see socialist states as the ultimate model for a democratised Korea, believing that 'democratisation of the state' must synchronise with 'socialisation of the market'. To disseminate socialist doctrines to workers, poor people and peasants, they also secretly imported and translated copious volumes of Marxist texts such as those on Leninism, Maoism, North Korean Il-Sung Kim's Juche Theory or neo-Marxist Dependency Theory (Cho 1992; Cumings 1997 p. 381).

The dissident intellectuals tried not only to become professional revolutionaries, but also to become *minjung* themselves. For this reason, the dissidents, armed with revolutionary ideologies, went to factories, rural villages, and urban slums to meet *minjung*. For instance, those who resolved to engage themselves in poor people's emancipation abandoned their socioeconomic status to become slum residents. Those who were determined to enlighten workers became factory workers, concealing their academic background. The intellectual activists, who devoted themselves to *minjung* movements were colloquially called 'movement groups (*undongk won*)'. With the support of *undong kwon*, the trinity of *minjung* movements – i.e. labour movements, peasants' movements and anti-poverty movements – was founded and developed in Korean society.

As a branch of *minjung* movements, anti-poverty associations were initiated by Christian clergymen and students. In 1968, the Urban Industrial Mission (UIM) was established at Yeongsei, a missionary university. It was originally intended as a place to train young seminary students on how to conduct missionary work in urban villages. However, after the Gwangju Wilderness Revolt in 1971, the UIM's attention

shifted to structural contradictions in urban poverty, and its primary cause changed to training intellectuals to become social activists for urban poor people and workers. Protestant students Byeongseop Heo and Hyeongkyu Park and Jesuit students Jeonggu Je and Heikyeong Kim were the legendary pioneers of the 1970s anti-poverty movements. This first generation of anti-poverty activists built churches, alias '*minjung* churches', in urban slums and opened day nurseries, free dispensaries and night schools and held various social events at the churches to contact poor people on a regular basis.

However, it was not until the mid-1980s that anti-poverty movements exploded. In the run-up to hosting the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympic Games, the military government introduced the 'Beautification of the Environment Bill', which was designed to eliminate slums. As a result, 200 shantytowns in Seoul were demolished and thousands of urban poor families looked set to be made homeless. Having witnessed the demolition, many intellectuals began to get involved in anti-poverty movements, constituting the second generation of anti-poverty activists. In 1987, urban slum resident councils were constructed in 50 shantytowns to obstruct forced regeneration (Yang 1990 p. 233). In the mid-1980s, individual anti-poverty activists and *minjung* churches gathered and founded informal associations of anti-poverty movement groups according to religious backgrounds, such as the Christian Association for Community Organizing (CACO) in 1984, the Catholic Organization Urban Poor (COUP) in 1985 and the Anglican Sharing Homes (ASH) in 1985. These three associations were very fluid, however, and generally cooperated with each other when conducting activities in slums.

The activities of these anti-poverty movements show a notable correspondence with Gramsci's strategies of resistance. Resembling his vision of 'organic intellectuals', Korean progressive thinkers strived to fuse themselves organically with subordinate classes by becoming "actively involved in practical life as a builder, organiser, and permanent persuader"(Gramsci's remark, quoted from Finocchiaro 1984 p. 131). Moreover, even though anti-poverty activist groups frequently utilised radical means of resistance such as street demonstrations, incendiarism and self-burning, their living in slums and building *minjung* churches parallel what Gramsci termed the 'war of position': long-term and locally grounded strategies for emancipation.

This locally rooted activism constitutes a unique feature of Korean anti-poverty organisations. In contrast to mere issue-fighting campaigns, they came to possess community facilities, interlocking networks and local infrastructure such as *minjung* churches, night schools, day nurseries and free dispensaries. For this reason, they could play an apparently similar function to service-providing welfare institutions, providing local poor people with various kinds of alternative welfare services such as adult education, child care or health services (Cho 2000).

Of course, they were fundamentally different from government-permitted welfare institutions. While these aimed primarily to deliver services to disadvantaged people on behalf of the state, anti-poverty organisations made use of their facilities as a stepping stone to contact poor people and achieve their ultimate goal of political revolution against the military state. As Figure 2-1 illustrates, anti-poverty organisations formed a counter-hegemonic bloc in civil society, competing against government-circled social welfare institutions.

**Figure 2-1 Two Different Civil Society Organisations during the Military Regime**
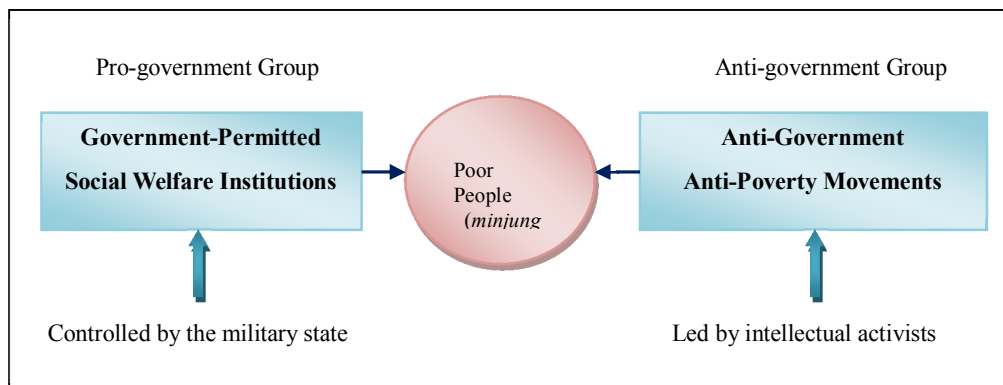


Nonetheless, social welfare institutions and anti-poverty organisations had something in common: both were led chiefly by Christian groups. Since most of social welfare institutions originated from Christian foreign aid organisations, the culture of Christian philanthropy has remained in government-permitted institutions to this day. 2,162 of 4,048 government-authorised social welfare institutions (53.4%) were still directly run by Christian organisations in 2009. 74.3% of 906 domiciliary facilities for children, the elderly or disabled people were Christian organisations in 2005 (Kim, H. 2008), and 216 out of 414 local social welfare centres for poor communities were Christian run (CEM 2009). Additionally, 77% of social workers in

all social welfare institutions are Christians (KIHASA 2006a p. 123). Given that the Christian population amounted to 29.2% out of a total population of 47.04 million in 2005, such percentages are outstandingly high (Statistics Korea 2005).

The influence of Christianity on Korean anti-government movements was also significant, as discussed above. In fact, religious institutions have been the vehicle for progressive social movements in many countries around the world (Katzenstein 1999; Morris 1984). As Morris has shown, the origins of American poor people's movements were bound up with the role of black churches (1984). Similarly, Katzenstein found that Catholic churches contributed to the formation of networks of dissenting women in the USA (1998). In Eastern Europe, meanwhile, churches were the institutional spaces that stimulated democratisation movements. The history of Korean anti-poverty movement groups cannot be understood without reference to *minjung* churches and religious intellectuals.


## 2.4 The State–Civil Society Relationship during the Democratic Regime (1993–2010)

### *2.41 The State Side: Establishment of Welfare Statism*

Due to the increase in anti-government movements, military leaders were finally forced to relinquish control to the democratic bloc. Anti-government movements climaxed in June 1987, and following the 1987 June Revolution, the Korean Constitution, which permitted dictatorship, was amended to allow for presidential elections. Despite this, under the new Constitution, Taewoo Rho, another military leader, was able to seize political control when the democratic bloc failed to choose between Youngsam Kim and Daejung Kim, the two oppositional political leaders, for their candidate. Thus, 1993 is seen as the start of the substantial democratisation of South Korea, when a civilian politician, Youngsam Kim, won the election for the first time. Afterwards, the democratic mood continued with the civilian Daejung Kim and Moonhyeon Rho governments.

The democratic governments conducted a wide range of welfare reforms. As the military regime stood for the 'Development First, Distribution Second' strategy, state welfare was nascent when compared with its soaring rate of economic growth. Thus, the democratic governments tried to improve rudimentary state welfare provision; the Youngsam Kim government initiated unemployment insurance in

1993; the National Pension was broadened to all citizens in 1999; the decentralised health insurance fund was integrated in 2000; and the Workers' Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance was made available to all workplaces in 2000. The coverage of public assistance provision was also substantially expanded in 1999 to include the working-aged poor. Accordingly, social expenditure has risen from 4.52% in 1990 to 11.09% in 1998 (KIHASA 2003). Table 2-3 is a summary of the vast welfare reforms that have taken place during the democratic regime.

**Table 2-3 Welfare Reforms during the Democratic Regime**

| Welfare Reforms | Youngsam Kim's Government (1993–1997) | Deajung Kim's Government (1998–2002) | Moohyun Rho's Government (2003–2008) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social Insurance | - Expansion of National Pension coverage to farmers and fishermen (1995)<br>- Expansion of Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance coverage (1996)<br>- Introduction of Employment Insurance (1995) | - Expansion of National Pension coverage to urban self-employed workers (1999)<br>- Integration of Health Insurance (1998)<br>- Expansion of Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance coverage (2000)<br>- Expansion of Employment Insurance coverage (1995) | - Expansion of Health Insurance benefits (2003–2005) |
| Public Assistance | | **- Expansion of Public Assistance coverage to the working-aged poor (1999)** | - Introduction of EITC |
| Welfare Service | **- Introduction of the Pilot Self-Sufficiency Promotion Centre Project (1996)**<br>- Introduction of welfare for out-patient elderly people (1995)<br>- Expansion of welfare for elderly people (1997)<br>- Expansion of domiciliary facilities for disabled people (1997)<br>- Introduction of Social Welfare Chest Law (1997) | **- Expansion of the Temporary Public Work Programme (1998)**<br>**- Introduction of the Workfar Programme (2000)**<br>- Introduction of the Homeless Shelter Programme (1998)<br>- Introduction of an Anti-Domestic Violence Law (1998)<br>- Amendment of the Welfare Law for Single Mothers (1998)<br>- Amendment of Welfare for Disabled People (1999) | - Introduction of the Community Child Care Centre Programme (2003)<br>- Expansion of Public Health Care (2005)<br>- Introduction of Health Family Law (2003)<br>- Amendment of the Children's Protection Law (2004)<br>- Expansion of the allowance for disabled people (2003) |

Source: Song and Hong (2006 p. 129)

It was during the democratic regime that welfare statism began to take root. The civilian governments declared national manifestos for state welfare: the 'Globalization of Quality of Life' of the Youngsam Kim government (Office of the President 1995); 'Productive Welfare' of the Daejung Kim government (Office of the President, 2000a); and 'Participatory Welfare' of the Moohyeon Rho government. These manifestos recognised social rights and the state's responsibility for people's wellbeing for the first time in modern Korean history. Unlike the previous authoritarian developmental state, they acknowledged the significance of social welfare policies independent of economic development. The Youngsam Kim

government launched the 'Five-Year Development Plan for the New Economy' for the period 1993 to 1997. Asian economist and the then Deputy Prime Minister, Soon Cho stated that the Five-Year Development Plan for the New Economy differed from the previous six Economic Development Plans conducted by the military governments from 1962 to 1992 (1994). The new plan emphasised a 'balanced development' between society and the economy, and included social welfare expansion and equity enhancement in the core development plan. The Deajung Kim government in fact terminated such economic development plans, and instead launched the 'Five-Year Development Plan for Social Security' for the period 1999 to 2003 (Office of the President 2000a). The Mohyeon Rho government then introduced the second Five-Year Development Plan for Social Security for 2004 to 2008.

Most international and domestic policy scholars have thus claimed that the democratic governments achieved a fundamental and qualitative enhancement of the Korean public welfare system (Ahn and Lee 2005; Kuhnle 2002; Kwon 2002; Lee 1999; Lødemel and Dahl 2000; Shin, D. 2000). They state that a real "welfare state is emerging" (Lee 1999 p. 23) in Korea, "moving beyond the welfare developmentalism" (Kwon 2002 p. 36). Ahn and Lee also lean towards this viewpoint, regarding the welfare reforms as a "welfare explosion" (2005). Lødemel and Dahl compare the Korean welfare reforms to the American New Deal during the Great Depression or the welfare construction in the UK after the Second World War (2000). Additionally, Kuhnle believes that the Korean welfare system is getting closer to the 'social democratic' form of welfare regime (2002).

However, when we talk about the characteristics of the state welfare system during the democratic period, we must also acknowledge the role of globalisation, as welfare expansion was a joint result of political democratisation and economic globalisation (Song and Hong 2006). As political scholar Sonn (2006) keenly observes, the Korean welfare policies were expanded, not in spite of, but because of direct neoliberal influence, starting with the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. This was not merely a momentary crisis, but the historical starting point for the Korean economy's incorporation into the global ethos of neoliberalism. Before the crisis, the military governments had managed to lead the national economy with little interference from western countries or international economic authorities such as the

International Monetary Fund (IMF). As Hajoon Chang argued, this factor contributed to the rapid economic growth of South Korea, compared to other developing countries under the intimate control of foreign authorities (2002, 2005). However, due to the financial crisis, the Korean government had to borrow rescue loans from the IMF, which caused South Korea to be placed under the direct regulations of this institution. The post-crisis Korean government had to carry out neoliberal reforms, such as enhancing labour market flexibility, opening the domestic financial market to foreign investors, downsizing, M&A and privatising public companies.

Welfare expansion was also a part of the neoliberal reforms. It is generally understood that neoliberalism rejects the concept of increasing public spending on welfare, and supports the 'rolling back' of the state (Gilbert 2002; Harvey 2007; O'Connor 1973). However, neoliberal influences do not always manifest themselves in the form of cutbacks in public welfare schemes. In Korea, neoliberalism facilitated the introduction of state welfare. When the IMF requested economic restructuring as a condition for granting loans, it required the Korean government to expand state welfare policies (IMF 1998). In western countries, where social welfare already occupies a large portion of GDP, neoliberal welfare reforms have normally implied the curtailment of state welfare programmes. In Korea, however, social expenditure ranks the lowest among the OECD countries, far less than the level of liberal regime countries, as seen in Table 2-4.

**Table 2-4 International Comparison of Social Expenditure in 1997**

| *Welfare Regimes* | | *Social Expenditure (% of GDP)* |
|---|---|---|
| Social democratic regimes | Sweden | 31.47 |
| | Demark | 30.10 |
| Conservative regimes | France | 28.82 |
| | The Netherlands | 23.90 |
| Liberal regimes | The UK | 25.07 |
| | The USA | 14.96 |
| East Asia | Japan | 15.05 |
| | **Korea** | **6.65** |
| **OECD Average** | | 21.2 |

Source: Koh (2000) and KIHASA(2002 p. 119) combined

The IMF thus suggested that the Korean government construct a social security net to manage the risks that could accompany neoliberal economic restructuring, such as long-term unemployment, economic polarisation and social

exclusion (Song 2001). For example, a 1998 memorandum from the IMF recommended the establishment of a social security net, including the expansion of the coverage of unemployment insurance and increases in the minimum duration and level of public assistance benefits (IMF 1998). In this sense, it can be said that welfare expansion was a part of neoliberal restructuring. As Figure 2-2 illustrates, while neoliberal influence in western welfare states is related to welfare retrenchment, Korean neoliberal welfare reforms were concomitant with welfare expansion.

**Figure 2-2 Directions of Neoliberal Welfare Reforms**
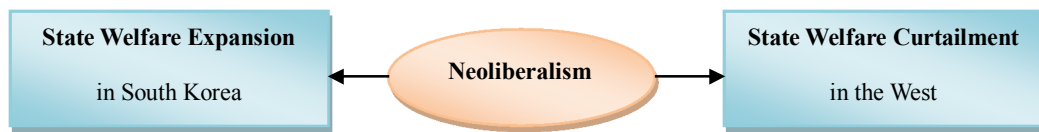


However, welfare reforms in Korea were limited in their expansion. As part of the neoliberal reforms, welfare expansion was permitted only to the extent that it did not disturb the liberal journey of the capital. Even though the coverage of social insurance was declared to be total during the democratic regime, the deep structure of the outsider–insider model has not changed (Song and Hong 2006). In reality, most temporary workers are still kept out of social insurance schemes, as Table 2-5 shows, in contrast to the routine privileging of regular industrial workers.

**Table 2-5 Social Insurance Coverage by Employment Status in 2001** (%)

|  | *National Pension* | *Health Insurance* | *Employment Insurance* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Regular workers | 92.7 | 94.8 | 80.0 |
| Temporary workers | 19.3 | 22.2 | 20.7 |

Source: Kim, Y. (2001)

Furthermore, even though the coverage of public assistance was expanded to include all poor people of working age in 2000, this entitlement for the working-aged poor is based on the condition that they partake in a workfare scheme called the 'Self-Sufficiency Programme'. For these reasons, some social policy scholars are reserved in presenting an optimistic view of the Korean welfare system as having genuinely moved beyond developmentalism (Holliday 2005; Hong and Song 2006; Kwon and Holliday 2007; Song and Hong 2006). As Holliday has argued, for

example, whereas state welfare during the military regime was based on a direct concern for productivism, the welfare reforms of the democratic period were merely a shift towards a less direct form of, rather than a farewell to, productivism (2005).

It is certainly the case that the democratic governments have been more progressive and welfare-friendly than the military ones. Nonetheless, apart from the Presidency, the democratic bloc has not yet built a stable foundation in the National Assembly. Conservative politicians from the 'National Grand Party', succeeding the former authoritarian bloc, still occupy the National Assembly, with strong backing from businessmen, prosecutor officials, administrative bureaucrats and military leaders. Due to the deep-embedded state-controlled economic structure, the back-scratching alliance between government and business is also serious. It has thus proved hard to liquidate the remnants of the half-century-long dictatorship and overcome the former ruling bloc in a short period. It was in this context that former progressive President Moohyun Rho faced impeachment from 193 conservative members of the National Assembly in 2004, although the motion was dispelled owing to vehement nationwide opposition. For this reason, whereas progressive groups such as social democratic or labour parties have played a leading role in introducing state welfare in western democratic societies (Castles 1982; Korpi 1983), it was hard to expect the same to occur among partisan politicians in South Korea, even after democratisation. In this context, non-state social actors emerged as a functional equivalent to western progressive parties outside of the National Assembly. They are the 'citizens' movement organisations (*simin undong danche*)'.

*2.42 The Civil Society Side: Proliferation of Civil Society Organisations*
<u>Social Welfare Movements through Citizens' Movement Organisations</u>: After democratisation in 1993, 'freedom of assembly and association' gradually blossomed. In 1994, the 'Social Organisations Registration Law' was abolished, and in its place the 'Civil Social Organisations Notification Law' was introduced, under which civil society organisations could be freely founded without state permission. Accordingly, a bewildering variety of civil society organisations sprouted from within. According to *A Conspectus of Korean Civil Society Organisations*, 56.5% out of an existing list of 7,600 civil society organisations (20,000 including local branches) were formed during the 1990s, as Graph 2-1 illustrates (Citizens'

Newspaper 1999).

**Graph 2-1 Explosion of Civil Society Organisations**
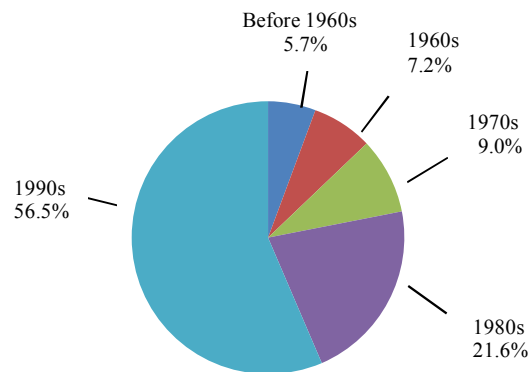


Source: Citizens' Newspaper (1999)

Among the newly formed associations, the most remarkable were what were generally termed 'citizens' movement organizations' (*simin undong danche*)'. During the military regime, *minjung* movements played an indisputably essential role in opening up the democratic era. However, after the authoritarian period, *minjung* movement groups could no longer occupy a predominant position within social movements. Whereas *minjung* movements aimed at a radical overturning of the Korean political economy, many progressive people came to prefer the concept of gradual social reforms. New circles of progressive people believed that the era of street demonstrations and extralegal action was gone, and that the present time demanded peaceful and legal action to deepen social democracy. They thus began to form new types of social movements. Distinguishing themselves from people's movements (*minjung undong*), they called themselves 'citizens' movements' (*simin undong*) so as to highlight their identity as 'rights-bearing and rights-claiming citizens' operating within the law.

The majority of those who were involved in citizens' movements again comprised middle-class intellectuals. However, they were quite different from the intellectual activists of the *minjung* movements. While the latter consisted of dissident clergymen or students who devoted their life to conscientising *minjung*, the former were white-collar workers and professionals such as journalists, lawyers, professors, doctors and social workers. And rather than becoming professional activists, most of them preferred to join in social movements as fee-paying members

or volunteers.

In a way, citizens' movements overlapped with what the West terms 'new social movements'. During the process of rapid economic growth, social problems such as pollution, traffic, human rights violations, gender inequality or sexuality issues slowly proliferated, yet they were not unaddressed by any group in society until the early 1990s. *Minjung* movements paid little attention to these issues, focusing on political revolution by workers, farmers and poor people. On the other hand, many organisations, founded in the name of citizens' movements, began to raise identity, lifestyle or cultural issues, promoting feminist, ecological, peace or LGBT movements. The 'Sarangbang Group of Human Rights' (founded in 1992), the 'Korean Federation of Environmental Movements' (founded in 1993) and the 'Korean Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights' (founded in 1997) belong to this new wave of social movement.

However, the main focus of most citizens' movement organisations remained the instigation of macro changes to the Korean political economy. In western countries, new social movements exploded in the 1960s, when redistribution issues were by and large dealt with by the public welfare system. However, in South Korea, the state welfare system was still immature. Thus, Korean citizens' movement organisations did not only concentrate on non-economic issues; like *minjung* movements, they also continued to voice concerns about redistribution and economic inequality. Where they differed from 'militant' *minjung* movements, however, was in their resolution to tackle these problems through non-violent campaigns and legislative reforms.

The People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) played a pioneering role in this area. The PSPD was the largest and most influential citizens' movement organisation. . It was founded in 1994 by 200 young progressive citizens, mostly professors, lawyers and doctors. Having 'economic justice' and 'participatory democracy' as its objectives, it organised numerous nationwide campaigns. One was the political campaign to reform the National Assembly by preventing corrupt politicians from winning in the 2000 general election. Three months prior to the general election, the PSPD released a list of politicians whom it judged as unfit candidates for the National Assembly, due to their involvement in corruption and their authoritarian background, and it began to vigorously conduct campaigns to have

the blacklisted candidates defeated. Shortly after this release, 400 citizens' movement organisations joined in the campaigns and formed the 'Civil Alliance for the 2000 General Election'. The civil alliance achieved a remarkable result, with 59 out of 86 blacklisted candidates losing the election, and subsequently the PSPD began to gain more popularity, to the extent that some journalists and scholars wrote that the real winner of the election was the PSPD.

In terms of the manner of activism, citizens' movement organisations were comparable to western voluntary campaign groups. However, the political power and significance of citizens' movements was noticeably great in Korean society, where authoritarian descendants still occupied state institutions such as the National Assembly, administrative authorities and courts of justice. According to the Gallop Korea in 2002, citizens' movement organisations were looked at as the most reliable political authority, as reported in Table 2-6. The confidence in citizens' movement organisations (77.0%) outstripped the confidence held in the National Assembly (11.1%) and in administrative bureaucrats (23.4%). This was why Daejung Kim and Moohyun Rho actively sought to ally with citizens' movement organisations to overcome their own handicaps as new minority presidents.

**Table 2-6 People's Trust in Social Organisations** (1,552 respondents)

|  | Trust | Distrust | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Citizen's Movement Organisations** | **77.0%** | 19.7% | 3.3% |
| Religion | 50.4% | 43.2% | 6.4% |
| Media | 46.9% | 49.6% | 3.5% |
| Business Circle | 34.4% | 62.1% | 3.5% |
| Court of Justice | 30.5% | 67.8% | 1.7% |
| **Administrative Bureaucrats** | 23.4% | **75.9%** | 0.7% |
| **National Assembly Members** | 11.1% | **88.5%** | 0.4% |

Source: Gallop Korea (2002)

In fact, the massive welfare expansion undertaken by the democratic governments was not possible without the support of citizens' movement organisations. A considerable number of welfare reforms were indebted to 'social welfare movements' led by the PSPD. As soon as the PSPD was founded in 1994, it formed the Social Welfare Committee as a sub-department. With the motto "welfare is the social right of every citizen", the Committee embarked on a series of social welfare movements, with which many other citizens' movement organisations

subsequently began to align themselves (PSPD 1994). As Table 2-7 listed, the social welfare movements formed various campaigns for universalising public assistance, expanding social insurance coverage and integrating fragmentarily managed health insurance funds.

**Table 2-7 Social Welfare Movements of the PSPD**

| Social Welfare Movements | Year |
|---|---|
| - Nationwide minimum livelihood guarantee movement | 1994–present |
| - Campaign for the legislation of universal public assistance, the National Basic Livelihood Guarantee | 1997–1999 |
| - Campaign for the integration of health insurance funds | 1998 |
| - Campaign for the separation of dispensaries from medical practice | 1998 |
| - Anti-discrimination movement for irregular workers | 2002–present |
| - Labour-rights claiming movements for juvenile part-time workers | 2002 |
| - Campaign for the increase of national minimum cost of living | 2004 |

Source: PSPD (2008)

The PSPD conducted lobbies, nationwide campaigns and petitions for the legislation of welfare policies. As the main axis of the PSPD comprised lawyers and professors, they knew how to influence statutory bodies. They even made bills of welfare policies themselves and submitted them to the National Assembly with the help of progressive politicians. Indeed, the universalised public assistance initiated in1999 and the health insurance reforms of1998 originated from bills that the PSPD developed. In this way, citizens' movement organisations played a key part in formulating the state welfare system in the democratic period. As Kim and McNeal note, without their roles as policy entrepreneurs, it would have taken longer for the democratic government to execute the welfare reforms (Kim and McNeal 2005).

The influence of citizens' movements was not only limited to facilitating welfare reforms. They also contributed to the establishment of welfare statism by popularising the concepts of 'citizen', 'citizenship' or 'social rights', which have constituted the rationales of western welfare states. Before the 1990s, the term 'citizen' used to be foreign to Korean society because the word came from a Euro–American historical context. Instead of *simin* (citizens), *minjung* (people) or *seomin* (the commonalty) were more popularly used in Korean society. It was in the late 1980s and early 1990s that 'citizens' and 'civil society' were imported by scholars from the West. In 1992, the Korean Association of Sociology and the Korean

Association of Political Sciences held a joint conference titled 'The Political Transition of Korea and Civil Society', introducing various theories on civil society. And from 1992 to 1995, distinguished academic journals such as *Economy & Society* and *Theory* published a great number of articles about 'civil society' and 'citizen'(Yu and Kim 1995). T. H. Marshall's concepts of 'citizenship' and 'social rights' were also introduced by scholars in the mid-1990s. Social policy professors belonging to the PSPD took the lead in spreading such notions to the public through press interviews, public statements and public forums. Through their propaganda, citizenship and social rights became known to people, and even the PSPD's motto, "welfare is the social right of every citizen" came to be adopted as a welfare policy slogan of the Daejung Kim government (Office of the President 2000a). In this manner, citizens' movements that emerged in the democratic period exerted a significant influence on the construction of state welfare.

Continuation of Government-Controlled Social Welfare Institutions: The mobilisation of social welfare institutions under the Social Welfare Institution Law continued even after democratisation. As was seen in Table 2-3, the democratic governments introduced various welfare service programmes, leading to arise in public spending on welfare services from 0.1% of total GDP in 1990 to 0.37% in 2001. Yet, as Graph 2-2 visualises, the ratio of the governmental social welfare budget allocated to welfare services compared to the increasing budget for social insurance and public assistance actually decreased from 24.18 % in 1997 to 15.7% of the total governmental welfare budget in 2001 (Song and Hong 2006 pp. 263-265).

**Graph 2-2 Proportions of the Governmental Budget Allocated to Social Welfare**
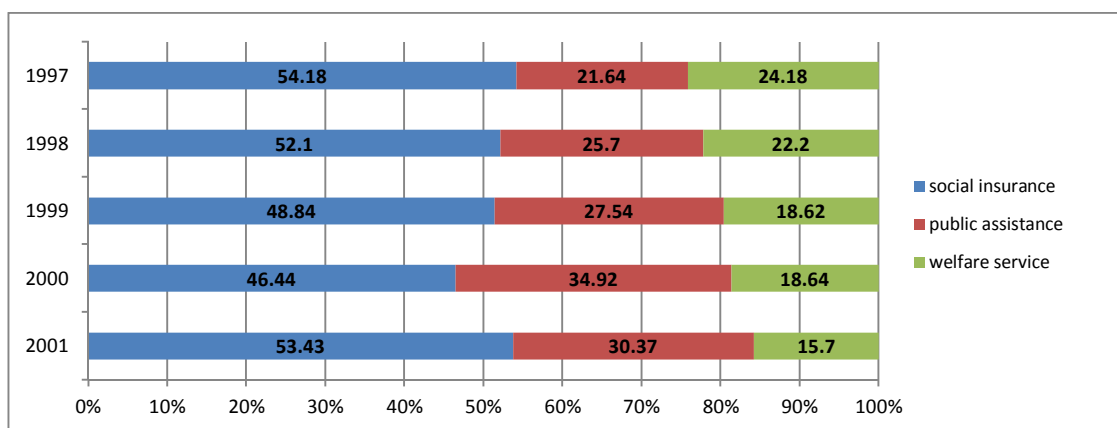


Source: Song and Hong (2006)

As Taekyoon Kim notes, the state continued to foist the task of welfare service provision on social welfare institutions while reinvesting the money saved from the reduced budget for welfare services in other fields of social protection, particularly public assistance (2007). Due to the financial crisis, the number of people who needed public assistance soared. Also, since public assistance was extended to include all people of working age in 2000, the governmental budget for public assistance benefits had to drastically increase. Accordingly, the public expansion of the welfare service was relatively constrained. To minimise the increasing cost of welfare services, the traditional partnership between social welfare institutions and the state had to remain intact, and even be strengthened.

Structural Changes in Minjung Movement Organisations: Whereas government-authorised welfare institutions did not undergo many unexpected changes, *minjung* movement groups went through structural transformations both at the individual and organisational levels. Since political democratisation was the ultimate goal of *minjung* movements, *minjung* activists had to decide their future direction after the goal was realised. Some activists returned to their life as ordinary citizens, and a number of activist leaders joined or were invited into political parties or administrative authorities as professional politicians (Cho 1999). For example, the pioneering Catholic anti-poverty activist Junggu Je became a member of the National Assembly in 1992; the leading activist of the Christian Academy, Myeongsuk Han, became a member of the National Assembly in 2000 and the Prime Minister in 2006; and the anti-poverty activist of the National Council of Churches in Korea, Hakyuson Son, was elected as a member of the National Assembly in 1992 and became the Governor of Kyeongi Province in 2002.

There were also changes in *minjung* movement organisations. After democratisation, most of these became legally recognised. However, the most remarkable change was that a considerable number of local *minjung* movement organisations built partnerships with the state to deliver various welfare services. As mentioned in Table 2-3, the democratic governments launched a great number of new social welfare programmes for poor people, including the Self-Sufficiency Programme, the Homeless Shelter Programme and the Child Care Centre

Programme. The welfare service expansion required new welfare facilities and agencies to implement the programmes such as workfare centres, homeless shelters and community childcare centres. However, as mentioned above, the government needed to minimise the national budget for social welfare. Rather than directly founding new state-run facilities, therefore, they preferred to utilise pre-existing civil society organisations in a similar manner to the previous military governments. It was in this context that local anti-poverty movement organisations became partners in the new welfare programmes.

Since anti-poverty movement organisations had local facilities and infrastructure, providing alternative childcare, health care and adult education for poor workers and slum residents, the democratic governments started to invite anti-poverty movement groups to partake in the new public welfare programmes. In particular, the governments sought collaboration with anti-poverty movement groups such as activists and churches of the CACO, the COUP and the ASH, as these were deeply embedded in poor communities, where the main targets of welfare services lived. As a result, the newly established welfare services such as the Self-Sufficiency Programme, the Homeless Shelter Programme and the Child Care Centre Programme began to be entrusted to anti-poverty organisations (CLLSC 2002; SPCH 2000).Through partnership forging, many anti-poverty organisations came to be incorporated into the state welfare system, and they became critical partners in local service delivery for state welfare schemes, together with the traditional social welfare institutions.

## 2.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has briefly outlined the roles of four types of civil society organisations in relation to the evolution of the social welfare system in modern Korean history. As discussed above, not only service-providing voluntary organisations such as foreign aid organisations and social welfare institutions, but also social movement such as people's movement and citizens' movement have taken the lead in moulding the current social welfare system.

Young's framework, which identified the roles of civil society organisations in social welfare reform as *supplementary, complementary and adversarial,* is helpful in comprehending such organisations in the Korean context (1999, 2000). In

the 'supplementary' model, civil society organisations work as primary social welfare providers in the fields where the state fails to serve. Civil society organisations in this category provide welfare services independently from the state as supplements to insufficient state welfare. In the 'complementary' model, civil society organisations provide welfare services in collaboration with the state. The state normally finances civil society organisations and the state-sponsored civil society organisations carry out the delivery of social welfare on behalf of the state. In the 'adversarial' view, civil society organisations prod the state to make changes in social welfare policies. This category emphasises social movements and campaigns of civil society organisations. Young's three lenses are useful tools with which to illustrate the roles of the four types of civil society organisations in South Korea. Table 2-8 is a visual summary of the different roles of Korean civil society organisations in different periods as viewed through Young's lenses.

**Table 2-8 Roles of Different Civil Society Organisations in Social Welfare**

| *Warfare Regime (1945–1960)* | *Military Regime (1961–1992)* | *Democratic Regime (1993–2010)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Foreign Aid Organisations** - - - <br><br>*Supplementary* welfare providers | - - - - - -▶ Withdrawal | |
| | **Government-Controlled, Social Welfare Institutions** - - - <br><br>*Complementary* welfare partners | - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -▶ <br><br>*Complementary* welfare partners |
| | **Anti-Government, Anti-Poverty Movement Organisations** - - - - <br><br>*Adversarial* social movements <br>*Supplementary* welfare providers | - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -▶ <br><br><br>*Complementary* welfare partners |
| | | **Citizen's Movement Organisations** <br><br>*Adversarial* social movements |

During the post-war period, foreign aid organisations offered the majority of social welfare independently from the state, since the state eschewed responsibility for social welfare provision. In this sense, they worked as 'supplements' to state welfare. During the military regime, social welfare institutions functioned as 'complementary' partners, receiving subsidies and delivering welfare services on behalf of the government. On the other side, anti-poverty organisations took an adversarial position against the developmentalist state. Although it was not their

primary role, they also offered supplementary, alternative welfare for marginalised *minjung*, who were isolated from the state welfare system. During the democratic period, the newly emerged citizens' movement organisations have contributed to the vast state welfare reforms, playing an advocacy role.

However, Young's framework based on the West is of limited use in attempting to ascertain the political roles of each type of Korean civil society organisation. South Korea has long been a politically contentious society, experiencing dictatorships for the last half a century. In this context, most service-providing organisations such as social welfare institutions have been intimately controlled by the state's regulations, and the political stance of the welfare institutions has been more conservative and pro-government than those imagined by western societies from normal service-providing voluntary organisations.

Also, *minjung* movement groups were more combative and radical than those organisations that the West thinks of as general voluntary action organisations. While issue-fighting groups in western countries normally aim to influence policy and politics in legal ways, the extralegal *minjung* movements in effect refused to negotiate with the state, ultimately targeting its complete subversion. It was after democratisation that western-style voluntary action groups such as citizens' movement organisations were founded. Table 2-9 provides a very rough sketch of the political positions held by each type of civil society organisation in comparison with western service-providing voluntary organisations and voluntary action organisations.

**Table 2-9 Political Positions of Civil Society Organisations**

| *Anti-Government* ⟵⟶ | | | *Pro-Government* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Radical* | *Reformative* | *Apolitical* | *Conservative* |
| *Minjung* Movement Organisations | Citizens' Movement Organisations | Foreign Aid Organisations | Government-Permitted Organisations |
| Western Voluntary Action Organisations | | Western Voluntary Service-Providing Organisations | |

Given the radicalism of *minjung* movements, the transformation of anti-poverty organisations into state welfare partners is a dramatic turnabout that cannot be compared simply to the transition of western voluntary organisations from the advocacy to the service delivery side. This leads us to the question how such a

welfare partnership between the government and anti-government movement organisations can be constructed and what impact this partnership may have on the radical stance of anti-poverty movement groups after their institutionalisation within public welfare administration. Chapter 2 has offered a broad survey of the various civil society organisations in Korean welfare history. Building on this, Chapter 3 looks more closely at the formation of welfare partnerships between the state and anti-poverty organisations, and questions why and how the extralegal *minjung* movement groups came to be incorporated into the state welfare system.

# Chapter 3

# Formation of the State and Anti-Poverty Organisations' Partnership

## 3.1 Introductory Statement

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to provide an overview of the history of the formation of the Self-Sufficiency Programme (SSP). The SSP is one of the largest welfare projects managed through a partnership with anti-poverty organisations. However, as Chapter 2 explained, anti-poverty organisations long maintained an antagonistic relationship with the state. This chapter explores how the hostile relationship was transformed into a partnership, and what circumstantial changes triggered the coalition.

This chapter divides the partnership formation process into three phases: (1) the pre-partnership period from 1945 to 1992; (2) the partnership trial period from 1993 to 1999; and (3) the partnership settlement period from 1999 to 2000. The first section explores the adverse attitudes and activities of the state and the anti-poverty movements for the working-age poor during the pre-partnership period. The second section examines two temporary welfare partnership projects between the state and anti-poverty organisations, undertaken during the early stage of the democratic regime: the Pilot Self-Sufficiency Promotion Centre Project and the Temporary Public Work Programme. The final section discusses the partnership settlement period when the two pilot projects were combined and institutionalised into a regular workfare scheme. This chapter aims to improve understanding of the development and characteristics of the SSP partnership in the Korean political-economic context.

## 3.2 Pre-Partnership Period from 1945 to 1992

### 3.21 Exclusion of the Working-Age Poor from State Welfare

From the beginning of independence from Japan in 1945 until 1992, South Korean society was ruled by a series of dictatorial or military leaders, Seungman Rhee, Junghee Park, Doohwan Chun, and finally, Taewoo Rho. Their general attitude towards the working-age poor can be summed up in one word: 'exclusion'. Due to the severe impoverishment brought on by the long Japanese colonial reign from 1910 to 1945 and the Korean War afterwards, the authoritarian governments focused on

national economic development and marginalised social security issues. They adhered to the belief that a reasonable distribution of wealth could be attained through a trickle-down effect from economic growth. Indeed, due to the rapid economic growth throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the absolute poverty rate did decrease from 40.9% in 1965 to 1.5% in 1988 (Kim, M. 2006 p. 71). It was widely accepted, therefore, that poor able-bodied adults did not need to be supported by the state since they could earn income in the market (Hwang 2002 p. 122). Consequently, there was virtually no state welfare for the working-age poor until the mid-1990s. When Junghee Park's military government promulgated the first Korean public assistance, Livelihood Protection (LP), in 1961, the government excluded the working-age poor from the coverage of public assistance benefits. The Livelihood Projection was available only for the poor incapable of work, that is, those who were under 18, over 65, disabled, ill or pregnant. People from 19 to 64 years of age could not apply for public assistance benefits, regardless of how dire their economic conditions were (MOHW 1987).

Although not permanent programmes, there were some temporary projects conducted by the authoritarian governments for the unemployed poor who were not eligible for public assistance. The Seungman Lee government launched Korea's first tentative public work-for-rice project in 1964, utilising foreign relief aid. Poor people could obtain rice after participating in public work projects such as cleaning roads or removing weeds from public parks. The Junghee Park government also continued to conduct several temporary public work projects. Instead of rice, his government began to offer cash to the public work participants. In 1974, Park's government began to establish public work projects without the support of foreign aid, which together comprised what was officially known as the 'Public Work Programme' (PWP) (Hwang, Lødemel and Trickey 2002 pp. 123-124).

However, the PWP was not a programme that could substantially support the livelihoods of the working-age poor. The maximum number of days that the poor were allowed to take part in the PWP was restricted to 10 per month, and considering that the national minimum cost of living was 394,421 KRW in 1980, the PWP's monthly pay (approximately 20,250 KRW for men in 1980) was too meagre for basic sustenance. As such, the PWP offered little more than supplementary earnings to its participants, and it died out in the early 1990s. Table 3-1 provides a brief summary of

the PWP undertaken from 1974 to 1990. As shown in the table, the number of PWP participants stood at 15,504 when it was initiated in 1974. However, the number dwindled year by year to about 1,793 in 1990 (MOHW 1993).

**Table 3-1 Decrease in the Number of Public Work Projects over Years**

| Year | Participants (Number) | Daily Wage (KRW) male/female | Working Days (days/per month) |
|------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1974 | 15,504 | 820/530 | 14.7 |
| 1980 | 9,356 | 2,500/2,000 | 8.1 |
| 1982 | 11,068 | 3,500/3,000 | 12.0 |
| 1984 | 3,172 | 4,500/3,500 | 13.0 |
| 1986 | 3,400 | 4,594/4,288 | 11.0 |
| 1988 | 4,814 | 4,985 | 11.0 |
| 1990 | 1,793 | 8,000 | 10.0 |

Source: MOHW (1993)

Together with the PWP, the Duhwan Chun government launched several state welfare services targeting the working-age poor. After Junghee Park was assassinated in 1979, another military leader, Duhwan Chun, again seized control of the government by means of a coup d'état in 1980. In order to pacify political resistance, the Chun government needed to conciliate socially disadvantaged groups. On his inauguration day, March 3, 1981, Chun therefore claimed to stand for 'Freedom from Poverty' (KIHASA 1995 pp. 135-136). Even though his declaration was generally interpreted as rhetoric to acquire political legitimacy (Kwon 1999), it nonetheless led to the establishment of certain welfare measures for the poor. In 1982, the Chun government devised the 'Synthesising Measure on Poverty' to show that he was keeping his promise. The synthesising measure stated that, while providing the LP for the poor unable to work, the government would start to offer comprehensive in-kind services for the working-age poor, such as job-training and business loan schemes, as well as existing public work projects (Kim, K. 2000 p. 176). Distinguishing them from the 'Livelihood Protection' cash benefits, the government officially labelled the welfare services as 'Self-Sufficiency Protection' in the sense that they were aimed at encouraging able-bodied adults to work and become economically self-sufficient.

In reality, Self-Sufficiency Protection was also little more than a name. The job-training and business loan services were not actually open to all the poor aged

from 19 to 64 because the qualification process was highly selective (Hwang 2002 p. 124). Only the poor who were under the age of 30 could apply for the training services. . The requirements for the business loan schemes were even more rigorous; applicants had to meet strict geographical, moral, psychological and economic criteria because the entitlement was restricted to "the poor people who are highly likely to be successful in running small businesses; who have lived in the same village for more than a year and continue to live there; who have a prospective and determined business plan; who do not squander and who have a strong will to be economically self-sufficient and are very active" (MOHW 1987). Because of the strict criteria, fewer than 10,000 people managed to receive job-training services or business loan services per year as Table 3-2 shows. Hence, even after Self-Sufficiency Protection was introduced, the great majority of the working-age population was excluded from the initiatives.

**Table 3-2 The Number of Successful Applicants**

| Year | Training | Business Loan |
|------|----------|---------------|
| 1980 | 3,466 | - |
| 1985 | 5,675 | 3,124 |
| 1990 | 4,794 | 6,494 |
| 1995 | 4,871 | 4,989 |

Source: KIHASA (1995 p. 143) and Hwang, Lødemel and Trickey (2002 p. 127) edited

*3.22 Anti-Poverty Movements for the Working-Age Poor (1968-1992)*

Formation of the Urban Poor and Urban Slums: While the authoritarian state was generally unconcerned about the working-age poor, anti-poverty movement organisations paid them special attention. Anti-poverty movements began to appear in the early 1970s, when urban poverty began to grow in big cities such as Seoul, Busan, Incheon, Daegu and Daejeon. This increase resulted from structural changes in the Korean macro-economy (Chung, D. 1985; Chung, K. 1987), which relied heavily on foreign loans and export (RIKS 1991 pp. 132-133). As a war-torn, developing country, South Korea did not possess its own industrial capital or natural resources. Thus, in order to raise industrial capital, the authoritarian government borrowed seed money from developed countries like the USA, Japan, and the UK. With these foreign loans, the government supported manufacturers that produced cheap goods, and tried to boost the national economy by exporting their products at

low prices. The rapid economic development of Korea was indeed indebted to the export-oriented strategy (Kang 1999; Kim, I. 1998).

This seemingly successful export-led growth was backed by a low grain price policy and a cheap labour income policy. To export cheaper products than rival countries, procuring low-wage workers was key. Thus, to minimise labour costs, the government needed to drop the cost of living for industrial workers by keeping the price of rice (the Korean major staple) extremely low. The low-price grain policy accelerated massive urbanisation, because it left farmers unable to make a living from agriculture. A large number of poor peasants lost their livelihoods and had to migrate to cities searching for paid work. According to the Population and Housing Census, the rural-to-urban migration amounted to 0.35-0.4 million per year during the 1970s, and the number of urban migrant workers, excluding their family members, reached 3.72 million in 1985 (Yoon 1990 p. 155). Including family members, then, approximately 10 million citizens moved into cities.

Although the migrants dreamt of economic wealth, or at least of getting paid work, their dreams were rarely realised. Most migrant workers ended up as part of of the urban poor population (Kim 1985 pp. 42-43). Due to rapid urbanisation, the labour supply far outweighed demand. Furthermore, the migrant peasants were largely unskilled and uneducated in industrial terms. Hence, as shown in Table 3-3, the urban poor were forced to choose between unemployment and irregular work in construction, in factories, or as street vendors.

**Table 3-3 Occupations of the Family Heads of Poor Urban Households (%)**

| Occupations | 1966 | 1979 | 1981 | 1982 | 1989 | 1990 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Building workers** | **34.7** | **27.7** | **35.5** | **22.0** | **27.9** | **28.8** |
| **Unemployment** | **21.5** | **36.5** | **31.5** | **48.3** | **24.6** | **39.2** |
| Factory workers | 11.3 | 7.2 | 8.0 | 5.1 | 17.6 | 13.7 |
| Pitchmen | 11.2 | - | 13.0 | 3.0 | 13.9 | 8.7 |
| Store Clerks | 8.0 | 14.0 | - | 8.3 | 8.2 | - |
| Office Staff | 10.4 | 1.9 | 4.8 | 2.4 | 3.8 | 3.3 |
| Farmers | 0.3 | - | - | 0.1 | 0.3 | - |
| Others | 1.0 | 13.2 | 7.2 | 10.8 | 2.1 | 6.3 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: KIHASA (1995 p. 110)

The poverty of the urban poor was thus more serious than that that found in

the countryside, where the poverty rate was lower. While 35.8% of the rural population lived under the poverty line in 1965, the poverty rate of urban areas was 54.9%. In 1976, 11.7% of the rural population lived in poverty; 18.1% of the urban population was poor. In 1991, the poverty rates were 2.8% in rural areas and 8.7% in the cities (Lee, Na, and Hyeon 1993; Seo 1981). An even more serious problem was that the majority of the urban population below the poverty line could not receive any public support. Most of the urban migrants who could leave their rural hometowns to find paid work were generally of working-age, whereas older people normally decided to remain in the countryside. Hence, in contrast to the higher urban poverty rate, the proportion of urban people receiving public assistance was very low because the working-age poor could not receive the LP benefits, which were targeted at older people. As a result, urban residents accounted for only 3% of LP recipients in 1980 as shown in Table 3-4.

**Table 3-4 Ruralisation or Livelihood Protection Beneficiaries** (Unit: %, person)

| Year | Urban regions | Rural regions |
|------|---------------|---------------|
| 1970 | 27% (283,300) | 73% (780,764) |
| 1975 | 13% (270,652) | 87% (1,771,450) |
| 1980 | 3% (107,683) | 94% (1,593,774) |
| 1985 | 22% (505,626) | 78% (1,767,524) |
| 1988 | 21% (484,063) | 79% (1,816,008) |
| 1990 | 19% (435,693) | 81% (1,820,498) |

Source: KIHASA (1995 p. 86) and MOHW (Each Year) combined

The influx of migrant workers into cities resulted in the formation of urban slums (Kim 1989; KOCER 1998; Park 1983). Before the 1960s, these were formed on a small scale by war refugees who came to Seoul after the Korean War in the early 1950s. However, when industrialisation and urbanisation began in earnest after the 1960s, larger-scale slums were built. Because shanty houses were the only places where most of the urban poor could afford to live, migrant workers thus started to build illegal shantytowns alongside the Han River. In the 1980s, urban slums diffused to the southern and northern areas of Seoul. Figure 3-1 shows the spread of illegal shantytowns in Seoul from the 1960s to 1980s.

**Figure 3-1 Shantytowns in Seoul between 1960 and 1980**



1961-1970                                    1971-1980
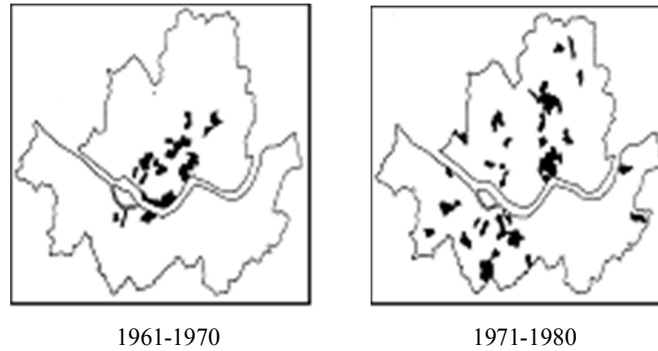
Source: Kim, S. (1996 pp. 87-88)

Anti-poverty movements emerged in the urban slums (KOCER 1998). Having noted the rapid increase in the number of these shantytowns, the authoritarian government began to demolish slum houses in1967, evicting people from their living spaces. In general, the government conducted this displacement forcefully and without proper compensation, and it was these coercive demolitions that provided the impetus for the development of anti-poverty movements in Korea. The Gwangju Wilderness Revolt of1971, in particular, was the prelude to many anti-poverty movements. The revolt was a voluntary uprising of slum residents who had been kicked out of their shanties. In the name of urban modernisation, the Park government dismantled several shantytowns in Seoul in 1969 and deported the dwellers to the Gwangju wilderness on the Southern fringe of greater Seoul. Although they did not receive any compensation from the government, they remained silent and subsisted for three years, surviving in the wilderness without electricity, a water supply or a drainage system. However, after Gwangju became the target of real estate speculation due to urban expansion, 50,000 poor people in the region came to lose their makeshift homes once again. They could not stay silent this time; the deportation order had greatly riled them, and they rose up in insurrection. They seized public buses and attempted to march into Seoul's city centre. When the police obstructed the march, they flocked toward the Gwangju police office and set fire to a police car. During the conflict, 100 policemen were wounded and 22 resident leaders were arrested.

This image [**Image 3-1 Gwangju Wilderness Revolt**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

This revolt raised public awareness of urban poverty issues throughout the country. In particular, progressive intellectuals began to pay attention to such causes (KOCER 1999 p. 54). As we briefly discussed in Chapter 2, before the 1970s, Korean progressive intellectuals had predominantly focused on central issues such as political democratisation against military dictatorships. However, the poor people's revolt in the Gwangju wilderness offered a new viewpoint to dissident intellectuals. They came to realise that "the urban poor are the actual victims of developmentalism of the military governments, and so it is they who are the cardinal forces of resistance against the authoritarian state"(Chung 1990 p. 8). Progressive Christians were the pioneers of this new moral paradigm. After the Gwangju revolt, many religious intellectuals admitted overlooking the suffering of the poor and began to expound the importance of "sharing the difficulties of the poor and helping them to become the leaders of social salvation" (Je 1987 p. 52). Some intellectuals even went to slums to live with poor people. *The Authentic History of Democratisation Movements* describes the outset of anti-poverty movements by Christian intellectuals as follows:

> The Gwangju Revolt shook the churches that lay buried under conservative Evangelism. There were approximately thirty churches around the Gwangju area, but none could become 'light and salt' for them. Progressive students and clergymen gathered at the Christian Association Hall. Byeongsub Heo and Hakgeu Son paid attention to urban poverty problems. The then students, Hahak Lee, Hogyeong Kwon and Dongwon Kim became engrossed in studies on urban slums. Priest Jinhong Kim built a *Minjung* Church in an urban slum. Hahak Lee received a fund from the 'World Council of Churches' and moved into Gwangju in October, 1971 to found a free hospital (Yu 2005).

The intellectual clergymen and students who decided to live in slums regarded Saul Alinsky's 'Community Organising' principle as their practical guide. It was an

American Presbyterian pastor, Herbert White, who had introduced Alinsky to students and clergymen. White was a missionary who had been dispatched to the Urban Industrial Mission of Christian-based Yeonsei University to support Korean missionary work. However, instead of focusing only on missionary seminars, he also taught Alinsky's book *Rules for Radicals* (1969) to the students. As a strategy for social movements, Alinsky's Community Organising aimed to assimilate thoroughly with poor communities and to assemble the scattered grievances of the poor into organised resistant forces (Horwitt 1989). Having witnessed the Gwangju Wilderness Revolt, intellectuals noted that Alinsky's ideas might also be applicable to the Korean situation (Cho, S. 1983). They therefore resolved to 'descend' to the level of the poor communities so as to mobilise social movements directly from there. Yeonsu Yang, an anti-poverty activist, described these movements as follows:

> There are possibilities of revolution in places where grievances exist. The initial goal of community organising is to find out where grievances are and to organise the disadvantaged poor from scratch into a revolutionary force (Yang 1990 p. 228).

Anti-poverty activists first built so-called *minjung* churches in urban slums. In order to mobilise slum residents, they needed focal sites where activists could meet with poor people. *Minjung* churches were considered the most suitable (i.e. inconspicuous) choice for this purpose; as religious places, they were seemingly independent from secular politics and also free from military scrutiny. Additionally, churches were social places where people could easily gather for various events. Thus, churches became the loci of anti-poverty movements during the authoritarian period. Since the 1970s, community organising groups led by progressive clergymen and students have grown in various poor villages in cities.

In the mid 1980s, the anti-poverty activists and *minjung* churches, scattered in various slums, finally formed informal umbrella associations such as the CACO, the ASH and the COUP according to their religious backgrounds (see p. 42). Although they were founded separately, they frequently collaborated and held general gatherings to discuss current issues and ideas on urban poverty. During the authoritarian period, the three anti-poverty associations conducted various activities, using their *minjung* churches as focal points. They not only fought against forced demolitions for slum residents, but also established free night schools, daily

nurseries, and free medical offices. Such activities functioned as alternative welfare services for the urban poor, who were excluded from state welfare services (CACO 1992; ASH 1996; COUP 1995). The 'Poor Workers' Community Movements', which were considered to be the origin of the SSP, were among the main activities conducted by the anti-poverty movement groups.

Poor Workers' Community Movements: Poor workers' community movements were initiated by anti-poverty organisations to reduce the unnecessary exploitation of poor workers through multilevel subcontract systems. The main jobs of slum residents are usually in manual construction, sewing factories or assembly-line environments (see Table 3-3), and these occupations are notorious in Korea for multilevel subcontract systems (Chung 2006; Hwang 1985; Shim 2006).For example, construction work generally has at least five brokers between bottom-line builders and prime contractors: bottom-line builders → builders' recruiters → work supervisors→ specializing construction companies → synthesising construction companies → prime customers. Construction companies do not directly employ builders. Instead, they make contracts with work supervisors to manage their construction sites. Work supervisors form contracts with builders' recruiters, whose role is to collect manual workers every day in the slums or at public squares and to dispatch them to construction sites. Work supervisors then manage the builders on the construction sites and pay daily wages. The production system of an assembly factory is very similar. In order to produce products such as cars or electrical appliances, several intermediary factories need to be involved, and slum residents are generally located at the lowest-level assembly factories. Indeed, the subcontract system is one of the main causes of poverty for the urban poor because, for bottom-line of workers, the existence of multiple brokers resulted in multi-layered exploitation. From the perspective of the prime contractor, however, having brokers is very beneficial to reduce costs and mitigate direct responsibility for workers' wellbeing.

The early poor workers' community movements endeavoured to overcome the subcontract system and build worker-owned businesses. In 1990, a leader of the CACO, Pastor Byeongsub Heo, established a construction workers' community called the 'Construction Workers' Dure' at an urban slum in Northern Seoul. Hehad built a *minjung* church called the Dongwol Church in the slum in 1974, and had also

embarked upon anti-poverty movements. While living in the urban slum, however, he realised that the life of a clergyman was fundamentally different from that of the poor. Thus, in 1989, he "threw his frock to the nettles" and began to work at construction sites with manual workers. Heo recalled in his autobiographical essay that such experiences made him "realise [that] the multilevel subcontract system of construction is the main cause of poor income and begin to think that if builders establish their own construction company and make direct contracts with consumers, builders could gain more earnings"(Heo 1994 p. 64). With this idea, he rounded up 20 navvies and built the Construction Workers' Dure in 1990.

The 'Dure Cooperative' was established for similar reasons. The founder, Jongryeal Park, was also a member of the CACO and the Pastor of the Loving Space *Minjung* Church in Songrim village. Like Byongsub Heo, he recognised that the subcontract system of assembly factories was a main source of poverty, which led him to establish an assembly workers' community in 1990. Jongryeal Park wrote that the initial purpose of the Dure Cooperative was "to escape from the exploitation structure of assembly factories. Through direct contracts with consumers, workers could earn more money" (Park 1993 p. 24).

When the two clergymen established the poor workers' communities in 1990, there groups had no underlying ideologies. They were, after all, just spontaneously founded. However, after the concept of 'workers' cooperatives' was imported from western countries – in particular, Spain – in 1992, their activities became more principled. As addressed in Chapter 2, by the late 1980s, many Korean *minjung* activists regarded socialist states in Eastern Europe as ideal societies. Thus, after the socialist states' collapsed, *minjung* activists encountered ideological chaos and anomie (Kim 1993). This situation led progressive intellectuals to seek alternative values. In the early 1990s, *minjung* activists eagerly strived to discover theories and ideologies that could replace socialism (Cho 1992): workers' cooperatives were one of the economic principles introduced through the activists' efforts (Kim and Kim 1992).

A former *minjung* activist, Seongoh Kim, was the pioneer who disseminated the concept of workers' cooperatives. After he was introduced to *Making Mondragon* (Whyte and Whyte 1991), a book about Spain's Mondragon Workers' Cooperatives by Professor Hyoje Joh a former LSE student, Seongoh Kim translated the book into

Korean in 1992 and established the 'Korean Institute of Workers' Cooperatives' (KIWC) to deliver cooperative ideas (Kim, S. 1992). Afterwards, workers' cooperatives began to receive attention from a lot of *minjung* movement activists. Although the spectrum of workers' cooperatives was rather broad, they shared a common belief that workers should run their own companies, produce goods together and share the profits equally (Kim and Park 2000). This communitarian production system sounded attractive to the activists who were still opposed to capitalism, but who no longer wanted to stand for socialism (CACO 1992).

Workers' cooperatives also captivated anti-poverty activists. Having encountered *Making Mondragon* in 1992, Anglican Priest Hongil Kim, a member of the ASH, introduced the workers' cooperative principle to fellow activists and began to invite Seongoh Kim to their gatherings. The Mondragon story was perceived as 'good news' to activists who had already tried setting up worker-owned businesses like the Construction Workers' Dure and the Dure Cooperative. It was of considerable allure that the Mondragon cooperatives had been set up in a poor town (Mondragon) by a Catholic Priest, José María Arizmendiarrieta. Since many Korean anti-poverty activists were Christian intellectuals, the religious background of the Mondragon Cooperative received much sympathy. For this reason, many leading anti-poverty activists, such as Pastors Jongryeol Park and Kidon Kim of the CACO, Ho Lee and Myongho Shin of the COUP and Priests Hongil Kim and Kyeongyoung Song of the ASH, displayed effusive approval of the Mondragon story, calling it "the Miracle" (Kim, H. 1994; Kim, K. 1994, 1995; Lee, H. 1994; Park 1992). Pastor Kidon Kim of the CACO had this to say of the Mondragon story:

> Korea has experienced very long political and economic oppression due to military dictatorships. So, 'the Miracle of Mondragon' is impressive to us. The Mondragon Cooperative is a production system with a human face. It is more human-friendly than dominant capitalism and also more rational than any other communist system. The Mondragon has opened our narrow viewpoints about an alternative society. It guides us to a new movement for the future Korean society – the society where poor workers themselves own the human-face economy (Kim, K. 1995 pp. 29-30).

After the introduction of the concept of workers' cooperative, the Construction Workers' Dure and the Dure Cooperative began to be reinterpreted retrospectively as

the seeds of Korean-style workers' cooperatives. The initial objective of workers' community movements was simply to reduce the evil of subcontracts, but it grew to a grandiose vision of "overcoming two macro ideologies of socialism and capitalism" (Kim, K. 1994; Lee, H. 1994). After the discourse of workers' cooperatives became popular among anti-poverty activists, workers' community movements began to mushroom in poor villages: the Anglican Priest Hongil Kim founded a sewing workers' community called 'Thread and Needle' in Nowon district in 1992; another Anglican Priest, Kyeongyoung Song, established a construction workers' community, 'Sharing and Respect Construction', in Gwanak district in 1992; Heiryeon Lyue formed a sewing workers' community, 'Big Whiteness', in Guro district; and along with these, 'Sharing and Dure Construction', 'Mapo Construction', and the 'Women Workers' Cooperative Clothing World' were established in urban slums in 1994 under the influence of the Mondragon Cooperatives' story (Yeom 2003).

This image [Image 3-2 Members of the 'Thread and Needle' Poor Workers' Community] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

To sum up, while the government prioritised economic development and neglected the wellbeing of the poor, anti-poverty organisations in urban slums endeavoured to mobilise workers into forces of resistance that could contest the authoritarian state and capitalist economy. However, politico-economic changes in Korea during the 1990s, including democratisation and economic crisis, qualitatively transformed the relationship between the state and anti-poverty movements, to the extent that the two parties began to experiment with two welfare partnership projects.

## 3.3 Partnership Trial Period from 1993 to 1999
### *3.31 Pilot Self-Sufficiency Promotion Centre Project (1996-1999)*

Welfare partnership between the state and anti-poverty organisations was discussed for the first time after the inauguration of civilian president Youngsam Kim. During the military period, the wellbeing of poor people was omitted from policy agendas. Because of the Development First, Distribution Second strategy, social welfare for the poor was nascent in comparison to the huge advances in economic growth. Hence, when Youngsam Kim won the presidency in 1993, the government was requested, both internally and externally, to improve the welfare schemes for poor people. In particular, the urban working-age poor emerged as one of the hottest welfare issues in the Youngsam Kim government (KIHASA 1995). In 1993, the governmental development policy think tank, the Korean Development Institute (KDI), submitted a policy proposal about poor workers' community movements to the Kim government. KDI researcher Sunwon Kown suggested that poor workers' communities could provide an alternative welfare model to help the unemployed poor find jobs and escape from poverty. Defining anti-poverty organisations as "voluntary and democratic organisations providing alternative work for the poor" (1993 pp. 66-67), Kwon recommended that the Kim government should consider aiding anti-poverty organisations to set up poor workers' communities, stating the following:

> The previous governments had supported working-age people through public work projects. But it was a top-down model for poverty reduction…By contrast, anti-poverty movement organisations have voluntarily established poor workers' communities and tried to provide jobs for people in poverty….The state and anti-poverty organisations used to be hostile to each other. But political environment has now changed. The state had better formulate networks with anti-poverty organisations and finance them (Kwon 1993 p. 72, 79).

Two years later, the Korean Institute of Health and Social Affairs (KIHASA), a governmental social policy think tank, made a similar recommendation. Advancing the KDI's proposal, the KIHASA suggested establishing so-called 'Self-Sufficiency Promotion Centres' (SSP Centres) in poor towns as frontline agencies that could systemically support poor people to form workers' cooperatives (KIHASA 1995 p. 394). The KIHASA proposed a partnership with local anti-poverty organisations in running SSP Centres, with the state as the financer and anti-poverty organisations as frontline operators of the SSP Centres. The plan for the cooperation was not a bad proposal for the Youngsam Kim government. Since Kim had also been a political

leader of anti-government movements during the military regime, he did not feel any aversion to cooperating with anti-poverty activists. On the contrary, the collaboration was considered a good opportunity to "recover democratic governance, impaired by the authoritarian governments" (Kwon 1993 p. 133) by mainstreaming the formerly suppressed *minjung* movement groups into state politics.

The collaboration was also prompted by governmental economic calculations as well. In terms of government spending, supporting pre-existing activities of the anti-poverty organisations would cost less than initiating a new welfare project from scratch. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, utilising civil society organisations was a common strategy employed by the Korean welfare delivery system to economise public expenditures. Similarly, when the KDI proposed the state's support for poor workers' community movements, it also detailed two key advantages of aiding anti-poverty organisations: "first, grassroots organisations can enhance accessibility to the poor and second, the partnership can economise start-up costs" (Kwon 1993 p. 75). KIHASA's researcher Jaeun Seok also identified cost efficiency as an advantage of welfare partnership, writing that "supporting anti-poverty organisations will be a more economic choice for the state….If the government finances their activities, it will also be able to help save the national budget, which might be needed to launch a totally new project" (Seok 1997 p. 71).

Anti-poverty activists also welcomed the partnership plan. As many scholars of social movements observed, changes in the political environments, such as democratisation and regime transitions, spurred the institutionalisation and co-option of social movements into the state system (Hispher, Meyer, and Tarrow 1998; Kubik 1998; McCarthy and McPhail 1998). In South Korea, political democratisation also mollified the extreme hostility of anti-government *minjung* organisations towards the state and changed their attitude towards formal politics (Cho 1995; Im 1997; Kim, E. 1999). Following this democratic mood, some outlawed anti-poverty activists actually began to enter into the institutionalised political arena as members of the National Assembly, state bureaucrats, or party politicians as seen in Chapter 2. In this atmosphere, many anti-poverty activists had little aversion to accepting cooperation with the state for welfare administration.

Another reason why anti-poverty activists accepted the welfare partnership was so they could acquire stable financial resources for their poor workers'

community movements (Kwon 1997). As resource mobilisation theories point out, simple grievances against social problems could not develop into social movements (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Social movements need to mobilise various types of resources such as personnel, money, and networks in order to further their goals. Having grievances about the capitalist economic system, the Korean anti-poverty organisations had aimed to develop their poor workers' communities into proper workers' cooperatives. However, in order to actually set up workers' cooperatives, financial resources like seed money were required. As voluntary associations, though, they had been chiefly dependent on the sacrifice of individual activists, and internal material resources to operate workers' communities were always sparse. Under the circumstances, anti-poverty organisations saw state sponsorship as an opportunity to overcome their financial limitations. Leading anti-poverty activists from the ASH, the CACO and the COUP therefore actively supported the KDI and the KIHASA's proposals (c.f. Shin and Kim 2002). Through their efforts, the Pilot SSP Centre Project, the first partnership project between the state and anti-poverty organisations, was launched in 1996.

The Pilot SSP Centre Project worked under the premise that if the government provided 150 million KRW a year for each community-based organisation, the organisations that received the funds were supposed to establish SSP Centres in their villages, recruit poor village people and help establish workers' cooperatives together (MOHW 1996 p. 197). In 1996, five initial SSP Centres were established in poor villages, and four Centres out of the five were entrusted to the local member organisations of the ASH, which had been at the forefront of poor workers' community movements. Table 3-5 shows the first five SSP Centres and the workers' communities that the SSP Centres organised.

**Table 3-5 First Five Self-Sufficiency Promotion Centres**

| SSP Centre | Operator of SSP Centre | Poor workers' community |
|---|---|---|
| Gwanak SSP Centre | Gwanak Sharing Home | • Cleaners' Community (*Green Environment*)<br>• Builders' Community (*Vision*)<br>• Sewing workers' Community (*Sharing*) |
| Nowon SSP Centre | Nowon Sharing Home | • Cleaners' Community (*Always Green*)<br>• Sewing workers' Communities (*Thread & Needle*) |
| Daejeon SSP Centre | Daejeon Sharing Home | • Hardwiring work Community (*Changdo*)<br>• Sewing workers' Community (*Clothing World*)<br>• Papering-wall Community (*Wall Brush*)<br>• Builders' Community (*Dasan Construction*) |
| Incheon SSP Centre | Incheon Sharing Home | • Builders' Community (*Relaxation*)<br>• Cleaners' Community (*Good day for cleaning*)<br>• Assembly work Community (*Handy*) |
| Mapo SSP Centre | Mapo Social Welfare Centre | • Care-giving workers' Community (*Seongsan Beauty*)<br>• Washing cleaners' Community (*Beautiful Washing World*) |

Source: MOHW (1998b)

Beginning with the ASH, other anti-poverty activist networks and *minjung* churches from the COUP and the CACO also began to form contracts with the government, with10 SSP Centres opening in poor villages in 1997. However, the partnership projects were, at that time, trial projects, and only a few SSP Centres were operating in a handful of poor towns. It was only after the Asian financial crisis that the partnership project for the working-age poor expanded nationwide.

*3.32 Temporary Public Work Programme (1998-1999)*

The 1997 Asian financial crisis gave rise to radical changes in the Korean economic structure. The causes of the wider crisis are complicated and multi-dimensional, but in Korea the crisis escalated when transnational capital was suddenly withdrawn from Korean financial markets on a large scale to avoid the loss of interest due to insecure financial conditions in Asian countries. Korean conglomerates like Daewoo and KIA went bankrupt with the sudden withdrawal of capital, and subsequently many minor enterprises toppled like dominoes, leading the Korean economy into insolvency (Song 1998). When the government turned to the IMF for financial assistance, the former called for substantial neoliberal reforms such as opening the national financial market to foreign countries and promoting labour market flexibility through restructuring and downsizing (MOGAHA 1999). High unemployment and economic polarisation were inevitable consequences of chain-reaction bankruptcies and massive dismissals. This sudden and widespread unemployment was something

that Korean society had never experienced. The Korean economy had achieved virtually full employment throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and the unemployment rate had been stabilised at less than 3% prior to 1997 (KEIS 2004 p. 3). However, as Graph 3-1 displays, the financial crisis gave rise to unprecedented levels of unemployment, with the rate soaring from 2.6% in 1997 to 8.4% in 1999.

**Graph 3-1 Sharp Increase of Unemployment after Financial Crisis (1992-2001)**
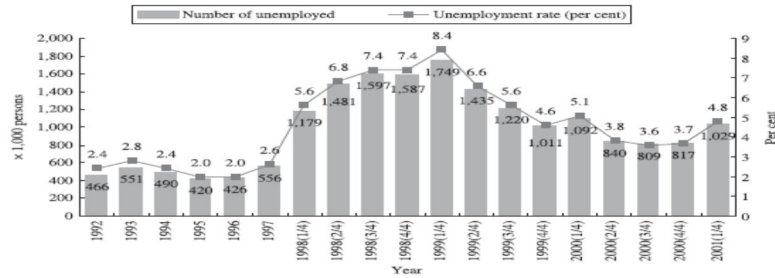


Source: MOL (2004) extracted from Kwon and Holliday (2007 p.244)

Although unemployment was still lower than in European countries, its after-effects were more considerable due to the lack of a social security net, which would have dampened the impact (Kim, H. 2000; Moon 1999). Existing welfare measures could not accommodate the roughly 1.5 million unemployed people at one time. Self-Sufficiency Protection, including public work projects, training services and business loan schemes, was too residual to cover the increasing number of unemployed people. Also, although the number of SSP Centres had increased to 20 by 1999, each SSP Centre could accommodate no more than 40 people in their workers' communities. Thus, according to the KIHASA, 88.5% of unemployed people were being totally excluded from state support in 1998 (Kim, Migon 1999 p. 6).

The economic shock served as a stimulus to initiate large-scale welfare measures for the working-age poor. As an urgent response to the soaring unemployment, the Daejung Kim government set up Temporary Public Work Programme (TPWP) to absorb the unemployed into public sector work. The government declared that it would "create and provide temporary public work for the unemployed poor until they finally find new jobs in the market" (MOGAHA 1999). Public work participation was open to all the unemployed who had not found jobs over the last 10 months and who did not have any means for daily livelihood. The TPWP was conducted four times a year as three-month projects after May 1998

(MOHW 1998a). These were the largest-scale public work projects in Korean history, schemes in which many government authorities participated; not only were the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Labour involved, but also other authorities including the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Agriculture. They created approximately 16,105 public work projects in their fields, such as cleaning public offices, constructing roads, planting trees and taking care of ill and elderly people. The government bodies employed 0.43 million unemployed people in the fourth quarter of 1998 and 0.58 million people in the first quarter of 1999, and spent 2.5 billion KRW in 1999 on temporary work projects (Kim, Migon 1999 p. 5).

However, there were several criticisms of the TPWP. First, the work projects were not yet sufficient to cover the massive number of the unemployed. According to government statistics (Graph 3-1), the number of unemployed people reached 1.58 million in the fourth quarter of 1998 and 1.74 million in the first quarter of 1999. In spite of this, only around 0.50 million people could participate in the TPWP projects. Moreover, since public work projects suddenly expanded, the state authorities had to face a shortage of street-level bureaucrats to manage the projects. In this situation, entrusting the creation and management of work projects to community organisations was proposed (Choi 1998 p.77; Kim, Sinyang 1999; Lee, H. 2000). For instance, a progressive researcher in unemployment, Jiwoon Choi wrote, "No matter how hard local government officials try to do, it is impossible for one or two officials to grasp the real condition of the unemployed poor and to manage public works. Entrusting community organisations with public work projects is thus necessary" (Choi 1998 p. 34).

Indeed, contracting public work projects out to community organisations was an efficient strategy for the government, which had difficulties in managing the massive public work projects on their own. Thus, in 1999, the government began to allow community organisations to join in creating and managing TPWP projects (ESC 1999).

Outsourcing the management of public work projects was also welcomed by anti-poverty associations, who saw such projects as an opportunity to involve more people in collective anti-poverty movements. Since the financial crisis had shocked

national economies, poverty and unemployment became issues not only for urban slums, but also for the nation as a whole. Hence, anti-poverty activists and *minjung* churches, which had originally concentrated on the poverty of slum residents, wanted to expand their poor workers' cooperative movements to include other regions. *Minjung* churches and activist networks from the ASH, the COUP and the CACO came together to launch the 'National Alliance of Movements against Poverty and Unemployment' (hereafter, National Alliance) in 1998. Some local labour movement activists, who recognised the necessity of anti-unemployment movements independent from traditional trade union-oriented labour movements, also began to join the National Alliance to tackle massive structural unemployment.

Following Alinsky's ideas about Community Organising, the National Alliance tried to mobilise unemployed poor people to establish workers' communities from scratch. They initially approached poor people by providing free lunchboxes, free child care or other social services (Cho, M. 2001 p. 81). However, the chances of meeting poor people outside of the slums were not high. Thus, when the government authorities discussed the idea of entrusting public work projects to community organisations in 1999, activists of the National Alliance expected the public work projects to function as a regular channel through which to meet local unemployed people beyond urban residents.

For this reason, anti-poverty organisations soon became engaged with the TPWP as well as with the Pilot SSP Centre Project. It is hard to know the exact number of public projects entrusted to anti-poverty movement groups during that time as the contract period of a project was very short (usually just three to six months), and various state bodies made the contracts. According to an internal document from the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (MOGAHA), about 177 community organisations created TPWP projects in 1999 on behalf of state authorities, employing 5,364 unemployed people (MOGAHA 1999). Table 3-6 gives examples of public work projects created and managed by the Nowon branch of the ASH in 1999. The Nowon Sharing Home organised public care giving, free house refurbishment, public cleaning and leftover food recycling projects with financial support from government bodies such as the MOHW, Seoul Metropolitan City Hall and the Nowon District Office.

**Table 3-6 Temporary Public Work Projects of the Nowon Sharing Home**

| Work Project | Contract Period | Funding Source |
|---|---|---|
| Cleaning project | March-December 1999 | Nowon District Office |
| Free food delivering project | March-December 1999 | Nowon District Office |
| Leftover food recycling project | March-December 1999 | Seoul Metropolitan City Hall |
| Free house refurbishment  project | March-June 1999 | Ministry of Health and Welfare |
| Free care-giving project | March-June 1999 | Ministry of Health and Welfare |

Source:  Song (1999 p. 51)

Thus, anti-poverty movement groups came to be engaged in two temporary welfare partnership projects as frontline agencies: the Pilot SSP Centre Project (from 1996 to 1999) and the TPWP (from 1998 to 1999). Although both projects focused on providing alternative work for unemployed people who were unable to find jobs in the market, they had nothing to do with coercive workfare. In August 1999, however, the two temporary partnership projects were suddenly transformed into compulsory workfare schemes. The following section discusses the introduction of a new public assistance project, titled the National Basic Livelihood Guarantee (NBLG), and the process through which the two temporary projects were incorporated into the public assistance system as workfare components.


**3.4 Partnership Settlement Period from 1999 to 2000**

*3.41 Introduction of National Basic Livelihood Guarantee*

Although the government had conducted several temporary projects for the unemployed poor, the working-age unemployed were still excluded from the regular public assistance system of the LP. Thus, several leading citizens' movement organisations began to campaign to include the working-age poor in the regular public assistance system. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, the 'Public Solidarity of Participatory Democracy' (PSPD) was the citizens' movement organisation that initiated the campaigns. As soon as the PSPD was founded in 1994, it inaugurated the National Welfare Basic Level Campaign. Drawing on T.H. Marshall's social rights discourse, the campaign insisted that every individual was a rights-bearing citizen and that every poor person should be able to enjoy basic social rights, regardless of age. However, their claim did not receive substantial public attention before 1997 because the poverty of working-age people was not a high public

priority at that time.

After the 1997 financial crisis, however, the issue began to acquire public attention. Immediately after the crisis, the PSPD held a series of strategic hearings, press interviews, and policy discussion meetings, stating the necessity of universal public assistance. As captured in the title of their first public hearing, 'Urgent Suggestion for the Economic Crisis: The Introduction of Public Assistance for the Unemployed Poor', they claimed that universal public assistance was an urgent measure needed to tackle the effects of high unemployment (PSPD 1998). As a product of the discussions, the PSPD formed a bill called the 'National Basic Livelihood Guarantee' (NBLG) and brought it to the National Assembly on 23 July 1998 with the help of Hongsin Kim, a welfare-friendly member of the National Assembly, who introduced the petition on their behalf. The essential feature of the bill was that the state had to guarantee the national minimum living cost of every citizen, regardless of his or her age and employability, when their income fell below the poverty line.

The full-scale campaign for the legislation of the new public assistance started after the bill was declined in July 1998, thwarted by challenges from conservative politicians. In order to wage an all-out war to legislate universal public assistance, the PSPD sought alliances with anti-poverty organisations such as the ASH, the COUP and the CACO, which it saw as having many advantages. First, while the PSPD was an issue-fighting organisation, targeting central politics, the anti-poverty organisations were grassroots associations. Thus, the PSPD thought that the latter would be better equipped to attract the attention of local poor people. Second, anti-poverty organisations had connections with *minjung* churches, so the PSPD expected them to attract religious people who had a moral influence on Korean society. Third, anti-poverty organisations had already cooperated with the state, administering pilot SSP Centres and TPWP projects since 1996. As a consequence, they had already secured personal networks with state officials. The PSPD wanted to utilise these networks in order to obtain officials' support for their NBLG bill (Ahn 2000 p. 13).

The PSPD invited Anglican Priest Kyeongyoung Song of the ASH to their social welfare campaign meetings. Issue-fighting citizens' movement organisations and community-based, anti-poverty organisations set up the 'Solidarity Assembly for National Basic Livelihood Enactment' (hereafter, Solidarity Assembly) together on

March 4, 1999. The Solidarity Assembly appointed Kyeongyoung Song as its executive chairman and Professor Jinyoung Moon of the PSPD as the policy chairman. The two-top system was a strategy to unite anti-poverty movement organisations and citizens' movement organisations (Moon 1999; Song 2000). The Solidarity Assembly made efforts, both formally and informally, to introduce the new public assistance bill to state officials, politicians, and the public (Ahn 2000 pp. 20-23). Through its campaigns, the NBLG bill gradually acquired attention in the institutionalised policy arena and gained support from progressive politicians of the National Assembly.

However, while generally acknowledging the need to incorporate the working-age poor into the regular public assistance system, a lot of conservative politicians and state bureaucrats still disapproved of unconditional public assistance. They argued that public assistance must distinguish 'the undeserving poor' from 'the deserving poor', stigmatising those of working age as the latter, unproductive and dependent on welfare benefits. Chungseok Gong, a conservative member of the National Assembly, stated that "the unconditional benefits for the work-able poor might deteriorate their will to work and make them lazily dependent on welfare" (National Assembly 1998). The Ministry of Labour (MOL) also provided its official opposition, claiming that "Able-bodied adults should be distinguished from 'genuine poor people' and treated with different measures since they are easily trapped in welfare" (1999). And expressing similar disagreement, the MOHW argued that "New public assistance should include an institutional device to divide 'genuine poor people' and 'the poor able to work'. Otherwise, the working-age poor could be lazy about work and lose the will to work" (1999a).

The welfare dependency discourse did not remain merely a discussion. The conservatives attempted to introduce some additional regulations to the NBLG bill to preclude the possibility of welfare dependency. A practical solution they suggested was to add a workfare component to the NBLG. Drawing on the example of western workfare trends, conservative members of the National Assembly claimed that Korea must follow advanced welfare states. A conservative politician, Uihwa Jung, made the following comments at the National Assembly: "As we can see from other advanced Western countries, workfare is a general tendency of the world. Korea also needs to follow the tendency and should focus on recipients' self-sufficiency and

independence from the state welfare benefits" (National Assembly 1998). The MOHW and the MOL also suggested that welfare recipients should be categorised into 'recipients unable to work' and 'recipients able to work', and that the latter group should satisfy certain work obligations in return for public assistance benefits (MOHW 1999a; MOL 1999). They emphasised that "if work-able claimants reject or are lazy at fulfilling work requirements, the benefit provision must be stopped" (MOHW 1999a).

Of course, the Solidarity Assembly vehemently opposed the welfare dependency discourse. In Korea at least, welfare dependency discourse was just an abstract theory imported from the West, rather than being a theory verified by domestic empirical evidence. Indeed, liberal welfare states in the West had certain histories of general public assistance for the working-age poor. In Korea, however, the working-age poor had been completely excluded from public assistance and had no proper safety net on which they could actually depend. The Solidarity Assembly thus explicitly refuted the welfare dependency discourse, stating that "welfare addiction is a conservative rhetoric that ignores the actual livelihood of poor citizens suffering from massive unemployment. Unlike other western countries, the working-age poor in Korea have never enjoyed social security. Talking about welfare dependency is thus illogical and premature" (Solidarity Assembly 1999a).

Nonetheless, the Solidarity Assembly could not gain adherence to their claim, and they ultimately had to compromise with the conservative bloc. As the 1999 General Meeting of the National Assembly drew near, the Solidarity Assembly focused more on passing the NBLG bill rather than on counteracting the welfare dependency rhetoric. As previously mentioned, the Solidarity Assembly had already failed to pass the NBLG bill in 1998, so this time it was a priority to pass it by any means possible (Solidarity Assembly 1999b). Thus, rather than adopting a hard line, the Solidarity Assembly stepped back. It moderated its strong objection to the welfare dependency discourse of the conservatives and finally agreed to add a workfare component to the NBLG bill. As a result, the final NBLG bill containing work obligations was re-submitted on July 12, 1999. It held that "every citizen below the poverty line can apply for public assistance benefits, but in regard to the recipients of working age, benefits are conditional on their participation in work-related activities." Through this compromise, the new NBLG bill was able to be

passed in August 1999 at the National Assembly General Meeting without one dissenting voice among conservative politicians (Ahn 2000).

As a result, the new public assistance legislation, the NBLG, came to have ambivalent implications, having been conceived with both progressive and conservative dimensions. In western countries, workfare is generally regarded as a conservative and neoliberal reform to reduce previous unconditional welfare. However, it is hard to judge the Korean workfare reform in this way. Given that the previous public assistance scheme, the LP, had excluded the working-age poor, the latter's entitlement to the new public assistance represented a welfare expansion. It was in this context that not only the government, but also the Solidarity Assembly could praise the NBLG as "an epochal event of social welfare" (Solidarity Assembly, 1999c) and "a revolutionary enhancement of welfare coverage" (MOHW 1999b). However, the NBLG reform was indeed a limited welfare expansion. Due to the influence of conservative discourse, the path towards unconditional welfare had beenpartially obstructed, and due to the collision of the progressive and conservative blocs, the NBLG came to have workfare elements.

*3.42 Addendum of Workfare Component, Self-Sufficiency Programme*

After the NBLG bill passed in August 1999, work obligation became a policy agenda of the government. Since the workfare component was suddenly added to the final bill in July 1999, the details of how to impose work requirements could not be discussed at that time. Because the NBLG was about to be enforced (in October 2000), the whole structure of the NBLG needed to be decided as soon as possible. The MOHW, the main ministry in charge of public assistance, thus formed an intensive policy-modelling team to develop the NBLG structure, together with academic scholars and the KIHASA researchers. The Self-Sufficiency Programme (SSP) was the sub-programme of the NBLG, developed by the policy-modelling team to enforce the work requirement on working-age recipients (MOHW 2000). Figure 3-2 shows the finalised NBLG structure.

**Figure 3-2 National Basic Livelihood Guarantee System**
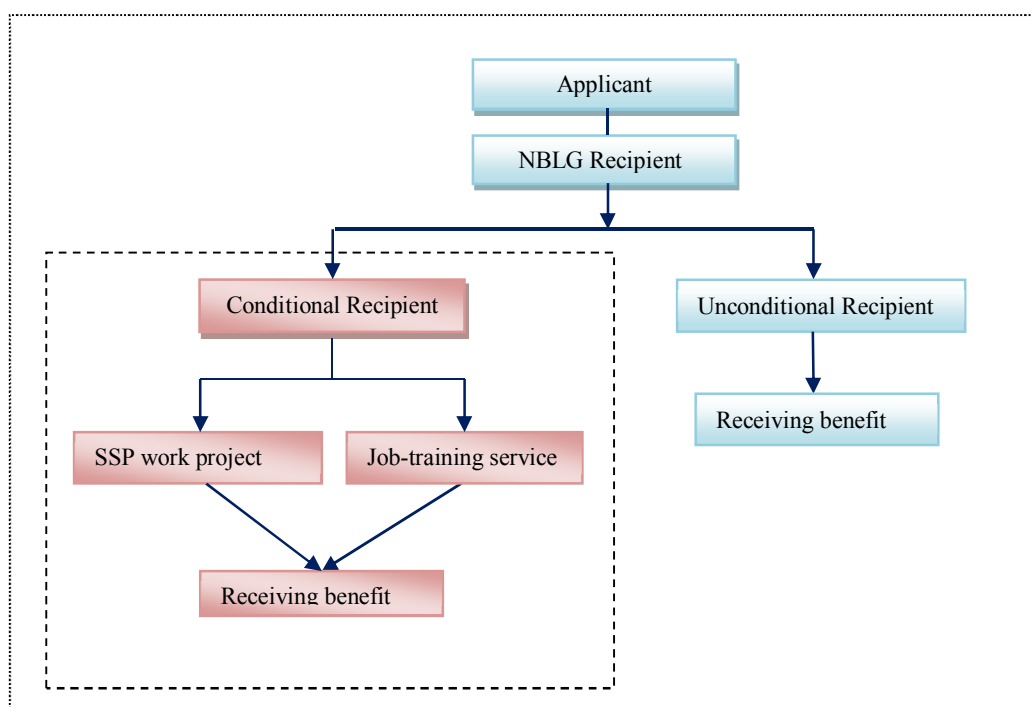


Source: MOHW (2005a p. 37) simplified

According to the NBLG system, 19- to 64-year-olds are allowed to apply for benefits unlike in the LP system. However, NBLG applicants need to pass through several assessment stages. If a person applies for public assistance, the government first distinguish 'official recipients' via a 'means test', which involves investigations into the monthly income and assets of the person and their family. The recipients who pass the means test then undergo the second stage of the scanning process, which is called a 'capacity test', assessing age, health conditions, previous career and education. Persons who are under 18 or over 65, disabled or pregnant are classified as 'unconditional recipients', and they can receive public assistance unconditionally as they did in the LP system. However, the rest of the applicants are categorised as 'conditional recipients' (or SSP recipients) and have to partake in compulsory work-related activities to obtain public assistance. If they fail to fulfil the work duties, their entitlement to the NBLG benefits is withdrawn (MOHW 2000). Conditional recipients are allocated to two work options according to their scores on the Capacity Test Standard, shown in Table 3-7.

**Table 3-7 Work Capacity Test Standard and Score**

| Standard | Category | Score | Detail |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Age 18-35 | 40 | - Person of this age can find job relatively easily |
|  | Age 36-50 | 20 | - Person of this age has moderate employability |
|  | Age 51+ | 0 | - Person of this age has difficulty finding job |
| Health | Good | 30 | - Person in good health |
|  | Bad | 15 | - Person with illness or bad health |
| Career and Education | High | 30 | - Person who has worked for more than 1 month over the last 3 years, except for participation in public work projects<br>- Person who has qualified skills<br>- Person who graduated from college or university |
|  | Middle | 15 | - Person who has worked for more than 1 month over the last 4-5 years, except for participation in public work projects<br>- Person who graduated from middle/high school |
|  | Low | 0 | - The rest |

Source: MOHW (2005a p. 47)

Recipients whose total scores on age, health and career/education 70 points are supposed to partake in individual 'job training' to receive NBLG benefits; those whose scores are under 70 are referred to 'SSP work projects' and have to work there for eight hours a day in return for benefits. MOHW's policy-modelling team provided various possible SSP work projects, ranging from "collecting and recycling food and waste, taking care of forests and parks, maintaining public facilities and lighting, and cleaning offices and schools to assisting disabled children and elderly people.

As a workfare programme, the SSP aims not only to impose work obligations on recipients, but also to promote the movement of recipients from welfare to work. As Figure 3-3shows, each SSP work option differs in terms of how they make recipients swap welfare for work. While recipients of the job-training service are urged to find paid jobs in the private market, participants in the SSP work projects are presumed to need extra work experience in order to make them more employable. SSP work projects are a kind of 'on-the-job training' that teach vocational skills like maintenance, recycling, cleaning and care giving. After working on the SSP work projects for a certain period (generally about three years), the SSP recipients are strongly encouraged to create their own co-businesses for cleaning, care giving or recycling together with other fellow participants. The MOHW titles the co-

businesses 'Self-Sufficiency Communities'.

**Figure 3-3 Self-Sufficiency Programme**
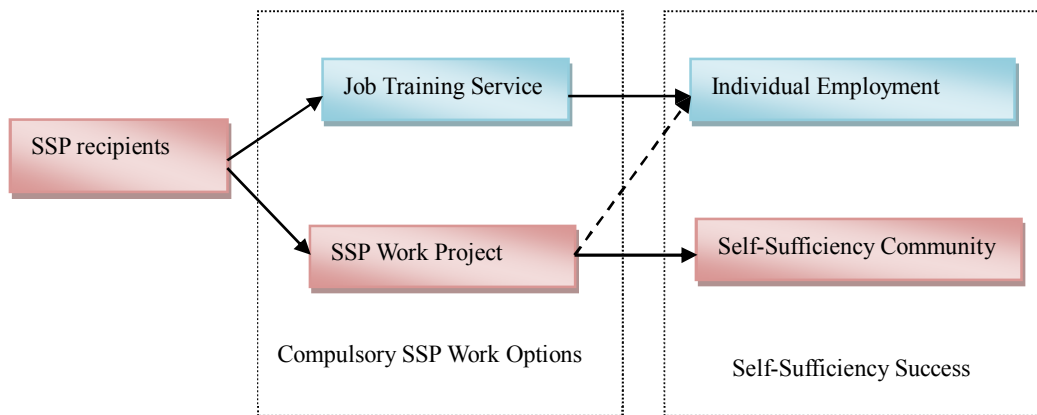


The final issue with which the SSP modelling team was concerned was which organisations would manage the job-training service and the SSP work projects. The MOHW decided to administer the job-training service directly because it had long carried out training services for the previous Self-Sufficiency Protection schemes. However, it decided to entrust SSP work projects to community-based organisations, just as it did for the Pilot SSP Centre Project and the TPWP. Through the two pilot projects, many community organisations had already become familiar with organising public work projects. Thus, instead of setting up new frontline agencies for the SSP, using existing infrastructures was a way to quickly stabilise the new workfare programme.

As suggested by SSP modelling team, it was decided that if community-based organisations applied to participate in the SSP, the government would offer an annual block grant of 150 million KRW to each of them, as it did for pilot SSP Centres. The voluntary organisations that received the funds would then open SSP Centres in their towns to create various SSP work projects. If local government offices referred conditional recipients to SSP Centres, the latter would assign the recipients to one of their SSP work projects, supervising their work performance and training them ultimately to set up Self-Sufficiency Communities with other recipients. The SSP partnership system is thus an accumulative combination of previous partnership projects: 'SSP Centres' are a regularised version of the pilot SSP Centres; 'SSP work projects' are similar to previous temporary public work projects; while 'Self-Sufficiency Communities' are named after poor workers' communities.

After the SSP system was finalised in April 2000, the government began to invite local voluntary organisations on a massive scale to run regular SSP Centres. However, this time, anti-poverty movement groups could not readily approve of the invitation. Unlike for the previous Pilot SSP Centre Project, the SSP was now a conservative and coercive policy. The role of SSP Centres was not limited to establishing poor workers' cooperatives; the newly institutionalised SSP Centres also had to watch over conditional recipients and check whether or not they fulfilled their work duties. For this reason, some anti-poverty activists refused to join the new style SSP Centres (Lee, S. 2000; National Alliance 2001a).

Nonetheless, before long, most anti-poverty organisations were forced to participate in the SSP. The first critical reason was the abolition of the two former temporary partnership projects. Because the unemployment rate decreased from 7.0% in 1998 to 4.0% in 1999, the national interest in unemployment was fading. Consequently, the government decided to cut the budget for the TPWP projects from 2.5 billion KRW in 1999 to 1 billion KRW in 2000, with plans to finalise the projects before 2002. This curtailment meant that a main source of financial support for anti-poverty organisations would disappear. Furthermore, if the SSP was implemented in October 2000, the Pilot SSP Centre Project would also be terminated, and the anti-poverty organisations, which were operating pilot SSP Centres, would have to decide whether to renew their contracts for the new SSP Centres or close their pilot SSP Centres, which meant giving up the regular aid of 150 million KRW per year. In this sense, founding the new SSP Centres became a pragmatic means to secure future financial support (Shin, M. 2000b p. 496).

The second reason for their participation in the SSP was to make use of the Centres as a realistic means to mobilise poor people. Although SSP work projects may take on the characteristics of coercive labour, SSP Centres are the places where poor people come and work. Thus, anti-poverty activists supposed that SSP Centres could function as institutional spaces in which to contact recipients for poor workers' cooperatives. A leading activist of the COUP, Myongho Shin, thus urged anti-poverty movement groups to operate the new SSP Centres, criticising some activists who were reluctant to engage in the SSP:

> Have we ever seriously experimentalised[sic] with the new SSP Centres
> for our movements? Some activists claim 'mobilisation is important',

but most of them tend to be indifferent to find out concrete means for mobilisation. Their idealism is discouraging our anti-poverty movements to go ahead. The reason why our movements are spinning around without progress is not because we do not have a clear ideology and goal…The problem is that some of us look down on real methods to mobilise poor people. They dream of dramatic revolution…While social activists run into such impatience and emotionalism, they fail to face the reality. We have to find out mobilisation methods from reality, not from ideal (Shin, M. 2000b p. 496).

Shin's suggestion soon gained widespread currency in anti-poverty activist circles. In August 2000, the National Alliance collected the opinions of member anti-poverty organisations about what they thought of founding SSP Centres. Although there was some diversity in their responses, most of them accepted SSP Centres as possible places where they could contact and raise consciousness among poor people. Below is a sample of their opinions, which illustrates their pragmatic and eclectic attitudes towards SSP Centres (National Alliance 2000a, 2000b).

The SSP will be a new centre for anti-poverty movements. The collective groups of recipients can become a strong political force. SSP Centres will be the starting point of social revolution (Bangwha Region Group of the National Alliance).

The SSP might become a means to mobilise them. It can serve to spread an alternative social economy like workers' cooperatives…We forecast that the SSP Centres can be a core centre for social movements (Guro Region Group of the National Alliance).

The SSP can be a channel to organise the poor…But we may be very cautious about the risk such that we are likely to be trapped in bureaucratic administration. Thus, while running SSP Centres, we will have to keep considering our ultimate goal and how to make use of the SSP for our own goal (Shinrim Region Group of the National Alliance).

After such internal discussions, almost all the anti-poverty organisations decided to participate in the operation of SSP Centres (National Alliance 2001b). In 2000, 31 anti-poverty movement groups opened SSP Centres with state grants. By the end of the first half of 2001, 71 additional anti-poverty organisations opened SSP Centres (Lee 2004). According to the MOHW's statistics for 2011, there are currently 247 SSP Centres run by local civil society organisations (MOHW 2011 p. 292). The SSP Centres are providing 2,695 SSP work projects for 25,802 SSP recipients. On

average, about five to six staff members work in a SSP Centre, managing approximately10 work projects, with more than 100 recipients enrolled at each Centre. Among them, a great majority of SSP Centres is operated by the anti-poverty organisations originating from the ASH, the COUP and the CACO.

**Table 3-8 Scale of SSP Centres**

|  | SSP Centres | SSP Recipients | Centre Staff | SSP Work Projects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Number | 242 | 25,802 | 1,319 | 1,983 |

Source: MOHW (2008a p. 4)

## 3.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has traced the evolution of the state and anti-poverty organisations' partnership in the SSP, examining how and why anti-poverty organisations, which used to be hostile to the state, came to construct partnerships therewith. In advanced welfare states, the mainstreaming of voluntary organisations in welfare is normally discussed in terms of cost-cutting strategies. It is also undeniable that the state and anti-poverty organisations' partnership in the SSP is in line with typical cost-saving strategies. However, these conventional strategies cannot fully explain the SSP partnership. Structural changes in Korean society such as political democratisation and economic crisis have also facilitated the coalition. Without democratisation and neoliberal economic restructuring, the state and anti-poverty organisations' partnership could not have been tested and expanded.

The most noteworthy point here, however, is that the SSP partnership is a kind of strategic compromise. The state and anti-poverty organisations had opposing visions for the SSP partnership. Anti-poverty activists did not sincerely approve of official SSP goals when forging a consensus with the state. And while the state intended to promote the self-sufficiency of the working-age poor by utilising anti-poverty organisations (i.e. their local infrastructure and personnel) as frontline SSP Centres, anti-poverty organisations were aiming to use the SSP to garner financial resources (state funds) in order to actualise their own movement goals, such as mobilising poor recipients for workers' cooperatives and political resistance. Figure 3-4 summarises the strategic alliance between the state and anti-poverty organisations.

**Figure 3-4 Strategic Alliance in the SSP Partnership**
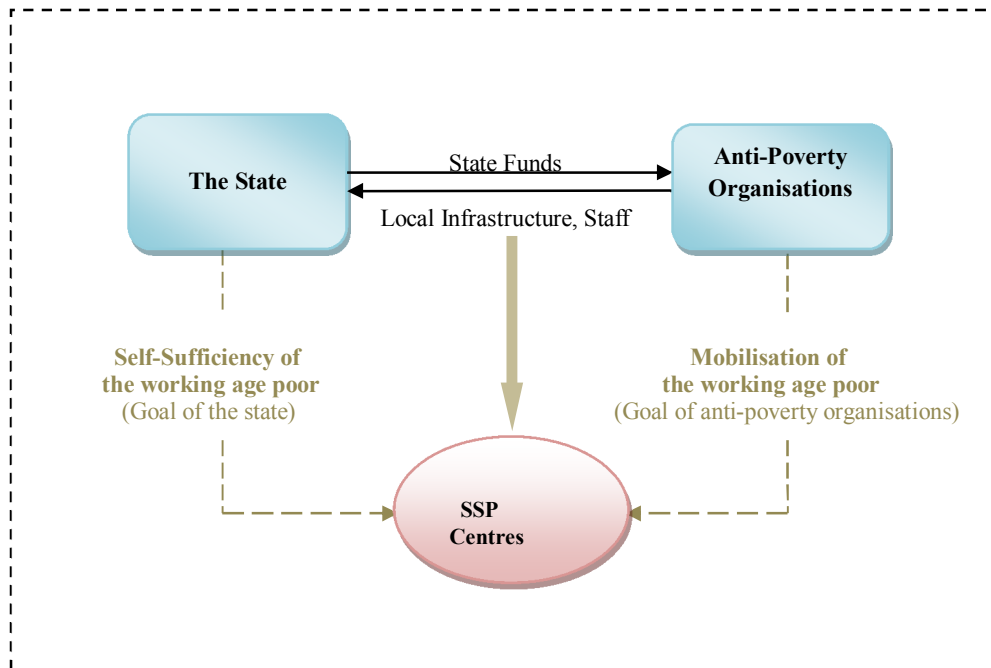


This strategic compromise was the underlying reason why 'progressive' anti-poverty organisations decided to administer 'conservative' workfare. In general, partnership is defined as "cooperation to achieve a common goal" (Glendinning, Powell, and Rummery 2002), but the SSP case reveals that partnerships may also be established where partners 'share a common means for different goals'. Indeed, investigating development projects, Lewis and his colleagues have found that the reason for diverse actors cooperating in partnership projects was not always that they shared the same view of the project, but that they were able to perceive, interpret and translate the project in various ways for their own sake (2006). They argued 'strategic translations' and 'calculated misunderstandings' make it possible for various actors to network with each other for one project, creating multiple rationalities and objectives. When the Korean anti-poverty organisations decided to run frontline SSP Centres, they also produced their own rationales and intentions about the SSP, and this internal calculation contributed to the massive influx of radical anti-poverty organisations into the workfare initiative.

This does not mean, however, that they could automatically achieve their incipient aspirations while operating SSP Centres. Indeed, the strategic calculations led activist-run SSP Centres to harbour internal contradictions between their original mission statements and the official rules of the SSP. This study intends to investigate

how anti-poverty organisations cope with the conflicts produced by the SSP partnership, questioning whether they are able to actualise their aspirations or, conversely, whether partnership results in the loss of their original ethos and political position. Before answering this question, the study will review existing literature on the role of civil society organisations in partnership and identify three analytical lenses for this research.

# Chapter 4

# Theorising Civil Society in State–Civil Society Partnership

## 4.1 Introductory Statement

This research aims primarily to investigate the political role of SSP Centres run by anti-poverty organisations in the SSP partnership. This chapter reviews the existing debates on the politics of state–civil society partnership in general and subsequently derives three analytical lenses to apply to this case study.

Owing to the international prevalence of state–civil society partnership, the various social science disciplines have created a vast literature on civil society organisations in partnership. Scholars in social policy and public administration, primarily from Western welfare states, have commented on welfare mix, welfare pluralism or governance in providing social services (Evers 1995; Evers and Wintersberger 1990; Powell 2007). Development studies have actively offered a great volume of case studies on poverty-reduction projects conducted by the South's NGOs and the state/the North's donor partnerships. However, a shortage of disciplinary exchange and differences in case contexts have left a limited shared conceptual and analytical foundation with which to coordinate the studies. A cacophony of terminology has emerged as well. Each study employs a diverse range of terms and definitions for civil society organisations (e.g. the third sector, voluntary organisations, nonprofits or NGOs) and for partnership (e.g. compacts, interagency working, integrated delivery, joint-up government or multisectoral collaboration). This diversity in language use tends to hinder interdisciplinary theorisation of civil society actors in partnership.

With this in mind, the first part of this chapter begins with revisiting the international literature on civil society organisations and partnership—especially those from social policy and development studies—and categorises the studies into three general approaches to the political position and nature of civil society actors in partnership. It also identifies central themes and issues discussed later in this research. The second part proposes three analytical lenses derived from the existing debates to analyse the politics of the SSP partnership.

**4.2 Three Viewpoints on State–Civil Society Partnership**

*4.21 Mainstream Policy Viewpoint: Civil Society as a Mutual Partner of the State*

Many policy discourses on partnership have treated civil society organisations as panaceas providing welfare services "outside the reach of state bureaucracy and beyond the interests of the private sector" (Morison 2000 p. 105). Some highlight the merits of the voluntary sector's efficiency and accountability of service delivery. Others focus on its role in reviving participatory democracy, while still others deal with civil society organisations as components of good governance. Although apparently diverse, their studies have a common interest in endorsing the "collaborative advantage" of state–civil society partnership (Huxham 1996).

For example, third sector scholars like Salamon and his colleagues have highlighted the strength of civil society organisations as service deliverers (Gidron, Kramer, and Salamon 1992; Salamon 1987, 1995; 1997; Salamon and Anheier 1997; Salamon, Sokolowski and List 1999; Weisbrod 1977, 1986). They have basically conceived state–civil society partnerships as the preferred mechanism for welfare provision in comparison with performance solely by state or market. In Western welfare states, mounting scepticism has arisen about the capacity of the state to efficiently deliver social services (O'Connor 1973; Offe 1984; Pierson 1995). Many scholars denounced state welfare as uniform, constrained by bureaucratic red tape, and lacking attention to special needs of minority groups. However, the market's ability to deliver primary welfare was also doubtful, judging from its history of failure to pay genuine attention to social problems (Hansmann 1987; James and Rose-Ackerman 1986). At this point, the third sector scholars turned to civil society organisations as alternative solutions to both state and market failures (Weisbrod 1977, 1986). Salamon et al. defined the third sector as "the first line of defence" for coping with social welfare problems (1999 p. 16). They stressed that voluntary organisations can produce responsive services under the assumption that they have more knowledge of local issues, can more easily establish intimate relationships with welfare recipients, and can more capably conduct holistic approaches for them.

While third sector scholars emphasise the high accountability of civil society agencies for welfare delivery, liberal political thinkers have expected the participation of civil society actors in public welfare to politically uplift participatory democracy (Putnam 1993, 2000; Tocquville 1961; Warren 2001, 2003). Tocqueville

stressed the significance of voluntary associations as a training ground for democracy and active citizenship, creating social capital and communitarian spirit (1961), and liberalist political discussions have echoed similar claims. The recent re-emphasis of the liberalist thoughts connect with criticisms of the bureaucracy of modern welfare states (Kendall and Knapp 2002; Simon 1990). Many political scholars have found that the bureaucracy of welfare states tends to restrict the democratic potential of civil society (Habermas 1987). Indeed, during the 20th century in western countries like the US, there was a marked decline in social participation, from church attendance and volunteerism to membership of clubs and communal associations (Putnam 2000). Against this background, some scholars began to promote the revival of voluntary associations and increasingly review them as "a place where politics can be democratised, active citizenship strengthened, the public sphere reinvigorated" (Brown et al. 2000 p. 57).

Community scholars like Etzioni have also advocated for a central role of voluntary organisations in providing welfare (1973, 1993), saying that it may well represent the most important step in reviving communitarian-inspired visions of modern society (1973, p. 315). This communitarian proposal for the enhancement of grass-roots democracy constitutes a core ingredient of 'the Third Way', which envisages statutory-voluntary partnership as a strategy for "the renewal of democracy" (Giddens 1998). The third way agenda has become the philosophical foundation of the British 'Compact' to promote partnerships in local regeneration, employment services and social care projects (Glendinning et al. 2002; Lewis 1999, 2005).

Such mainstream policy discourses that emphasise the advantages of civil society organisations in welfare provision fall within the debates of 'networked governance', characterised by the loosening power of the state and the simultaneous recognition of other social actors in public administration (Jessop 1999; Kooiman 1993, 2003; Pierre and Peters 2000; Rhodes 1994, 1996, 1997; Stoker 2004, 1999). The governance theorists have argued that network forms of *governance* have increasingly replaced hierarchical forms of *government*. The traditional concept of government as regulating power no longer rules and other societal actors in civil society have become influential over policy administration. Governance scholars coined the phrases "governance without government" and "hollow states" to

dramatically depict the new structure of public administration (Rhodes 1994, 1996; Peters 1994). In their debates, voluntary organisations have been normally hailed as essential components of good governance. They have taken on heightened significance as viable welfare administrators, replacing state-oriented welfare governance.

As such, although existing discussions on state–civil society partnership come from various disciplines, they sing one voice that the state has lost political and moral authority, while civil society actors have emerged as desirable solutions to state-run welfare. To borrow Fairclough's language, these mainstream discourses "articulate" with each other and constitute a dominant image of democratic partnership (2000 p. 170).

Limitation of the mainstream policy viewpoint: However, the mainstream policy discourses on partnership seems to have a very clear limitation: it fails to address the possibilities that partnership could damage the putative nature of civil society. The mainstream policy discourses mainly advertise the virtue of partnership, but neglects its negative impact on civil society. Its followers generally describe partnership as a situation in which the responsive and lively features of civil society simply flow into and replace the bureaucratic, unresponsive and rigid state system. They do not concern themselves with the adverse effect—state power interferes with civil society actors.

Indeed, the dominant policy discourses have basically paid scant attention to power conflicts in partnership. For instance, Coston categorised state–civil society relations into two camps—'repression and rivalry' and 'partnership and cooperation'—as if partnership signified the opposite of conflict and suppression (1998). Similar to Coston, most of the mainstream discussions highlight a cooperative side of partnership, assuming a mutual and harmonious nature to partnerships. As Dahlstedt accurately commented, "Today's partnerships are characterised by the belief that none of the involved parties is superior to any of the others. The state no longer dictates conditions, but rather functions as one partner among a number of others, such as firms and voluntary organisations" (2009a p. 19). Governance theorists Peters and Pierre also stated, "Government organisations remain a part of the networked governance, but they are conceptualised as dependent

on the other actors to the same extent that those actors are dependent on government"
(1998 p. 226). Further, most scholarly literature on partnership consider that civil
society organisations "enjoy a substantial degree of discretion from the state during
the operation of partnership projects" (Glendinning et al. 2002 p. 1). For this reason,
they have decorated partnerhip with phrases such as 'mutual dependency',
'interaction', 'interdependence' or 'interrelationship', in hopes of dispelling any
residue of power relations such as conflict, domination or subjection.

When they must point to a superior actor in partnership, the mainstream policy
discourses recognise civil society organisations as "superior" in terms of efficiency,
trust and representativeness in the fields of welfare provision (Kendall and Knapp
2002 p. 11) compared to the "clumsy, bureaucratic, and path dependent" state (Peters
and Pierre 1998 p. 225). Salamon also stated, "Voluntary organizations are in a better
position than government to personalise the provision of services, to operate on a
smaller scale, to adjust care to the needs of clients rather than to the structure of
government agencies" (1995 p. 49).

However, unlike the dominant policy assumption, some critical researchers
have pointed out the image of 'equal' partnership as idealistic. Indeed, most of the
dominant discussions are not based on thorough empirical studies of actual
partnership cases. The discussions of governance or the third way resemble
normative blueprints about desirable partnerships. Contrary to their assumption,
however, numerous case studies have consistently provided controversial testimonies
of a great disparity between facts and norms. To name a few, Alexander, Nank and
Stivers conducted a large-scale case study on the collaboration of 124 voluntary
organisations and the state in Ohio, US, and found that most of the voluntary
organisations regarded themselves as in an increasingly dependent position vis-à-vis
the state (1999). They observed the risk that community spiritedness, which has
traditionally marked their nature, of going unnoticed through their engagement to
welfare service delivery. Many studies of development projects have revealed similar
observations. Examining the Integrated Rural Development Project in Bangladesh,
Feldman also showed how the collaborative development projects actually resulted
in the bureaucratisation of NGOs rather than offering a more effective platform to
distribute resources to the poor (2003). Along these lines, Brinkerhoff also
demonstrated that voluntary associations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, originally

established to serve an advocacy role, faced difficulties in retaining their original political stance and identity, being subjected to state instruction after their involvement in social care delivery (2002).

It seems commonplace that partnership projects significantly constrain the values, identity and missions of civil society organisations, as Smith and Lipsky commented (1993 p. 30). Nonetheless, repeatedly (re)producing the image of mutual coproduction, the dominant discussions rarely pause in their studies to ponder the possible consequences in which the ruling bloc, like the state or donors, could determine the direction of civil society actors. In this sense, Harriss denounced the dominant notions of networked governance and partnership as "deceptive because they tend to conceal and veil the operations of power" (2002, p. 116). The author has based the following critical viewpoint on partnership upon these objections to the mainstream discourse of partnership.

*4.22 Critical Viewpoint: Civil Society as a Shadow State*
As a counterpoint to the dominant paradigm of mutual partnership, studies that we can categorise as providing the critical perspective have warned that partnership can undermine the values and identity of civil society actors. As we can see from phrases used by critical studies, such as "the perils of partnership" (Deakin 1995), "threat to civil society" (Alexander et al. 1999), and "illusion of good governance" (Mercer 2003), some have criticised the romanticizing of partnerships and tried to indicate political challenges that civil society actors can confront after their engagement in partnership structure. In this sense, we can view this critical viewpoint as the structuralist approach—sensitive to power and control of the dominant structure over actors, whereas the mainstream policy viewpoint more closely resembles the functionalist approach—focusing mainly on the functions of civil society actors and slighting conflicts and power relations.

Among the critical voices, Wolch's 'shadow state' apparatus might be one of the most representative ones (1990, 1999). Examining partnership cases in the USA, Wolch articulated the pressure on voluntary organisations to alter their traditional ethos. She contended that, although seemingly equal and independent, civil society organisations actually play the role of junior partner in these relationships, controlled by the state in both formal and informal ways. The state mostly funds welfare

partnership projects. Thus, if the state withdraws funding, it throws light on the financial vulnerability of voluntary organisations. Due to dependence on state funds, voluntary organisations tend to become more susceptible to the demands of the state and gradually move away from community needs. For this reason, Wolch asserted that partnership causes civil society actors to operate as a shadow state. Akin to Wolch, Dahrendorf also held that partnership in the UK means nothing less than the incorporation of voluntary organisations into the state system. He argued the seemingly mutually advantageous marriage of state and voluntary organisations actually threatens the weaker partner of this affair, and partnership will likely stifle the independence of voluntary associations with the flirt of political power of the state (see Lewis 2004 p. 181, 2005 p. 128 for Dahrendorf's claims).

Wolch's shadow state has a certain affinity to Althusser's ideological state apparatus (1971). Althusser viewed supposedly non-state organisations such as religious, educational, family, legal, trade unions, communications and cultural components as state apparatuses alongside army, policy, courts and prisons, traditionally regarded as state bodies. While defining the latter as 'repressive state apparatuses' exercising coercive and violent state power, he termed the former as 'ideological state apparatuses', through which the state disseminates dominant ideologies to society in a sophisticated fashion. From the Althusserian viewpoint, the degradation of voluntary organisations as a shadow state is a very natural corollary of partnership.

In the vanguard of the critical viewpoint stands a group of Foucauldian studies, which have seen partnership as an advanced technique of intimate regulation of the society (Dahlstedt 2009a, 2009b; Fyfe and Milligan 2003; McDonald and Marston 2002a, 2002b; Morison 2000; Schofield 2002). One of Foucault's key issues dwells on the question: How can the governing power regulate increasingly disparate subjects of society? To offer a conceptual framework to this question, he coined a term, *governmentality* (1991). The term itself, in combining the words *governing* and *mentality*, implies the dominant practices of governing power that a society takes for granted. For instance, during the golden age of welfare states, traditional 'government' meant the governing mentality that Western societies took for granted as a desirable form of governing system. However, under the influence of neoliberalism, 'smaller government' emerged as advanced governmentality

(Burchell, Gordon, Miller, and Foucault 1991; Rose and Miller 1992; Rose 1993; Barry, Osbourne, and Rose 1996; Dean and Hindess 1998). The advanced governmentality appears to fit with governance discourses, which highlight 'the retreat of the state' or 'hollowing out of the state'. However, contrary to governance debates, governmentality scholars consider that ostensibly smaller government does not actually mean a shrinkage of governing power. Instead, they view it as governing power reconfigured and disseminated beyond the conventional state bodies, by multiplying sites of regulation to other social agencies and individuals (Rose 1996; Rose and Miller 1992). Accordingly, the role of the state changes from that of central sovereign to that of mobiliser or coordinator of non-state agencies from a distance. Governmentality scholars view such diffusion of governing power as the key to how the neoliberal state regulates diverse groups and individuals.

Along these lines, a few partnership researchers inspired by Foucault have pointed out that partnership represents a technique of advanced liberal governmentality that aims at the dissemination of regulatory power to non-governmental organisations. Through power dispersion, voluntary organisations come to carry out social control and tutelage formerly conducted by the state. Examining various partnership cases, Foucauldian researchers contend that partnership leads civil society actors to become docile subjects of the dominant capitalist system, actively actualising neoliberal priniciples such as managerialism, self-management and self-responsibility on behalf of/with the state.

In this vein, shadow state and Foucauldian studies have characteristically illustrated how the dominant system absorbs civil society actors. Alongside the aforementioned studies, many other critical scholars have also demonstrated how dominant power co-opts civil society actors through partnerships. They argue that the dominant power has extended its tentacles to civil society through partnership, far from retreating from power. The critical studies have commonly cited the following three challenges with which partnership assaults civil society organisations: depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation[2].

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[2] In terms of the impact of external pressures on civil society organisations and their strategic responses to external constraints, the theories of neo-institutionalism are a useful reference point. Although not always dealing directly with power, neo-institutionalists have viewed external coercion, such as the legal enforcement of state mandates and sanctions, as being the dominant vehicle of change for individual organisations (cf. Powell and Dimaggio 1991). Also, advancing the early version of institutional theory, Oliver has argued that organisations not only conform to contextual

1) Depoliticisation (losing an adversarial stance against the state): First, critical studies have indicated that partnership erodes the political potential of civil society actors as a force of contestation against state institutions (cf. Alexander et al. 1999; Dahlstedt 2009a; Feldman 2003; Maddison, Denniss and Hamilton 2004; Milligan and Fyfe 2005). Civil society "stresses the representative or contestatory functions of social organizations outside the state" (Edwards and Foley 2001 p. 6). However, many scholars have found that partnership poses a challenge to the adversarial role.

State control of money signifies the most frequently cited constraint to the advocacy role. For example, voluntary organisations engaged in welfare delivery in the USA continue to receive approximately 40% of their budgets from government, and such financial reliance of civil society organisations on the state or donor are very much the same in other countries (Alexander et al. 1999 p. 456). Salamon basically regarded such role division—the state as *funder* and voluntary organisation as *provider*— makes them a kind of 'complementary' ally (1997). But it normally turns out that dependence on state subsidies significantly undermines the capacity of civil society organisations to put forward alternative political ideas for social change and, thus, "silencing dissent" (Maddison, Denniss, and Hamilton 2004). Tracing the history of British welfare partnerships, Jane Lewis stated, "Given the importance of the state's position as paymaster, it is unlikely that the state hands money over to voluntary organisations without demanding to know how it is spent" (2005, p. 28). The state wants to scrutinise and tailor the activities of civil society organisations by setting regulations and parameters. Especially, while the state is normally interested

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constraints, but also have the capacity to resist, decouple, conceal, buffer, challenge, attack or manipulate those who make regulative demands upon them (1991). In this sense, neo-institutional theory also offers a cogent analytical frame within which to examine the influence of state intervention on civil society organisations and their struggles against imposed rules. Indeed, McDonald and Marston have attempted to apply the neo-institutionalist approach to the analysis of non-profits, examining how the external policy environment of the neo-liberal state has threatened the distinctive institutional order of non-profit organisations and driven them to adopt neo-liberal policy discourses and regulations in search of a new institutional order (2002a). However, the present study does not draw directly from these neo-institutionalists' concepts and themes, which are concerned more with mechanisms, rather than relations, of power. The main focus of this work is the power dynamics between actors, not intra-organisational change within a given organisation; neoinstitutional theory is well suited to studying the organisational aspects of partnership, but is less useful when investigating its political dimensions. Thus, the literature review has focused on works that deal directly with power relations in a state–civil society partnership, from which three analytical themes (i.e. depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation) have been derived. These reflect the power relations between civil society organisations and the state (depoliticisation), civil society organisations and poor people (bureaucratisation) and civil society organisations and the market (marketisation) in a partnership setting.

in the service-delivery role of voluntary organisations, it is less comfortable with their political role. Thus, state regulations tend to exhort voluntary organisations to focus more on service-delivery businesses and marginalise their political role. Consequently, the potential of civil society organisations as sites of social change gets implicitly and explicitly circumscribed by the regulatory control of the state (Milligan and Fyfe 2005 p. 420).

Depoliticisation also results from civil society organisations' attempts to survive in the institutionalised arena. Merrett's study of nonprofits in Illinois in the USA revealed that voluntary organisations felt under threat by cutbacks in state aid because they normally came up short on their own finances (2001). Having witnessed that organisations' long-term survival closely linked to meeting state's demands, many voluntary organisations tend to reshape their own activities in terms of statutory objectives rather than on the basis of their own values (Alexander et al. 1999 pp.460-462). To maintain an amicable relationship with the state, they tend to avoid taking antagonistic stands. They begin to formulate their opinions apolitically or at least 'neutrally' by narrowing discussions to issues of technical problem solving, and they evade discussing underlying structural causes of the problems (Feldman 2003 p. 22). A survey of the Australia Institute also revealed that nine out of ten Australian NGOs believe that dissenting organisations risk having their funding cut (Maddison, Denniss, and Hamilton 2004 p. 43). After examining a Swedish urban regeneration project, Dahlstedt found that this survival strategy substantially diminishes the spirit of resistance of civil society actors and creates a "conflict avoiding subjects"(2009a p. 26). In this sense, Feldman has a pessiminist attitude about partnerships, stating that the "strategic alliance" of civil society organisations with the state to secure funds finally leads to the "co-optation" to the dominant system as a faithful servant (2003, p. 11).

2) Bureaucratisation (losing intimate connections with people): Second, critical studies have indicated that partnership bureaucratises civil society organisations and establishes hierarchies in their relationships with local people (cf. Alexander et al. 1999; Cope 2001; Feldman 2003; May 2001). As we saw when looking at the mainstream policy viewpoint, civil society organisations have mainstreamed as desirable frontline welfare agencies because the public views them as an alternative solution to top-down state bureaucracy strengthening bottom-up initiatives. As

"indispensable intermediaries between community and government", society deems voluntary organisations to convey the voices of marginalised people to governments that would otherwise remain remote and unheard (Melville and Perkins 2003 p. 1).

However, many critical studies have rejected this image of participatory partnership. After entering into the state bureaucratic system, voluntary organisations normally face the challenge of balancing the role of representing welfare receivers with the role of fulfilling their contracts with the state. Although they had originally intended to speak for the needs of people, it gets rather difficult for them to constantly stand by welfare receivers. They become too busy with imposed tasks to consider all the diverse needs of receivers while also attending to the demands of the state (Alexander et al. 1999 p. 461). The demands from the state pose particular threats to their capacity to respond to social needs, potentially undermining the credibility of civil society agencies within the communities they serve (Baines 2010 p.11). Similarly, Rummery warned that welfare partnerships might cause the exclusion of the real voices of service users, while participating agencies try to meet their own needs (2006 p. 300).

Some critical scholars even point out that civil society organisations act as 'street-level bureaucrats' rather than as 'grassroots advocates' for people. As local welfare agencies, voluntary organisations should conduct "mandates to monitor clients and enforce sanctions . . . on behalf of their partner, the state" (Wolch 1999 p. 28). In this regard, Lipsky and Smith depicted voluntary organisations as 'new street-level bureaucrats' executing state regulations at the local level on behalf of state officials:

> Nonprofit agencies have taken over functions previously undertaken directly by public workers, and have assumed program responsibilities in new areas where government workers have never performed. The staff of nonprofit agencies are the new "street-level bureaucrats": that is, workers who…act under the cloak of public authorities. (Smith and Lipsky 1993 p. 13)

Cope's analysis of a workfare partnership in Buffalo, NY, in the USA provides a vivid illustration of the function of civil society actors as the new street-level bureaucrats (2001). He criticised that while civil society organisations provide training services for poor people, they actually play the role of bureaucrats, "by insisting on certain behaviours and attitudes, and by facilitating the monitoring of

public assistance recipients who will be sanctioned if they do not attend regularly or do not conform to program rules"(2001 p. 403). Through partnership, civil society organisations relinquish their role in advocating poor people and come to function as 'case managers' that monitor everyday behaviour of unemployed individuals (McDonald and Marston 2005).

Indeed, some critics feel civil society organisations often represent the interests of those 'who work with the poor', rather than the interests of poor people (May 2001 p. 254). Investigating development NGOs, Feldman held that civil society organisations intrinsically preclude the bottom-up participation of disadvantaged people, rather than enabling it. She claimed that instead of trying to find ways for local poor people to speak on their own behalf, NGOs normally prefer to step forward and speak on their behalf as if their opinions stem from those of people in poverty (2003 p. 18). Such NGOs can easily displace the direct voices of local people under the good name of "representatives" (Feldman 2003 p. 21). Farrington and his colleagues also agreed that considering NGOs as grassroots advocates of a local community is itself a problematic assumption (Farrington, Bebbngton, Wellard and Lewis 1993 p. 31). Many civil society organisations fail to actualise the bottom-up participation because most of their staff do not come from poor families originally (Farrington et al. 1993 pp. 44–45; Feldman 2003 pp. 16–17). In general, NGO staff, often intellectuals and university graduates, come chiefly from the middle class. Such different backgrounds between NGO staff and poor people accelerate the process of hierarchicalisation between the two, and make it easier for NGO staff to relate to state bureaucrats when they work on public welfare projects.

3) Marketisation (losing communitarian and cooperative spirits): Marketisation represents the third threat to the nature of civil society organisations (cf. Backman and Smith 2000; Browne 2000; Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Evans and Shield 2002; Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005; Rosenman, Scotchmer, and Benschoten 1999; Ryan 1999). Often called *nonprofits*, civil society organisations have been regarded as more trustworthy public welfare providers than for-profits in the market (Weisbrod 1977, 1986; Hansmann 1987; James and Rose-Ackerman 1986). While the market stresses the values of competition, performance or self-interestedness, some consider voluntary organisations as social incubators that fosters reciprocity,

equality, solidarity and cooperation (Hodgkin 1993 p.422; Cox 1999 p. 27). Traditionally appreciated as a producer of 'social capital' and the bonds of trust (Putman 1993), this distinction between civil society organisations and private companies has been the rationale for the desirability of civil society agencies in delivering public welfare (Wigglesworth and Kendall 2000 p. 1). However, many critical scholars of partnership have observed a growing convergence between nonprofits and for-profit enterprises in terms of ideology, managerial models and styles.

In particular, the state has exerted growing pressures on its partnering nonprofits to follow market management. In many Western countries, the state has increasingly introduced market-type mechanisms to welfare administration, especially under the name of new public management (Clarke and Newman 1997; Dunleavy and Hood 1994; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Walsh 1995). State authorities have employed strategies of business management to guide public administration, and the notions of performance, competition or customer satisfaction have supplanted the previous norms of social welfare such as equality and social rights. A problem arises when "the managerial state" (Clarke and Newman 1997) begins to demand that their partnered voluntary organisations adopt market-like approaches to their activities, structures and philosophies (Browne 2000; Evans et al. 2005).

Performance-based funding, for one, puts pressure on civil society organisations to become more businesslike. In a study on American partnership cases, Ryan observed the state's shift from offering unconditional grants to performance-based funds with increased emphasis on outcomes measurement (1999). The traditional manner of outsourcing welfare services, formerly a non-competitive and quasi-grant arrangement has changed. In today's welfare partnership in many countries, the state tends to award funds to voluntary organisations according to their performance, such as to whom (how many) and how efficiently they deliver services (Nightingale and Pindus 1997 p. 6). The emphasis on performance causes nonprofits to venture into commercial and profitable activities and deters them from entering into mission-related actions (Adams and Perlmutter 1991 p. 33). As Alexander and her colleagues demonstrated, performance-based funding encourages voluntary organisations to "provide reimbursable services of individual benefit where the outcome can be measured and documented" (1999 p. 68) and results in the gradual

elimination of unquantifiable services.

Business-like management tends to dampen inter-organisational solidarity among civil society organisations. One merit of civil society is to create social networks of trust with community people and other neighbouring organisations. These social networks are viewed as an essential channel for organising collective actions and voices to address social change (Backman and Smith 2000 p. 356-363). However, performance-based contracts drive voluntary organisations to compete with each other for limited funds. The competitive contracts dismantle cooperative spirits among nonprofits, shifting their focus from solidarity with others to greater achievements than others (Alexander et al. 1999 p. 462). In this regard, drawing on Foucauldian governmentality, Morison commented that partnerships provide a mechanism whereby the state encourages the more "managerially minded" parts of the voluntary sector to pursue their interests through a framework of "good practice", which reinforces economic rationality rather than traditional ethos (2000).

Critical scholars note that state–civil society partnership finally dissipates the potential of civil society as a counterforce against capitalism. With partnerships come new criteria such as growth, efficiency and progress to guide the decision making of nonprofit organisations. As Ryan noted, emphasis on the new criteria deters civil society organisations from keeping up an anti-capitalist viewpoint (1999 p. 135). Since the state values efficient services and outcomes, it becomes harder for civil society agencies to concentrate on collective social issues beyond the assigned tasks of serving individuals (Rosenman et al. 1999).

To sum up, the critical debate has asserted that partnership damages the putative nature of the third sector in various aspects. Scholars believe that partnership erodes the advocacy potential of civil society organisations (depoliticisation); formalises their relation with welfare receivers (bureaucratisation); and leads them to lose their communitarian spirit and to comply with market demands (marketisation).

The multidimensional colonisation of civil society through partnership has also been acknowledged by mainstream commentators who would basically accentuate the bright sides of the third sector. For instance, Salamon has cautioned that bureaucratisation and marketisation signify the most likely effects of government contracting on nonprofits (1993b). Gidron, Krammer and Salamon also mentioned

that some civil society organisations act like a 'vendor', functioning as a subordinate agent of the state, rather than as a 'partner' that enjoys a significant degree of discretion in the operation of welfare delivery (1992). They drew attention to difficulties in achieving the ideal of a mutual partnership model in a context where one party possesses the purse and the other the begging bowl.

Limitations of the critical viewpoint: However, the critical viewpoint also has limitations of having selectively explored the power relationships. To put it differently, critical studies tend to magnify the 'domination–subjection' relationship in partnerships, pointing out how the dominant power comes to colonise civil society actors. They generally set aside any possibilities of 'resistance', which is another aspect of power dynamics. In this regard, Glennerster commented on the partiality of Wolch's selection of partnership cases, saying that it failed to incorporate contrasting stories where voluntary organisations enjoyed a certain autonomy and opposed state regulations (1992 p. 482).

Foucauldian view of partnerships also clearly reveals the selective display of information. Foucault claimed "there are no relations of power without resistances" (1980 p. 142) and "because power is everywhere … resistance is everywhere" (1980, p. 96). But while heavily focusing on disclosing how actors become subjugated to dominant power, Foucauldians have not yet substantially explored the emergence of resistance in their studies. For this reason, some have criticised Foucauldian studies for offering an exclusively pessimistic and nihilist approach to power, merely showing a unidirectional aspect of power relations (domination and submission) and failing to give a cogent account of actors' subjectivity and reflectivity (Dews 1987; Leonard 1997). Foucault-influenced partnership studies also share the limitation. Having a highly deterministic assumption that every actor is an instrument of the dominant structure, they have argued that welfare partnership represents an 'advanced' technique of the dominant system. The totalising viewpoint does not differentiate between civil society organisations and government, but rather it bundles them together with welfare providers that regulate the poor.

To acknowledge this limitation, several critical scholars have touched upon some signs of resistance in partnerships. For example, Alexander and her colleagues commented, "Although the occasions are limited by their vulnerability to the power

of the agency, 'islands of freedom' could continue to pop up amid voluntary organisations" in partnership (1999 p. 467). However, this kind of comment on possibilities for resistance normally arrives at the concluding remarks of their studies as brief prospects. Whether or not civil society organisations can really maintain their ethos and in what manner they struggle against domination largely remains under examined. The following alternative viewpoint has emerged as a corrective to the inadequate attention of the critical approach to resistance.

*4.23 Alternative Viewpoint: Civil Society as a Space of Resistance*
As a modification of the critical perspective, the alternative viewpoint claims that civil society agencies in partnerships can still function as 'a space of resistances', not only as 'a space of services'. While the critical perspective throws light on the co-option of the civil society into the state welfare system, the alternative viewpoint tries to unearth the counter-actions emerging from civil society to restore their distinctive aspects in the partnership system. It differs from the mainstream policy discourses, which overlook the existence of dominance in partnership. But it also differs from the critical viewpoint that simply view civil society actors as docile prostheses of the state. The alternative viewpoint illuminates the autonomous side of civil society actors and shed more light on their continuous political struggles to countervail the colonisation process of civil society.

Believers of this perspective have yet to develop a fully established and systematised approach compared to the other two viewpoints. It represents an embryonic view recently proposed and applied to parts of several case studies. Particularly, anthropological studies of development projects have consistently tried to reveal that indigenous NGOs resort to multiple strategies of negotiation and autonomy to carry out their own 'projects in the Project' contrary to the directions of project funders like the state or other North donors (Arce, Villarreal, and Vries 1994; Arce and Long 2000; Gupta and Sharma 2006; Lewis and Mosse 2006; Long 2001; Sharma 2008). Gupta and Sharma's anthropologic approach to Mahila Samakhya, an Indian development project, offers one example (Gupta and Sharma 2006; Sharma 2008). Mahila Samakhya, a stereotypical partnership project, is sponsored by the state and North donors and operated by local NGOs at 9,000 villages in ten provinces. As frontline welfare agencies, the local NGOs are supposed to provide

poor rural women altruistic work and empowerment services for economic self-sufficiency. Officially speaking, Mahila Samakhya is a kind of work-first policy, initiated by neoliberal requirements from the IMF. Also, according to many Foucauldian scholars, so-called empowerment services refer to typical discourse and practice to burden individuals with all responsibility for social problems (Pease 2002). In this sense, if superficially drawing a Foucauldian view, one could easily view local NGOs for Mahila Samkhya as local disciplinary powers that actively facilitate the neoliberal principles of self-sufficiency and self-responsibility of poor women.

However, Gupta and Sharma contended that the one-dimensional interpretation of Foucauldian scholars errs because it assumes civil society actors function as merely compliant with official policy principles. By conducting an anthropological investigation, they disclosed that local NGOs continue to sustain their philosophy of community development and radical social changes. The NGOs problematise the view of women as passive welfare recipients and try to alter the mainstream discourse of 'individualistic employment' into 'collective empowerment'. By incorporating Paulo Freire's pedagogy and feminist liberation theories into their services, the local NGOs 'empower' poor women to critically reflect upon gender inequality, to mobilise village-level women's groups and finally lead them to conduct collective actions to challenge the oppressive situation. Through this study, Gupta and Sharma showed the danger in generalising civil society organisations as instruments of the dominant system and suggested paying careful attention to actual street-level activities of civil society agencies to fully grasp their role in partnership projects.

As for cases in Western welfare states, Little's ethnographic study of an American workfare programme and Baines' on Canadian nonprofits offer good references for the alternative approach (Baines 2010; Little 1999). By observing training classes run by voluntary organisations for TANF recipients, Little criticised the conventional Foucauldian viewpoint, which neglects opposition of civil society actors (1999). She attempts to describe how voluntary organisation staff try to distinguish themselves from the dominant system and consciously present their distinctive identity from state welfare bureaucrats as below:

Workfare program staff explicitly distinguish themselves from income maintenance caseworkers to their clients, saying, "I'm not a welfare worker, I don't know the welfare rules." They sympathize with clients over the treatment they get from 'the system' and their AFDC caseworkers. Staff see themselves as part of an emancipatory work training and/or educational program for poor women, rather than as part of the welfare bureaucracy. (Little 1999 p. 171)

The state sets the major elements of the TANF, but at the training classes, voluntary organisation staff altered stigmatised discourses of dependency and made efforts to offer TANF recipients a chance to critically reflect upon poverty, rather than delivering neoliberal idea of the TANF. Through this study on resistance, Little rebutted the critical viewpoint, which misses the emancipatory role of civil society actors, and she argues that voluntary organisations in partnership can still serve to produce counter-hegemonic discourses (1999 p. 166).

As Little clarifies, the alternative viewpoint of civil society actors' discretion has gained analytical inspiration from Lipsky's "street-level bureaucracy" (1999 p. 166). As Lipsky described in another book, *Street-Level Bureaucracy* (1980), street-level bureaucrats do not always observe formal policy orders and goals. Although official mandates constrain their activities, they can have their own perspectives on policies and exercise considerable discretion while administering welfare. Along this vein, many scholars have shown how street-level bureaucrats remake and change official rules of state policies. Sharon Wright's studies offered one such case (2001 2003). Examining Job Centres Plus in the UK, she revealed how street-level workers revise public regulations of the New Deal. In like manner, Howard shows how frontline officials can modify and ignore rules (2006). He dissented from the totalising view of Foucauldian studies, saying that their structuralist critics hardly count the "different perspectives and practices of actors at different levels and in different parts of social welfare system" and the power conflicts between street-level and central welfare administers (Howard 2006 p.137).

Given the aforementioned discretion of traditional street-level government bureaucrats, we can presume that voluntary organisation staff, which Lispky and Smith defined as "new street-level bureaucrats" (1993 p. 13), can also keep a certain autonomy from the state. Indeed, their discretion can be no less than that of local government officials. Even though voluntary organisations have the nickname "the

third-party government" (Salamon 1997; Young 2001), they stem from different foundations, origins, and histories than real government bodies, and their staff entertain more liberal ideas and opinions, compared to state officials whose tasks and status more strictly adhere to statutory directions. This different base can enable civil society actors to perform more autonomous actions than state officials when administering commissioned welfare services. In this sense, Little suggested, to comprehensively explore power dynamics in welfare projects, we need to differentiate 'street-level' civil society actors from 'top-level' official policies and carefully look at the defiance of street-level actors, rather than assuming both level of actors exercise power and create discourse in the same (hegemonic) way (1999p. 1 166).

Baines' study on Canadian social services examines the autonomous role of the nonprofit sector in welfare delivery with a greater focus (2010). He acknowledged that neoliberal restructuring and managerialist ideology restrict the capacity of nonprofits to express their voluntary and participatory spirit within the confines of their increasingly narrow, fast-paced, and standardised work (p. 23). Nonetheless, through an ethnographic examination, he found that the voluntary sector has simultaneously been a site of resistance and an alternative form of service delivery (p. 10). He illustrated how staff in nonprofits began to adopt social unionism and collectively initiate new forms of resistance through which to have a voice in far-reaching social issues and sometimes in coalition with clients.

By exploring practices and discourses of grassroots actors, the alternative studies commonly try to unearth bottom-up resistance of civil society agencies in partnership projects. In terms of theoretical genealogy, this approach resonates with Gramscian and Habermasian thinking, which defined civil society as 'a field of hegemonic conflicts' in which the system can colonise civil society actors but simultaneously strive to restore the lifeworld (Arce and Long 2000 p. 13). In this regard, the alternative perspective can appear as an attempt to revive the empancipatory project in the era of partnership.

Characteristics of the alternative viewpoint: Of course, we cannot argue that all civil society agencies in partnership stay true to their values and missions. The forms of power dynamics certainly differ case by case. In a society where state power is very

strong, the colonisation of civil society organisations may be intense. In other societies with more autonomy of social actors, the spirits of resistance might remain more intact. However, even for the same case, findings can be contradictory. For instance, when Crawford viewed an Indonesian development partnership project as a disguise for continued dominance of donors over indigenous civil society (2003), Malarangeng and Van Tuijl countered by providing a contradictory portrayal of how Indonesian civil society actors actively change and oppose donor intervention (2004).

The first reason why the findings of the alternative approach differ from the critical viewpoint has to do with 'wider usage of research methods'. Characteristically, the alternative viewpoint prefers to incorporate the anthropological approach as the research method. Most critical studies have also been based on empirical case studies. Nonetheless, their evidence chiefly comes from official data, which are unlikely to disclose any unspoken parts of the power dynamics. As Scott observed of a vast range of power relations, however, subordinate actors have historically had a vested interest in avoiding any explicit display of insubordination (1985, 1990). Concerning retaliation, they prefer to parry open confrontation with higher authority and so disguise their defiance, usually while exhibiting outward compliance (1990 p. 86). For this reason, power relations, which we can see in 'public transcripts' like policy documents are predominantly peaceful (1990 p. 12-13). In this sense, Scott criticises social science research relying on official data as "a shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate … (and) it is unlikely to tell the whole story about power relations" (1990 p. 2). He continued:

> Social science is, in general then, focused resolutely on the official or formal relations between the powerful and weak. This is the case even for much of the study of conflict…. I do not mean to imply that the study of this domain of power relations is necessarily false or trivial, only that it hardly exhausts what we might wish to know about power. (Scott 1990 pp. 13-14)

Along this line, Foucauldian scholar Larner also self-criticised the governmentality literature that tends to focus on official discourses, as read through government policy documents and neglect the "messy actualities" of policy projects, stating that the privileged emphasis of official data makes it "difficult to recognise

the imbrication of resistance" (2000 p. 14). Scott thus suggests that, if we want to divulge a broader territory of power dynamics, we should incorporate a closer and more grounded research method like ethnography and informal interviews. As a methodology to examine every day discourses and discourses, ethnography serves as an apt tool to disclose concealed insubordination that goes beyond public actions and words (Lewis and Mosse 2006 p.16). In this sense, the alternative studies, which aim to capture undisclosed disobedience and autonomy of civil society actors, have borrowed Scott's methodological ideas (Lewis and Mosse 2006 p.16; Little 1999 p. 192).

The second reason why the findings of the alternative viewpoint contradict the critical viewpoint can result from the 'wider definition of resistance'. The critical viewpoint tends to only judge overt antagonism and collective actions as 'genuine' resistance. Examining poor people's movements, Piven and Cloward state that the only way subordinate actors can gain any meaningful social changes is through outward protests and mass disruptions (1977). They believe that if and when social movements turn to institutionalisation or incorporation into the dominant system, resistance will fade and fail. According to this conventional view, we rarely see any activities of civil society organisations in partnership as 'authentic' resistance because civil society actors in partnership hardly "negate the basis of domination" (Scott 1985 p. 292). For this reason, Wolch holds that to really restore a space of resistance, voluntary organisations must decouple from partnerships and move away from dominant institutions, powerful groups and privileged places (1999 p. 26).

However, some have criticised the narrow concept of resistance, which dichotomises the political life of social actors into either 'open rebellion' or 'consent': if not overt revolt, all other activities go into the category of consent. Scott considers this binary division prone to miss low-profile forms of disobedience (1990 p. 20). For example, conducting research on power relations in a Malay rural village, Scott found that even though peasants appear to comply with the directions of land owners, they actually harbour grievances in their minds and express them informally through piecemeal squatting, poaching, pilfering, clandestine tax evasion, intentionally shabby work or creating tales of revenge and spreading rumours against their landlords (1990 p. 14). These daily activities may not look like public resistance like street demonstrations or strikes, but these everyday actions do not fit neatly into

pure consent. If we only analyse public forms of resistance, a wide variety of undeclared insubordinate behaviour remains under-researched, and we fail to grasp the complexities of political struggles in partnership. In this sense, Scott suggests examining a broader range of resistance, including "low-profile, undisclosed resistance" as well as "open, declared resistance" (1990 p. 19).

The alternative viewpoint on partnership has adopted this wider definition of resistance. Trying to identify everyday forms of resistance, Gupta and Sharma similarly illustrate the unofficial attempt of Indian civil society organisations to shift the mainstream meaning of "individualistic empowerment" to "collective empowerment" (2006). Little demonstrates how voluntary organisations encourage TANF recipients to subvert the dominant discourse of "welfare dependency" into the counter-discourse of "dependable mothers" (1999). Addressing development agencies' reactions to state intervention, Lewis and his colleagues also reveal how developmental NGOs reinterpret state rules for their own advantage during the street-level implementation of development projects (2006). Civil society actors in partnership deal with tensions between their values and the dominant imperatives through such street-level remaking of the dominant imperatives.

The emphasis on street-level discretion goes along with Deleuze and Guattari's "micro-political" and "molecular revolution" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 1987; Guattari 1984). The characteristics of the alternative perspective not only reside in the apparently mechanical expansion of research methods and definition of resistance but also associate with the epistemological turnover of the notions of emancipation and revolution. When discussing the issue of revolution, we normally consider the subversion of the macro political-economic system through, for example, internationally organised class struggles. However, Deleuze and Guattari imply that revolution's goal is "to relocate the given arrangement of the systems and create new meanings and practices in the systems" (Guattari 2004 p. 26). Like Foucault, they also have concern about the totalising dominant power, which pervades all aspects of social existence and everyday life. But Deleuze and Guattari seek to highlight the strategies of micro-resistance, which attempt to recreate alternative meanings and differences within the given environments. From their standpoint, the low-profile, daily activities of civil society actors in partnership to convert dominant policy discourses (individualistic empowerment; welfare dependency) into alternative ones

(collective empowerment; dependable mothers) can represent a molecular level of revolution, which can ultimately metamorphose the texture of the partnership projects.

Thus far, we have reviewed the three existing perspectives on the political position of civil society agencies in partnership. While the dominant policy assumption tends to see civil society organisations as symbiotic actors in peaceful partnerships, the critical perspective argues that civil society organisations tend to become state apparatuses colonised by the dominant system. On the other side, the alternative viewpoint attempts to highlight the spirit of resistance of civil society actors, which remains alive in spite of the ubiquitous control of the dominant power.

What then of the Korean workfare partnership? Rather than presupposing which viewpoint serves as the right lens for the SSP partnership, this research draws on the three viewpoints as tentative analytical lenses to analyse the politics of the SSP partnership. The following section briefly reviews the existing studies of the SSP in reference to the three analytical lenses.

## 4.3 Three Analytical Lenses for the SSP Partnership

### 4.31 Analytical Lens 1: Mainstream Policy Viewpoint

As the first possible scenario, we can regard the SSP partnership system as a symbiotic relationship. Almost all of the policy documents on the SSP studies have predominantly adopted the mainstream policy discourses, illustrating how advantageous the SSP partnership is. When the Daejung Kim government initiated the SSP and announced it to the public in 2000, it largely employed the dominant discourse. At a governmental report on *DJ Welfarism*[3], the Kim government contextualised the SSP partnership in the manner of the third way, stating:

> Traditional welfare expansion has reached its financial limit, and market-oriented solutions have failed to have a positive effect on job creation and the elimination of poverty… This is one reason that the "third way'" has appeared in European countries since the latter half of the 1980s. Under this policy, alienation and poverty are not left to be resolved by the government or the market, but rather the regional communities (Office of the President 2000a p. 67).

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[3] DJ is a contraction of Deajung.

Following the typical narratives of the mainstream policy discourses, *DJ Welfarism* highlights the contribution of community organisations to "a revival of community spirit … and the effective utilization of public assets" (pp. 13-14), and promoted the SSP system as "a more efficient and flexible local welfare system, replacing the centralized system of welfare in which the government controls the sphere and scope of welfare" (p. 15). Alongside this, numerous policy statements from state authorities have repeatedly demonstrated the SSP as a bottom-up welfare model, calling it "locally grounded welfare", "outreach welfare" or "participatory welfare" (Office of the President 2000a, 2000b, 2003).

A majority of public administration and social policy scholars have also reproduced the dominant policy discourses, emphasising the merits of partnership (Hahn and McCabe 2006; Jin 2004; Joo 2003; Kim and Park 2000; Park, K. 2003; Park, Y. 2003; Shim 2003; Sin 2002; Sung, Park, and Jang 2004). Drawing on the concept of 'good governance', they have viewed the SSP as a role model of local welfare governance. Hahn and McCabe even introduced the SSP to the *International Journal of Social Welfare* as Korea's Third Way that has widened the chances for civil society agencies to influence public policies (2006). Academic scholars and governments alike have predominantly accentuated the merits of the SSP partnership.

As discussed in Chapter 2, former military governments have used government-permitted social welfare institutions to make up for deficient state welfare. As Taekyoon Kim accurately points out, a relationship between the authoritarian state and social welfare institutions cannot be mutual, rather, they resemble "master-servant" relationships (2007, 2008). Compared to traditional partnerships, the SSP, administered with the cooperation of progressive anti-poverty organisations and the democratic state, can be easily regarded as "a fruit of democratisation" (Kim and Park 2000; Office of the President 2000b).

Furthermore, the Western policy paradigm of the third way backed up the unanimous appraisal of the SSP partnership. Strictly speaking, the mainstream policy discourses, which emphasises civil society actors as surrogates for state bureaucracy, originated from a Western historical context such as the restructuring of Western welfare states (Evans and Shields 2002). But South Korea has yet to experience either a mature welfare state or a liberal economy. In this sense, viewing the SSP as a third way replacing the failures of state bureaucracy and liberal market seems a bit

out of context. Nonetheless, the Korean government and scholars have habitually imported such Western policy discourse to describe Korean welfare partnerships.

Of course, as the dominant policy discourses have asserted, the SSP partnership might really serve as a democratic welfare system. But the consequences of many partnership projects have turned against the anticipation of the dominant policy assumption as we have already discussed. Therefore, the mainstream discussions (re)produced by Korean government and scholars should have verified their claims through empirical evidence. However, regrettably, their debates have scarcely offered empirical data about what has been actually happening to the SSP partnership.

*4.32 Analytical Lens 2: Critical Viewpoint*

In fact, as the critical viewpoint suggests, it is highly plausible that SSP Centres find themselves subjugated to state control rather than working as mutual actors. In South Korea, the state has traditionally exerted strong authority over civil society. Although democratic transitions witnessed a downward trajectory of state power to a considerable extent, it remains true that the previous pattern of utilising civil society organisations as a state apparatus for making up deficient state welfare has consistently continued, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Of course, as radical social movement groups, anti-poverty organisations have different origins and take different political stances from traditional social welfare institutions. Thus, some may assume that anti-poverty organisations might not be easily colonised by the state unlike apolitical social welfare institutions. However, given the reports that radical feminist movement groups have relinquished their political ethos and become individualistic service agencies similar to conventional service-providing organisations after their operations of social service centres (Mathews 1994; Banaszak and Beckwith 2003), we should not ignore the critical viewpoint as a possible scenarios.

Nonetheless, the current Korean literature hardly addresses the possible challenges of the SSP partnership. One reason might be that most progressive intellectuals have a direct stake in the SSP. In the USA, anti-poverty activists have constituted the kernel of anti-workfare movements outside of the state (Goldberg 2001; Krinsky and Reese 2006). However, Korean social activists and intellectuals

have played a pivotal role in forming SSP Centres. That is to say, the core progressive actors, who could have publicly raised their voices against workfare, ironically constitute leading figures of the SSP field as SSP Centre directors and staff. Indeed, at the SSP's initiation, the progressives enthusiastically hailed SSP Centres as grassroots welfare agencies, rather than pointing fingers at the SSP Centres' negative aspects (Kim, J. 2006; McCabe and Hahn 2006; Moon 1999; Shin and Kim 2002)

The fact that many have regarded the SSP as 'welfare expansion' in the Korean political economic context also helps the SSP to evade criticism. As Wad states, the Korean "trend towards *workfare* (production and employment-related social security systems) evolves out of a state of *warfare* (with national security prevailing and social security provided by family and kin)" (1999 p. 3), whereas Western welfare reform to workfare comes across as a kind of retrenchment from "Keynesian welfare state to Schumpeterian workfare state" (Jessop 1993, 1992). For this reason, while a great number of progressive scholars in Western welfare states have expressed sharp criticism of workfare reform as welfare cutbacks, the SSP has received relatively few criticisms from progressives. Only a few scholars such as radical Marxist, Sungeun Cho (2001), or Foucauldian researcher, Ayoung Woo (2007), who were not engaged in SSP Centres in any sense, criticised the SSP as punitive and neoliberal welfare reform and mused that SSP Centres would function as Korean-style workhouses.

However, these few critical studies also have limitations, focusing only on the policy-making process of the SSP. Similar to mainstream scholars, they only analysed the early-stage policy documents and failed to present further empirical verification on real-life administration of SSP Centres. To fill this gap, this study is thus intended to interrogate empirically how anti-poverty organisations cope with the following possible challenges while operating SSP Centres.

1) Depoliticisation (losing the adversarial role against state policies): We turn to depoliticisation of SSP Centres as the first possible threat. As radical social movement groups, anti-poverty organisations had generally taken a stand against state policies. However, through their contracts with the state for running SSP Centres, they come to regularly receive financial aid from the state. The critical

viewpoint argues that financial reliance on the state normally causes the subordination of civil society organisations to state intervention and restricts the political capacity of civil society actors. Given the existing examples, we would not deny the possibility that state funds for SSP Centres can depoliticise anti-poverty organisations.

2) Bureaucratisation (losing intimate connections with poor *minjung*): Bureaucratisation represents the second potential threat to SSP Centres. As locally grounded *minjung* movement groups, they had aimed to become parts of poor *minjung* and finally organise them into oppositional forces. However, after they become frontline workfare agencies, they must also fulfil their official duties to supervise work obligations of SSP recipients. As we saw from other critical studies, civil society organisations in partnership have the tendency to transform into pseudo bureaucracies. Similarly, we can assume the possibility of SSP Centres becoming frontline regulators for recipients, losing their original aspiration to become grassroots advocates of people in poverty.

3) Marketisation (losing the egalitarian and cooperative spirit): We turn now to the third plausible pressure, marketisation. Being influenced by communism and workers' cooperative ideas, Korean anti-poverty organisations had sought an anti-capitalist economy. The incipient intention for their engagement in the SSP involved securing a base to establish poor workers' cooperatives. However, many critical case studies have witnessed the tendency that civil society agencies in partnership gradually resemble business models. We cannot ignore the likelihood that the market-oriented workfare policy threatens the anti-capitalist ethos of Korean anti-poverty organisations. We thus need to explore how anti-poverty activists coped with the pressures of marketisation during the SSP administration.

*4.33 Analytical Lens 3: Alternative Viewpoint*
This study will also include the alternative viewpoint as a third scenario and investigate street-level activities of SSP Centres. A danger exists in judging the role of SSP Centres without investigating their low-profile activities. While outwardly showing obedience to state regulations, civil society actors can unofficially contend

against official rules. Scott viewed that indirect actions can serve as resistance strategies employed by subordinate social actors under surveillance most of the time (1990, xii). To borrow Scott's terms, such offstage forms of defiance constitute "infra-politics", a larger submerged realm of political struggles of subordinate groups beneath the visible loud and headline-grabbing protests (1990, p.183).

In fact, as discussed in Chapter 2, when anti-poverty organisations decided to operate frontline SSP Centres, they intended to utilise the SSP Centres as headquarters of social movements. Hence, although not overtly publicised, there could possibly exist some coping strategies of anti-poverty organisations to actualise their internal aspirations during the operation of SSP Centres. Nonetheless, the literature reveals almost no academic attempts to explore the underlying struggles of SSP Centres. Accepting the alternative argument, this study therefore aims to pay careful attention to unofficial actions and discourses of SSP Centres (if any) as well as their public actions. In so doing, this research wishes to provide a fuller and balanced picture on the power dynamics in the SSP partnership beyond a simplistic caricature on the SSP administration.


**4.4 Concluding Remarks**

Chapter 4 has reviewed two well-established theses (the mainstream policy viewpoint and critical viewpoint) and an emerging thesis (the alternative viewpoint) on the politics of partnership, which this study will employ as possible scenarios for the SSP partnership. Also, it has identified three possible threats to civil society organisations in partnership: depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation. This study examines how anti-poverty organisations in the SSP system have dealt with depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation, and then aims finally to discuss which scenarios represents the most pertinent analysis on the role of civil society organisations in the SSP partnership.

# Chapter 5
# Methodology

## 5.1 Introductory Statement

For this research, a qualitative methodology was adopted. Qualitative methodology is a more appropriate approach than quantitative methodology for capturing the changing dynamics of social actors (Creswell 1994, 1998; Marshall and Rossman 1995) because it aims "to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there" (Patton 1985 p. 1). Through this qualitative approach, this study strived to understand the political struggles of anti-poverty organisations in the unique context of the Korean SSP system.

In this chapter, the three data collection and analysis methods that this research employed – document analysis, in-depth interviews and participant observation – are discussed. The first section explains the multiple methodological framework of this study. The second section reflects the position of the researcher, which affected the data gathering and analysis. The third and fourth sections illustrate the detailed procedures of data collection and analysis. The ethical issues of this study are discussed in the final section.

## 5.2 Overall Discussion on Multiple Methodological Designs
### 5.21 Multiple Sources of Data

Qualitative research is multi-method focused, involving the studied use of a variety of empirical materials (Denzin and Lincoln 2000 p. 2). It generally consists of three primary methods of collecting data: (1) the review of documents; (2) interviewing; and (3) observation (Marshall and Rossman 1995 p.78; Patton 1990 p.10). This study also consulted: (1) administrative and historical documents on the SSP; (2) in-depth interviews with 42 actors in the SSP system; and (3) a month of participant observation at an SSP Centre.

Collecting data from multiple sources has two general advantages. First, the data "are likely to be much more convincing and accurate" (Yin 1994 p. 92) "because a combination of methods will provide the researcher with more different kinds of

evidence, thus making comparisons richer and more contextualised" (Potter 1996 p. 95). They increase validity when the different data offer competing findings, and so researchers can "overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-methods" (Denzin 1989 p. 307). Also, as Yin stated, "the use of multiple sources of evidence allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioural issues" of certain research topics (2003 pp. 97-98). This study thus chose to consult multiple sources of data to present more comprehensive and valid descriptions of the politics of the SSP partnership.

In addition to the general advantages, multiple methods were particularly critical for this study that excavated multi-layered power dynamics in the SSP system. As briefly touched upon in Chapter 4, each form of data (e.g. written/spoken/behavioural or official/unofficial data) is inclined to convey different aspects of the power dynamics of social actors. Official policy documents such as governmental announcements, manuals or handbooks of the SSP are useful for understanding the official interactions in the SSP field. However, these 'public transcripts' can hardly reveal 'hidden transcripts' about how local SSP Centres actually respond to the official mandates at street level. As Scott asserted, whereas publicly written data normally display dominant discourses, the practical discourses of subaltern groups tend to be constructed and distributed in rather unofficial and informal ways (1985, 1990). Given the possible existence of unofficial discourses, the analysis of public records is insufficient for examining the whole range of power dynamics. To grasp the hidden politics of the SSP, this study investigated lived experiences of actual actors by collecting unofficial information alongside official records.

The concern about informal politics chimes with bottom-up or street-level research on policy implementation (Brodkin 2000, 2003; Elmore 1979; Hjern 1982; Hjern and Porter 1981; Lipsky 1980). The conventional top-down approach is premised on the fact that policy implementation is pre-planned by central guidelines, and top-down policy analysts have consequently chiefly consulted official guidelines to debate a particular policy administration (Sabatier, 1986; Van Meter and Van Horn 1975). On the other hand, street-level researchers acknowledge that frontline policy agencies can remake policy from formal guidance (Lipsky 1980 p. 13). They believe that, "if we want to understand the effects of policy, we cannot do so without taking

into account the practical effects of the policy's administration" (Henman 2006 p. 22). Even Brodkin defined street-level policy administration as "policy fact (practical policy)", while identifying policy guidance as "policy fiction (written policy)" (2003 p. 151). Of course, contrary to the arguments of street-level researchers, Korean SSP Centres might be working in conformity with formal SSP rules. Yet, the possibility exists that SSP Centres have certain discretion to withstand state intervention. Therefore, without street-level investigation, we may run the risks of eliminating an important part of the real politics of the SSP field. Scott expressed this by stating that "only by capturing the experience in something like its fullness will we be able to say anything meaningful about how a given system influences those who constitute it and maintain or supersede it" (1985 p. 2).

In order to get a fuller picture of the politics of the SSP partnership, this study combined the methods through which the lively discourses and practices could be also examined. First, alongside formal documents, this study collected unpublished and informal documents such as minutes of SSP Centre staff meetings, informal SSP Centre records, internally circulated memos, and personal diaries or letters. Nonetheless, there could still be some unofficial ranges of activities and discourses which written data could not detect.

To address this possibility, this research chose in-depth interviewing of 42 actors in the SSP system as the second main source of data. The interviewees included anti-poverty activists working in SSP Centres. Interviews are beneficial for looking into actors' perceptions about certain phenomenon, present and past behaviour, and conscious reasons for actions or feelings (Rubin and Rubin 1995). Through interviewing, this study aimed to grasp the personal opinions of SSP Centre staff on the SSP and how they perceive their identities after anti-poverty organisations transformed into SSP Centres. The second aim was to investigate whether there are informal counter-discourses and complaints in the SSP field. Verbal interviews can be a channel through which actors can more liberally unmask their personal grievances against official SSP guidelines, which they are reluctant to express in official space. As Scott stated, "if formal organisation is the realm of written records (for example, resolutions, declarations, new stories, petitions, lawsuits) and public action, infrapolitics is by contrast, the realm of conversation and oral discourse, of surreptitious resistance" (1990 p. 200).

Nonetheless, although interviewing is a relatively naturalised mode of data gathering in relation to the review of documents, it is still an artificial means to obtain data as it involves having conversations with selected respondents in arranged settings. In such limited time and space, acquired information is apt to be restricted to what interviewees are willing to offer. Moreover, direct discussions about power relations in the SSP system can be a sensitive matter to some respondents. Thus, there is always a probability that interviewees can operate self-censoring filters for their sake, altering, exaggerating or hiding critical information. Moreover, there is another danger that the researcher intentionally or unintentionally coaxes the interviewees into preferred responses to leading questions (Holstein and Gubrium 1995 p. 17).

For this reason, participant observation in an SSP Centre, called the Junim SSP Centre (pseudonym), was chosen as the third main research method. "As its name reveals, participant observation demands first hand involvement in the social world chosen for study. Immersion in the setting allows the researcher to hear, see, and begin to experience reality as the participants do" (Marshall and Rossman 1995 p. 79). Because the researcher s very close to the context, she or he is able to spontaneously conduct more natural and informal dialogues with actors and yield richer and more detailed data on the actors' behaviours and unspoken acts, which can rarely be obtained through consciously written and spoken data. Accordingly, anthropologic researcher on development Long stated that "observational studies often provide better insight into the dynamics and complexity of power relations…than any form of 'aggregated' structural analysis could achieve" (2001 p. 23). Through an observation of the Junim SSP Centre, this study also aimed to directly witness and gain inside accounts about how anti-poverty organisations react to official SSP regulations in the real setting, how they struggle against the threats of depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation.

This study values equally each of the three methods because each has its own strengths and weaknesses. Interviewing is the best way to find out what is on someone's mind. "We cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe situations and behaviour that took place at some previous point in time…Researchers need to interview people to find out those things we cannot directly observe" (Patton 1990 p. 276). Documentary analysis

provides precise information on historical events in the SSP field. Also, policy statements can show what legal duties are imposed on SSP Centres. As McLaughlin stated, street-level investigation can easily fail to "integrate the micro world of street-level actors with the macro world of policy makers" with its emphasis on street-level actors (1987 p. 171). Top-down researcher Sabatier, who acknowledged the contributions of bottom-up studies, also pointed to this limitation of only investigating bottom-line policy practice because it does not provide the wider conditions that constrain choice and strategy of policy actors (1986 p. 38). The analysis of official policy documents was thus necessary because they offer information of 'structure' and 'structural constraints' of actors.

*5.21 Multiple Informants of Data*

While investigating the political struggles of SSP Centres, this study did not only consult the standpoint of SSP Centre staff, but also consulted the perspectives of other actors in the SSP field such as state officials and SSP recipients. Many case studies on the role of civil society organisations in partnership have merely relied on the data from civil society actors. For example, to explore the role of civil society organisations in welfare projects in Ohio, Alexander and her colleagues referred to the survey data from 124 nonprofits and three focus group discussions with some of their staff (1999). However, the self-description of civil society agencies can no more be sufficient evidence for a study on a state-civil society partnership than government documents can be a full account of the partnership.

The power position of social actors is intrinsically 'relational' and 'socially constructed' while interacting with other partnering actors. Dominance, subjection and resistance cannot occur without counterparts who dominate, oppress or are resisted. As Mahoney and Yngvesson stressed, 'a subject' "makes meanings in her relationships with others" (1992 p. 70). This was the reason why Najam proposed to define NGO's roles in relation with other actors such as 'funders', 'clients' and 'NGOs' themselves (2000).

The relational aspect is truly important to understanding the position of anti-poverty organisations in the SSP system. The status of a SSP Centre as a 'fund receiver' cannot be explained without mentioning the state, 'the funder'. The Centre's activities as 'welfare provider' are inseparably related to 'welfare

recipients'. Thus, referring to the counterparts' perspectives on SSP Centres can be one of the best ways to grasp the position of anti-poverty organisations in the system. In this regard, this study additionally conducted subsidiary in-depth interviews with 14 SSP recipients and 8 state officials in charge of the SSP, as well as activists working in SSP Centres.

Relying on multiple informants was also useful for inter-subjectivity, "the shared and recurrently sustained interpretations" of the political status of anti-poverty organisations (Dezin and Lincoln 2000 p. 490). Multivocality, meaning "to comprise multiple exchanges between and among varied positions and points of view", is a classical technique of qualitative research to acquire inter-subjectivity (Holstein and Gubrium 1995 p. 66). Respondents from a specific party are apt to render the data they prefer to reveal. Although not intentional, the information created by one party is inclined to be biased or partial due to self-centred standpoints. To minimise such bias, qualitative researchers have pursued multivocality by conducting interviews with multiple respondents (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Goffman also advocated interacting with people in groups of two or more in order to avoid seeing a deliberately distorted version of the way things usually are (1989). Accordingly, this research aimed to consider and compare how different actors, like state officials, welfare recipients as well as activists, view, perceive and experience the SSP partnership.

Nonetheless, finding 'the common reality' was not an ultimate goal of consulting multiple informants in this study. Whereas a quantitative researcher who subscribes to positivism assumes that there is a common reality across individuals, the researcher who subscribes to a qualitative paradigm assumes multiple realities of actors (Firestone 1987). Indeed, while collecting the data for this study, I frequently encountered dissonant statements. Whereas activists in SSP Centres frequently stressed their origin as *minjung* movement groups, many recipients using SSP Centres did not recognise this organisational background. While SSP Centres tended to emphasise their expertise in the arena of the SSP, state officials often viewed them as too amateurish and idealistic to implement the SSP project. When such discrepancies were found, this study neither hid them nor forcibly extracted concurrence. Being based on a qualitative paradigm, this study did not seek absolute objectivity. It acknowledged "perspectival subjectivity", acknowledging actors'

different perspectives and interpretations of the social world (Kvale 1996). For this reason, when the views of SSP Centre staff, SSP recipients and state officials were contradictory, this study transparently presented the discordances and attempted to suggest implications of them. As a matter of fact, the dissonant perceptions were a good refection of the conflicts in the SSP partnership.

*5.23 Multiple Data Collection Times*

This study conducted fieldwork studies over two different time periods, in 2004-2005 and in 2008. As Farrington et al. observed from development projects, "partnership is an evolving process which has both passive and active elements over time" (1993 p. 159). The power dynamics in a partnership is not fixed, but changing. State intervention in voluntary organisations can be incrementally intensified, and subsequently, the autonomy of participant organisations can wane over time. However, there are also probabilities that indigenous resistance against the state intervention can also be gradually constructed after a certain while, although not promptly. For this reason, one-time data collection at a certain moment is prone to miss the changing dynamics in a partnership. This is why this study tried to include changes in the power dynamics of the SSP partnership. Qualitative methodology is a useful approach to observe historical changes in a certain issue because it allows researchers to commit to an extensive period of time in the field (Creswell 1998). Miles and Huberman explained this:

> Qualitative research is powerful for studying any process (including history); we can go for beyond 'snapshots' of '*what*?' or '*how many*?' to just how and why things happen as they do – and even access causality as it actually plays out in a particular setting. And the inherent flexibility of qualitative studies (data collection times and methods can be varied as a study proceeds) gives further confidence that we've really understood *what has been going on*. (Miles and Huberman 1994 p. 10)

To investigate *what has been going on* in the politics of the SSP partnership system and *how* the role of anti-poverty organisations has *changed over time*, this study also made use of the strengths of the qualitative approach, conducting fieldwork over two separate periods of time. I conducted the first data collection, including historical documents of anti-poverty organisations and in-depth interviews with 20 activists working in the SSP field, in 2004-2005. This data collection was a

pilot study for the PhD proposal. Parts of the data had been used for my Master's degree dissertation about the formation of the SSP partnership, and I have here been analysing these data in greater depth. The follow-up fieldwork was conducted in 2008. During the second fieldwork, the document database for this study was updated and in-depth interviews with 26 actors were conducted. Additionally, a month participant observation of the Junim SSP Centre was also undertaken.

Indeed, through the two fieldwork studies, the final arguments of this study have been significantly elaborated. As we shall discuss in the main chapters, 2004-2005 was a turbulent period, when state intervention of the SSP Centres' performance was intensified. The regulative force of the state was obviously oppressing SSP Centres, and the counteractions of the SSP Centres appeared to fail. Thus, a provisional conclusion of this study was leaning towards the critical viewpoint at that time. However, the 2008 follow-up fieldwork revealed that the political geography of the SSP space had reconfigured since then. The power dynamics became complicated and sophisticated, showing some symptoms closer to the alternative viewpoint. Therefore, multi-time fieldwork enabled me to catch the dynamic politics of the field and propose a more prudent discussion. Thus far, an overall methodological framework has been illustrated. Importantly, the multiple methodological designs were not to jump to conclusions by relying only on a single source of data or informants. The next section will address the position of the researcher in the SSP field.


## 5.3 Position of the Researcher

A qualitative researcher is not detached, but is very much immersed in a research setting. The quantitative approach assumes a researcher to be an external observer of a research object, but the data collection and presentation of a qualitative study is unavoidably collaborative, "implicating meaning-making practices on the part of both researchers and respondents" (Holstein and Gubrium 1995 p. 4). Therefore, the whole self of the researcher becomes a crucial instrument for data collection and analysis (Guba and Lincoln 1981 p. 11; Patton 1990 p. 14). For this reason, transparent and honest self-reflection on the part of the researcher is an essential component of designing qualitative research. Laudon and Laudon claimed that "before you interview someone else, you must in effect interview

yourself…(because) your education, intellect, upbringing, emotions and ethical framework all serve as powerful filters for what you will be hearing in your interviews" (2002 p. 117).

*5.31 Person Crossing the Border*

In this study, I was a person on the border. David Lewis disclosed the interesting phenomena of "boundary crossing" when interviewing actors of the public, private and third sectors (2008). In spite of the segregated images of each sector, individual actors are often crossing between sectors. As seen with the recruitment of ex-government personnel to NGOs, people can consecutively or simultaneously engage themselves in different sectors as activists, volunteers or professionals.

'Boundary crosser' is one of the most appropriate expressions of my identity in the SSP field. As a child who grew up in an urban poor village, I was very accustomed to the everyday lives of the poor in urban slums. Because the families of my close friends and kin have been living on public assistance, social welfare was more than just a legal institution; rather it was first-hand 'experience'. It was when I attended Seoul National University (SNU) in 1998 that I left the poor village. But the baneful consequences of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis swept over the Korean society, and this phenomenon encouraged many university students to become involved in social movements. I also knocked on the door of the Public Solidarity of Participatory Democracy (PSPD), a citizen's movement organisation in 1999. I returned to the sphere of social welfare –not as a poor child, but as a volunteer. As we discussed in Chapter 3, the PSPD was devoting all of its energy to push the NBLG bill in 1999. My volunteering experience at that time made me understand the structure of the Korean social welfare. Some parts of Chapter 2 and 3 are based on the knowledge and data gathered at that time.

In 2003, I went on to graduate school at SNU and began to 'research' social welfare. The department of social welfare in SNU is a nationally privileged institution, where a lot of policy projects commissioned by the MOHW are undertaken. I also had the opportunity to be involved in two research projects conducted by the MOHW in 2004. During that time, I was officially identified as a MOHW-recruited research assistant and was able to be on close terms with some state officials.

However, apart from this, I maintained the identity of a voluntary worker for social movements. Over the winter of 2004-2005, I joined in the 'Korean Centre for City and Environmental Research' (KOCER) as an unpaid full-time intern. The KOCER is a research centre built by anti-poverty activists from the COUP. Inheriting the spirit of anti-poverty movements, the KOCER was founded in 1994 to serve as the educational centre for anti-poverty activists. It was indeed not difficult to see by chance social activists, progressive students and clergymen visiting the KOCER. Having worked at the KOCER, I was able to recognize the significant involvement of anti-poverty organisations in state welfare projects, and this realisation finally motivated my pursuit of a PhD on welfare partnership.

This journey as a poor child, a state-funded research assistant, and a voluntary activist was significantly helpful to access precious data from recipients, state officials and activists, which a researcher of one party could not obtain. Royster's *Race and the Invisible Hand* well illustrates the advantageous position as 'a person on the border' (2003). Americans of all backgrounds tend to "change their racially charged conversations when they believe members of other races are present" (2003 p. 2). "Whites do not volunteer to share intimacies with black researchers and black scholars themselves choose (perhaps wisely) not to 'go there'" (2003 p. 1). But Royster extraordinarily succeeded in conducting cross-racial interviews because, as a half-black and half-white, she had what she explained as a "racially ambiguous appearance". Thus, both blacks and whites could feel comfortable when engaging in significant levels of private racial talk with her since they *believed* she was one of them (2003 p. 3).

Although I did not have an ambiguous appearance like Royster's, it was obvious that the interviewees from different sectors considered me to be 'a person on their side', who could sympathise with their standpoints. Embarking on interviews, I used a snowballing technique, initially using the social network woven by my previous work history (Spreen 1992). To contact SSP Centres, I made use of the KOCER's research staff. Similarly, the interviews with state officials were easily arranged by using the SNU network. When I was introduced to potential informants, the brokers normally presented me as 'one of them' such as a 'voluntary action researcher' or a 'social welfare student', and the first introduction appeared to become my primary identity, notwithstanding that I was not unwilling to reveal my

other identities.

As Hammersley and Atkinson discovered, what kind of person the interviewer is often seems to be more important to interviewees than the value of the research itself (1995 p. 83). Complementing their insight with my experience, it might be safe to say that what kind of person the interviewer is *perceived to be* by interviewees is more important to interviewees than what kind of person the interviewer actually *is*. The different perceptions of interviewees concerning my identity were indeed beneficial for accessing valuable data. For instance, state officials treated me as a student or a state-funded research assistant. But some activists said, "I have refused to be interviewed by any researchers, but this time I give consent for an interview for the first time because you worked at the KOCER". The shared identity with respondents quickened the icebreaking with them and enabled me to swiftly dive into the more private and deeper discussions about their opinions on the SSP partnership.

*5.32 Challenges to the Researcher*

However, compared to the smooth data collection, I experienced difficulties in the process of data analysis. The challenge was to maintain the critical distance from informants while writing up the findings. Power relations, in general, are a very sensitive topic both to the superior and subordinate groups. I had already assumed that it may be true for the SSP partnership system. But as the research proceeded, I learned that invisible conflicts and tensions among actors were more serious than I had guessed. Yet, it seemed that they could not openly act on their antagonism against each other due to their close interactions under the umbrella of 'partnership'.

The intra-partnership tension sometimes helped me to gain precious data. Although not all, some informants looked glad that an 'outside' researcher would plunge a scalpel into the long-pending conflicts which they dared not to expose. Some activists at the SSP Centre were pouring out discontent against the state with a shield of confidentiality. An interviewee even gave me her private files containing unpublished records on the SSP, saying that she "collected them, waiting for this moment". Another informant told me I could get any internal documents from his organisation. There was also a respondent who showed me his private essay about personal experience in the SSP field. They commonly asked me to incisively criticise the SSP partnership without reserve. But it did not take long time to realise that they

wished me to criticise it as a defender of their side.

Scholarly conscience assisted my escape from the implicit pressures to live up to the wishes of the ardent informants and considerably aided data collection. My identity as 'a person on the border' also helped me not to be inclined toward one party. Notwithstanding, some emotional and ethical concerns were always lingering. I also felt a dilemma similar to one a funded researcher may experience; close interaction with funders can cause researchers to ignore some findings that funders do not welcome (Kvale 1996 p. 118). When the data offered by informants turned out to be used differently from their expectation, it made me feel somewhat guilty for their data provision. Given the ethical principle that research should not be embarrassing or harmful to the participants in the research (Marshall and Rossman 1995 p. 73), it was difficult to determine to what extent I could apply a scalpel of sharp criticism to the SSP field. As Christians aptly stated, even what researchers regard as neutral comments can appear controversial in the practical field (Christians 2000 p. 145). Thus, instead of excessively worrying about the expectation of data providers, I finally determined to employ a practical criterion to use the gathered data: i.e. when making arguments on an issue, I strived to present solid descriptive data so that actors from different origins could be simultaneously convinced. This criterion enabled me to be circumspect and judicious in producing results to the research questions. The following sections illustrate the detailed procedures of the data collection and analysis.

**5.4 Methods of Data Collection**

As Miles and Huberman stated, data collection is inescapably a selective process because researchers cannot "get it all"(1994). Researchers are thus constantly making choices about what to register and what to leave out (Miles and Huberman 1994 p. 56). This section illustrates the processes through which documents, interviewing and observational data were gathered for this study and the rationales for selecting the data.

*5.41 Documents*

Documents are normally rich sources of evidence concerning the phenomenon being examined. This study collected published/unpublished and official/unofficial

documents on the SSP system as the main source of evidence.

Governmental policy documents: First, this research collected governmental documents on the SSP, particularly regarding official guidance and regulations on SSP Centres. Such documentation was to identify formal goals and duties imposed onto SSP Centres. Official government documents were relatively easy to access because most of them are open to the public in principle. The MOHW has uploaded *The Self-sufficiency Programme Guidebook* annually on their online library. Also, most of administrative documents such as policy proposals, announcements and statistics could be found and copied at the MOHW's offline library. As for informal documents, some key policy drafts and working papers were obtained through the state officials who participated in interviews. However, interestingly, a significant amount of up-to-date governmental documents was acquired via SSP Centres. As frontline agencies that carry out top-down state guidance, SSP Centres were very sensitive to the latest policy schemes, circulating them among colleagues. While visiting SSP Centres for interviews and an observation, I was fortunate to obtain these latest policy data.

Historical Documents of Anti-Poverty Organisations: Second, this study collected historical archival documents of anti-poverty organisations, particularly of the ASH, the CACO and the COUP. This collection was to examine original values, goals and identity of anti-poverty organisations before their engagement with SSP Centres. The KOCER, which was home to this data, retains a great volume of published and unpublished documents of the three faith-based anti-poverty activists groups. The collection includes legendary magazine series, *City and Poverty; The 10-Year History of Sharing Homes* (ASH 1996); *History of the Catholic Organization Urban Poor* (COUP 1995) or *Data Packs of the National Alliance of Anti-Unemployment Movements: 1998-2000* (National Alliance 2003a, 2003b). The KOCER also possessed biographies of anti-poverty activists, memorandum, photographs and other internal notes and diaries of activists. Owing to my work experience with the KOCER, I was able to borrow the data, which could rarely otherwise be accessed.

Administrative Documents of SSP Centres: Third, to examine the new roles and

activities of SSP Centres, the data from the peak organisation of SSP Centres, called the Korean Association of SSP Centres (KASSPC), were collected. I visited the KASSPC and collected annually published *The General Meeting Report of SSP Centre Staff*, formal handbooks, pamphlets or project reports of SSP Centres. Also, other formal and informal documents of individual SSP Centres such as project plans, notes, written reports of events, fax, and minutes of SSP Centre meetings or photographs were obtained from SSP Centre staff who participated in interviews. Above all, however, the most valuable data were collected during an observation study. While working as a volunteer in the Junim SSP Centre for observation, I was allowed to look into administrative documents, policy records, logs or statistics of SSP Centres. Even though most of the data could not be discussed in this thesis due to confidentiality, the perusal of the internal data afforded valuable insights and enhanced understanding of the SSP field.

*5.42 In-depth Interviews*

Additionally, invaluable empirical evidence was generated through semi-structured interviews. Interviewing is a "technique of gathering data from humans by asking them questions and getting them to react verbally" (Potter 1996 p. 96). In order to understand daily activities and personal views concerning the SSP partnership, this study interviewed various informants. Table 5-1 is the number of interviews conducted in the 2005 and 2008 fieldwork studies. The numbers only include formally arranged semi-structured interviews, and informal conversational interviews with staff; recipients and officials during the fieldwork studies are excluded in this counting.

**Table 5-1 The Number and Types of Interviewees**

| Fieldwork | Main interviewees | Subsidiary interviewees | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Anti-Poverty Activists | State Officials | SSP Recipients | |
| 2005 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 16 |
| 2008 | 12 | 7 | 7 | 26 |
| Total | 20 | 8 | 14 | 42 |

Selecting Main Interviewees: First, I conducted interviews with 20 anti-poverty

activists working in the SSP field. These interviews were performed to gain more lively descriptions about their original and new identities and to examine how anti-poverty activists have confronted and coped with the dilemmas of depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation. There are 242 SSP Centres commissioned to civil society organisations in South Korea. To engage SSP Centres where I could mobilise interviewees, three criteria were employed: (1) SSP Centres founded by historically renowned anti-poverty organisations; (2) SSP Centres having operated from the early stage (e.g. from the period of pilot SSP Centres); or (3) SSP Centres having functioned as discursive and opinion leaders in the SSP field. These standards were to maximise historically reliable, rich and representative data.

Through this selection process, about 10 SSP Centres were finally chosen. For initial contacts with the SSP Centres, I asked the KOCER's researchers to introduce me to the SSP Centres or, for some cases, I personally sent emails introducing my research topics. Of the 10, 8 SSP Centres permitted interviewing. As Table 5-2 shows below, they include two SSP Centres run by the branches of the ASH; three SSP Centres are Protestant-based anti-poverty organisations, belonging to the CACO; and, two SSP Centres are managed by Catholic-originated anti-poverty organisations, belonging to the COUP. Also, one SSP Centre, run by a non-religious activist group, the Korean Women Workers Association (KWWA), was included. The KWWA joined the National Alliance for Anti-Unemployment Movement led by the three faith-based anti-poverty associations in 1998 (cf. Chapter 3 for the National Alliance). When the members of the National Alliance decided to operate SSP Centres in 2000, the KWWA followed and established 8 SSP Centres in various villages. Alongside the faith-based anti-poverty organisations, it has thus become one of the leading anti-poverty organisations running SSP Centres. For this reason, this study included a SSP Centre run by the KWWA.

**Table 5-2 SSP Centres Where Interviews Conducted**

| SSP Centre (pseudonym) | Parent Anti-Poverty Organisation (pseudonym) | Historical Origin of Anti-Poverty Association | Number |
|---|---|---|---|
| Norae SSP Centre<br>Gwangye SSP Centre | Norae Sharing Home Branch<br>Gwangye Sharing Home Branch | Anglican Sharing Homes | 2 |
| Pajong SSP Centre<br>Junim SSP Centre<br>Younggwang SSP Centre | Pajong *Minjung* Church<br>Junim *Minjung* Church<br>Younggwang *Minjung* Church | Christian Association for Community Organizing | 3 |
| Sungdo SSP Centre<br>Enhye SSP Centre | Catholic Sungdo Peace Home<br>Good News Catholic Group | Catholic Organization Urban Poor | 2 |
| Kuwon SSP Centre | Seoul Branch of the Korean Women Workers Association | Korean Women Workers Association | 1 |
| Total | | | 8 |

On average, 5-8 staff members (including the director, senior staff and junior staff) work at each SSP Centre, and this research collected interview data with 14 activists working in the eight SSP Centres. It is said that there are three generations in anti-poverty activists. The first generation is progressive religious intellectuals who pioneered in anti-poverty movements in urban slums in the 1970s, based on Alinsky's Community Organising principle. The second generation mainly grew from radical student activists who were influenced by Marxism and joined in anti-demolition activism in urban shanty towns in the 1980s. The third generation is those who participated in anti-poverty movements after democratisation in the 1990s, including those who mobilised in anti-unemployment movements after the 1998 Financial Crisis. Generally, the first generation activists have retired or have already passed away. The current leading figures in SSP Centres are thus from the second and third generations. In general, the second, aged 40-50+, are occupying director or senior staff positions in SSP Centres, while the third generation, aged 30-40+, are holding senior or junior staff positions. Among the 14 interviewed activists, 4 activists had director positions in the SSP Centres, 7 people were senior staff, and 3 respondents were working as junior staff. In terms of generation, 2 staff members could be defined as the first generation, 3 staff members came from the second generation, and 8 staff members belonged to the third generation. Apart from the 14 activists from the eight SSP Centres, this study conducted in-depth interviews with 6 anti-poverty activists, including those working in the KASSPC and those who are regarded as leading figures in the history of Korean anti-poverty movements. These interviews were arranged to obtain a broader overview of the SSP system and to

strengthen the background knowledge of Korean anti-poverty movements. Appendix 1 is the summary of the characteristics of the 20 activists who participated in the interviewing.

Selecting Subsidiary Interviewees: I conducted auxiliary interviews with 14 SSP recipients and 8 state officials. According to the MOHW survey, 25,802 SSP recipients worked in SSP Centres in 2008. On average, a SSP Centre supervises 106-107 recipients, allocating them into their SSP work projects such as care-giving, cleaning, or refurbishment work projects (MOHW 2008a p. 4). This study collected interviews with 14 SSP recipients who belonged to six SSP Centres. In general, direct contact with recipients was not easy because they do not have their own official networks. Hence, initial contact could not be established but through SSP Centres. However, using SSP Centre staff as brokers poses the probability that staff introduced their favourite recipients who could offer supportive comments about them. Fortunately, while working at the KOCER in 2004-2005, I acquired access to 7 SSP recipients belonging to two SSP Centres, and thus managed to conduct interviews with them without potential interference by SSP Centre staff. As for the 2008 interviews, I could do nothing but ask SSP Centres to introduce their recipients when interviewing their staff. Through this snowballing method, this research enabled me to obtain interview data with 6 other recipients. Appendix 2 is a brief summary on the interviewed SSP recipients.

As for state officials, this study conducted interviews with 8 officials. Their information primarily helped to provide a general understanding of the official SSP rules. Also, this was necessary to analyse the correlation between state guidelines and actual practice of SSP Centres. I was able to easily contact and interview 3 central officials directly in charge of SSP administration and policy planning by using a personal network with the MOHW. Besides the central officials, I collected interview data with local government officials, whose duties are to sort out SSP recipients and refer them to local SSP Centres in their regions. Contact with local officials was acquired primarily by using a snowballing technique, starting from the central MOHW officials. Through this, interview data with 5 local government officials in charge of the SSP could be generated (see Appendix 3).

<u>Asking Semi-structured and Open-ended Questions</u>: This study used semi-structured and open-ended questions. A semi-structured interview involves a number of predetermined questions posed in a more or less structured fashion (Berg 2001). It is used when it is important to minimise variation in the questions posed to interviewees and to reduce the possibility of bias that comes from having different interviews for different people (Patton 1990). The semi-structured questions for this study were developed in compliance with the research questions. But emergent questions were frequently asked according to circumstances and the responses of each interviewee. Also, owing to the unstructured nature of interviewing, information that I did not expect to obtain was offered and, in response, interview questions were added or modified to carefully reflect the actual field.

Interviews with the three types of actors were conducted loosely in rotation (e.g. activist → recipient → official → activist). The rotating method provided the opportunity to naturally compare and contrast their opinions. Also, while rotating interviews, the findings from one type of actors could be immediately compared to another type of actors and reflect the findings in question lists for subsequent interviewees. There are no fixed rules for the sequence in questions, but following Patton's suggestion, this study preferred "to begin the interview with questions about non-controversial present behaviours, activities, and experiences" (1990 p. 294). The interviews lasted approximately 1.5 to 3 hours each and all of them were tape-recorded in 2005 and digitally-recorded in 2008 based on informed consent.
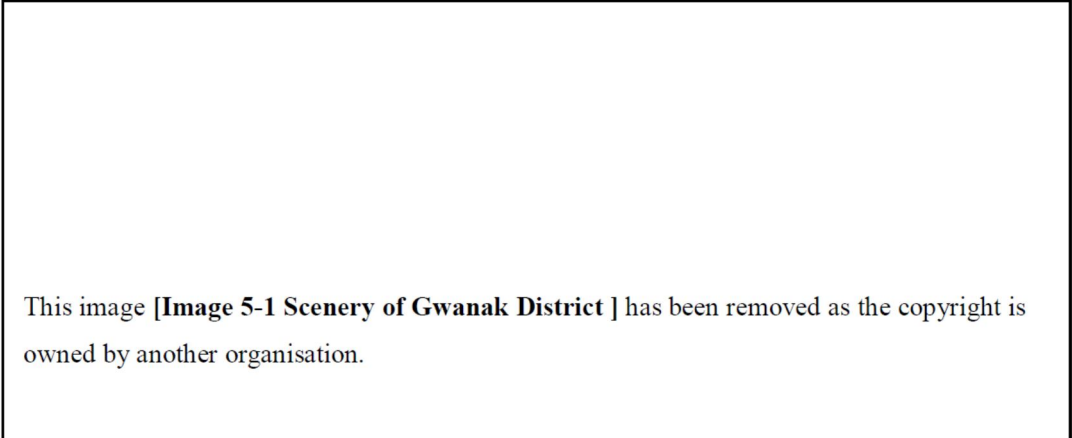
*5.43 Participant Observation*

The third main data set was collected through observation at a SSP Centre. Participant observation is a method that collects data by immersing the researcher in the natural setting to observe certain peculiarities, happenings or actions that may emerge at the setting (Jorgensen 1989; Spradley 1980). This study employed observation to examine actual activities and discourses happening in the SSP field and to observe events which demonstrated power relations in the SSP partnership.

<u>Selecting Site and Time of Observation</u>: The selection of the site and time is most critical to participant observation. "Because the setting does not change, it is very

important to consider carefully the implications of selecting a particular setting for study" (Jorgensen 1989 p. 40). I selected a SSP Centre near the completion of my in-depth interviews and document gathering. As Jorgensen stated, it was because "the more we know about possible settings, the easier it will be to make informed choices" (1989 p. 41). While visiting the eight SSP Centres for interviews and reading documents on SSP Centres, I deliberated on which SSP Centre I should select as an observation site, and finally the Junim SSP Centre was chosen. Generally speaking, the first criterion of site selection is a site that would maximise comparability and allow access to a wide range of social data concerning activities, places and actors (Spradley 1980 pp. 39-42). The second criterion refers to the range of possible roles a researcher might assume and whether the roles can provide sufficient access to phenomena of interest (Jorgensen 1989 p. 41). The Junim SSP Centre met both criteria.

First, the Junim SSP Centre could maximise the opportunities to collect data. The Junim Centre was founded in Gwanak district in 2000 by the Junim *Minjung* Church (pseudonym), a historically renowned anti-poverty movement group belonging to the CACO. Currently, 8 staff members are managing 7 SSP work projects and there are 83 SSP recipients. Gwanak district is one of the poorest regions in South Korea, where a lot of anti-poverty movements have emerged since the authoritarian regime (cf. Image 5-1). For this reason, whereas other districts normally have one SSP Centre, Gwanak district has several SSP Centres. Therefore, the location could afford extra opportunity to observe interactions among local SSP Centres as well as daily activities at an individual SSP Centre.



This image [**Image 5-1 Scenery of Gwanak District**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

The second reason for selecting the Junim SSP Centre was that I could assume

a full-time volunteer role at the Centre. In principle, SSP Centres do not employ volunteers for their formal administrative tasks, and this was true of the Junim SSP Centre. But apart from the official SSP implementation, the Junim SSP Centre has been operating unofficial nighttime humanities education courses for their SSP recipients, called *Humanities for Hope* since 2006 (see Chapter 8 for humanities education courses). Thus, the Centre needed extra hands for assisting with the nighttime pedagogic programme, and I was accepted as a participant observer on condition that I would help *Humanities for Hope* as a volunteer.

The participant observation was conducted 10 November to 12 December 2008, when the collection of other data was nearly finished; therefore, I could immerse myself in the observational study. The timing of the observation was beneficial for other reasons as well. First, the so-called 'Self-Sufficiency Festival' is normally held in November. During the Self-Sufficiency Festival, SSP Centre staff, SSP recipients and state officials of the same district congregate, hold photo exhibitions in public places such as underground stations or local government buildings to introduce their SSP work projects to the public, and organise a fair to sell goods and advertise services which their SSP work projects produce. The 2008 Self-Sufficiency Festival in Gwanak district took place November 17-21, 2008. Since November, therefore, was the period when SSP Centre staff, officials and recipients in Gwanak district were actively interacting with each other to prepare for the festival, it offered the best chance for me to observe power relations in the SSP field.

Second, December, the final month of the year, was when annual performance investigations to SSP Centres were carried out by the government (see Chapter 6 for performance investigation). Each year, state officials visit SSP Centres and assess their performance outcomes. Since the fieldwork time covered part of December, I was fortunate to closely observe the annual performance assessment process. As a result, the fieldwork at the Junim SSP Centre from November to December maximised the observational chances for special events as well as daily activities in an SSP Centre.

Field Role of the Researcher: A participant observer is able to adopt various field roles, such as inside observer/active participant or outside observer/passive

participant (Gold 1958). My field role in the Junim SSP Centre can be described as a 'moderate' participant observer, combining being an 'insider' and an 'outsider' (Spradley 1980 p. 60). Similar to inside actors, I had a certain role at the Junim SSP Centre as a full-time volunteer, working 9 to 6 from Monday to Friday. My main voluntary work was to monitor the humanities classes and to collect and edit an annual collection book of prose and poetry which SSP recipients wrote as homework. The voluntary role contributed to easily establishing rapport with staff and recipients and naturally acquiring access to the activities of the Junim Centre. However, I was still not a complete insider of the SSP system. Although *Humanities for Hope* was held in the SSP Centre's office, it was a programme totally independent from the SSP. Had I been an inside actor directly involved in SSP administration, my participation would have interfered with natural interactions in the SSP system. But by being engaged in an unofficial programme outside of the SSP system, I managed to maintain an outsider's perspective on the SSP system, simultaneously securing the opportunity for close observation.

Establishing Rapport: The process of gaining rapport was related to the places where I worked and had lunch every day. The Junim Centre office has four spaces: (1) the 'desk area' where staff work; (2) the 'multi-use room' used for waiting, counselling or meetings; (3) the 'communal kitchen' where staff have lunch together; (4) the 'conference room' for bigger gatherings like humanities education classes. As an informal volunteer, my temporary desk was placed in the multi-use room, and it turned out to be a good place for gaining rapport with recipients. The Junim SSP Centre required recipients of certain SSP work projects, such as home cleaning or refurbishment projects, to come to the Centre twice a day (before and after their work) to check whether they actually fulfilled their daily work obligation, and the multi-use room was the area where they gathered and chatted with each other. Although not intentional, my allocation in the multi-use room thus afforded privileged access to the "backstage" dialogues of recipients (Goffman 1959). Recipients were curious about my existence at first. But after having been introduced to my research and volunteer roles, they did not seem to view me as a threat and invited me into their casual chats. Because I could converse with the same recipients for more than a half an hour a day, I was gradually accepted by them and able to gain

their trust to the extent that they freely criticised SSP Centre staff before me. These informal gossip sessions certainly enabled me to grasp the internal viewpoints of recipients at the SSP Centre.

On the other hand, the communal kitchen was the main place for gaining rapport with staff. I found that most of the SSP Centres had communal kitchens, where staff cooked and shared food together every day. It may come from the tradition of communitarian culture of social movement groups. The Junim SSP Centre also had a communal kitchen, and while volunteering, I was invited to the communal kitchen for lunch with 8 staff members every day. During lunch time, I could join daily conversations with the staff. Most of the time, the dialogue was irrelevant to the SSP, covering ordinary life issues. Yet, the conversations naturally narrowed invisible distance between me and staff, and offered the foundation for mutual trust, on which I could inquire of staff about sensitive topics in the SSP system.

Observing the Field: During the observation, I tried to investigate the daily activities of the SSP Centre and how SSP Centre staff, recipients and officials interact at the Centre office, and how they interact over events like the festival. When permitted, informal conversational interviews were also conducted. "The conversational interview is a major tool used in combination with participant observation to permit the evaluator who is participating in some programmatic activity to understand people's reactions to what is happening" (Patton 1990 p. 281). Unlike semi-structured interviews, most of the questions for the informal conversations grew out of immediate contexts.

The observation space was not confined to the Centre office. SSP Centre staff regularly made rounds of inspections to the workplaces of their SSP work projects such as hospitals (for care-giving projects), schools, offices or houses (for cleaning or refurbishment projects). I was allowed to accompany the staff to the workplaces from time to time and observe the actual work projects. While touring from one workplace to another, I could have informal conversational interviews with the staff about the detailed conditions of SSP work projects and listen to their personal thoughts on SSP work projects, state officials and recipients. During the festival, I even worked at some of SSP work projects such as cleaning and refurbishment projects in person by

participating in the one-day SSP experience programme. While working with recipients, I could also talk with them and examine their behaviour without the presence of SSP Centre staff.

Besides the formal social worlds like SSP Centre office or recipients' workplaces, I was privileged to access to "semi-private social worlds" (Beck 1992), in which "people may well articulate a reflexive critique arising from their mistrust of the systems and institutions by which they are controlled"(Dean and Melrose 1997 p. 115). Pubs were an exemplary semi-private world in this case study. Heavy and collective drinking is a well-known characteristic of Korean culture, and it is not unusual for Korean workers to go for drinks together almost every day after work (Cho and Faulkner 1993; Namkoong et al. 2003). It was similar for actors in the SSP field. During my fieldwork, I was invited by staff and recipients for drinks quite often. To draw on Scott's illustrations, such places like pubs, coffeehouses, club-rooms or taverns are "social sites of hidden transcript" where pre-public reflexivity and resistant discourses of subordinate actors could effloresce (1990 pp. 120-123). While socialising with staff and recipients at pubs, I could access and collect their hidden gossip and grievances concerning the SSP system, which rendered insights and evidence for the discussion of resistance.

## 5.5 Methods of Data Analysis

As Patton stated, in qualitative research, there are no absolute and universal formulas to assist in analysing data (1990 p. 372). However, qualitative researchers "have an obligation to monitor and report their own analytical procedures and processes as fully and truthfully as possible" (Patton 1990 p. 372). This section describes the detailed data analysis procedures.

### 5.51 Transcription

The first step of data analysis was to transform all the gathered data into written texts. I tried to transcribe in-depth interviews within a week after conducting each interview. For participant observation, handwritten field notes were created with as much details as possible. The notes consisted of informal dialogues with SSP Centre staff, recipients and state officials, important episodes and happenings at SSP Centres, observations of interactions among staff, recipients and officials, including

my own reflections on the observations. As for important dialogues, I put effort into producing transcriptions verbatim. The handwritten field notes were elaborated every day into more completed textual forms by using a word processor so as not to lose any details that were still vivid in the memory.

*5.52 Classification*

The second step was to classify the transcribed data so that they could be easily retrieved. Some key paper-style documents were ring-bound according to issues, events or the origins of data. Computer-file-style documents were stored in 26 subfolders according to informant issues, events or topics.

Interviews were organised by assigning identification numbers. The identification numbers were not only for ensuring easy retrieval, but also for protecting interviewees' anonymity. Each identification number was composed of three parts of information: (1) the type of actor; (2) year of fieldwork; and (3) sequence of interviewing. For example, the interviews with 'anti-poverty activists' were given a code of 'AP', and the code was followed by fieldwork year and sequence of interviewing such as 'AP-2005-01', 'AP-2005-02', and 'AP-2005-03'. The interviews with 'government officials' were coded into 'GO', also followed by fieldwork time and sequence like 'GO-2005-01'. For 'welfare recipients', 'WR' was assigned as the first code.

The daily field notes and informal conversations were broken down into sections and each section was labelled according to date and episode. For example, the label, 'FN-05.11.08-funeral' refers to the episode in which SSP Centre staff attended the funeral of an SSP recipient's father on November 5, 2008. 'FN-13.11.08-gift' refers to the episode in which SSP Centre staff gave gifts to all the children of SSP recipients who would take the university entrance exam on November 13, 2008. The labels were created primarily for personal use, to easily remember the episodes and dialogues and to retrieve the original field notes.

*5.53 Coding and Interpretation*

Coding and interpretation are the culminating activities not only in the data analysis procedure but also in the whole research process (Patton 1990 p. 371). It involves examining the data, teasing out important themes, making clusters of data according

to the themes, finding patterns, producing interpretations and presenting the findings (Miles and Huberman 1994 p. 10). When coding and interpreting the data, this study consulted 'the framework analysis', which is increasingly used in the analysis of qualitative data (Lacey and Luff 2001; Spencer et al. 2003). According to Lacey and Luff, there are five key stages to conducting coding: (1) familiarisation; (2) identification of a thematic framework; (3) indexing; (4) charting; and (5) mapping and interpretation (2001 pp. 9-10). Although this process shall be explained here mechanically, these activities were not linear, but were, in actuality, a reiterating and flexible procedure.

(1) Familiarisation: First, I read carefully the gathered documents, in-depth interview transcripts and field notes several times until the overall contents of each datum was familiarised and set in my mind.

(2) Identification of a Thematic Framework: Second, I tried to find important and recurrent themes from the data that needed to be discussed in this thesis. The basic topics for this case study had already been identified through the literature review in Chapter 4. For instance, issues like state funding (depoliticisation), the bottom-up approach (bureaucratisation) or 'business-like management' (marketisation) were general moot points over which studies on the politics of partnership have normally been disputed. This study also incorporated the general topics into an initial thematic framework. The initial themes were elaborated into more concrete topics specific to the SSP system while collecting and reading the actual data of the SSP partnership. For example, while perusing the data, it was found that the ways in which anti-poverty activists identify poor people have transformed over time and this change represents the formalisation of the relationship between activists and poor people. Thus, 'appellation of poor people' was added to the thematic sets for bureaucratisation. In this way, the themes were evolved throughout the processes of actual data collection and analysis. New themes emerged and old themes were modified. They were refined continuously until the writing of the final thesis. In this regard, it can be said that the identification of a thematic framework bore a resemblance to grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1968; Strauss and Corbin 1990).

(3) Indexing: Indexing is the stage of applying the thematic framework to the data so as to identify specific pieces of data which correspond to the themes. When attentively reading the documents, transcripts and field notes, I identified the document paragraphs, interview comments and field note sections relevant to each theme, and marked them with colours and lines for easy retrieval.

(4) Charting: While indexing the relevant data according to themes, I also created charts so as to have an overview of all of the themes and the relevant data for each theme. For this clustering, I produced three separate charts (charts for depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation). In each chart box, I cut and pasted key words or direct quotations from the indexed data for easy retrieval.

(5) Mapping and Interpretation: Lastly, I tried to search for "patterns, associations, concepts, and explanations" in the data (Lacey and Luff 2001 p. 11). I repetitively pondered the coded data under each theme to identify patterns, associations, concepts and explanations. Taking 'appellation of poor people' as an example, I deliberated and compared how activists have identified poor people in their documents, during formal interviews and in the real setting of SSP Centre offices, and found general patterns and changes in the manner of identification over time. Then, I interpreted what these identifications imply regarding the relationship between staff and recipients.

However, while interpreting the data, I tried not to rush to one answer. Even though the patterns of the data initially manifested a certain viewpoint, I did not terminate the analysis. Instead, rival interpretations were also tested. I attempted to think about other logical possibilities and then determine if those possibilities could be supported by the data. As Patton said, testing rival explanations is a crucial technique for enhancing the quality of analysis because "failure to find strong supporting evidence for alternative ways of presenting the data or contrary explanations helps increase confidence in the original, principal explanation generated by the analyst" (1990 p. 462).

Also, when it discovered some data that disprove principle arguments of this thesis, this study did not discard or hide them. Instead, the 'negative cases' were addressed with explanations of their implications. This was done because the rigor of

qualitative analysis depends on not only presenting solid descriptive data, but also displaying candid research findings through which readers can understand the other side and draw their own interpretations (Patton 1990 p. 375).

*5.54 Triangulation and Validity*

Triangulation means "gathering and analysing data from more than one source to gain a fuller perspective on the situation you are investigating" (Lacey and Luff 2001 p. 23). This study also triangulated multiple data to get a more accurate view on the politics of the SSP partnership (Blaikie 1991; Knafl and Breitmayer 1991). Notwithstanding, searching for 'one reality' from different data sources was not the ultimate goal of the triangulation. Qualitative research is willing to sacrifice coherence of evidence in order to understand the real setting and people's minds. Rather than forcefully presenting a trimmed view, this study was willing to present contradictory facts on the SSP partnership.

As for validity issues, this study was concerned more about 'internal validity' than 'external validity'. External validity means the extent to which the results of a case study can be generalised to other cases. Belonging to the positivist tradition, the purpose of external validity is based on the belief that there is 'the Truth' which penetrates social phenomena. But as Isadore and Newman stated, qualitative research does not pursue such statistical generalisation, and "if the purpose of the research is to generalise, one should employ quantitative methodology" (1998 p. 54). I did not aim to discover universal answers to all welfare partnership cases. Rather, I pursued what Yin termed 'analytical generalisation', meaning to offer analytical references and insight to other studies (1994).

In terms of internal validity, Maxwell recommended three validity checks for qualitative research: (1) descriptive validity: the accuracy of what is reported by the researcher (the events, the objects, the behaviours, the setting, etc); (2) interpretive validity: the accuracy in interpreting: whether the participant's views, thoughts, feelings, intentions and experiences are accurately understood by the researcher; and (3) theoretical validity: the extent to which the theoretical explanation developed fits the data and is, therefore, credible and defensible (1992). To enhance descriptive validity, this thesis tried to accurately report only what actually happened, or was heard and observed in the SSP field. Also, for interpretive validity, I re-asked

interviewees what they meant when I was not certain about my comprehension of their remarks.

## 5.6 Ethical Concerns

As a research student of LSE, I have observed the LSE Research Ethical Policy. Practical guidance has also been taken from Christians' discussion on the codes of ethics in qualitative research about informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and accuracy (2000 pp. 133-155).

### *5.61 Informed Consent and Opposing Deception*

I made the best effort to acquire informed consent from participants. When I collected data, I made clear to informants the aim of the research and the usage of their data. Interview recording was also undertaken based on respondents' permission. Also, for the participant observation at the Junim SSP Centre, I explained my research and the purpose of the observation at the staff meeting on the first day so that all staff members would be aware of my observation. Participant observers aim to learn about the setting while causing as little disruption as possible (Burgess 1984). Thus, I did not use a recorder at the Junim SSP Centre office because using one might have distorted the flow of interactions among staff and recipients. Instead, I wrote field notes.

However, fully informed consent was compromised due to time limits. While the Junim SSP Centre staff knew that I was conducting participant observation, some SSP recipients did not recognise me. Some SSP recipients, who dropped into the SSP Centre every day for updating their daily work performance forms, were very well aware of my position as a researcher. But there were other recipients who did not visit the SSP Centre every day according to the requirements of their SSP work projects. Thus, their visits to the Centre office were occasional and it was not possible to introduce my research to each of them. I introduced myself when asked, but such instances were rare. Most of them seemed indifferent to me; they may have considered me to be a new SSP recipient. This selective informed consent was justified because my observation did not unduly intrude on their personal lives and no information was gathered about them personally. Nonetheless, I was extra cautious about the possibility that it could be regarded as deceptive data gathering

from their angle. For instance, when two similar pieces of evidence were gathered from an informed recipient and uninformed one, this thesis presented the former one to avoid the risks of unintentional deception.

*5.62 Privacy and Confidentiality*

Codes of ethics insist on safeguards to protect people's identities and those of the research locations (Christians 2000 p. 139). This study endeavored to secure and conceal all names of interviewees and SSP Centres. Pseudonyms have been used and interviewees have been assigned identification numbers. The names and the locations of SSP Centres have also not been divulged. The features that could identify them have been altered, or only minimally presented when necessary for the study's purpose (e.g. the religious origins of the SSP Centres). Interview transcripts and field notes were kept in a secure place and viewed by no persons except the researcher.

Despite these efforts, I acknowledge that watertight confidentiality may not be possible. As Christians expressed it, "pseudonyms and disguised locations are often recognized by insiders. What researchers consider innocent is perceived by participants as misleading and even betrayal. What appears neutral on paper is often conflictual in practice" (2000 p. 139). To minimise unintentional betrayal and embarrassment as a result of insensitive research practices, I requested informants to tell me when they had some comments or information which they wanted to be off the record. Even if the comments and information were so appealing and provided crucial evidence for the study, I did not include them in the final thesis if confidentiality was requested.

*5.63 Accuracy*

Ensuring that data are accurate is also a core ethical issue (Christians 2000 p.140). This study opposes the use of unethical fraudulent materials, omissions, fabrication and contrivances of data. Nonetheless, in the sense that nearly all the collected data are written and spoken in Korean, certain linguistic distortion may have been inevitable during the process of English translation. It was simply impossible to accurately translate slangs, idioms, and colloquial Korean into English. I admit that a degree of inescapable modification has occurred while translating, although I used my best efforts not to spoil any pith of data.

**5.7 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has described the methodological framework adopted for this study. The complex nature of the power dynamics in partnership has guided the choice of multiple qualitative methods, namely a mixture of documentary analysis, in-depth interviewing with various informants and an observation. Self-reflection on the position of the researcher and ethical issues has also been discussed in this chapter. The following three chapters present the findings that these methods have yielded about the political struggles of anti-poverty organisations against depoliticisation, bureacratisation and marketisation.

# Chapter 6

# Struggle of Anti-Poverty Organisations against Depoliticisation

## 6.1 Introductory Statment

As the first main findings chapter, Chapter 6 explores how anti-poverty organisations in the SSP partnership have dealt with the challenge of depoliticisation over time. As reviewed in Chapter 3, anti-poverty organisations played a political adversary role against state policies during the authoritarian regime. However, after democratisation, they came to establish a partnership with the state, receiving state funds for operating local SSP Centres. This chapter investigates whether SSP Centres can continue to act as adversaries to the state or whether their dependence on the state actually deradicalises them; and if they manage to retain their adversarial role, in what manner can they do so.

To answer these questions, this chapter traces the historical change of the power dynamics between anti-poverty organisations and the state. The first section revisits the pre-partnership period, particularly illustrating the antagonistic relationship between the state and anti-poverty organisations and the attempt of SSP Centres to maintain a distance from the state after the SSP partnership. The second section discusses the performance-based funding scheme, which intensified state intervention in SSP Centres and delineated SSP Centres' collective actions against the funding scheme and the public resistance. The last section explores the new tactics that SSP Centres employed to counter state discipline. In doing so, this chapter leads to a sub-conclusion that, unlike the dominant policy assumption of 'mutual partnership', anti-poverty organisations came to be under state control due to the SSP partnership. However, the critical viewpoint of the 'shadow state' also provides a partial picture of the politics of the state–civil society partnership. Despite the increasing state intervention, SSP Centre staff still strive to restore the spirit and role of activists within the system in creative ways as the last section of this chapter will unfold.

## 6.2 Initial Aspiration for Mutual Partnership

*6.21 Radical Resistance against State Coercion*

As highlighted in Chapter 2, state suppression of civil society was severe during the authoritarian regime, and accordingly, anti-government movements became active in society. Citizens as well as devoted social activists would participate together in collective demonstrations. The Busan-Masan City Riot in 1979, the Gwangju City Democratization Revolt in 1980 and the June National Revolution in 1987 were large-scale uprising led by the citizenry. In this sense, political scholar Hochul Sonn illustrates Korean society of that period as a "Movement Society", borrowing Meyer and Tarrow's term (1998), where social movements had been powerful and ubiquitous (2006 p. 85).

The military state responded to anti-government movements with physical oppression. When the Gwangju City Democratization Revolt broke out, the Doohwan Chun military government proclaimed martial law and brutally killed 600 citizens (cf. 2,000 wounded) for three days by randomly shooting, hitting and stabbing people (Kang 2003). Whenever political insurgencies took place, the military governments employed similar emergency measures and tried to quell the riots with bayonets and employed so-called 'skeleton corps' (*baekgoldan*), consisting of combative police and gangs to subjugate the opposition (KOCER 1999 p. 50).

This image **[Image 6-1 Anti-Government Demonstrations and State Suppression (1970s-80s)]** has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

Besides the military suppression, the state conducted ideological repression by branding political dissenters as 'socialist evils'. Since South Korea is still in a Cold War with the communist North, the military government appropriated the Cold War situation to witch-hunt anti-government activists. The National Security Law emphasised that the Korean War never ended, and anti-government activists who harmed internal national security were deemed to be spies or supporters of North Korea (Bae 1991; Kim, Minbae 1999; Seo 2004). Any kind of social activist, including 'real' socialists' became victims of the National Security Law, and the Korean CIA frequently rounded up anti-government activists and tortured them. Korean's first Nobel Peace Prize winner Daejung Kim, who was elected as a civilian democratic president in 1998, was also arrested and tortured, to the extent that he became crippled.

Such political environments in South Korea radicalised anti-poverty organisations. When anti-poverty movements were initiated in the 1970s, they were based on the community organising of Saul Alinsky, an American reformist who preferred gradual reforms within existing political systems. Nonetheless, having undergone dictatorship, Korean anti-poverty activists could not merely stick to moderate reforms, and thus in the 1980s, they came to broaden their ultimate political goals to "the subversion of the state by organising the subordinate class"(Park and Cho 1989 p. 131). Yeonsu Yang, a then anti-poverty activist, summarised the radicalisation of anti-poverty movements as follows:

> Struggles for poor people's survival could not be a sufficient goal of anti-poverty organisations. The state was the very source of the persecution and poverty of *minjung,* so anti-poverty movements were impossible without antagonism against the state (Yang 1990 p. 228).

Owing to their increasingly radical attitude, anti-poverty activists also became the target of ideological witch-hunting. Since the three big anti-poverty associations, the CACO, the COUP and the ASH, have religious backgrounds, the state could not rashly oppress them as this would be criticised as religious persecution. Nonetheless, the faith-based associations were not entirely free from Korean McCarthyism. In 1976, the Korean CIA intruded into *minjung* churches and rounded up anti-poverty activists including Byeongsup Heo and Jeonggu Je, the founding figures of the CACO and the COUP, branding them as communist spies. However, the witch-

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hunting, nicknamed the '1976 Communist Mopping-Up' did not eliminate anti-poverty movements. On the contrary, as the COUP recorded, "such experience led activists to employ more aggressive strategies to fight against the state" (KOCER 1999 p. 54).

In particular, 'anti-demolition movements' in the 1980s show the violent counter-actions of anti-poverty organisations against state policies. As we can see from the Gwangju Wilderness Revolt, urban gentrification commenced in the late 1960s (see Chapter 3) and large-scale regeneration began in 1983 (Cho and Cho 1991; Kim 1989; KOCER 2003). There are three backgrounds to the massive gentrification. The first is industrialisation and the growing influx of poor migrants. Having seen a flood of urban shantytowns, the incumbent Doohwan Chun's government planned to dismantle shanty houses and construct modern apartment blocks to accommodate people in large quantities. The forthcoming 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul urged the militant government to hurry gentrification. The government intended to burnish the image of 'affluent Korea' and 'the miracle of the Han River' to foreign media as a tool to gain international recognition for its dictatorship. Furthermore, private construction corporations, which wanted to maximise profits through the special procurement boom, accelerated the urban regeneration. For these reasons, urban redevelopment was conducted rapidly, and 38,464 villages went through major and minor redevelopment from 1983 to 1993 (Sim 1994 p. 140).

This rapid gentrification resulted in the forced demolition of shanty towns. For slum residents, gentrification was a life-and-death matter that destroyed their living spaces. They thus appealed to the state for compensation, but the state refused, stating that shanty houses were originally illegal. According to the record of the COUP, just a few cases managed to obtain small compensations of 20,000-30,000 KRW, equivalent to just a daily minimum income (KOCER 1999 pp. 52-55).

This image [**Image 6-2 Shantytown and Forced Demolition in 1980s**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

The crude gentrification led anti-poverty organisations to launch radical poor people's movements(Cho 1988; KOCER 1998). Slum residents were the first to look to anti-poverty organisations for help. Urban residents went to *minjung* churches, night schools or free nurseries to ask activists' support to impede the governmental gentrification projects, which led to an explosion of anti-demolition movements. As Ho Lee, a leading activist of the COUP, stated, "organising voluntary grievances of poor people was the very dream of anti-poverty activists" (Lee 1995 p. 16). Anti-poverty activists mobilised slum residents into anti-state forces. Starting with Mokdong village in 1983, Sadang village in 1985 and Sanggye village in 1986, 30 urban slums in Seoul were mobilised for anti-demolition movements by 1988 (KOCER1999 pp. 43-55).

This image [**Image 6-3 Anti-Demolition Movements in Urban Slums**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

To support the anti-demolition movements, radical students also streamed into urban poor villages on a large scale in the 1980s. The young intellectuals were more radical than the first-generation activists, who were mostly clergymen or religious students influenced by Saul Alinsky. These students incorporated socialist ideas into

the community organising activities (KOCER 1989 p. 12). Through this, the counter-hegemonic discourse of anti-poverty movements became more systematised and sophisticated. Activists began to point to "the contradiction of state-led capitalism as the cause of poor people's suffering" (Kim, J. 1992 p. 159) and resolved to indefinitely fight until the capitalist state collapsed (Chung 1990 p. 54; Kim 1985 p. 13; Kim 1985 p. 13).

Defining the state as an "irreconcilable enemy", anti-poverty organisations protested against the state's demolition projects. As Suhyeon Kim, an activist leader of the COUP, recollected, "activists intended to meet force with force and dared to be arrested" (Kim, S. 2002 p. 67). Activists intercepted roads, interfered with construction works, committed arson on construction companies, carried out street marches, slept in front of government buildings, or attacked state offices with petrol bombs, metal clubs and rubble. In some slums, such as Mokdong village, activists continued the struggles for more than three years, and a lot of activists, including Suhyeon Kim, were arrested for their extreme counter-actions. In his unpublished book, *The History of Urban Anti-Poverty Movements*, Jaedon Shin, a leading activist of the COUP, outlined the features of anti-poverty movements during the 1980s:

> Fierceness, durability, and unity! These were the typical features of anti-poverty movements. Instead of a short spell of gatherings, we aimed to carry on invincible fights. Our actions were goal-oriented and organised (Shin 1990 p. 35).

Although the "fierce, durable, and united" movements suffered from state sanctions, they gained social and moral support from other social actors. Greene (1984) and Brockett (1993) have stated that arbitrary state violence tends to accelerate revolutionary potential of society by turning apathetic people into sympathetic supporters and radicalising moderate people. Having witnessed hundreds of people gunned down by the military governments, Korean citizens also came to sustain – or at least connive with – the radical anti-poverty movements. In particular, other social activist groups began to further recognise anti-poverty organisations as the leading body of the Korean anti-government movement and allied with them. In 1987, the leading national student union, the SNU Student Union held anti-poverty movements:

> We pay attention to the enormous revolutionary wave which anti-poverty organisations are creating for Korean society. In order to stop political oppression, we support anti-poverty movements and take part in their activities. It is the way to scrape out the dirty ruling bloc from our land (SNUSU 1987 p. 16).

The support from student unions had a significant implication in South Korea in the sense that student unions have functioned as a delivery room for future social activists (Lee 2007). Indeed, due to the radical anti-demolition movements, many leading student activists decided to devote themselves to anti-poverty organisations. For instance, the senior staff of the Junim SSP Centre, Chungsim Kwak (AP-2008-06) was an SNU student union activist, who joined the Protestant Junim *Minjung* Church during anti-demolition movements. Despite their aggressive attitudes, anti-poverty organisations widened their political influence on society when their activism targeted the 'unpopular' military state. The COUP praised its own moral superiority during the military regime as follows:

> We are the essential channel for political liberation. Based upon *minjung*'s aspirations, we are threatening the state that is not founded on popular support. We are getting recognised as righteous groups that could confront the state until the end (KOCER 1992 p. 60).

*6.22 Keeping a Critical Distance from the State*

When the democratic government invited anti-poverty organisations to the Pilot SSP Centre Project in 1996 and promised to regularly sponsor them with grants of 150 million KRW per year, anti-poverty activists generally considered the state money as "governmental scholarship" (AP-2005-19), which "rewarded (them) for (their) previous social movements"(AP-2005-01; AP-2005-15). The 'government scholarship' for SSP Centres continued after the Pilot SSP Centre Projects were regularised in 2000, and the same amount in grants (150 million KRW) had been given to each SSP Centre without any change by 2004. SSP Centres spent the grants on paying salaries, renting offices, managing SSP work projects and purchasing assets such as cars, printers, computers and office furniture. Table 6-1 summarises the average expenditure lists of SSP Centres in 2003, reported by the KASSPC (KASSPC Information Centre 2004 p. 105). Since the operation of SSP Centres was

100% dependent on the state money, the state grants were the only recourse that enabled SSP Centres to carry on.

**Table 6-1 Average Expenditure of SSP Centre**

| Item | Amount(\) |
|---|---|
| Salaries | 10,7903,620 |
| Office rent | 24,164,460 |
| SSP work project management | 7,735,490 |
| Office Expenditure | 10,025,710 |
| Other expenses | 170,720 |
| Total | 150,000,000 |

Source: KASSPC Information Centre (2004 p. 105) edited

However, despite the dependence on state resources, SSP Centres tried to distinguish themselves from state control. They preferred to define the SSP partnership as "equal cooperation" not as activists' coming under state jurisdiction. Anglican Pastor Chuntaek Kwon, the director of the Nowon Sharing Home and the Nowon SSP Centre, highlighted the importance of maintaining critical distance from the state when the Pilot SSP Centre Project was set out in 1996. At *the 10-Year History of Sharing Homes,* Kwon made sure that the ASH would not be trapped by state sponsorship, saying that "our relationship with the state is not combative anymore. But it must not become a master-servant relationship. Anti-poverty organisations should fault the state as a symbiotic partner" (1996 p. 135). Other anti-poverty organisations also stood firm with the idea of a symbiotic partnership. When a lot of anti-poverty organisations decided to run SSP Centres in 2001, Sungoh Kim, a leading activist of the ASH, wrote in a renowned activist magazine, *City and Poverty*, that SSP Centres should maintain "critical distances and creative tensions" with the state (2001 p. 66). Quoting a popular Korean proverb:

> "The further a toilet is located from the house, the better it is". This proverb explains our past relationship with the state. The more distance social movements had from the state, the better it was. But contemporary people do not place a toilet outside of the house. We even have a toilet inside the room. Social activists can be closer with the state like that. But we need to maintain critical distances and creative tensions (Kim, S. 2001 p. 66).

Although receiving state grants, anti-poverty organisations were not willing to allow the state to meddle in their business. The remark of a senior staff of the KASSPC epitomised the general attitude of anti-poverty activists during the early stage of the SSP Centre project.

> If the state thrusts their oars into our affairs as if they are our employers, all will be over. The state can support us, but should never interfere with our activities. They are not our employers and we are not their employees (AP-2005-15).

However, their initial aspiration for autonomy could not be actualised in reality. State funds were more like merit-based scholarship, rather than need-based. The state aided anti-poverty organisations not because it upheld activists' ideologies, but because it expected activists to conduct SSP work projects on behalf of the state. For this reason, it was impossible for state-sponsored SSP Centres to insist on their own missions. As a staff member of the Norae SSP Centre commented, "While the state money has brought anti-poverty organisations alive, it has also manacled (their) hands and feet" (AP-2005-02). The Korean democratic government could no longer exercises visible 'coercive power' to punish anti-poverty organisations. However, the financial support offered by the state came to function as 'invisible handcuffs', as the Norae SSP Centre staff member commented. Borrowing the two types of 'power' – i.e. coercive power vs. disciplinary power (Foucault 1980; Gramsci 2006; Lukes 1981), the state began to exercise 'disciplinary power' through financial support. Especially the introduction of a performance-based funding scheme in 2005 more directly placed SSP Centres under state surveillance.

**6.3 State Intervention in Anti-Poverty Organisations**

*6.31 The State Pressures for Good Performance*

The performance evaluation of SSP Centres, which estimates how many poor people succeed in leaving welfare with the help of SSP Centres, has existed since the beginning of the pilot SSP Centre Project. The early-stage evaluation had nothing to do with financial incentives and sanctions. Thus, there were no disagreements on the evaluation. However, the performance evaluation began to cause severe conflict between the state and anti-poverty organisations when the MOHW decided to

intensify the pressures for good performance by introducing performance-based funding.

Criticisms of SSP Centres from conservative media promoted the introduction of the intensive performance evaluation. After three years of SSP implementation, the Korean Board of Audit and Inspection (KBAI) conducted the first large-scale inspection of the SSP, and opened the results to the public in July 2004. The average poverty escape rate via the SSP was as low as 5%, and in Seoul City it was just 2.4%, meaning only 24 out of 1000 recipients finally found jobs through the SSP service (KBAI 2004). The poverty escape rate immediately became the target of media criticism. On July 16, 2004, *Naeil Newspaper* extensively featured the outcomes, condemning that "the SSP urgently requires 'massive surgery'". It stated that although the state has poured more than 294 billion KRW a year (into SSP Centres), the poverty escape rate of SSP recipients is unreasonably low" (Naeil Newspaper 2004). Naturally, SSP Centres were reproached on the poor outcomes. Under sensational headlines such as "SSP Centres Feed Themselves" (Donga Newspaper 2004) and "Insane SSP Centres" (Segye Newspaper 2004), the conservative media blamed SSP Centres for ineffective performance. After the news articles were published, the MOHW vindicated SSP Centres by uploading several public responses on its official website, such as:

> Although SSP recipients are classified as able-bodied persons, they are aged (40+), and their work capacity is relatively poorer than normal people. Thus, 5% cannot be concluded to be an ineffective outcome (MOHW 2004a p. 1).

However, while defending SSP Centres against external condemnation, the MOHW began to internally discipline SSP Centres by devising the 'New Financial Support Scheme' in December 2004 (MOHW 2004b). The new scheme was a graded fund provision for SSP Centres based on their performances[4]. The MOHW stated that it would conduct a comprehensive annual evaluation of every SSP Centre from 2005, using five main criteria: 1) the number of SSP recipients that each SSP Centre

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[4] Precisely speaking, the MOHW had been considering introducing performance-based funding since 2003 (cf. KASSPC Information Centre 2004; 2006a), but the KBAI's inspection and the external criticism about SSP Centres in 2004 served as a decisive momentum to the introduction of a new financial support scheme (MOHW 2007 p.1).

manages; 2) the number of SSP work projects; 3) the number of independent Self-Sufficiency Communities; 4) the percentage of SSP recipients who succeed in leaving welfare; and 5) the recipient satisfaction survey score. The MOHW planned to categorise SSP Centres into four clusters according to the evaluation results, and subsidise funds accordingly, as shown in Table 6-2. The official reason for the new scheme was that "equal grants for every SSP Centre hamper efficient and productive performance" (MOHW 2004b p. 1).

**Table 6-2 Graded Funding Scheme**

| Category | Premier SSP Centre | Standard SSP Centre | Basic SSP Centre | Small SSP Centre |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual Funds (KRW) | 170 million | 150 million | 130 million | 110 million |
| The Number of SSP Centres | 58 | 94 | 50 | 7 |

Source: MOHW (2004b p. 3)

*6.32 Direct Actions against State Intervention*

SSP Centres perceived the new financial scheme as a "disgrace" (AP-2005-01) and as "blasphemies against social movements" (AP-2005-03) because the scheme was a virtual incentive-punishment measure. Compared to the previous equal grants of 150 million KRW, the top 58 SSP Centres would receive 20 million KRW more, whereas the bottom 57 SSP Centres could face a curtailment of around 20 million KRW. As Chungsung Kwon, the director of the Norae SSP Centre, explained, the incentive-sanction system was "a raid on the pride of activists" (AP-2005-01):

> The state is trying to have us under their thumb! They view that we are extorting the government budget like a parasite. We are doing our activities in our own ways. The measure is a raid on the pride of activists. We are not their dogs moving here and there for such carrots and sticks (AP-2005-01).

Such rejection was not the only reason for the dissent from the state scheme. The scheme was seen as a frontal attack on the values that anti-poverty organisations had endeavoured to protect even after their operation of SSP Centres. Firstly, graded funds implied the "imposition of inter-organisational competition" (AP-2005-01; AP-2008-09; AP-2008-11). Anti-poverty organisations had strived to avoid situations that could possibly incur competition among themselves. For instance, the

government had once selected 45 SSP Centres as good practice models, and bestowed 20 million KRW awards in July 2003. However, 20 SSP Centres refused to accept the rewards and returned the money to the government. Considering that SSP Centres had rejected even a one-time bonus in order to preserve inter-organisational solidarity, the regular incentive-sanction initiative appeared a fundamental threat to their comradeship. Hosanna Jung, the director of the Pajong SSP Centre, demonstrated this:

> It would bring about a division within our camp. The state intention is obvious. It is to permanently anchor the competitive spirit to our camp, rewarding some whom the state favours and punishing the others (AP-2005-03).

Another reason they disagreed with the new scheme was because it was based on "quantification" (AP-2005-01; AP-2005-03) and "materialism" (AP-2005-01; AP-2008-11). The aforementioned five evaluation criteria were mostly about quantitative aspects of performance –the number of recipients, SSP work projects and Self-Sufficiency Communities. This meant that in order to acquire higher grades, they should "increase the numbers" (AP-2005-01), which anti-poverty organisations had regarded as less meaningful than the quality of their activities. A SSP Centre director said:

> Imagine we have to grade our activities in terms of numbers like '1 point for one person' or '10 points for 10 persons'. What bullshit it could be! The state is imposing the bullshit. The state holds evaluation as objective. Well, evaluation is just materialism, pretending objectivity. Nowadays, even schools do not rank students according to exam scores. But the government still likes ranking. How anachronistic is this? The evaluation will restrict our freedom. It is a shortcut to the death of social movements. Why should we compete for the meaningless numbers among comrades? (AP-2005-01).

Moreover, the quantified criteria were likely to deteriorate the relationship between SSP Centres and SSP recipients. In the sense that self-sufficiency success rates became an evaluation criterion, it became inevitable for SSP Centres to urge recipients to be independent from welfare. To "increase the numbers of successful recipients", SSP Centres would have to push their recipients out of welfare as some SSP Centre staff commented:

> We have embraced any recipient. But grading will reduce our space to manoeuvre. We may be forced to push recipients out, to pull the state money in (AP-2005-03).

> Graded funding will make recipients mere objects of our activities. Our humanist spirit will disappear and only management spirit will remain in SSP Centres. How could we call such situation really 'good performance'? (AP-2005-04)

Like this, to anti-poverty activists, the state's intervention in SSP Centres' performance signified the loss of their ideals such as comradeship and humanism. For this reason, SSP Centres could not readily comply with the scheme, and a group of SSP Centre staff delivered their suggestions to the MOHW, such as "while a general evaluation can be tolerated, the incentives and sanctions based on performance are unacceptable" (AP-2005-01). However, as long as anti-poverty organisations were receiving state money, their SSP Centres could not be in their possession. From the standpoint of the state, SSP Centres were just another type of social welfare institution supervised by the state. When Dugwan Kim, the special aide of the Office of the President, visited and made a personal speech at the South Bupyeong SSP Centre on July 27, 2005, many activists from various SSP Centres gathered to demonstrate against the new funding plan. The response of Kim at that time represented the state's view:

> If you (SSP Centres) were entirely irrelevant to the state, we wouldn't need to assess you…But once you are receiving state subsidies, SSP Centres must accompany a certain degree of accountability. The state would receive citizens' criticisms if we took no heed of welfare institutions. 'What on earth does the state do with my taxes?' They may express their discontent. I pretty much understand grading may be unfamiliar to you because many of you have social movement backgrounds. But it is now necessary for you to consider responsibility for the national budget (South Bupyeong SSP Centre 2005 pp. 6-7).

Because the introduction of the new scheme remained on track, SSP Centres decided to dash into an all-out struggle in August 2005 (KASSPC 2005a, 2005b, 2005d). Since anti-poverty organisations had conducted collective actions against the military state for a long time, they were adept in direct actions. Even the policy executive of the KASSPC, Jun Choi, was a famous radical activist who wrote the lyrics of one of the most popular protest songs in modern Korean history, 'From

Hero to Warrior'. Having the KASSPC as their headquarters, more than 100 SSP Centres allied together in almost no time and resolved to fight together. On August 9, 2005, the KASSPC announced the protest resolution, saying:

> We, the SSP Centres have provided alternative services and jobs for people in poverty and contributed to their social, psychological and emotional independence. We have tried to clear away a dark shadow of the structural poverty in Korea...The state may well have to respect SSP Centres, but the new scheme is going to the opposite direction, destroying the state-civil society partnership...It is not too late yet. The state must thoroughly admit their fault, and withdraw the plan. SSP Centres confirm our determination to fight against the scheme (KASSPC 2005h).

Soon after the announcement, SSP Centres devoted themselves to the struggle, making full use of traditional social movement tactics. They pitched tents on August 17, 2005 at Gwacheon Square, where the MOHW building was located, and decided to go on a sleep-in strike until the state withdrew its new measure. Activists from SSP Centres gathered from all over the country and grouped according to regions to take part in the sleep-in strike (see Table 6-3). Staff from the SSP Centres in Busan City had to travel more than 12 hours by car in order to attend the sleep-in strike in Seoul City. However, as a staff member of the KASSPC recalled, they "were all passionately dedicated to combat the incentive-sanction logic (AP-2008-17). Even some activists such as Jun Choi decided to set about a hunger strike until the state recalled the graded funding scheme and 100 directors of SSP Centres declared voluntary resignation and demanded the resignation of the Minister of Health and Welfare (KASSPC 2005c).

**Table 6-3 Sleep-in Strike Schedule**
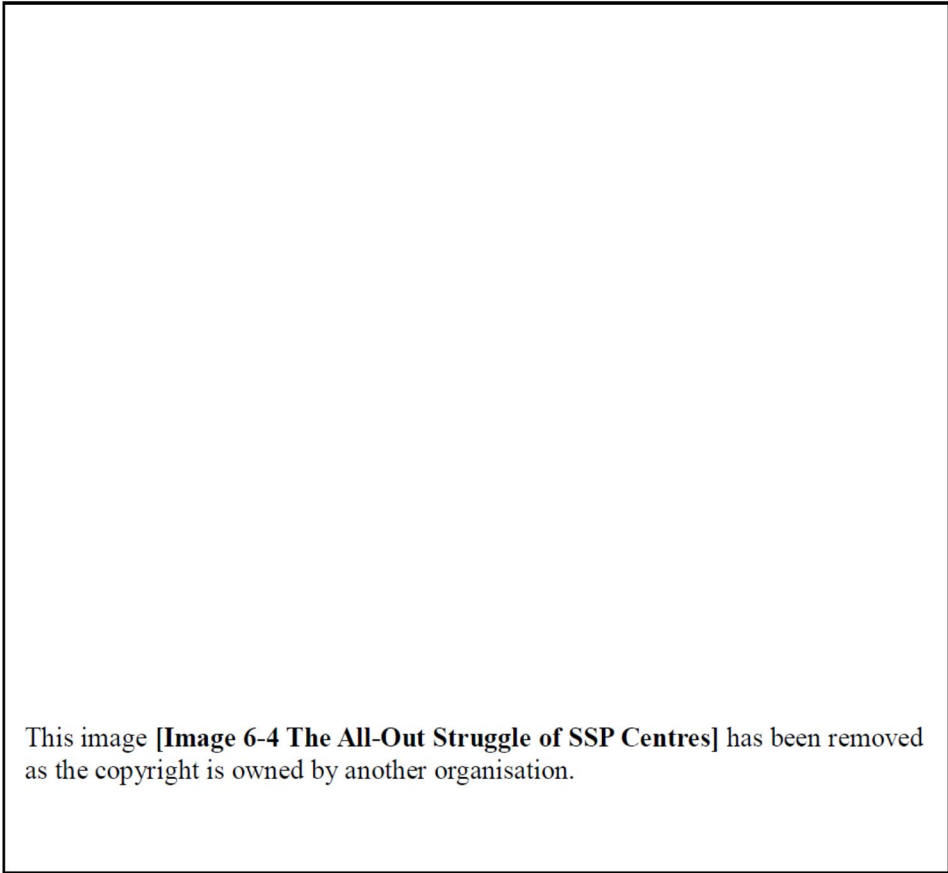
| Date | SSP Centre Group | Date | SSP Centre Group | Date | SSP Centre Group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6- 8 Sep | Seoul City | 17-19 Sep | The KASSPC | 28 Sep | Busan City |
| 9-11 Sep | Kyeong Province | 20-21 Sep | Chungnam Province | 29-30 Sep | Ulsan City |
| 12-13 Sep | Kangwon Province | 22-23 Sep | Kyeongbuk Province | 1 Oct | Jeonnam Province |
| 14-15 Sep | Incheon City | 24-25 Sep | Gwanju City | 2- 3 Oct | Jeonbuk Province |
| 16 Sep | Metoropolitan Area | 26 Sep | Daejeon City | 4- 5 Oct | Chungbuk Province |

Source: KASSPC Newsletter (2005e p. 1)

Anti-poverty activists working at SSP Centres also expressed their resolution

by using on-line campaigns, one-person silent picketing and street marches (KASSPC 2005e, 2005f, 2005g). About 560 staff of 100 SSP Centres confederated and conducted the collective actions in a shipshape manner. Image 6-4 captures the various tactics that SSP Centres adopted. Such collective demonstrations can be seen as successful in the sense that they confirmed the remaining capacity of anti-poverty organisations for social movements even after their incorporation into the SSP. For this reason, SSP Centres celebrated their national league by declaring the 'Self-Sufficiency Proclamation' on September 2, 2005 as follows:

> A better world is possible!
> From every nook and corner of the country, we are united.
> Vividly feeling the unity of our comrades,
> We fill our hearts with hope.
> Transforming 'their SSP' into 'our life',
> We have been clawing our way up to SSP Centres.
> Our activism is alive and we will go on.
> We will remember 2005! This grand alliance!
> Let's keep creating bigger, broader solidarity!
> (KASSPC 2005d p. 8)

This image **[Image 6-4 The All-Out Struggle of SSP Centres]** has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

*6.33 Failure of Direct Actions*

The initial self-satisfaction, however, did not last long. Unlike previous collective actions against the military state, their struggle did not gain social support. Rather, the activists received unfavourable responses from other social actors. Citizens' responses were also not as hospitable as they had expected. When they had conducted social movements against dictatorship, they were respected as an "activist group sacrificing themselves to noble causes" (AP-2005-01). However, after they were incorporated into the state welfare system, people viewed their activism disparagingly, seeing as a "rent-seeking interest group, grumbling for more state rice" (AP-2008-11).

However, the most disappointing aspect of the campaign was the apathy of SSP recipients. SSP Centres expected that SSP recipients would stand at their side because they had for a long time fought for poor people's rights (KASSPC 2005d). When the SSP commenced in 2000, many SSP Centre staff were determined to "share the fate of poor people" (KASSPC 2000 p. 97). Indeed, as Myeongho Shin, a COUP activist, said, "community activists have hitherto tried to identify poor people's interests with their own interests" (KOCER 1999 p. 56). However, this was not the whole story. In a sense, activists expected SSP recipients to show the same attitude to them, supporting their activities and assisting in their all-out struggle. In the KASSPC Newsletter on September 5, 2005, the General Director of the KASSPC, Seokgu Jung thus asked SSP recipients to join their demonstrations:

> SSP recipients! Unite and Resist! Let's fight together. We are the members of the same SSP family. We need to unite to regain our rights. We all dream of a world where all people can live an equal life. Let's open a better world together (KASSPC Newsletter 2005d p. 1)!

However, despite the agitation, most recipients did not show any interests in the strike, and only a few recipients came to the Gwacheon Square strike spot. As a SSP Centre staff explained, it was "practically difficult for recipients to participate in the strike because they had to work at SSP work projects during the day" (AP-2008-13). Also, "many recipients are ashamed of their recipient status and don't want to reveal their status in public" (AP-2008-13). This would make them reluctant to be involved in public parades.

There was another reason behind the recipients' passive attitudes, as a

recipient confessed, "The matters of the SSP Centre are basically irrelevant to recipients" (WR-2005-04). Most SSP recipients simply viewed SSP Centres as "public welfare agencies, managing the SSP on behalf of the state" (WR-2005-02), and they did not know what anti-poverty organisations used to do for poor people in the past. Furthermore, because recipients received SSP benefits directly from state offices, the financial conditions of SSP Centres did not affect the amount of their benefits. If their SSP Centre was closed owing to financial difficulty, recipients could be re-referred to another SSP Centre. Due to the different positions, recipients had a lukewarm attitude towards the SSP Centres' strikes. For these reasons, SSP Centres failed to acquire the support of their recipients, and had to lead the struggle alone.

Consequently, the strikes did not change state plan. However, the fact that SSP Centres did not gain external support was not the only reason for the strike's failure. There were other factors that led their struggle to fail. The present social context in which anti-poverty organisations were located is different to the past. When they stayed outside the institutionalised policy arena, their combative actions were the symbol of the preserving spirit of resistance. But once they entered into the state–civil society partnership, their aggressive responses came to be described as 'improper behaviour' for state-sponsored welfare institutions. To draw the remark of a state official, "negotiations and compromise became a more legitimate medium to exchange opinions between partners" (GO-2008-03). For this reason, state officials viewed the uncompromising attitude of SSP Centres as "stubborn" and "old-fashioned":

> It is really regrettable they behaved in quite old-fashioned ways. The government is no longer ruled by dictators. We value communication and compromise. But they didn't want to negotiate and concede, stubbornly claiming for quite unrealistic demands (GO-2008-03).

The 'indefinite strike' strategy was also the cause of the failure of their collective actions because it was incompatible with the timely procedures of public administration. As discussed in the last section, a "fierce, durable, and united struggle"(Shin 1990 p.35) used to be a traditional social movement strategy to show indefatigable will. But the funding scheme of SSP Centres was a time-limited policy agenda, which was to be implemented according to the planned schedule of the 2005 government budget allocation. Thus, a swift countermove should have been carried

out. Nonetheless, borrowing the expression of a KASSPC staff member, the activists decided to "simply sit outside the MOHW building and waited for the state to listen to their voices" (AP-2008-17). While they were conducting the indefinite strike outside the MOHW building, the MOHW had already been allocating the graded funds to the SSP Centres. However, the KASSPC decided to continue the strike. The sleep-in strike, which began on August 18, 2005, carried on through November "without a specific plan"(Choi 2005), and such protracted strike caused SSP Centre staff to be "exhausted" (AP-2008-05) and "doubtful"(AP-2008-10; AP-2008-11) about the KASSPC' direction. Having sensed the internal doubts, the policy executive, Jun Choi, sent a letter to encourage SSP Centres under the title of "A Letter for SSP Centre Family" on September 28, 2005. He wrote:

> Many comrades are asking me at the tents how long the strike will continue. The KASSPC hasn't got a specific plan about when we will end the struggle. We are going to fight until the state accepts our claims. Only through the struggle will we be able to become independent actors of the SSP. We, SSP comrades must maintain greater efforts to unite (Choi 2005).

However, many SSP Centre staff frowned on this "haphazard" (AP-2008-07) strategy. They were not full-time activists any longer, and had to work as SSP Centre staff. Thus, it was impossible to continue the sleep-in struggle timelessly. As the strike prolonged, SSP Centre staff who enthusiastically participated in the strike dwindled, and the all-out struggle finally fade away around early December without conspicuous results. Accordingly, the influential position of the KASSPC as an activists' headquarters was "irreparably damaged" (AP-2008-18). As a KASSPC staff member said, "The KASSPC has become untrustworthy" (AP-2008-17). When SSP Centre staff talked about the KASSPC in in-depth interviews in 2008, they described the KASSPC as an "incapable" (AP-2008-05), "hopeless" (AP-2008-09) and a "nominal organisation"(AP-2008-13).

Hence, the grade funding system didn't simply just restructure the government–SSP Centre relationship. Through the failure of the 2005 all-out struggle, SSP Centres unexpectedly came to realise their new social position as state-disciplined welfare agencies. As a SSP Centre staff member, the failure of the all-out struggle made SSP Centres "sceptical about their identity as social movement groups" (AP-2008-11). Many staff ridiculed themselves as "pawns of the state" (AP-

2008-08), "cringing to the state" (AP-2008-11) or "becoming tamed by the state" (AP-2008-13):

> The system is wicked. Many SSP Centres are now concerned about superficial performance. We are not state bodies, but are surely within the system. Candidly speaking, I think we are cringing to the state and dancing to their whistle (AP-2008-11).

> I feel we are becoming tamed by the state little by little. It is a kind of vicious circle. If our SSP Centre is degraded to a lower level, we have no choice but to fire one staff member. If one staff member is gone, the others have to shoulder more work projects. How can we guarantee the quality of work projects? … So it is wiser to adopt the performance evaluation system as quickly as possible (AP-2008-13).

SSP Centres were apparently experiencing a dark era after 2005. Since the introduction of the graded funding scheme, the state reinforced incentives and penalties several times. In June 2007, the MOHW added an incentive scheme to the funding system. It was to select one SSP Centre among each cluster as a good performing model and grant 8-12 million KRW as a bonus (MOHW 2008a p. 10). The aim of selecting a good performing model was to improve competitive capacity among SSP Centres. In 2008, the MOHW even planned to curtail 10% of state funds to the SSP Centres that gained a '0 score' on two out of five evaluation criteria. The MOHW also decided to cancel contracts with the Centres that received this warning for two consecutive years (MOHW 2008c p. 2). Nonetheless, there was no conspicuous opposition to the reinforced graded funding. The KASSPC only sent a brief written opinion to the MOHW, stating that "instead of curtailment, warning for low-performing SSP Centres would be sufficient" (KASSPC 2008 p. 1).

To sum up, the state funds that SSP Centres used to enhance their available resources forced them to be controlled by state regulations and vulnerable to state policies, as Wolch (1990) has claimed. However, this did not mean that they meekly conformed to the state as faithful servants. As Section 6.4 reveals, SSP Centres began to work out alternative ways to sustain their adversarial role, while seemingly adjusting to state rules.

## 6.4 Resistance to State Intervention
*6.41 Illegal Performance Manipulation*

By observing the relationship between peasants and landowners in a Malay village, Scott discovered that the opposition of the subaltern class to power holders was expressed not only through traditional forms of resistance, such as direct and radical social movements, but also through boondoggling, pilferage, feigned compliance, laziness and deceit. Thus, the techniques of defiance can be "unorganised, unsystematic and individual" rather than "organised, systematic, and cooperative"; "opportunistic and self-indulgent" as opposed to "principled and selfless"; "indirect and covert" not "direct and overt"; and born not of "revolutionary consciousness" but of "everyday material interests" (Scott 1985 p. 292).

In a similar vein, SSP Centre staff, who realised their subordinate status to the state, began to employ indirect and illegal tactics to defy the intensifying state intervention. After the failure of the 2005 collective action, SSP Centres no longer explicitly claimed the abolition of performance-based funding. However, this does not mean that activists obediently accepted the state rules. While SSP Centre staff cynically claimed that they "became tamed by the state" (AP-2008-13), they were adeptly exploiting a loophole in the state bureaucratic system to disturb performance-based funding. The most typical form of micro-resistance was to fabricate performance results. Every December, all SSP Centres were supposed to submit their annual performance documents to the MOHW, which then calculated the scores of each SSP Centre based on their performance evaluation chart (Table 6-4); SSP Centres that gained higher total scores received more state funds. The loophole in question was concerned with the documents used by the MOHW to assess performance outcomes, some of which were submitted by the SSP Centres themselves.

**Table 6-4 Standards of SSP Centre Performance Evaluation**

| Evaluation Standard | Range | Score |
|---|---|---|
| 1.Number of Recipients | Below 20 persons<br>21 - 30<br>31 - 40<br>41 - 50<br>51 - 60<br>61 - 70<br>Over 71 persons | 1<br>2<br>3<br>4<br>5<br>6<br>7 |
| 2. Number of Work Projects | Below 4 projects<br>5 - 6<br>7 - 8<br>Over 9 projects | 1<br>2<br>3<br>4 |
| 3. Number of Self-Sufficiency Communities | 1 community<br>2<br>3<br>Over 4 communities | 1<br>2<br>3<br>4 |
| 4. Self-Sufficiency Success Rate | Below 5%<br>5% - 9%<br>10% - 14%<br>15% - 19%<br>20% - 24%<br>Over 25% | 1<br>2<br>3<br>4<br>5<br>6 |
| 5. Recipient Satisfaction | Below 90 scores<br>90 - 94<br>Over 95 scores | 1<br>2<br>3 |

Source: MOHW (2008c p. 6)

Bureaucratic system is predominantly based on written documents. The state bureaucracy is managed through the use of impersonal documents as these are assumed to enhance efficiency and rationality in administrative work. However, while 'paperwork' is valued, actual 'face-to-face interaction' among people is gradually being disregarded. This is what Habermas was referring to when he warned of 'the colonisation of the lifeworld' by the bureaucratic system of the welfare states, i.e. the real world of experience as encroached upon by the expansion of the world of documents (1987). Activists in SSP Centres also expressed their disquiet about the tendency of the MOHW to deal with matters mostly through documents, ignoring conditions 'on the ground'. They denunciated the MOHW as "desk administration" (*taksang hangjung*):

> Desk administration is the evil of the state. The MOHW doesn't have any understanding of real life. Administering SSP work projects needs mind and hearts, but they only have a head. They are simply sitting in front of desks and like sending us the documents of orders. Their focus is only to push us to vomit achievement (AP-2005-01).

The MOHW officers don't have any field experience. They don't know the real situation. They are burying their noses into papers. The problem is that desk administration is actually ruling the roost of the SSP (FN-11.22.2008-cleaning staff).

However, the interesting point is that 'desk administration' did not exclusively serve the state. SSP Centres also took advantage of desk administration. The fact that the performance evaluation was conducted using documents implied that the state was unlikely to scrutinise actual performance. Exploiting the narrow-mindedness of the document-oriented evaluation, some SSP Centres were able to bolster their performance results by submitting fake documents. For instance, one SSP Centre had a bike repairing work project; however, this was recorded as two separate projects in order to claim more MOHW funding. Likewise, an SSP Centre that was managing one care-giving project listed it as two different projects in their records. Another Centre submitted a report that said they were running two refurbishment work projects, when in reality participants on these quasi-discrete projects undertook work together.

The most popular form of document fabrication was to increase 'recipient satisfaction' scores. In early December, the MOHW sent questionnaires to SSP recipients via SSP Centres. The questionnaires asked recipients how much they were satisfied with their SSP Centres. After recipients anonymously marked the questionnaires, the SSP Centres were supposed to collect and send them to the MOHW. Since recipient satisfaction was a criterion used to grade SSP Centres, staff often requested that their recipients score them generously in this category. When I visited a SSP Centre for an interview on December 3, 2008, I happened to observe four recipients filling in the questionnaires at the meeting room of the Centre. Handing over the questionnaires, a SSP Centre staff member asked them to grade the questionnaires generously, making the total score exceed 95 points. As shown in Table 6-4, if the average satisfaction score was over 95/100, the SSP Centres would obtain the highest grade in this category. Thus, the staff solicited the recipients for more than 95 points. The recipients seemed to agree to the staff's request, and gave them a rating of 95 or over.

There may be several reasons why the recipients conspired with the staff. Firstly, most recipients preferred to be on good terms with the staff. As one recipient said, recipients did "not need to please staff to receive benefits" (FN-03.12.08-

cleaning recipient) because SSP benefits were directly distributed from the state office. But as another recipient added, there was "no need to be deliberately at odds with staff"(FN-03.12.08-cleaning recipient). Recipients had to interact with SSP Centre staff on a regular basis, whereas they did not work face-to-face with state officials. Therefore, the recipients wanted to avoid any unnecessary conflicts with staff. As the fabrication of satisfaction surveys did not directly harm their own interests, recipients were fairly willing to oblige the staff.

This manipulation of satisfaction scores occurred not only at this one SSP Centre. Compared to other standards, recipient satisfaction was the most subjective. Thus, it was the weakness that could be most easily manipulated. Accordingly, almost all the SSP Centres (235 Centres out of 242) gained 3 points (highest level) for the satisfaction category in 2008, while only 2 SSP Centres received 1 point (lowest level) and 5 SSP Centres gained 2 points (middle level) (MOHW 2008b). Since the manipulation was conducted covertly at individual SSP Centres, it was extremely difficult to know how many SSP Centres fabricated the standards and to what degree. Recipients might truly have been satisfied with the services of the SSP Centres and voluntarily awarded them the highest score. But as a Gwangye SSP Centre staff member suggested, "Almost all SSP Centres may cook them up to a degree" (AP-2008-11). The manipulation was a sort of 'sub-culture' that SSP Centres tacitly shared to the extent that it had a common nickname, 'performance play'. As one Gwangye SSP Centre staff member said:

> We all know performance play is dishonest, so we often tell each other
> not to play performance. But in our heart of hearts, we actually think it
> is a natural consequence of the wrong evaluation policy (AP-2008-11).

Interestingly, this individualistic and opportunistic 'performance play' led to the bizarre situation of 97.1% of SSP Centres achieving the highest scores in recipient satisfaction. This inadvertently resulted in the 'equalising' of official performance outcomes for SSP Centres, such that the MOHW was unable to categorise SSP Centres according to this criterion.

The MOHW was also aware of the prevalence of performance manipulation, so it added a new rule to the revised performance-based funding scheme. *The 2009 SSP Guidelines* state that local government officials should witness recipients'

scoring of the questionnaires, and SSP Centre staff should not be present at the time (MOHW 2008c p. 5). However, the central guidelines of the MOHW could not be implemented at the local level due insufficient cooperation from local welfare officials, who did not "not have time to split hairs about such minor details" (GO-2008-05). For instance, there were 443 SSP recipients in Gwanak district, working on 33 SSP projects divided between three SSP Centres (Gwanak District Office 2008). However, there were only one or two officers taking charge of the SSP in the Gwanak district office. Moreover, because district offices were normally understaffed, local welfare officials had to deal with other welfare programmes such as social services for children, the elderly or the disabled as well as the SSP. A local welfare official described their working conditions as follows:

> The MOHW seems to think we are supermen. We are doing everything of welfare. A disability unit of the MOHW requires me to report about the disabled, the pension unit about the elderly, and the social assistance unit about welfare recipients. Although each unit orders a trivial task, I have to spend all my time on reporting to all the units (GO-2008-04).

Under the heavy workload, it was impractical for local welfare officials to visit each SSP work project merely to monitor SSP recipients' questionnaires. Therefore, despite the MOHW's guidelines, local officials were inclined to leave the allocation and collection of the questionnaires to each SSP Centre. As an official said, "this is better for all"(GO-2008-06):

> If not excessively problematic, I allow SSP Centres to do it. How could you expect NGOs to perform like state offices? If I interfere in their work one by one, we both will get headaches. I would like to smoothly handle it without making a fuss (GO-2008-06).

Consequently, many local officials were making discretionary decisions against the MOHW's guidance. As Lipsky has illustrated, local officials as street-level bureaucrats remade policies and exerted "considerable discretion and autonomy in determining the nature" of the SSP (1980 p. 13). The interesting point is that their discretionary decisions unexpectedly created room for SSP Centres to continue performance fabrication. The MOHW initially tried to control the SSP Centres' manipulation by using local officials, but these in fact functioned as a shield,

protecting SSP Centres from the MOHW's intervention. The critical viewpoint on state–civil society partnership normally holds that the state exercises a united power. But the state system consists of a group of diverse bodies that includes local governments as well as the central government. Although the state bodies ultimately aim at "governing the society" (Miller and Rose 2008), the administration of state bodies cannot be entirely homogenous in practice, and such internal differentiation among state actors can (unintentionally) weaken the hegemonic power of the state over civil society. The local state officers' discretionary connivance with SSP Centres' manipulation provides an example of this trend.

To sum up, performance manipulation shows how the characteristics of the state system can be used as a tool for micro-resistance in the real partnership setting. Critical scholars on partnership have warned that the document-oriented bureaucratic system is isolating and colonising civil society agencies. But SSP Centres used the very document-focused process to deceive the state system by submitting fake documents. Performance manipulation was not the only tactic that SSP Centres adopted. While document manipulation can be seen as a form of hidden resistance through which SSP Centres illegally and stealthily defied the state's commands, there were other strategies of resistance that used the characteristics of state bodies in lawful ways. Inciting recipients to claim social rights was one such case.

*6.42 Legal Petitions for Social Rights*

During the military regime, the political aim of anti-poverty organisations was to effectively overthrow the existing state system. Given the unlawful nature of dictatorship, anti-poverty activists viewed it as natural to employ unlawful means to confront the illegitimate state. However, after democratisation, Korea became a law-governed state. As discussed in the last section, one of the reasons why the 2005 all-out struggle did not obtain social support was because SSP Centres overlooked this change in the nature of the state and simply clung to what one state officer denounced as "old-fashioned and illegal" means of opposition (GO-2008-03). Nonetheless, the failure of direct actions did not result in a complete end to the advocacy role of SSP Centre staff for poor people's wellbeing. Although they no longer intended to overturn the existing state system, SSP Centres began to find alternative ways to uphold the original purpose of anti-poverty movements within the system, using the characteristic of the law-governed state. Legal claims for social

rights were one of the tactics.

Obstacles to Social Rights: In reality, welfare recipients are faced with many obstacles to enjoying legally guaranteed social rights. The first of these is the state's control of welfare information. In Korea, social assistance benefits and their related services (e.g. medical care, childcare, housing allowance, gas bill discounts and food support) are provided on the basis of individual application, meaning that a person cannot receive the services regardless of how poor he/she is if he/she does not apply for the policy services. Therefore, knowledge of available services is a prerequisite to obtaining them.

The problem is that the government is normally unwilling to spread welfare service information. Through the introduction of the new social assistance, the NBLG, the democratic government began to legally guarantee the basic livelihood of the working-aged poor, who used to be excluded from state welfare. At the 1999 Independence Day Celebration, the then President Daejung Kim proclaimed "the state's responsibility for the wellbeing of all citizens by ensuring social rights of low income working-age citizens" (GIA 1999 pp. 25-26). Nonetheless, in reality, the government was concerned with the expenditure associated with welfare expansion, and thus many government ministries managing national budgets disliked the sudden increase in welfare population, which contradicted the public announcement of President Kim (MOGAHA 2003; MOPB 2000). For this reason, when the NBLG was initiated in 2000, the MOHW did not actively deliver the news to poor people and even restricted the first application period only to 12 working days (i.e. 2-20 May 2000) to allegedly minimise the number of applicants (Solidarity Assembly 2000).

Owing to the state's inactive publicity, almost all SSP recipients who participated in this study said that they "hadn't heard that young people (like them) were able to receive regular public assistance and services" (WR-2005-05). Although they "finally had to visit the state office because (they) had no straw to grasp" (WR-2008-13), their initial expectation from the state was to merely gain temporary aid, such as assistance in paying their children's school fees (e.g.WR-2005-01; WR-2005-02; WR-2008-13) or medicals bills for their family members (e.g.WR-2005-05; WR-2008-14; WR-2008-10). Due to the ignorance of available welfare services, poor

people were generally unable to enjoy full welfare rights.

Complicated welfare laws also made it trickier for poor people to exercise welfare rights. As Habermas (1986) and Tuebner (1986) have argued, welfare laws have "dilemmatic" features. The original aim of the juridification of the welfare state is to promote substantive freedom and equality. However, legal rules comprise a volume of specialist terminology that can be hardly understood by ill-educated recipients. As Øyen has noted, the esoteric nature of specialist legislation tends to make the rules inaccessible to the great majority of poor people (1980 p. 49). Indeed, most of the SSP recipients I interviewed said they did not know the basic legal terms such as 'conditional recipient', 'social rights' or 'employability'. Because of the ignorance about welfare, poor people had to follow the orders of state officials and passively receive what officials gave them. As a recipient recalled, it made them "intimidated and overwhelmed like ignorant babies" (WR-2008-12):

> I didn't know what she (state official) was saying and what I could do. If she directed me to do this and that, I did it. If she told me to fill in some forms, I did it. I felt that if I didn't follow her directions, she would cut off my application (WR-2008-12).

In fact, professional welfare knowledge is the power of state officials. According to Foucault's neologism, *'power/knowledge'*, power is based on knowledge, and knowledge produces power (1980). Just as the medical knowledge of doctors disciplines patients to conform to their directions, expert knowledge possessed by dominant groups tends to isolate subaltern peoples. Using Foucault's term, welfare laws were also a kind of power/knowledge possessed by dominant policy makers or bureaucrats, and poor people were 'have-nots' in terms of welfare knowledge. In this unbalanced power situation, it was quite tricky for the 'knowledgeless' poor to assert their legal social rights.

Apart from external obstacles such as the lack of welfare information and the complexity of welfare laws, internalised stigma also hampered the working-age poor when demanding greater rights. As a Younggwang SSP Centre staff illustrated, many SSP recipients were "ashamed of their recipient status" (AP-2008-10). They were "conscious of the gaze (of others) and wanted to conceal (their) condition as much as possible" (WR-2005-06):

Society may laugh at me. 'Such a young man relies on the state.' People may pour scorn on me saying I am a perfect lazybones. My friends will dis me 'you wretch, just die than suffer disgrace'(WR-2005-06).

Because of the fear of disgrace, some SSP recipients lied to their friends that they "are doing internships in the public sector" (WR-2005-05) or "preparing for running a business" (WR-2008-14), rather than admitting that they worked on SSP projects. Some recipients even used to lie to their own families. As Goldberg argues, this "stigmatisation discourages demands for social rights because clients see themselves as unworthy of greater assistance and perhaps undeserving of the assistance they already receive" (2001 pp. 194-195). For the recipients who internalised social stigma, welfare support was something to be hidden.

Organising Information Meetings: It was in this context that SSP Centres started arranging information workshops to deliver the details of welfare information to their recipients. Since the official role of SSP Centres was to manage work projects, they did not have to conduct such workshops. But having witnessed the obstacles to attaining social rights, some SSP Centres began to pay attention to the delivery of welfare information beyond the provision of services. Even though knowledge of legal issues was initially produced by bureau-professionals, this did not mean that it should always function for the 'haves'. In this sense, SSP Centre staff intended to assist recipients to actualise their rights, by turning 'ignorant recipients' into 'knowledgeable claimants'. *The Introductory Handbook for SSP Centre Staff* (2007a, 2007b), internally published by the KASSPC, also emphasised active information provision as a desirable attitude for SSP Centre staff:

> Recipients not only have rights to welfare, but also rights to know everything of welfare. Staff have the duty to answer each of their questions with kindness and to proactively deliver information (KASSPC 2007b p. 228).

Indeed, all of the SSP Centres I visited were holding various information workshops to introduce welfare knowledge to recipients. As the information service schedule of the Younggwang SSP Centre shows (see Table 6-5), many Centres offered new recipients three-day (the shortest) or two-week (the longest) induction

courses to help them get to grips with the social welfare system before starting to work on SSP projects. They also organised workshops for recipients to update information.

Table 6-5 Informational Service Schedule of the Younggwang SSP Centre

| Course | Schedules | Contends |
|---|---|---|
| Induction for new recipients | Two-week course (3 times a year) | General introduction of social welfare, NBLG and SSP |
| Workshop for current recipients | One-day workshop (8 times a year) | Update information of new welfare schemes and services |
| General assembly of all recipients | One-day meeting (every month) | Discussion about the direction of SSP work project |
| Special class | Irregularly | Learn how to use computer and internet |
| Informal gathering | Frequently | Sharing common sense and current social affairs |

Source: Younggwang SSP Centre, informal material (2008 pp. 54-55)

The information meetings were used not only "for explaining laws with straightforward language" (AP-2008-10), but also "to equip recipients to be aware of their constitutional rights and shake off all their sense of humiliation" (AP-2008-11), as staff members in charge of education noted:

> We teach that the 'recipient is not a miserable state'. What does 'self-sufficiency' imply? I always say, 'Self-sufficiency is self-standing, standing as a dignified citizen. Stop walking on eggshells in when receiving state money. You used to pay taxes. You will repay the benefits with taxes. What you are receiving is your undoubted rights. The state must ensure your livelihood' (AP-2008-11).

> I minutely explain the NBLG. How is it introduced and what does 'basic livelihood' and 'guarantee' mean? I show blow by blow how to calculate benefits and what additional services are available for recipients (AP-2008-10).

Ironically, the institutionalisation of anti-poverty organisations as state-controlled SSP Centres facilitated the distribution of public welfare information. Critical scholars might perceive the institutionalised SSP Centres simply as being a 'shadow state'. But the very fact that they came under state guidance made it easier for SSP Centres to convey up-to-date welfare guidance from the state to their recipients, as the state directly transmitted its newest rules to 'subordinate' SSP Centres. Of course, the information workshops did not lead recipients to perfectly

master the welfare system, nor did they completely eradicate the sense of shame felt by participants. Nonetheless, the inculcation of welfare knowledge yielded silent changes. As one official said, "recipients have gradually grasped the meaning of social rights and began to claim them while staying at Centres" (GO-2008-07). Local welfare officials were the first to perceive the recipients' changes because "recipients began to increasingly call for social services as time goes by" (GO-2008-07).

Lipsky contends that recipients normally have little knowledge about welfare because they are isolated and street-level bureaucrats tend to control and selectively ration information (1980 p. 118). However, this is not entirely applicable when civil society organisations become street-level welfare agencies. While state officials were reluctant to release information, SSP Centres were willing to proffer knowledge to recipients. Thus, many recipients at SSP Centres came to be armed with welfare information. For instance, while I was interviewing the local welfare officials, one official (GO-2008-08) received a phone call from a female SSP recipient. The recipient was calling to inquire about the reason the official did not offer her childcare services, available to SSP recipients. Judging from the official's defensive response, he appeared to make a mistake and the recipient seemed annoyed about this. After the call, the official embarrassedly said:

> Well, you see? Some recipients are experts in welfare. They know welfare better than I do. Welfare is just work to me, but it is a vital part to them. Sometimes, they come and say, 'I know the government is going to introduce such and such service' and insist that they want to apply for the service right now. Some people even scold me for being lazy. I have to soothe them 'leave your contact and I will call you first when the service is ready' (GO-2008-08).

I listened to similar stories from other officials about recipients' claims for social services. They commonly said that "ignorant recipients are an ancient story" (GO-2008-07), nicknaming individual recipients 'Dr. Welfare'. As the comments below show, officials presumed there would be a certain connection between the recipients' changed attitudes and SSP Centres because "recipients became truculent after being sent there" (GO-2008-05).

> So-called conscientisation [sic]? SSP Centres seem to conscientise recipients and urge them to be offensive. I sent a recipient to an SSP

Centre. She used to be very gentle. But one day, she came and asked angrily, 'doesn't the state have gas rates discount service? Why didn't you give it to me?' Well, did I hide it on purpose? I was about to arrange it for her, but needed time to sort it out. She should have politely asked, "I have heard of the electricity bill discounts. Shall I apply for it?" (GO-2008-05)

There was special free rice provision for low-income residents last year. As far as I feel, social welfare centres didn't make many efforts to report this to their clients. But SSP Centres appear to notify it. Many SSP recipients flocked to the office to get the free rice (GO-2008-04).

The increasing demands of SSP recipients increased officials' workloads. However, it was difficult to blame SSP Centres directly. In the past, anti-poverty activists used to be the vanguard of anti-poverty movements, using physical weapons such as petrol bombs, metal clubs and rubble to stop forced gentrification. Thus, the state had an excuse to directly suppress the radical activism. However, the information workshops of SSP Centres delivered seemingly harmless knowledge as 'symbolic weapons' to win social rights. Hence, there were no legal grounds to prohibit the workshops. Furthermore, it was not activists, but SSP recipients who demanded social services from the state.

Collective Legal Petitions for Workers' Rights: This behind-the-scenes support did not only facilitated the petty social service claims of individual recipients, but also incited the more systemic movements of recipients such as collective legal rights petitions. In general, whereas *paid workers* are recognised as right-bearing citizens (worker-citizen), *welfare recipients* are denounced as second-class citizens (welfare citizen) whose rights are restricted (Fraser and Gordon 1992, 1994a, 1994b). While workers are viewed as moral and diligent, recipients are seen to be immoral and lazy. This distinction has functioned as a critical boundary that shapes the range of social rights that each can claim. This binary opposition is also been reflected in the traditional dualistic social welfare system, i.e. social insurance and social assistance. While 'social insurance' is appreciated as a body of non-stigmatising policies for people working in what Fraser called the 'official economy of paid employment' (1990 p. 57), 'social assistance' is a stigmatising programme for poor people out of work. Workfare programmes such as the SSP are also founded on this distinction, which reinforces the moral superiority of workers. As another term for workfare,

'welfare-to-work', implies, it aims to quickly push recipients from (inferior) welfare to (superior) work.

Ironically, however, workfare has brought forth an unintended effect on the welfare-work distinction. Since the SSP combined welfare benefits with compulsory work activities, SSP recipients were situated on the threshold between pure recipients and pure workers. SSP recipients spent almost eight hours a day at their work projects (e.g. cleaning, care-giving, free lunch delivering and refurbishment) (see Image 6-5). In reality, their work activities were indistinguishable from those of the normal workers, as an SSP recipient on a cleaning work project attested:

> I go to a public school every day to clean the toilets and corridors. I am more like a cleaner than just a beneficiary. Many teachers and students don't know whether I am on welfare or an employed cleaner, unless I talk to them (WR-2005-04).

This image [**Image 6-5 Examples of SSP Work Projects**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.
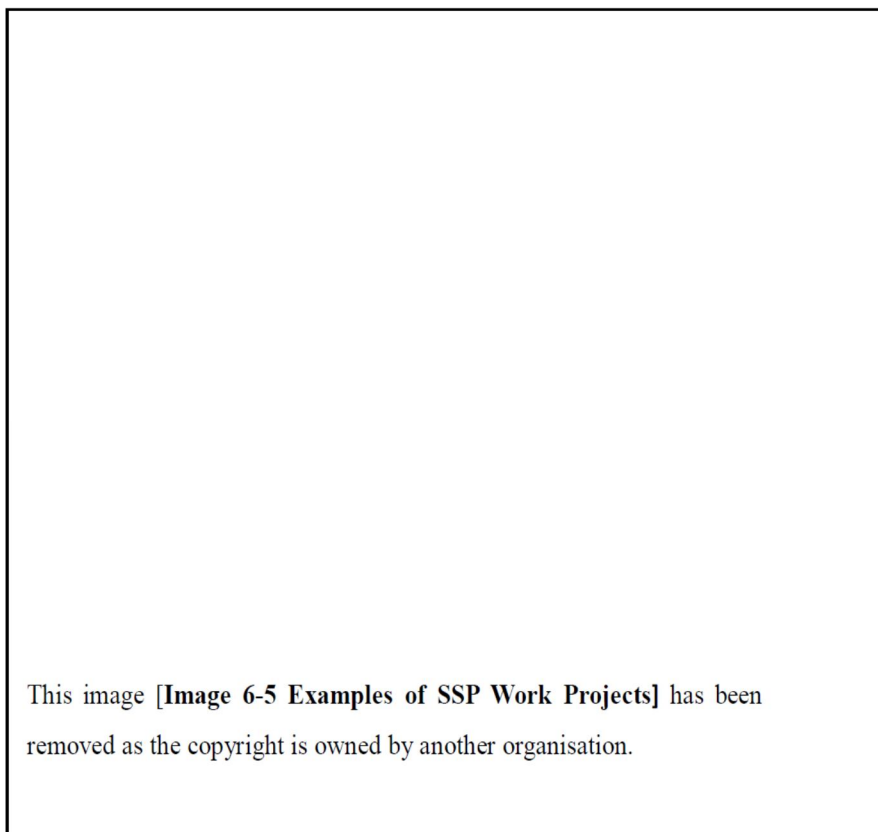
The MOHW has also used terms such as 'working hours' or 'wages', which are associated with paid work. *The SSP Guidebook* states that "the official *working hours* of SSP recipients are 8 hours and 5 days per week" (MOHW 2008a p. 44).

However, despite the similarity between SSP work projects and paid work, the treatment of SSP recipients was worse than the treatment of normal workers. SPP recipients could not enjoy workers rights such as the four basic social insurances (i.e. health insurance, pensions, workers accidents compensation insurance and unemployment insurance), paid holidays, retirement allowances or rights of collective bargaining. Also, due to the principle of less eligibility, their SSP wages were set below the national minimum income.

It was at this point that SSP Centres began to encourage recipients to claim equal rights to wageworkers. Workers' rights are an issue not only in Korea; in the USA, too, they are a contentious matter. Many American anti-poverty organisations, such as the Association of Community Organization for Reform Now or Community Voice Heard, mobilised 'workfare justice movements' to encourage participants to challenge their inferior treatment (Brooks 2001; Goldberg 2001). However, there are some differences between the Korean and American cases. Whereas the American anti-poverty organisations were placed outside the workfare system, the Korean ones belonged to the SSP system as frontline centres. Nonetheless, SSP Centres managed to play a similar role to American organisations by inciting their SSP recipients to claim workers' rights.

It is noteworthy that state bodies, rather than the SSP Centres, initiated the rights claims. In January 2004, the Ministry of Labour (MOL) sent a notification to SSP Centres stating that SSP recipients could join workers' accidents compensation insurance and unemployment insurance, because "every temporary public worker, working more than 15 hours a week, is to be entitled to social insurance under the amended Social Insurance Law initiated in 2004" (KWCWS 2004). This notification had significant implications for SSP recipients' status because social insurance membership is a symbol of wagework. Indeed, judging from the MOL's statement, the Ministry counted SSP recipients as temporary 'public workers'. As a matter of fact, although the MOHW had naturally deemed SSP recipients to be welfare receivers, their standing was legally ambiguous. The Labour Standards Law defined a worker as "a person who provides their labour to any kind of businesses for the purpose of wages" (Labour Standards Act, art. 14). According to the definition, SSP recipients, who offer the state their labour in return for SSP wages, could also be seen as public workers. For this reason, the MOL discretionally recognised SSP recipients

as workers. The problem was that the MOL's interpretation ran counter to the MOHW's taken-for-granted view, which defined SSP recipients as mere welfare beneficiaries.

The contradictory definitions within state bodies over SSP work project participants provided SSP Centres with new space for resistance. As Alexander states, "norms create order only when they bind action via internal commitments" (1995 p. 155). But having witnessed the disunity between the two ministries, SSP Centres also became doubtful about the binary concept of welfare and work, and sought other ways for SSP recipients to be acknowledged as rightful workers. One of the pioneering SSP Centres in this respect was the Asan SSP Centre founded by a local anti-poverty organisation called the Asan Daily Construction Workers Union (ADCWU). When the construction market was severely depressed after the 1997 financial crisis, social activists in Asan City organised the ADCWU together with unemployed builders, and joined the 'National Alliance of Movements against Poverty and Unemployment' (See Chapter 3). When a massive number of anti-poverty organisations decided to set up local SSP Centres in 2000, the ADCWU decided to establish the Asan Centre. Because of this background, Asan SSP Centre staff, who came from the ADCWU, had knowledge of workers' rights and were sensitive to the implications of the MOL's notification. Asan SSP Centre staff saw that the MOL's notification was an opportunity to call upon the state for the recognition of SSP recipients as workers.

The Asan SSP Centre began to promote the MOL's alternative interpretation. It firstly taught recipients labour-related laws, encouraging them to form a trade union and register it with the MOL, which is in charge of trade union registration. In general, a legitimate trade union is an essential basis for workers to collectively confront employers for better working conditions and workers' rights. In this sense, the Asan SSP Centre presumed that a recipients' trade union would be expedient to consolidate their workers' status and rights. The Centre director thus suggested forming a recipients' workers union. 20 recipients who agreed to his plan gathered and registered their union with the MOL. The MOL, which had already acknowledged SSP recipients as public workers, thus authorised the Asan Recipients' Union as a legitimate union under the Labour Standards Law in September 2004 (Labour Today October 24 2005).

But it was unexpected and unacceptable news to the MOHW, which belatedly heard of the Asan Recipients' Union. From the MOHW's position, the degradation of SSP recipients was an important precondition for the two-tiered social welfare system. But once SSP recipients were recognised as workers, extra financial expenditure would be inevitable. Also, as the Ministry in charge of welfare recipients, the MOHW might have to become an 'employer' and guarantee SSP recipients their various workers' rights. Thus, as an SSP Centre staff member explained, the MOHW could not welcome the registration of a recipients' union:

> Accepting recipients' unions is not a big deal. The problems come in its aftermath. If the state recognises SSP recipients as workers, the ripple effects may be paramount. SSP wages should be increased to the level of the minimum income. Recipients may ask for rights in labour-related laws. Collective negotiation, social insurance, income bargaining, severance pays… a multitude of problems may stir up. The whole SSP system can be threatened. This is why the MOHW has blocked any issues of workers' status of SSP recipients from the beginning (AP-2008-05).

As the staff member described, making a trade union was just the beginning. The Asan SSP Recipients' Union started to assist SSP recipients to redress the violation of various workers' rights. On August 30, 2005, Seonja Kim, a female recipient in the Asan SSP Union made a petition to the MOL, claiming that the MOHW was breaking the Labour Standards Law by not offering her paid menstruation holidays. As expected, the MOL advised the MOHW to offer her menstruation allowance because participants on public work projects have the right to paid holidays under the Labour Standards Law. After disputes and negotiation between the MOL and the MOHW, the MOHW finally had to pay her a daily SSP benefit (23,000 KRW) as a menstruation allowance because it could not find any provisos to rebut the MOL's order (PCNSWU 2005).

The tactic of the Asan SSP Centre encouraged other Centres, which began to educate recipients on how to form trade unions. The Shiha SSP Centre encouraged their recipients to organise and register a recipients union in 2005 (MOL 2005). In 2006, the Changwon SSP Centre run by the Changwon Sharing Home also guided their care-giving project's recipients, some of whom had caught scabies from the Changwon Public Hospital, to seek to redress through workers' accident

compensation insurance.

However, the conflictual interpretations between the MOL and the MOHW about SSP recipients' status did not last long. A series of redresses caused constant confrontation between the MOL and the MOHW. Because the different interpretations were related to ministries' interests and influence, neither voluntarily revoked their standpoints. If SSP recipients are defined as 'pure welfare beneficiaries', the SSP exclusively falls under the jurisdiction of the MOHW. But if recognised as 'temporary public workers', the MOHW should share the administration of the SSP with the MOL, which is in charge of workers' issues. The conflict thus had to be settled through the mediation of a third party, the Ministry of Government Legislation (MOGL). The MOGL is the central state authority that produces legal advice to ministries and handles legal troubles among state bodies. In February 2006, the MOHW firstly asked the MOGL "whether SSP recipients should be considered as workers". The MOGL issued an administrative interpretation in May 2006, stating that "SSP recipients cannot be viewed as workers because their benefits are principally paid as livelihood support, not as genuine income" (2006). Having heard the result, the MOL offered the same question in November 2006. But, the MOGL stuck to its previous interpretation in January 2007.

The MOL could not neglect the MOGL's interpretation this time. According to Article 24 of the Government Organisation Act and Article 26 of the Legal Implementation Regulations, the MOGL has authoritative power over legal issues within the government. The MOL thus had to "respect the MOGL's judgement to maintain the consistency of the government implementation" (MOL 2007 p. 5). In May 2007, the MOL announced *The Amended Guidelines about SSP Recipients* after internal compromises with the MOHW, stating that "the MOL will no longer view SSP recipients as workers in principle" (2007 p. 1). Subsequently, the MOL terminated all the pending petitions of SSP recipients. In other words, the MOHW, which had rejected recipients' identities as workers, finally won their battle with the MOL.

Nonetheless, it could not discourage rights claims and redresses. Symbolic boundaries between SSP participants and public workers that were once taken for granted have already become thematised many times since 2004, and were no longer self-evident. Also, as SSP participants had been enjoying social insurance or paid

menstruation holidays for several years, the new measure was perceived as a deprivation of justifiable rights. SSP participants who used not to care about human rights issues became discontented with the state's final decision.

SSP Centres began to use the recipients' discontent to mobilise collective actions. In May 2008, the Jeonju local government stated that it would no longer pay Unemployment Insurance bills for their recipients. This measure provoked SSP Centres in Jeonju City, but they could not complain of their case to any state bodies because the MOL had decided to conform to the MOHW. The Deokjin SSP Centre, run by a protestant anti-poverty activist group, thus started human rights seminars for recipients to seek alternative solutions (see Image 6-6). One alternative suggested by the Centre staff was to submit a petition to the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK). The NHRCK is the national advocacy institution for human rights protection, run independently from the government under the Constitution. The official aim of the NHRCK is "to ensure that the inviolable, fundamental human rights of all individuals are protected and the standards of human rights are improved' (National Human Rights Commission Act, art. 1). Accordingly, socially disadvantaged people whose rights are violated by the state or the market, such as women, ethnic minorities, children, the disabled or poor people, are of particular interest to the NHRCK. The NHRCK is not a formal mechanism of laws such as the courts, but their judgements have gained public trust and legitimacy in society to the extent that the government cannot downplay its advice. Also, if the government fails to implement the recommendation of the NHRCK, it must clarify the reason for its failure in writing (National Human Rights Commission Act, art. 25[3]). Given the NHRC's legal authority, 68 SSP recipients of the Deokjin SSP Centre collectively submitted petitions to the NHRCK in May 2008 with the legal advice of the Deokjin SSP Centre staff (Deokjin SSP Centre and JSPHR 2008).

While the Deokjin SSP Centre used the legal channel of the NHRCK to redress the violation of basic workers' rights, SSP Centres in Kyeongnam province chose to incite SSP participants to direct action. 10 local SSP Centres assembled to launch "SSP Workers' Labour Rights Movement" in April 2008, and invited their SSP work participants to join. Unlike the 2005 all-out struggle, SSP recipients actively participated in the movement because it linked directly with their material interests. More than 500 recipients gathered together at public squares and began to conduct press interviews, street parades and sit-down strikes, urging the government to 1) increase SSP wages; 2) acknowledge the labour rights of SSP recipients, and 3) improve the working conditions of SSP work projects"(KCSWLRM 2008).They chanted and held pickets stating: 'SSP recipients are workers', 'We are working, not receiving charity' and 'Guarantee human rights! Guarantee decent income!'(see Image 6-7).

However, while SSP recipients were at the forefront of the rallies, SSP Centre staff scarcely appeared at the strike spots. Through the failure of the 2005 struggle, staff came to know that their straightforward confrontation with the state was not a wise strategy to demur at state policies. For state-sponsored welfare agencies, it could only impair their ostensibly peaceful relationship with the state, providing little gain. Rather than leading the recipients' demonstrations, staff therefore shored up the movements by offering their SSP Centre offices as meeting places, assisting recipients to strategise the campaigns or making pickets and banners for the SSP recipients' strikes. Through this behind-the-scenes support, SSP Centres could continue to play a political advocacy role against the state without incurring

direct condemnation from it.

This image [**Image 6-7 Kyeongnam SSP Workers' Labour Rights Movements**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.
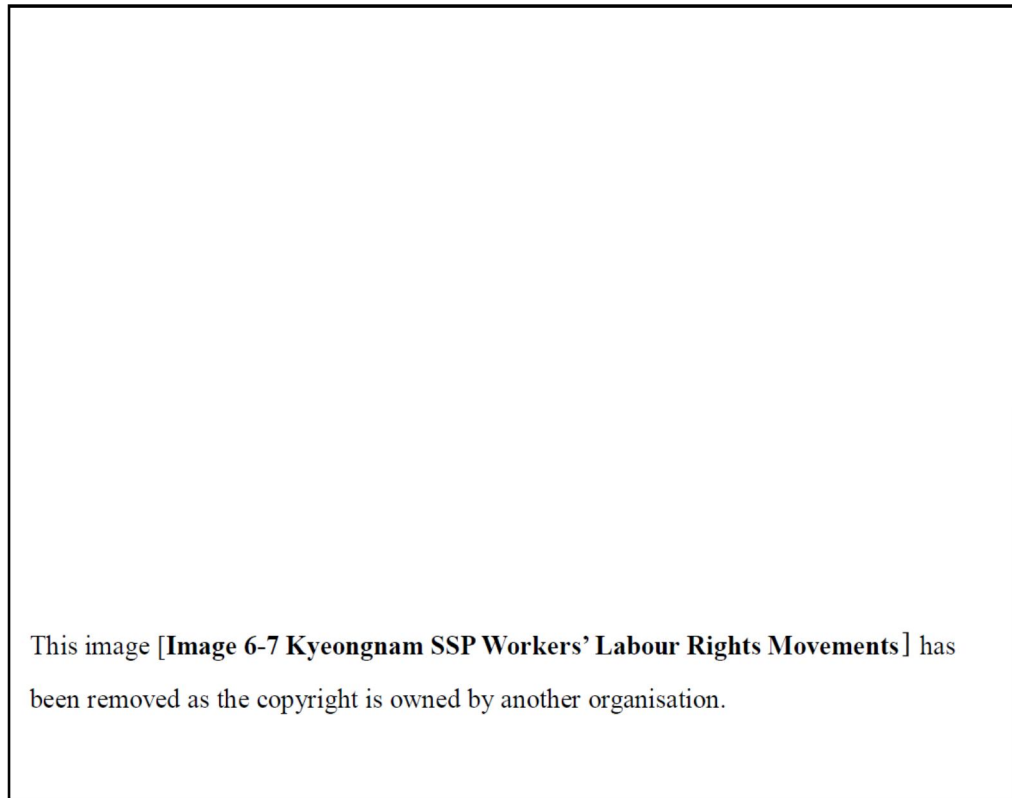
The collective movements for workers' rights succeeded in achieving certain objectives. Some renowned citizen movement organisations, such as the Participatory Solidarity for Public Democracy (PSPD) and the Solidarity for Peace and Human Rights, which have focused on campaigns of citizenship and human rights, began to pay attention to SSP recipients' social rights, and were publicly backed up by SSP Workers' movements. Also, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) started to recognise SSP recipients as workers (JHAMILC 2008).

Of course, the SSP recipients' rights claims have not led to the reclassification of SSP recipients as legitimate workers. The MOHW still does not officially recognise SSP participants' status as workers, and the wageworker/welfare recipient distinction is still apparent. Nonetheless, as noted by Goldberg, who researched American workfare justice movements, "the formation of a new collective identity among workfare workers and collective action to secure and institutionalize recognition of that identity are themselves important accomplishments that required explanation…, because they have already blurred this distinction and problematized

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their classification" (2001 p. 214).

In the Korean workfare, SSP Centres have contributed in particular to building what Scott terms 'infrapolitics' (1990) for workers' rights claims. Just as the infrastructure for commerce, such as transport, banking, currency, property and contract law, makes commerce possible, "the infrapolitics provides much of the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action" (Scott 1990 p. 184). To draw on Scott's analogy, SSP Centre's supply of legal information has paved the way for the outpouring of recipients' complaints.

Such infra-political activities of SSP Centres have remarkable implications for our understandings of political dynamics in the state–civil society relationship of the SSP. If only considering direct counter-actions, we can say that SSP Centre staff have lost their adversarial nature after the 2005 all-out struggle. We have discovered, however, that while working as the official partner in state policies, SSP Centres have been revived as "the silent partner of a loud form of public resistance" for recipients (Scott 1990 p. 199). In this sense, it remains difficult to view SSP Centres as depoliticised.

## 6.5 Concluding Remarks

Chapter 6 has examined the struggle of anti-poverty organisations against the threat of depoliticisation. In general, the state–civil society partnership has been naively portrayed as an equal collaboration. Korean anti-poverty organisations expected to have a symbiotic relationship with the state before participating in the SSP administration. However, this case study of the SSP implementation shows that, so long as civil society organisations are dependent on the resources of the state, a domination–subordination relationship is in fact inescapable. The failure of the 2005 all-out struggle exemplifies how the partnership can debilitate the political capacity of anti-poverty organisations as adversaries to the state.

Nonetheless, it is still hasty to conclude that SSP Centres are mere shadow states, as the critical view would hold. While the critical perspective might offer a pointed diagnosis of the depoliticisation symptoms of SSP Centres, it is unlikely to detect the seeds of micro-resistance under the surge of depoliticisation as it normally highlights overt and radical resistance. However, as we can see from performance

fabrication, SSP Centres can manipulate state control, while routinely complying with the state's performance evaluation. Equipping recipients with power/knowledge also shows how SSP Centres maintained their advocacy role for poor people without appearing as the vanguard of social movements.

It may also be worthwhile to note that SSP Centres have, paradoxically, made use of the state's regulations as instruments of their resistance. Many critical scholars have assumed that bureaucratic and legal rules are weapons of the ruling bloc used to regulate people. But as we can see from the document fabrication and legal petitions, SSP Centres have appropriated welfare bureaucracy and the legal system as "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985) to win substantial gains from the government.

The heterogeneous structure of state bodies also unexpectedly offers the SSP Centres room to manoeuvre. Many critical scholars tend to suppose that the state is an entity that exercises hegemonic power in a systemic manner. But the state is comprised of specialised ministries, institutions and agencies and each state body can uphold disparate discourses and practices on specific matters, as we can see from the contrasting opinions of the MOHW and the MOL and of central officials and local officials. Intra-state discordances can create a rupture in the state system of which civil society actors can take advantage. In this sense, the critical approaches that view the governing system as little more than a compact surveillance network concerned with civil society agencies may need to be modified. Further theoretical implications of the findings of this chapter will be discussed in the Conclusion.

# Chapter 7

# Struggle of Anti-Poverty Organisations against Bureaucratisation

## 7.1 Introductory Statement

Chapter 7 focuses on how SSP Centres have struggled against the threat of bureaucratisation over time. Mainstream debates have depicted state–civil society partnership as "bespoke approaches to local problems and poverty" (Glendinning et al. 2002 p. 84; Alcock 2004 p. 215). In South Korea, the involvement of anti-poverty organisations in the SSP has been appraised as 'participatory welfare' because it was assumed that SSP Centres could function as a direct channel to the marginalised poor in local villages (MOHW 1999c). However, the critical voice on partnership has argued that community organisations have come to resemble state bureaucrats and have lost intimate connection with the working class. This chapter interrogates whether SSP Centres can continue to maintain affinity with the impoverished or whether their participation in public welfare causes them, instead, to become welfare bureaucrats. It also considers the ways in which SSP Centres might manage to resist the wave of bureaucratisation.

The first section of this chapter outlines the practices and discourses that anti-poverty activists had produced to build a close relationship with poor people before the SSP partnership. The second section illustrates how the state–civil society partnership has widened the hierarchical gap between activists and the poor. The third section examines the everyday efforts of SSP Centres to minimise this formalised relationship. Through this investigation, this chapter proposes a sub-conclusion that the policy discourse of 'participatory welfare' is rhetoric from the angle of poor people, since the impoverished are actually excluded from the SSP partnership and still remain as passive policy targets while activists are incorporated into the state's bureaucratic system. But this chapter also argues that viewing SSP Centres solely as pseudo-bureaucrats can prove to be misleading, given the Centres' street-level practices that re-inspire a participatory nature in the SSP field.

## 7.2 Initial Aspiration for a Bottom-up Approach

*7.21 Assimilation Principle of Anti-poverty Activists*

As we saw in Chapter 2, while Korea was ruled by a series of military leaders, many progressive intellectuals including anti-poverty activists strived to stand for and assimilate into the life of the subordinate populace (*minjung*), resisting the military ruling bloc. Myeongho Shin, the leading activist of the COUP, defined this attempt at assimilation by intellectuals as the "assimilation principle" (KOCER 1999 p. 56). Influenced by Sartre's book *A Plea to Intellectuals* (1974), eminent Korean critics Bungik Kim and Wansang Han claimed, "if educated intellectuals do not have the spirit of criticism against the dominant and don't speak for the subordinate, they are by no means 'real intellectuals', but merely 'technicians of practical knowledge'"( Han 1978; Kim 1971 p. 226). Progressive students and clergymen enthusiastically held to the idea of 'real intellectuals' and decided to devote their life to subordinate people. As Pastor Byeongsub Heo, the pioneer of the CACO, recorded, intellectuals asked themselves 'who I am, and what I should do', and found the meaning of their existence in social movements:

> "Who am I?", "Why was I born in Korea?", "What can I do and what should I do?" These were the questions I kept asking myself at that time. Through this serious self-reflection, I came to reach the conclusion. I have to do something for *minjung*. I have to follow the agonies of *minjung*. This was why I began to enter social activism in 1974 (Heo 1994 pp. 60-61).

To befriend poor people, many intellectuals actually threw away their previous lives and joined the urban slums. This was a Korean style of the V-narod (go-to-the populace) movement. As the COUP recollected, activists believed "complete identification with poor people is the prerequisite of social movements. Above all things, activists must become the same residents of slums and see problems through poor people's eyes and solve them from their points" (KOCER 1999 p. 59). The process of remaking themselves into a part of poor people was called 'throwing a body (*tooshin*)' or 'going down (*habang*).' Ho Lee, an activist of the COUP, explained the notion of '*tooshin*' as follows:

> The dictionary's definition of *too-shin* is 'to throw and devote oneself into a certain task'. The *too-shin* to anti-poverty movement means 'to throw oneself to revolutionise the unjust society and to

identify oneself with poor *minjung*', who are suffering from the injustice of the society (Lee 1995 p. 28).

The intellectuals' aspiration for the devotion to populace was not of course unique to Korea. Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta joined the Italian International in 1871 after abandoning medical school at the University of Naples and apprenticed himself as a gas fitter (Levy 1987 p. 159). The Guinean revolutionary leader Amílcar Cabral also exhorted intellectuals to "commit suicide as a class in order to be reborn as revolutionary workers" (Chabal 2002 p. 177). Nonetheless, Korean anti-government activism is a unique case in which a large number of intellectuals tried to 'organically fuse' with subordinate groups. The reason why *tooshin* became a popular strategy for Korean *minjung* movements was first because activists appreciated *tooshin* as the best 'praxis' as opposed to mere 'theory'. Progressive intellectuals thought that in order to link their revolutionary ideas to the life of *minjung*, they themselves needed to experience *minjung*'s actual life in poor villages. The state's intensive surveillance was another reason. Because the gazes of disguised policemen or the Korean CIA were ubiquitous, it was difficult for intellectuals to approach *minjung* without certain disguises. For these reasons, complete identification with poor people was critical to activists.
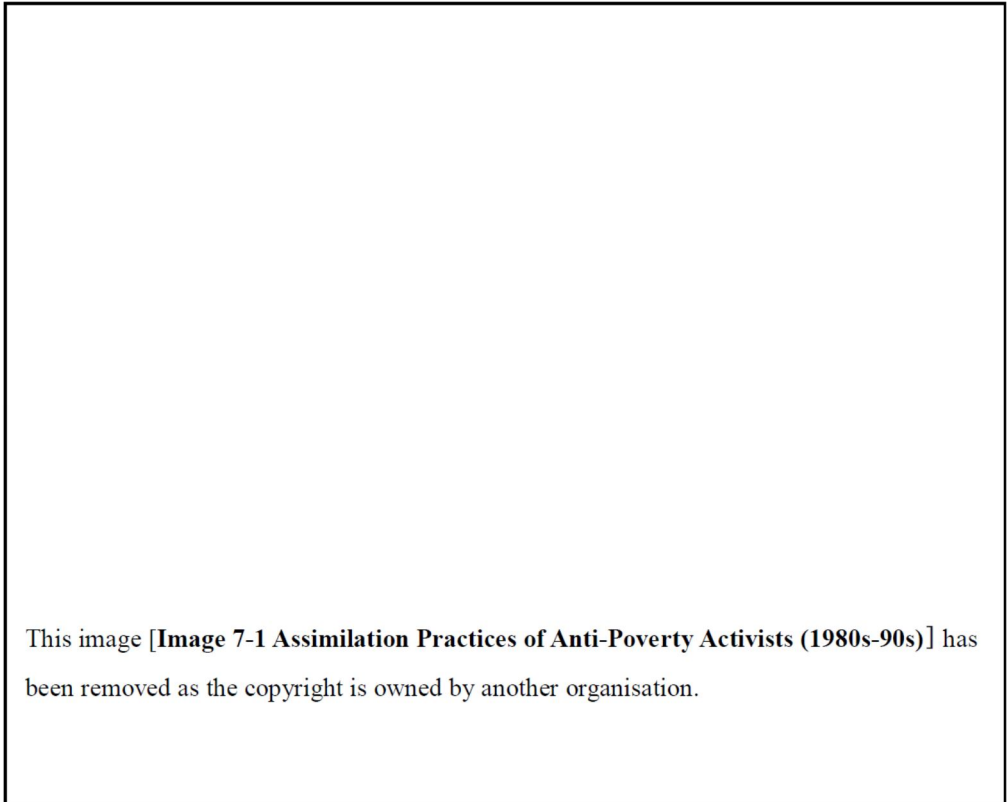
The activists who *tooshin* to urban slums first made efforts to observe the lifestyles of poor residents and adjust their lifestyles to the residents. As an anti-poverty activist recalled, they "simply ate, slept, talked and drunk together with poor people at everyday life to be assimilated to the life of the poor"(Park 2002 p. 134). The following recollections of some activists show their endeavours to mix with slum residents:

> We began to draw a map of the slum. We indicated the meeting places of residents. When drawing the houses, we wrote down the occupations, education histories, and personalities of the residents as well. To make more accurate map, we peddled small necessities or food from door to door. Some fellow activists went to pubs to hang around with residents (KCSI 1987 p. 69).

> The first and the most important steps were to live with and be like the poor. We had certain ideas in mind, but we simply lived there. We simply ate, slept, talked and drank together with them (Park 2002 p. 134).

While living in the slums, intellectual activists had founded local *minjung* churches as centre points where they could secure regular contacts with the slum-dwellers. *Minjung* churches opened various facilities such as night schools (*yahak*), daytime nurseries and free medical centres, and they organised informal social networks such as cultural clubs for sports, mountain climbing, singing or plays in order to naturally befriend slum residents (see Image 7-1). Their assimilation practices afforded them a certain degree of success. Pastor Byeongsub Heo of the CACO recalled how he was able to understand the minds of slum residents 'through self-denial of previous backgrounds':

> I met an impressive resident called Chulyoung Lee. I came to learn about the real life of poverty by getting to know his name, appearance, characters, behaviour and life history. My previous knowledge was totally useless when I was with Chulyoung. My conceptual words and manners came to naught before him. I was able to identify myself with Chulyoung and became his brother through self-denial of my previous background (Heo 1990 p. 118).

This image [**Image 7-1 Assimilation Practices of Anti-Poverty Activists (1980s-90s)**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

Anti-poverty activists gradually got closer to poor people to the extent that they and slum residents could call each other 'brother' or 'sister'. These specific

names have significant implication in Korean social relationships. People use the terms brother or sister not only to refer to real siblings, but also to denote intimate fellowship. Thus, the fact that activists and residents called each other brother or sister meant they managed to make close friendship beyond formal interaction. Anti-poverty activists who have become SSP Centre staff recalled the relationship between activist and low-income individual below:

> I hung around with local builders and often went to their house parties. I entered in their world! Our relationship was like brotherhood. There were no higher and lower statuses between us. We called each other older brother or younger sister simply according to age (AP-2005-01).

> We went to *Karaoke* and drank together. Some residents phoned me even at the dawn to talk about their private problems such as their sex lives. There were not many differences between my life and theirs (AP-2008-09).

Not to mention, assimilation was not the end of their activities. As activists from the COUP stated, the ultimate goal of assimilation was to "plant radical ideals in residents' minds" (Park 2002 p. 134) and "mobilise the agonies and grievances of poor *minjung* to construct an ideal society where *minjung* could become the core leaders of history" (Je 1987 p. 52). As Protestant *minjung* movement groups also clarified, they aimed to "conscientise *minjung* into the collective force to overthrow the dominant ruling party" (KCSI 1987 p. 226). Among their various activities, night school (*yahak*) was directly for the consciousness-raising practices. At a formal level, *yahak* was a free educational service for the urban poor who sought to continue secondary education. But under the influence of Paulo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), the actual focus of *yahak* became a promotion of their revolutionary spirits. This was why *yahak* teachers taught the individuals Marxist theories as well as literature, mathematics, and English, which were necessary for entrance into tertiary colleges (CNSA 1985 pp. 27-28).

*7.22 Minjung: Revolutionary Interpellation of Poor People*

The term *minjung* captures the sense of a revolutionary purpose among anti-poverty organisations. While activists informally called poor persons 'brother' or 'sister', they conventionally used *minjung* to collectively represent poor people. The churches

that they founded in urban slums were called '*minjung* churches'. The classic books that were written and read by activists had titles such as *Power of minjung, Church of minjung* (KCSI 1987) and *Let the Poor Speak: Pedagogic strategy for minjung* (Heo 1987).

Althusser suggested that every ideology is "interpellating individuals as subjects", defining persons' identities in specific relationship to others and imposing particular roles on them (1971 p. 170). As counter-ideologists, anti-poverty activists also described people in poverty in terms of their roles. The term '*minjung*' suggests the specific kind of relationship that activists wanted to make with poor people and the role they wanted to impose on the poor individuals. The closest English equivalent to the label *minjung* is 'populace'; however, *minjung* implies much more. The concept of *minjung* is associated with people who lack material and cultural resources as a consequence of exclusion by the ruling class. Under the influence of Latin American liberation theology, Korean theologian Namdong Seo developed a more refined definition of *minjung*: "the people who are economically poor, politically oppressed and culturally alienated" (1984 p. 227). In this sense, *minjung* has been colloquially used with certain adjectives and nouns such as 'oppressed *minjung*' or the '*minjung* revolution'. Even when the word *minjung* is used alone, it naturally conjures up the image of political suppression and revolts. By calling the poor *minjung*, activists intended to express both the oppression of poor people and their opposition to the state control (KCSI 1987).

Since most anti-poverty organisations were based on progressive Christianity, they also appropriated religious symbolism to represent poor people. They often re-interpreted poor people as the theophany of the suffering 'Messiah,' who shouldered the burdens of injustice and the sufferings of South Korea. Namdong Seo, a progressive theologian and teacher of the CACO, stated in his essay '*Who is minjung*' that poor *minjung* are the face of God, and so activists have to look after poor people if they want to meet God*:*

> The Messiah comes to us, being incarnated as 'the suffering neighbour'. The suffering poor are our Messiah. If we desire to meet and take after the Messiah, we have to follow poor *minjung* and be like them. The new age will open and the oppressed will be the leaders of the new land (Seo 1984 p. 102).

This quote suggests that people took on the image of the saviour Messiah, who would liberate society from injustice. In that vein, activists also interchangeably used 'social salvation' with 'social revolution'. The COUP's leading activist, Jeonggu Je, clarified it, saying that "Korea is waiting for the saviour Messiah. If poor *minjung* collaboratively stand against the dominant system, then they will be able to accomplish the mission of social salvation" (Je 1987 p. 52). Accordingly, activists defined their own role as auxiliary supporters and followers who were to assist *minjung* in accomplishing their mission. Some excerpts from anti-poverty organisations in the 1980s and 1990s demonstrate the activists' understanding of themselves as supporters:

> The aim of anti-poverty movements is to follow poor *minjung*. *Minjung* revolution will overthrow the developmentalist dictatorship, and the power of *minjung* will lead the society into a new era (KOCER 1989 pp. 3-4).

> We make it clear that the kernel leaders of social revolution are suffering *minjung*. They have taken on the agonies for the sake of the whole society, being oppressed, exploited and subservient (Kim, J. 1992 p. 222).

*7.23 Underlying Gap between Activists and Poor People*

Despite the assimilation principle and the appraisal of the impoverished as revolutionary leaders, a hierarchy still existed between activists and poor people. Although activists were seemingly living a poor life, they could not at all become 'genuine insiders' of poor people's circles. Their backgrounds—their education, economic status and social networks—were qualitatively different from those of the 'original' poor people. They could be 'priests' of *minjung* churches, 'doctors/nurses' of free medical clinics or 'teachers' of night schools, but they could not be the original slum residents. It is difficult to know the actual viewpoints of poor residents because few records exist in written form. However, extant records do reveal ambivalence about activists. The first comment comes from an illegal shanty house resident in the 1980s, and the second one comes from a former student of a night school:

> I was really worried about being kicked out of my shack. Could I

receive enough compensation? Although I was very tired from work, I went to the *Minjung* Church to listen to activists. They might have some practical solutions. But his sayings were all fantasy. He said, "You must not beg money of the state. Fear not about living in poverty. You don't want to hand over poverty to your children? Such attitudes are not right. You are the leader of the history and so you must be proud of your poverty." "Well…what the hell," I said! We the residents were facing demolition under our very nose! (Quoted from Kim, J. 2002 p. 149).

Poverty is a life for us, but not theirs. Someday they will leave the slum, but we always have to live here. A *yahak* teacher told me "your labour is sacred." What? Sacred? I bet he has never experience the feeling of working to death in his whole life (Quoted from Heo 2001 pp. 105-106).

Examining the English working class in the 1930s, Orwell says ideology (like socialism) "is a theory confined entirely to the middle class" (1937 p. 173). As Scott also argues, while the subordinate poor struggle "directly from the reality of material life, intelligentsias' sight is set on a more distant horizon" (1985 p. 349). Their illustrations have a distinct relevance to the narrative of the Korean anti-poverty activists. As aforementioned comments show, the ideological meaning of poverty that activists tried to deliver was somewhat "a fantasy" created by middle-class intellectuals. Activists who voluntarily chose poverty could "be proud" and feel that poverty was "sacred" because it could be the core motivator for collective resistance. However, for the original poor, poverty was a face-to-face and day-to-day reality that they did not choose and could not easily escape from. They could not consider themselves as leading figures for history, nor were they proud of their condition. Revolutionary images like *minjung* or the saviour Messiah did not come directly from the poor. These were normative interpellations invented by activists, which inevitably entailed misrecognition of the poor.

Activists were also acutely aware of this incompatibility. Although they apparently lived in slums, they could also perceive that some residents sometimes left activists out of their gatherings and regarded them as "someone different" (KOCER 1999 p. 308). The recollections from anti-poverty activists allude to the underlying gap between activists and slum residents:

I tried not to show off, but people appeared uncomfortable with me. There were some residents who led unwholesome lives with alcohol

or B-girls. They presupposed I wouldn't understand their culture and judge them. So they put me on one side when they had parties (re-quoted from KOCER 1999 p. 308).

I remember a woman asking me a question. She and I were sitting on the bridge at a shantytown. She asked me very cynically, "how long could you stay here?" I could see her eyes full of ambivalence–expectation, but mistrust. I felt that her question came from seeing that many activists eventually left the slum, seeking their own lives (Kim, H. 1996 p. 10).

For this reason, leading activists always stressed "breaking up the wall" and "making more devotion to residents" (KOCER 1999 p. 58). Catholic activist leader Myeongho Shin would advise activists "to attend even trivial gatherings of poor people at pubs, at home or on the streets and not to leave the places in the middle" (KOCER 1999 p.308). He also asked activists to "touch poor people's hearts by showing sincere and patient devotions to them" (KOCER 1999 p. 309). Remembering residents' birthdays and being the first to help when they had difficulties were the other endeavours activists made to overcome the gaps. To narrow the distance, a leader of the CACO, Byeongsub Heo, even quitted his job as a *minjung* church pastor in 1989. He gave this reason for leaving the church:

Whenever I felt some distance from poor people, I used to analyse myself. I was living with them and shared sweets and beaters together, but finally my status as pastor seemed to be an obstacle to absolute assimilation (Heo 1990 p. 127).

Afterwards, Heo became a builder to more intimately work with the poor and established a construction workers' cooperative, *Dure* with fellow manual workers in 1990 (see Chapter 2). After he founded a poor workers' community, a large number of activists began to try to form poor workers' cooperatives. During the 1970s and 1980s, activists had focused mainly on building *Minjung* Churches, free medical offices, night schools or daytime nurseries, working as teachers or clergymen. However, in such places, they only could meet residents at nights or on weekends. In the workers' communities, though, they could meet slum residents every day as they laboured as builders or factory workers. In this sense, activists expected that it would allow more intimate contacts with the slum dwellers. The director of the Norae Sharing Home explained the reason activists became interested in workers'

cooperatives:

> To go down more deeply…we wanted more intensive contacts with the poor. At nursery schools or clinics, we could only meet mothers or elderly people for a short time. It is very shallow. To organise movements, we need to enter the core part of poor people's lives. "Let's share the daily life with working men". It was the first reason for poor workers' communities. We had to have the same jobs to be like the poor (AP-2005-01).

The director of the Pajong SSP Centre, Hosanna Jung, was also one of the activists, and he followed the poor workers' cooperative movements. Like Byeongsub Heo, he graduated from a Presbyterian seminary, but he did not take orders as pastor. Instead, he decided to "live at a bottom-line of the society and work with the poor" (AP-2005-03). In order to fulfill his goals, he organised a construction workers' cooperative in Nowon village. Activists regarded the trend of living and labouring in poor workers' communities as "the strongest and deepest assimilation practice" (AP-2005-01). Since activists had quit their previous jobs, "their livelihood became also entirely dependent on workers' cooperatives like other poor workers" (AP-2005-01). Thus, workers' cooperatives made "residents and activists board the same boat" (AP-2008-11).

The fact that anti-poverty activists had closely lived and worked with poor people became one of the chief rationales for believing that anti-poverty organisations were the best agencies to run local workfare centres in poor villages. Indeed, when devising the Pilot SSP Centre Project in 1996, the Youngsan Kim government sought advice from anti-poverty organisations. Leading activists such as Anglican Priest Hongil Kim and Kyeongyoung Song from the ASH; Pastor Byeongsub Heo and Youngsik Oh from the CACO; and Myeongho Shin and Ho Lee from the COUP indeed played a significant role in formulating the SSP Centre model (Office of the President 1995). Against this historical background, SSP Centres could be chiefly acclaimed as a bottom-up initiative that "incorporated bottom-line opinions of poor people into state measures" (SDI 2001). The government has described SSP Centres as "democratic administration" (MOHW 2000) or "participatory welfare" institutions (MOHW 1999c; Office of the President 2000b). Activists themselves have also defined SSP Centres as "grass-roots communities where *minjung* construct and work together" (ASH 1996 p. 50).

### 7.3 Bureaucratisation of Activist–Poor People's Relationship

*7.31 The Shift from an Assimilation Principle to Outreach Welfare*

The 'participatory welfare' discourse, however, contained certain myths. Even though activists were invited to the partnership as grassroots representatives of poor people, actual poor people were virtually isolated from the partnership construction. After democratic politicians grasped power, anti-poverty activists began to re-identify themselves as 'grassroots politicians' for poor people. After an anti-authoritarian leader, Youngsam Kim, won the presidential election in 1992, there was an internal gathering of anti-poverty activists, entitled 'Democratisation Movements after Democratisation'. At the gathering, Byeongsub Heo encouraged fellow activists to become involved in institutionalised politics and become bottom-line politicians. He said:

> We have confined ourselves to an activist identity. We have said institutional politics are evil and full of greedy politicians. But from now on, we need to reinterpret our activities as politics. We are bottom-line politicians.… *Minjung* has longed for 'the political Messiah'. They have waited for the Messiah who will satisfy their wishes. We must be the politicians who can fulfil their desires. We need to prepare ourselves for this mission. Since activists do not have a good understandings of law or administration, we have to equip ourselves with professional knowledge (Heo 1992 p. 92, 99).

In this address, Byeongsub Heo was depicting activists as 'the political Messiah'. In fact, the Messiah was a religious metaphor used by activists to refer to poor people. This discourse was suddenly turned upside down after democratisation, and the notion that 'the poor are the Messiah' was replaced with a new thesis that 'activists are the Messiah of the poor.' It is very remarkable that Byeongsub Heo was the leader who had most passionately strived to identify poor people as the political Messiah. Along with Heo, many activists reengineered their identity as bottom-line politicians who could speak for the poor to the public. A protestant pastor of the CACO, Jongryeol Park, also defined anti-poverty activists as "real political leaders who can represent *minjung*" (MSJJ 2002). Some may regard this discursive reposition as a surprising transformation. But given the fact that the hierarchical gap between activists and the poor had long existed, it was not a fundamental change, but

a revelation of the hidden hierarchy between activists and the poor.

The democratic government also regarded activists as spokespersons for poor people. When it developed welfare projects, it primarily consulted and invited anti-poverty activists, not poor people. Although Byeongsub Heo stated that activists did not have professional knowledge in law or administration (1992 p. 99), they did have relatively advanced educations and were more familiar with political language, as compared to the low-educated poor. For this reason, middle class activists acquired the authority to present their viewpoints in the dominant policy arena, as if their opinions were the voices of the poor. But strictly speaking, the actual voices of poor people remained silent and unheard, with activists participating in 'participatory welfare' as deputies for the poor people.

The SSP partnership's exclusion of poor people enlarged the distance between activists and the poor. The SSP partnership's working model, proposed by the Office of the President in 2000, visualises the gap between anti-poverty organisations and poor people (Figure 7-1). In the diagram, civil society organisations are grouped with the state in the inner circle of SSP service providers, whereas the poor are located outside of the circle as welfare targets. Anti-poverty organisations, which formerly tried to work closely with poor people, were redefined as suitable frontline agents who could supervise recipients at the local level.

**Figure 7-1 Partnership Working Model for the SSP**
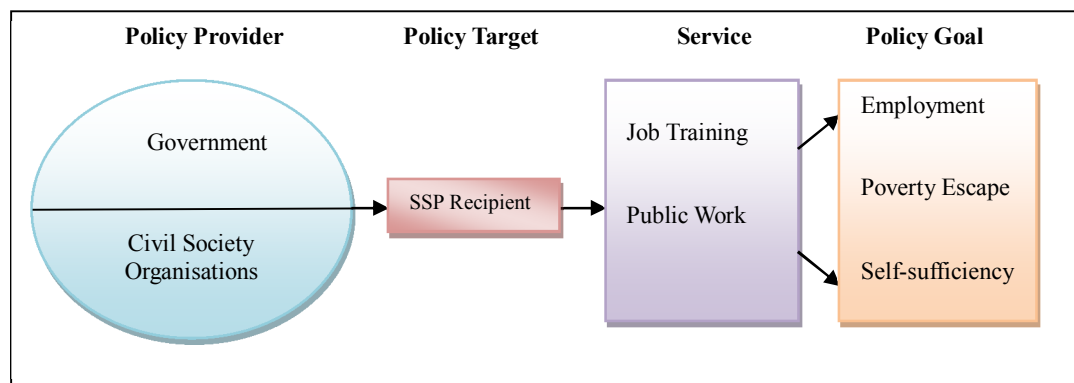


Source: Office of the President (2000b)

Accordingly, the traditional assimilation principle of anti-poverty organisations was absorbed into the dominant administrative discourse. Originally, the assimilation principle was the counter-discourse to confront the dominant system. But after the SSP partnership, the government began to reinterpret the assimilation

principle as the foundation of the "outreach welfare approach" or the "door-knocking welfare model" (Kim, Y. 2000 p. 17; Office of the President 2000b). The reversion of a social movement discourse into an administrative one is noteworthy because it displays the changed role of anti-poverty organisations, moving from social movement groups to welfare service providers.

*7.32 Recipient: Bureaucratic Interpellation of Poor People*

Bureaucratic assessment: After the SSP partnership, the relationship between activists and poor people became bureaucratised into a relationship between staff and recipients. Welfare policies unavoidably involve 'bureaucratic assessment' to sort out recipients who deserve welfare benefits (Habermas 1987). Since the state basically wants to spend monetary benefits only on the 'legitimate' poor, the selection of proper people is a crucial procedure in welfare administration. The state devises a means test to investigate the conditions of poor people and determines whether or not they are eligible for benefits. Particularly, workfare strengthens bureaucratic assessment in order to divide 'the undeserving poor' from 'the deserving poor'. Workfare basically assumes the working-age poor as 'undeserving' of welfare benefits. Therefore, it requires the working-age poor to meet certain conditions, such as searching for jobs or work activities, to acquire benefits. As a workfare policy, the SSP also has bureaucratic assessment. To become SSP recipients, applicants have to undergo 1) a 'means test' (e.g. monthly income; assets; income/assets of direct-line family members) to prove their poverty; and 2) a 'working-ability test' (e.g. health; age; vocational and educational careers).

However, such bureaucratic assessment tends to transform and reduce complex people into "artificial entities" (Prottas 1979 p. 3). In the bureaucratic system, people are treated as a case, number or type, rather than as whole personality (Daley 1971). In this sense, Habermas criticised the bureaucratic assessment as "violent", forcibly squeezing the life of people into certain forms of documents (1987 p. 363). The words of a female SSP recipient demonstrate how the bureaucratic sorting-out process "wounded" a person by ignoring their feelings and circumstances:

> After divorce, I could fully understand why people commit suicide.

I cried a lot when I had to apply for state support. I hated it. But I had no money to feed my three kids after my divorce. I didn't want to become a bad mother. But instead I had to become a bad daughter. State officials told me to submit documents on my parents' income. It was really humiliating. Divorce already bruised my parents' hearts, but at least they didn't know I had become totally broke. But I had to confess to them my economic condition to get their documents. It hurt my parents once again. It wounded me more. It wounded me more. You know, most of us go to the state office in a miserable state. But officials make us even worse with cold paper work (WR-2008-12).

Foucault also thought the classification practices of administrations tend to reify human beings (1979). Classifying people according to income, health, education or career is based on the assumption that the life and the body of poor people can be anatomically fractionated, analysed and disciplinarily partitioned. Such bureaucratic assessment is appraised as 'scientific' and 'objective'. However, it can be quite unrealistic and arbitrary on the side of poor people. If the income of a person increases slightly, from 99% of the minimum income level to 101%, the bureaucratic system may define her as no longer being poor. However, in reality, she may not see an enhancement in her life, as some SSP recipients complained:

My son has grown up to the age of 20 and got a job, so my welfare will end next month. My son is busy dealing with his own livelihood and does not give me a penny. But the official told me I am not poor any more, but the near-poor! What does the near-poor mean? I cannot understand why they keep labelling me this and that (WR-2005-02).

I used to be an unconditional recipient, but became upgraded into a conditional recipient. I cannot sense any change in my life. Only I have always been poor regardless of how I am called (WR-2005-04).

Indeed, 'conditional recipients (SSP recipient)' is a bureaucratic label that is created for administrational convenience. However, the administrational classification became the imperative tool to define 'the real poor'.

The problem was that SSP Centres also have to follow the bureaucratic classification, even though it is fundamentally contradictory to their original values. As Myeongho Shin said, anti-poverty organisations pursued a solidaristic society that "does not discriminate people according to their income, occupation, sex, social

status and the place of birth" (Shin, M. 2000a p. 51). The motto of the Anglican Sharing Homes (ASH), 'sharing (*nanum*)' was also associated with the solidaristic idea. Beongsup Heo explained the meaning of 'sharing' when invited to give the keynote address at the 10th anniversary of the ASH in 1996:

> The practical ethics of anti-poverty movements is solidarity and unity. The Sharing Homes is founded on these ethics. The isolated poor are now facing unequal distribution, social injustice and structural discrimination originating from flimsy capitalism. We ought to engage the problems with the ethics of sharing, solidarity and unity (Heo 1996 p. 15).

Hence, the bureaucratic division of poor people could not but collide with the ethics of activist-run SSP Centres. But they did not have the ability to counter the bureaucratic classification. As bottom-line agencies, they are principally supposed to accept SSP recipients sorted out by the state. It is not at their discretion to directly recruit poor people for their SSP work projects. If an SSP Centre wants to employ a person for their SSP work projects, it first has to send the person to the state office and have them undergo a means test and a working-ability test. To activists who used to unrestrictedly mingle with poor people in urban slums, the bureaucratic mechanism was somewhat awkward. Working against such bureaucratic mechanisms, some SSP Centres required the discretion to directly recruit poor people for SSP work projects. The comments below reflect the opinions of SSP Centre staff members, collected by the KASSPC in 2001, on the current top-down allocation of recipients.

> The SSP is run by community organisations, so we deserve to choose our SSP work participants. We have a lively understanding of poor people. Thus, the state has to concede the initial rights for directly employing SSP work participants (KASSPA 2001 p. 67).

> It would be much better for us to find our work participants. At least, I propose we should be allowed to recruit one third of our work project participants (KASSPA 2001 p.72).

Their claims for discretionary recruitment were not accepted. The state wanted to allow SSP benefits only to the officially recognised poor, prescribed in the SSP rules. And since activists had decided to work as bottom-line agents for the SSP,

they also had to abide by the regulations. Consequently, the first meetings of activists and poor people became arranged through the mediation of the state. The previously informal interactions between activists and poor people have replaced with formal relations between staff members and recipients. Basically, SSP recipients go to SSP Centres 'involuntarily', for the purpose of receiving benefits. Recipients have to work at the SSP Centres where the state refers to them, as follows:

> I received a letter from the district office. It wrote I had to work at the Sungdo SSP Centre. A map of the Sungdo SSP Centre was enclosed in the letter. If I said I didn't want to go there, the state would discontinue my benefits (WR-2008-10).

> A state official gave me telephone numbers of three SSP Centres near my house, and said I must work at one of them. I didn't know what the SSP Centre was for. The official said it would offer me work I could do (WR-2008-13).

To SSP recipients, SSP Centres are "unfamiliar" places (WR-2008-09; WR-2008-13). For some recipients, who live in villages where anti-poverty movements have been active, the SSP Centres, run by these anti-poverty organisations, can be familiar organisations. There are, however, many recipients who come from other villages. For this reason, their first impression of the SSP Centres is that these are simply places where they have to work to obtain state benefits, rather than a place for anti-poverty movements.

*7.33 The Widening Gap between Staff and Recipients*

In the early stages of the SSP Centres, SSP Centre staff tried to remain on intimate terms with SSP recipients by employing the previous 'working-together' strategy. The official role of SSP Centres was to create SSP work projects, like care-giving, cleaning or construction projects; to allocate recipients into one of the work projects; and to monitor whether recipients have satisfied their required working hours at the projects. However, rather than acting merely as supervisors, some activists wanted to continue with traditional assimilation practices and join SSP work projects with recipients. The senior staff of the Junim Centre (AP-2008-06) would help out at the cleaning work project. The junior staff of the Sungdo SSP Centre (AP-2008-09) and the director of the Pajong SSP Centre (AP-2005-03) worked at refurbishment

projects together with recipients. As the Sungdo SSP Centre staff recalled, they "followed recipients around to their construction sites and cleaned, painted and floored as recipients did" (AP-2005-09).

Nonetheless, this strategy had fundamental limitations. As one staff member confessed, a staff–recipient relationship was principally a "power-laden relationship" (AP-2008-14). Since recipients viewed staff as the supervisors of their work activities, they felt constrained in the presence of staff, and preferred staff not to come frequently to their workplace, as one recipient said:

> He (the staff member) is a gaffer. No matter how friendly he is, he is an inspector. When our work project doesn't meet his expectations, we can see he hardened his face. Almost all recipients were busy with reading his face (FN-25.07.2008-furniture project).

Having recognised that recipients did not necessary like being with staff, the staff decreased the frequency of working with recipients. Only when recipients suffered from a shortage of hands did the staff go to the workplaces and assist the recipients. Besides the unfavourable reactions, the increasing workload of staff also made it difficult for them to work with recipients. As pseudo frontline bureaucrats, staff had to complete a lot of administrative tasks for submission to the government, such as writing activity logs of recipients, financial documents, project plans and performance reports. Particularly after the state intensified the performance evaluation in 2005, the official paperwork grew (see Chapter 6). Accordingly, the staff members were busy coping with their administrative duties.

Harbouring Complaints about SSP Centre Staff: In this formalised relationship between staff and recipients, the original objective of anti-poverty activists, to 'mobilise grievances of poor people into the resistance force', became difficult to actualise. Following Alinsky's Community Organising (1969), Korean activists had traditionally believed that "there are possibilities of revolution in the places where grievances exist" (Yang 1990 p. 228), and they wanted to detect and assemble the scattered grievances of poor people into a collective force. Activists working in SSP Centres would also expect the community organising of SSP recipients. Nonetheless, far from expressing grievances about the society, most recipients did not want to reveal their personal opinions even about SSP Centre staff, as revealing their real

thoughts could lead to acts of revenge.

As Scott has examined in various hierarchical societies, subordinates tend to "measure (their) own words before those who had power over" them (1990 p.ix). Since misplaced gesture and word can be detrimental to their interests, they choke back direct discontent in the presence of the powerful. SSP recipients also adopted a similar strategic pose. For instance, some recipients I interviewed did not like their allocated work projects, but most of them were reluctant to talk to staff about this. A female recipient at a cleaning project was one of these. She disliked the cleaning project, most of whose members were men, and wanted to move to a care-giving project, which included "women's chores" that were familiar to her. But she had not told this to anyone, as she "did not want to displease staff":

> I keep down discontent. You know, I came here for money. So although it is not satisfactory, I have to adjust to it as it is. We cannot always choose what we like, can we? It is better to follow the general trend (WR-2008-12).

Many other recipients also "preferred not to speak about their opinions even though they had something to request" (WR-2005-05), because they did not want to risk possible conflicts. Although staff may be willing to listen to recipients, many recipients "firmly closed their mouth" (WR-2005-01) and did not offer their thoughts at face value, as another recipient explained:

> The staff talks and we listen. No recipients speak. The staff doesn't tell us not to speak, but this is the atmosphere. If I didn't touch sensitive matters, meetings would go smoothly. Why should I make a fuss and risk conflicts? (WR-2005-01)

Expressing Complaints against SSP Centre Staff: There were some recipients, however, who articulated their complaints against staff. Some recipients began to counter-utilise the fact that SSP Centres were state-sponsored welfare agencies. Recipients viewed SSP Centre staff as "subordinate" bureaucrats compared to "the real state officials" (WR-2008-10). In fact, SSP Centres had limited authority over SSP recipients. SSP Centres had to accept any recipient whom the state referred to them. Moreover, even though the SSP Centre did not want to keep certain recipients under their charge, it was quite hard to return the recipient to the state office, because

sending back recipients incur a loss of various administrative costs. SSP Centres had to provide a reasonable account for a rejection. Also, re-sending recipients could damage their image as a trustworthy agency. Therefore, the SSP Centres did not resend their recipients to the state office, as long as the recipients were not 'total nutters'. A Sungdo SSP Centre staff member explained their restricted authority:

> We can neither employ them (recipients) nor pack them off. The SSP Centre is expected to welcome all the recipients. Even if there is a person whom we like, we couldn't recruit him. On the contrary, although a recipient is lazy, we couldn't tell him to leave the centre (AP-2008-09).

As time went by, recipients began to sense the subordinate status of SSP Centres to the state. Many recipients I met knew "the state holds power over SSP Centres" (FN-25.11.2008-cleaning project):

> They (the SSP Centres) are a paper tiger. The real tiger is behind. They could also be shut down if their performance doesn't please the real tiger (FN 25.11.2008-cleaning project).

> SSP Centre is an intermediary…something like an estate agency. Landlords exist elsewhere (FN-17.11.2008-one day work).

Of course, recipients did not speak out about their awareness of the limited power of SSP Centres before staff members. The staff members were their direct work managers. As long as they had to work under the staff, recipients did not want to appear to be doing anything overtly against them. As a recipient said, "it is beneficial to maintain amicable relationship with staff" (WR-2008-08). Howe has distinguished between 'reluctant' and 'assertive' welfare recipients (1990). While reluctant recipients follow the instructions of welfare providers, regardless of whether they themselves agree with the instructions, assertive recipients seek to influence the decisions of welfare providers to get what they want. The majority of SSP recipients apparently shared similar characteristics with Howe's 'reluctant recipients'. However, their identities as compliant and assertive recipients were not fixed, but rather situational. Recipients who had been obedient could suddenly change their attitudes and take a counter-offensive against SSP Centre staff, particularly when the staff's decisions caused problems for the recipients.

Spilling the wrongdoings of SSP Centres to the government was a typical counter-offensive strategy for SSP recipients. As Weber illustrated, in the bureaucratic system, workers are subject to higher authorities (Weber 1978; Weber, Gerth, and Turner 1991 p. 251). Recipients were also aware of this attribute of the bureaucratic system. Thus, some recipients, who were driven into a corner by SSP Centre staff, assailed the staff by sending their complaints to the government.

Youngmi, a female recipient of the Junim SSP Centre, was one of these cases. On November 16, 2008, a staff member received a call from the Junim Public Hospital (pseudonym)–one of the workplaces for a care-giving project. The hospital staff reported Youngmi's absence. Actually, she had been notorious for being late without due notice. Thus, when the staff member received the call, he could stand no more, furious with her constant misbehaviour. When the staff called her, Youngmi said her son had been in a traffic accident that morning. However, he held her culpable, recalling her previous habitual lateness. The staff member thus reported to the Gwanak district office that she was 'absent without notice'. Such reports would cause part of her benefits to be slashed from her total SSP benefits. Hearing this, Youngmi became infuriated, because she assumed that her absence was legitimate. Hence, she submitted a complaint to the Gwanak district office, saying that the Junim SSP Centre was abusing its discretion by disapproving absences even for emergency cases. Absence without due notice was a fault of Youngmi, but regardless of who was wrong, the civil appeal incurred a stressful new workload for the staff member. He had to hand in written statements in self-defence, and respond to calls from the state office as part of the investigation. In this way, recipients could tactfully gain revenge on staff simply by submitting complaints. Thus, some recipients entered complaints "just to fuck SSP Centres" (WR-2008-13).

The Sungdo SSP Centre case was another example. Jaewoo, a junior staff member of the Sungdo SSP Centre (AP-2008-09), was accused by a recipient of misappropriation of SSP Centre finances. Being in charge of a construction project, Jaewoo was one of the staff who actively tried to get along with project recipients. Because his construction project dealt with private house refurbishment, it earned extra profits through the refurbishment work. However, since recipients basically received SSP benefits from the state, such profits were legally bound to be saved. The saved money was called a Self-Sufficiency Preparation Fund (SSP Fund) (See

Chapter 8 for more details). But Jaewoo had sometimes rendered portions of the fund to individual recipients. He found SSP benefits too meagre for a decent life, and so wanted to help recipients by sharing the profits.

Since the arbitrary allocation of the fund was beneficial to recipients, the ones working at Jaewoo's construction project did not express any opposition. However, it was problematised by a male recipient later. Because the recipient kept drinking alcohol at workplaces, and made constant trouble with other recipients, Jaewoo finally decided to send him back to the state office. Hearing the decision, however, the recipient got back at Jaewoo by counterclaiming against him, for his 'misappropriation' of the SSP Fund, to the Sungdo district government. Jaewoo wanted to settle the complaint smoothly, and requested the recipient withdraw the complaint. However, the recipient insisted on calling for the dismissal of Jaewoo, saying he would not leave the Sungdo SSP Centre unless Jaewoo left first. After Jaewoo begged him in person, the recipient finally withdrew the appeal. But Jaewoo was "emotionally damaged" from the attack. He believed that he had done his best to stand with recipients, but this recipient had "stabbed (him) in the back" (AP-2008-09). It made him consider changing his occupation, as he felt sceptical about his devotion to poor people.

Of course, the complaints do not signify that recipients came to have superior power over staff. These frontal attacks by recipients on staff were very rare, and only conducted by recipients who had nothing to lose, or dared to lose what they had. As one recipient aptly described, the complaints were "I will kill you before I die" actions (WR-2008-13). Most recipients preferred to repress their grievances and maintain amicability with staff. Some may view the amicable relations and the rare frontal attacks as adverse situations, but conformity and confrontation are actually two sides of the same coin. Both point out that previously informal relations between activists and poor people had disappeared, becoming more formalised after the SSP partnership. Although activists originally hoped to identify with poor people and mobilise their grievances at SSP Centres, this became more difficult. The underlying gap between activists and poor people had widened after activists were transformed into SSP Centre staff, and the staff members themselves became targets of counterattacks by poor people.

Nonetheless, it is rash to conclude that SSP Centres have completely lost their

original aspiration of befriending and advocating poor people. As Section 7.4 delineates, despite bureaucratic restriction, SSP Centre staff have worked out alternative practices to rehabilitate equal and participatory environments at SSP Centres.

## 7.4 Resistance to Bureaucratisation
### 7.41 Restoring Informal Domains in SSP Centres
As we discussed in Section 7.3, the new bureaucratic tasks of SSP Centres made it both difficult and undesirable for activists to freely 'work with/like' recipients as they used to do. To draw on Habermas' terms, SSP Centres had become part of the "formally organised domains of action" in the bureaucratic system (1987 p. 185). Consequently, they drifted apart from the lifeworlds of poor people, the "informally constituted domains of actions" (1987 p. 366). However, rather than simply accepting the new environment, activists endeavoured to restore informal domains of action in their SSP Centres. In other words, they began to try to reclaim the lifeworld within the formal domains of the SSP by organising activities such as social circles.

Organising Social Events and Leisure Circles: Originally, activists expected SSP Centres to function something like *minjung* churches, where poor people could easily come together and socialise. As it turned out, the SSP Centres were not comfortable places for recipients. Moreover, since recipients spent much of their day at hospitals, schools or public offices for cleaning, refurbishment or care-giving work projects, Centre staff did not have many chances to mingle with recipients. In order to revive this staff–recipient relationship, staff thus began to organise social events and leisure circles that were completely separate from obligatory SSP work projects. As a Junim SSP Centre staff member explained, "one-day outings or three-or two-day camps were the most typical way to increase opportunities to get closer with recipients, getting away from work duties" (AP-2008-06). Almost all of SSP Centres I visited organised one-day excursions to the mountains or to seaside or tourist sites, where all staff and recipients assemble. Some SSP Centres, such as the Guro Life SSP Centre, had held three-day family camps where children of recipients can also join. This was especially important because many SSP recipients were single mothers. The social events served a double purpose; not only could staff get to know recipients outside of

their bureaucratic role, but also recipients could have the chance to travel. Many recipients "could hardly dream of a trip for themselves, being battered by daily life (WR-2008-09)", and most had "never travelled since school excursions" (FN-10.12.2008-cleaning project). Thus, the outings that SSP Centres organised were great opportunities to step out of daily routines. For this reason, although such social events were not mandatory, most recipients were willing to participate.

This image [**Image 7-2 Social Events of SSP Centres**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

Apart from organising special social events, some Centres formed regular leisure circles. These offered recipients the chance to become familiar with SSP Centre offices and build relationships with other recipients. For instance, the Younggwang SSP Centre began to support gatherings with fellow recipients who had similar interests and hobbies; mountain-climbing, film-watching and novel-reading circles were formed in 2006, as shown in Table 7-1. The staff also joined in as members in the climbing and film circles. These kinds of leisure groups enabled recipients to see SSP Centres as more restful spaces. Regular gatherings of the circles usually took place in the meeting rooms of SSP Centres, which naturally led to more frequent visits to the Centres by recipients. The spaces now housed informal get-togethers as well as official work. It was still the case that Centres were official welfare agencies, but owing to the staff's attempts, they had also become "spaces where recipients could mingle with other recipients and freely guffaw unlike at state offices" (FN-03.12.2008-talk at bus).

**Table 7-1 Leisure Circles of the Younggwang SSP Centre**
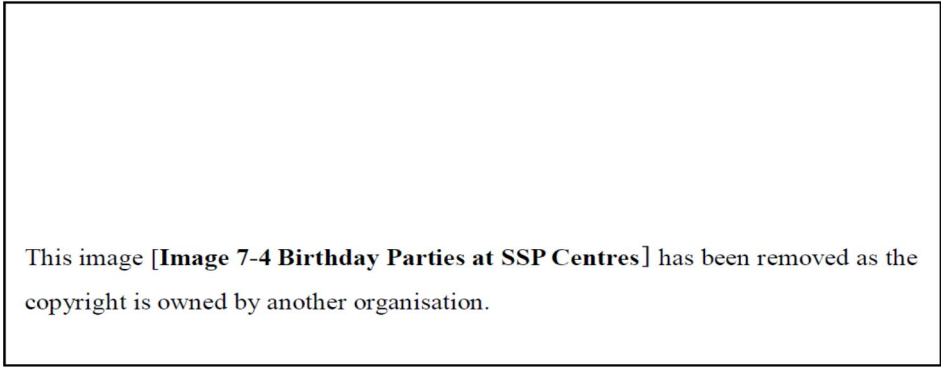
| Leisure circle | Recipient no. | Goal | Annual meeting times |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Religious circle | 8 | Christian Bible study | 7 |
| Climbing circle | 21 | Climbing a mountain every month | 7 |
| Outing circle | 9 | Going to palaces, galleries, cultural events | 3 |
| Badminton circle | 16 | Getting fit with badminton and ping-pong | 11 |
| Film circle | 21 | Going to theatres | 3 |
| Reading circle | 4 | Reading novels | 3 |
| Health circle | 10 | Sharing tips about healthy life style | 10 |

Source: Younggwang SSP Centre, informal material (2008 p. 6)

This image [**Image 7-3 Leisure Cirles of SSP Centres**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

<u>Sharing Daily Life Events</u>: SSP Centre staff also made efforts to participate in the daily lives of recipients. Celebrating recipients' birthdays was a typical example. At government offices, a recipient's date of birth is simply a piece of neutral information collected to identify an individual or to check his or her eligibility for welfare. After using the information for administrative purposes, state bureaucrats normally bury it in their cabinets. Unlike state officials, SSP Centre staff made the information more than just numbers. SSP Centres commonly threw monthly birthday parties or

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prepared gifts for their recipients, as Image 7-4 shows.

This image [**Image 7-4 Birthday Parties at SSP Centres**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

Some SSP Centre staff took an active interest in recipients' family affairs. While conducting participant observation at the Junim SSP Centre, I encountered more than a few instances of staff involving themselves in recipients' lives. On November 11, 2008, the Junim SSP Centre staff chipped in money and bought toffee boxes for recipients' children who were taking the national university entrance exam on November 13, 2008. In Korea, it is customary that friends and relatives give sticky toffee to students, with the hope that they will 'stick to' or enter universities. Although SSP Centre staff members were neither friends nor family, they treated recipients' children as if they had known them much longer.

Another episode further exemplifies how staff members tried to surmount their bureaucratic roles. On November 21, 2008, a recipient phoned the Junim SSP Centre to report that she could not attend work because her father had died. Since Korean funerals normally last for three days and nights, she wanted to take official exemption from her work duties for three days. According to administrative regulations, the role of the SSP Centre staff is simply to report her absence to the state office. In this situation, however, SSP Centre staff members chose to visit the funeral after work. In Korean culture, the more guests that come to funeral, the more blessings the dead receives. Thus, families often welcome strangers or beggars as well as friends or kin as their guests. Understanding this cultural particularity, SSP Centre staff wanted to console and express care for the recipient by attending the funeral.

The staff's various efforts to befriend recipients had certain positive effects. As anthropologist Marcel Mauss famously explained, a gift is a symbolic expression of

friendship and hospitality, and the act of giving constructs social bonds (2002). In this case of SSP Centres, the activists' acts of giving created a kind of social bridge towards recipients. As caring about the daily events of recipients was not an official duty of SSP Centres, staff had to spend extra time and money on the unofficial activities. In particular, the staff's steady efforts gradually impressed recipients. Jinhyeok, a recipient at the Sundong SSP Centre, stated that the constant action of giving "cannot continue without sincere hearts" (WR-2008-10):

> One day, the staff came to our workplace and slipped something into my hand. It was a Philips electronic pot. I like drinking coffee, and she seemed to have remembered this. She didn't have to give us anything, or she could have merely bought a cheap made-in-China kettle. I am not only talking about the price. Humans can tell whether a person is sincere or hypocritical. I could see she was genuine (WR-2008-10).

Jinhyeok was a recipient who came to the Sungdo SSP Centre solely for benefits, but this kind of experience gradually made him more favourably-disposed to SSP Centre staff. Bangmi, a recipient at the Enhye SSP Centre, also initially assumed that SSP Centre staff would be "cold and indifferent like state officials" (WR-2008-12), but their friendly manner slowly changed her mind:

> I can feel their kindness comes from their hearts. They are not showy in their giving. I know they are responsible for helping me, but I would be able to sense whether or not they were patronising me. Cold and warm hearts have different temperatures. I can sense they have warm hearts (WR-2008-12).

Some recipients directly reciprocated the staff's kindly gestures. Jihyeon and Sunmi were the single mothers at the Junim SSP Centres who received toffee boxes for their children. To express their gratitude, they cooked *bulgogi* (a beef dish) and *kimchi* (pickled cabbage) for staff. Since they knew staff usually worked late nights, they brought the food to the Centre office with *soju* (Korean vodka) one night as a surprise. Jihyeon, Sunmi, the five remaining staff members and I had a small party and chitchatted together until midnight. Not all recipients were as direct as Jihyeon and Sunmi; some expressed their thanks in a roundabout way by leaving drinks, chocolate or candy on staff members' desks. These kinds of small gifts were signs

that activists' aspirations for friendship had reached some recipients.

As a matter of course, the recipients who responded so positively to staff's efforts were not a majority. While some recipients liked spending time with staff, many others preferred to keep their distance, as mentioned in Section 7.3. Although staff strived to overcome their image as frontline bureaucrats, their endeavours could not entirely eliminate the image. Also, one could not know for certain whether those recipients who appeared amiable to staff like Jihyeon and Sunmi were being sincere. Nevertheless, it is clear that staff members' efforts had at least succeeded in distinguishing SSP Centres from normal state bureaucracy. This fact was more obvious when I talked to some recipients who were cynical about SSP Centres. Daljae, a recipient working on a cleaning project, was always complaining that "SSP Centres are making use of recipients to receive the state money" and that "staff are no different from foremen" (FN-05.08.2008-Enchong). Despite these complaints, when asked whether he would like SSP Centres to be run directly by state officials, he shifted his attitude and answered:

> No, I don't think it is a good idea. Officials are rude and rigid. They are dismissive and command without eye contact. The SSP Centre staff is at least trying to listen to me (FN-05.08.2008-Enchong).

Daljae's perspective was far from idiosyncratic. While conducting formal and casual interviews with recipients, they explained without exception that they preferred the current partnership system in which civil society agencies administered SSP Centres. Although the staff's efforts could not completely rid them of their bureaucratic image, they had caused even the most cynical recipients to see SSP Centre staff as (at least) "something different from state officials" (WR-2008-13).

### 7.42 Mother, Father and Teacher: Informal Interpellation of Recipient

Staff have also used 'language' to withstand bureaucratisation. As we saw in Chapter 7.2, in the past, activists had referred to slum residents as 'sister' or 'brother'. However, after the SSP partnership, administrative terms like 'recipient' replaced the daily interpellation, and it became rarer that staff would call recipients 'sister' or 'brother'. Activists themselves were also reluctant to use the casual names. When they had lived in slums with residents, the latter could perceive such informalities as

an expression of friendliness. However, as *The Introductory Handbook for SSP Centre Staff* states, in the bureaucratic setting of SSP Centres, "recipients already feel timid and thus might misread staff's casual attitude as talking down to them" (KASSPC 2007b p. 237). Thus, the KASSPC recommended that "staff should be cautious about the manner of speaking and to avoid using lower forms of speech except in special circumstances" (KASSPC 2007b p. 237).

Since 'brother' and 'sister' were now off-limits, staff members devised alternative types of name that would retain the friendliness of brother and sister while showing modesty. 'Mother', 'father' and 'teacher' were the replacements. During fieldwork, I could observe that staff almost always referred to recipients with these titles (i.e. "Have you seen Mother Bangmi today?" or "Have a seat here, Teacher Bangmi"). In Korea, 'mother' and 'father' are used to refer to seniors with affection and respect. English words with a similar nuance might be the names 'aunt' and 'uncle'. The term 'teacher', on the other hand, is more honorific, but it is still a colloquial term that expresses favour and honour to others. By using these informal but respectful words, staff intended to ease the formalised relation with recipients.

State officials used different names for recipients and rarely employed the affectionate terms. They "mostly call recipients Mr. or Mrs. X (*ssi)*" (GO-2008-04). 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.' creates a distant and aloof tone compared to 'mother', 'father' or 'teacher'. Thus, SSP Centre staff rarely used them. Even when talking to an outsider like me, staff members' language clearly contrasted with the language of state officials. During in-depth interviews, SSP Centre staff and state officials most often used the official terms of 'SSP recipient' or 'conditional recipient' because these were commonly circulated words in the SSP field. But while state officials employed other administrative terminologies like 'client' or 'welfare target', SSP Centre staff continued to use 'mother',' father' or 'teacher' to refer to recipients.

The staff's manner of address created a number of interesting linguistic phenomena at SSP Centre offices. In Korea, people are generally called by their titles, not merely by their names. 'Professor Jang', for example, would retain his professor status in any act of naming. SSP Centre staff were categorised as director, senior staff or junior staff, and recipients refer to them with the given titles ('director Sungji', 'section chief Chungeun', 'manger Eungsu', etc.). However, junior staff members normally did not have official titles. Thus, recipients had to call junior staff

teachers because 'teacher' was a universally honorific title. However, in an effort to overcome hierarchy, staff members may also refer to recipient as teacher' (see Table 7-2). The identical titles made it tricky for outsiders like me to discern who were recipients and who were junior staff. The respectful and friendly names for these individuals loosened the hierarchical structure between staff and recipients.

**Table 7-2 Everyday Designation of Staff and Recipient**

| *Official Position* | *Everyday Term of Address* |
| --- | --- |
| Director | director |
| Senior staff | manager, section chief |
| Junior staff | **teacher** |
| Recipient | **teacher**, mother and father |

Of course, these linguistic practices did not completely dismantle the staff–recipient hierarchy. No matter how humble their words, staff obviously had more power than recipients. Indeed, although staff tended to habitually and unconsciously use the honorific designations, a few recipients were very sensitive to this. When I asked why they called recipients teachers, SSP Centre staff were at a loss for answers, claiming: "Well…I haven't thought about it. We had done it so far" (AP-2008-17) or "well…because these are comfortable words" (AP-2008-11). On the other hand, some recipients were very sensitive about their titles and "felt awkward and uncomfortable when (they) were called 'teacher', the same title as junior staff" (WR-2008-13), because they counted themselves as inferior to staff. A recipient at the Junim SSP Centre thus personally requested staff not to use honorific words like 'teacher' when talking to her (FN-20.11.2008-counselling log). In this sense, the informal forms of address might be seen as symbolic of the self-complacency of SSP Centre staff and have little real impact on staff–recipient relations. However, in addition to the designations, there were other activities that directly aimed to weaken the hierarchical order and generate more democratic relationship between staff and recipients.

### 7.43 Transferring Bureaucratic Authority to Recipients

As we saw in Section 7.2, even though anti-poverty activists would 'go down' (*habang*) to slums to *tooshin* to poor people, there was always an underling gap between activists and poor people. Thus, it cannot be said that the SSP partnership

itself suddenly created a hierarchical relationship between staff and recipients. More accurately speaking, the partnership was simply a scenario that revealed and intensified the pre-existing hierarchy.

With such manifestly hierarchical orders, some SSP Centre staff began to seriously discuss what a desirable role for the staff would be and how they might redefine the relation between staff and recipients. *The Introductory Handbook for SSP Centre Staff 1* and *2,* published by the KASSPC, grew out of the staff's reconsideration of their identity within the organisation (2007a, 2007b). The series contained four writings by leading activist figures who had guided SSP Centres from the beginning of the partnership: 'The Attitude and Role of Staff' by Byeonghak Lee and 'The Place where Staff Stand' by Wonsul Kim from Protestant anti-poverty organisations; 'Relationship with Recipient' by Miyoung Kim from a Catholic anti-poverty organisation; and 'Partnership between Staff and Recipients' by Jongki Kim from the ASH. Rather than adhering to traditional assimilation principles, the leaders all admitted to an ontological difference between recipients and staff and acknowledged that staff members have real authority over recipients. However, rather than actively exercising the hierarchical relationship, they attempted to create a more equal relationship. In the handbooks, the activist leaders called upon SSP Centre staff to develop "democratic leadership". They suggested that staff should relinquish some of their power to recipients instead of directing all aspects of work projects themselves. The KASSPC General Director, Byeonghak Lee, phrased it as follows:

> Many members of staff act like problem-solving leaders, offering certain solution to recipients. But this discourages recipients from setting their own plans for their work projects, and staff members easily become peremptory bureaucrats. My suggestion is that as democratic leaders, staff members assist recipients in standing on their own. Staff should be aware of treating recipients as passive policy targets (KASSPC 2007b p. 247).

Catholic anti-poverty activist Miyoung Kim also urged members to respect the opinions of recipients when managing SSP work projects:

> Unripe staff members tend to disturb the wisdom of recipients. They are likely to objectify recipients and force their knowledge onto recipients. But recipients can be more resourceful than staff, because

they gain lively wisdom from real experience. Staff must respect recipients' opinions, perspectives and suggestions that their wisdom produces (KASSPC 2007b p. 231).

Recipient Leadership: One of the practical strategies for respecting recipients' opinions was to entrust some work project management to recipients. The management of work projects normally required specific, practical skills beyond general office administration skills. For example, for a cleaning project, management involved handling cleaning equipments and chemicals, making contracts with customers, forming an estimate or selecting the manners of cleaning. However, staff members who spent most of time submitting paperwork to the state had less ability to carry out such practical tasks compared with recipients who actually did the cleaning. A staff member and recipient described this in the following ways:

> I (staff) don't have dry cleaning skills. I can iron some T-shirts, but I don't know how to clean furs and leathers. When I visit the dry cleaning project of recipients, I sometimes help with ironing. But I did not put my nose into their laundering activities (AP-2008-09).

> He (staff) used to interfere with my work during the early days. But I now have become far better at wood-work than the staff member. He does not know how to choose the right panels for making chairs. He does not distinguish panels of broad-leaved trees from needle-leaf ones. He cannot saw logs or hammer nails. So he leaves me the professional parts. I think he's right. He couldn't do everything. It's impossible (FN-25.07.2008-furniture).

Accordingly, SSP Centre staff had gradually decreased their involvement in the basic elements of SSP work projects and turned over some management duties to recipients. One of the most typical methods for promoting recipients' discretion was to have some experienced recipients stand as 'work project leaders' and leave the operation of work projects to them. Among the 14 recipients who participated in in-depth interviews, four were recipient-leaders: Namhee Oh (WR-2008-08) was the leader of a care-giving project at the Kuwon SSP Centre; Miae Jo (WR-2008-13) was the leader of a care-giving project at the Junim SSP Centre; Jaejin Park (WR-2008-09) was the leader of a bike-rental project at the Sungdo SSP Centre; and Myeongsu Choi (WR-2005-05) was the leader of a cleaning project.

The recipient-leaders held substantial decision-making power over their SSP work projects. When the Junim SSP Centre staff member in charge of the care-giving

project allocated recipients to hospitals or patients' homes, he made a point of first consulting Miae Jo, the care-giving project leader, since she knew the conditions and personalities of fellow recipients better than staff. Miae also accompanied staff when they visited recipients' workplaces to monitor their performance. Namhee Oh, the care-giving project leader of the Kuwon SSP Centre, was also vested with authority. She assigned recipients to hospitals or homes and organised care-giving training workshops by herself. As she explained, "apart from the final confirmation of budget spending, most of daily project operation is actually in (her) hands" (WR-2008-08). Moreover, some project leaders worked at SSP Centre offices together with staff, coordinating their projects rather than staying at work project sites. For this reason, it became trickier to discern project leaders from staff judging solely by the tasks they undertook.

This image [**Image 7-5 SSP Recipient Leadership Workshops**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

Side Effects of Recipient Leadership: Sharing leadership also had negative impacts. While the bureaucratic gap between staff and project leaders diminished, complex issues between project leaders and ordinary recipients began to emerge. In principle, there were no official ranks among recipients; they were supposed to be treated equally under the SSP rules, working the same hours and receiving the same amount of benefits. But due to the leadership sharing practices, some recipients had come to obtain superior power over other recipients in the actual work projects. In general, a project leader was chosen among recipients who had worked for a certain project for longer than others and so had more practical experience in that area. Therefore, most of fellow recipients by and large accepted the recipient leadership, although there were, in principle, no hierarchical orders among them. However, some recipients

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disliked or were envious of project leaders, as Jaejin, a bike-rental project leader from the Sundong SSP Centre, explained:

> Some recipients of my project used to be homeless. Some are still alcoholics and haven't had proper jobs their whole lives. I frequently fret about them. They work half an hour and then idly fool around for an hour. So, others have to do the rest of their work. I would like to directly say, "how aren't you working hard?" They simply ignored my sayings. When I warn them, they speak ill of me. "What the hell, who are you? You are also a recipient like me. Don't mistake yourself!" (WR-2008-09).

A care-giving project leader, Miae, related a similar experience:

> My position is very ambiguous. Some absurd conflicts happen because of it. Our care-giving recipients share cabinets with hospice volunteers at the Junim general hospital. One day, three volunteers said their clothes had disappeared. By monitoring CCTV, the hospital staff found that an SSP recipient had moved the clothes from another cabinet. I was very annoyed about the recipient's impolite manner; her behaviour could further abase the reputations of the recipients. I suggested she should apologise to the volunteers. But she shouted at me, "You are also a recipient like me. You are younger than me. How dare you embarrass me in front of others?" Since the day, she hasn't talked to me. (FN-03.12.2010-Miae)

I could also observe subtle tensions between recipient leaders and normal recipients at the Junim SSP Centre. Suhyeon was a recipient of the Junim care-giving project. Although she had to move into a poor village in Gwanak district, she used to live in Kangnam district, a wealthy area in Seoul. After she joined the care-giving project, Suhyeon quickly attracted attention from other recipients due to her higher education and refined manner. Thus, the care-giving recipient leader, Miae, made sure Suhyeon was acting appropriately. According to the former, "Suhyeon seems to be having her eye on the project leader role and contradicts me at every chance" (FN-04.12.2008-project leader). Although there were no outright fights, it was indeed obvious that Suhyeon and Miae were weary of each other, avoiding face-to-face conversations. SSP Centre staff members were also aware of such side effects of recipient leadership, and thus some SSP Centre employees such as a senior staff member of the Gwangye SSP Centre were sceptical about the leadership transfer strategy. They claimed that it could "inculcate authoritarianism and elitism in a few

chosen recipients" (AP-2008-11).

Democratic Decision-Making Devices: In a similar vein, some SSP Centres sought for a new alternative to defend against the side effects of the selective sharing of leadership. The aim was to disperse and decentralise authority by allowing more recipients to have their say in the matters of SSP Centres. In order to do this, some Centres organised more democratic decision-making meetings through which recipients could exert substantial voting rights on issues of SSP Centre activities. For example, as displayed in Table 7-3, the Younggwang SSP Centre organised self-governed project meetings where all member-recipients could collaboratively discuss and set business plans for their own work projects rather than relying solely on the directions of staff or project leaders. At care-giving project meetings, member-recipients could have the right to choose who should be dispatched and which hospitals or homes they should go to.

**Table 7-3 Self-governed Meetings of SSP Work Projects**

| Project Name | Meeting's Title | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Total care-giving project | Monthly meeting | Second Wednesday every month |
| Laundering work project | Self-governed meeting | Everyday |
| | Community-preparation meeting | Monday biweekly |
| House refurbishment project | Weekly meeting | Monday every week |
| Assistant for the disabled project | Monthly meeting | Third Wednesday every month |
| Incubating project | Morning gathering | Twice a week |
| | Monthly meeting | Once a month |
| Farming project | Self-governed meeting | Everyday |
| | Weekly meeting | Monday biweekly |

Source: Younggwang SSP Centre, informal material (2008 p. 61)

Alongside the self-management of individual work projects, more than a few Centres began to allow recipients to take part in the general administration of the Centres themselves. According to a survey by the KASSPC in 2009, 42 out of 124 respondent SSP Centres (33.9%) had devised participatory democratic channels through which recipients could formally engage in running SSP Centres (KASSPC 2009a p. 152). As Table 7-4 summarises, the type of decision-making channels are diverse: some SSP Centres incorporated the opinions of recipients' representatives in their modus operandi; others held recipient–staff joint assemblies that every recipient

could attend and partake in, with management methods decided through a democratic vote; and others invited recipients to become board members in their organisations.

**Table 7-4 Recipients' Participation in Decision-Making of SSP Centres**

|  | *Types of meetings* | *Frequency* | *Ratio (%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Decision-making meeting | Project leaders' meeting | 25 | 20.2 |
|  | Recipients' representative committee | 8 | 6.5 |
|  | Self-governed project meeting | 7 | 5.6 |
|  | Recipient-staff joint assembly | 1 | 0.8 |
|  | Inviting recipients as board members | 1 | 0.8 |
|  | Total | 42 | 33.9 |
| Non-decision making meeting only |  | 82 | 66.1 |
| Total |  | 124 | 100.0 |

Source: KASSPC (2009 p. 150)

The KASSPC described these decision-making devices as 'practices of empowerment':

> The institutional role of SSP Centres is to offer recipients opportunities to escape from poverty. But historically, recipients had been socially stigmatised, having no political voices and power in the society. Thus, it is equally important to empower recipients to voice their opinions. The decision-making meetings are practices of empowerment in this sense (KASSPC 2009a p. 154).

If the government ran the SSP Centres directly, such 'practices of empowerment' would not be possible. The attempts to transfer power to recipients were the endeavours of activists working in SSP Centres as staff. Needless to say, the power transfer did not mean that SSP Centre staff had relinquished all their administrative authority to recipients. The majority of SSP Centres did not give recipients the right to vote on the business of SSP Centres. Furthermore, the direct engagement of recipients in SSP Centres' decision-making was normally restricted to peripheral issues like "deciding the schedule or venue of social programmes" (KASSPC 2009a p. 153). As a senior staff member explained

> No matter how hard and honestly recipients are, recipients are not responsible for SSP Centres. They are indifferent to the consequence of SSP Centres. Ultimate responsibility for the failure and success of SSP work projects are upon staff, so crucial

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issues like finance and accounting have been dealt only by staff (AP-2008-14).

Nonetheless, the SSP Centres' attempts to create a participatory democracy were significant. Even though SSP Centres could not maintain their original assimilation principle of 'going down' to the lifeworlds of poor people, they managed to create a kind of assimilation by sharing bureaucratic authority with recipients and thereby elevating their status at SSP Centres. Roughly speaking, while traditional assimilation practices called *tooshin* (throwing a body) or *habang* (going down) represent *downward* assimilation, political empowerment through 'leadership transfer' or 'participation in decision-making processes' can be interpreted as *upward* assimilation. Such practices are remarkable phenomena that are rarely found in government-run welfare agencies. This is an obvious achievement of the SSP Centres' efforts to withstand the wave of bureaucratisation. In this sense, it may be hasty to suggest that civil society actors in partnership come to serve merely as pseudo-bureaucrats, regulating the poor according to state commands.

## 7.5 Concluding Remarks

Chapter 7 has discussed the struggle of SSP Centres against bureaucratisation in the SSP partnership. Mainstream debates have depicted state–civil society partnerships as 'bottom-up initiatives', assuming that civil society organisations can function as direct channels for the voices of marginalised people. The SSP partnership, where local anti-poverty organisations are engaged as frontline SSP Centres, has been acclaimed as 'participatory welfare' in Korean society for this very reason. However, this case study of the SSP administration reveals that the state–civil society partnership can actually prevent, rather than facilitate, the inclusion of marginal people's voices. While anti-poverty activists are invited to act as service providers, poor people remain passive policy targets. Also, as we saw in Section 7.2, the SSP partnership has widened the hierarchical gap between activists and poor people, and SSP Centre staff have come to function as street-level bureaucrats supervising SSP recipients.

Nonetheless, it is still hasty to conclude that SSP Centres have been completely absorbed into the state bureaucratic system. Section 7.3 demonstrates that SSP Centre staff strive to create an 'inclusive society' within SSP Centres, despite the

limitations. Social events and leisure circles are among their everyday efforts to restore the lifeworlds of recipients. Transferring administrative leadership to recipients or inviting them into the Centre's decision-making processes represent further attempts to stimulate recipients' participation in the SSP system. Given these street-level practices of SSP Centres, it seems rash to conclude that the partnership represents the simple bureaucratisation of anti-poverty organisations; rather, anti-poverty organisations can continue to act as sites for struggle in defending the lifeworlds of poor people within the bureaucratic system. Further theoretical and policy implications of these findings will be elaborated in the final chapter.

# Chapter 8

# Struggle of Anti-Poverty Organisations against Marketisation

## 8.1 Introductory Statement

As the third principal findings chapter, Chapter 8 explores how anti-poverty organisations in the SSP partnership have dealt with the threat of marketisation over time. As reviewed in Chapter 3, SSP Centres directly stemmed from anti-poverty organisations that had conducted poor workers' cooperative movements in poor communities. The workers' cooperative movements aimed to establish an alternative to the capitalist market. However, the official goal of the SSP chiefly focused on economic dependence in the capitalist labour market. This chapter explores whether the SSP partnership has led anti-poverty organisations into the grasp of market-oriented policy or whether these organisations maintain an anti-capitalist stance. It also considers the ways in which SSP Centres might manage to resist the wave of marketisation.

The first section briefly reviews the attempts of anti-poverty organisations to actualise the anti-capitalist ethos of poor workers' cooperatives in their SSP Centres. The second section examines how SSP Centres came to conform to market-oriented policy and gave up their initial aspirations. The third section, however, explores new tactics and praxis through which SSP Centres have begun to reinvent themselves to resist the market-oriented SSP. Through this investigation, this chapter demonstrates the ways in which anti-poverty organisations continue to defend the voices of poor people against the capitalist market even within the workfare policy system.

## 8.2 Initial Aspiration for Alternative Economy

### 8.21 Poor Workers' Cooperatives

Korean anti-poverty organisations had pursued economic egalitarianism since their inception. As discussed in Chapter 3, Alinsky's community organising ideas (1969) formed the basis for these organisations. The word, *community* (*gongdongche*) relative to community organising meant not only a geographic concept as in 'the same region', but an ideological concept representing communalism. Leading activist

of the COUP Myeongho Shin emphasised the ideological aspect of the word, stating that "community conceives the political-economic will to establish an egalitarian society that overcomes inequalities and injustice which have discriminated between people according to their income, occupation, sex, social status and the place of birth"(2000a p. 51).

The idea for economic communalism also served as the basis of poor workers' cooperative movements of anti-poverty organisations (Kim, H. 1994; Kim, K. 1995; Lee, H. 1994). Workers' cooperatives do not have dominant employers and subordinate employees. According to the definition by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), workers' cooperatives aim to invest money together; work collaboratively; discuss business issues democratically (one member, one vote); and share profits equally (ICA 2007). Such cooperative work, equal distribution, communal ownership and democratic decision-making procedures corresponded with the economic egalitarianism that anti-poverty activists had sought for so long. Thus, poor workers' cooperatives quickly became the central organising bases for anti-poverty movements.

*8.22 SSP Centre as a Springboard for Workers' Cooperatives*

As illustrated in Chapter 2, anti-poverty organisations also decided to join in the SSP to make use of SSP Centres as an incubator for workers' cooperative movements. As Table 8-1 summarises, while the state viewed the SSP as a stepping stone to economic independence of poor individuals of working age, anti-poverty activists regarded it as a means to recruit potential members of poor workers' cooperatives from the working-age poor.

**Table 8-1 Official SSP Discourse vs. Anti-poverty Movement Discourse**

|  | *Target* | *Different Goals* | *Common Means* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***The State*** | The working-age poor (**The undeserving poor**) | Leaving state welfare  Economic self-sufficiency | Work at SSP Centre |
| ***Anti-poverty movements*** | The working-age poor (**The organisable poor**) | Organising workers' cooperatives  Alternative economic system | Work at SSP Centre |

In detail, unlike the state, which divided the poor into 'the undeserving poor' and 'the deserving poor', anti-poverty organisations claimed that they had valued

sharing, solidarity and communalism. However, anti-poverty organisations had also (unconsciously) divided poor people into two groups: 'the organisable poor' and 'the un-organisable poor'. Activists presumed that "young and wholesome manhood should be the kernel of the movements" to confront the dominant system vehemently (AP-2008-07). Therefore, since they embarked upon anti-poverty movements in urban slums, they "preferred to establish intimate relationship with working-age men, rather than elderly or female residents" (AP-2005-01). This implicit division between the organisable poor (working-age men) and the un-organisable poor (the elderly or female) became more conspicuous with the introduction of workers' cooperative ideas in the early 1990s. Because workers' cooperatives aspired to an alternative 'production' system, activists wished to assemble healthy and young people who could focus their energy on work. As an activist of the ASH wrote, activists generally "firstly recruited vigorous male as core members of workers' communities and then supplemented the rest of the vacancies with other residents"(Chang 1996 p.182). Chungsung Kwon, the director of the Norae Sharing Home, also reported activists' preference for working-age people:

> There was an activist, who was interested in poor people with disability. She wished to found a poor workers' community for them. But how could the disabled be mobilised? Impossible! Our aim is mobilisation, not merely earning money or philanthropically distributing jobs to the poor (AP-2005-01).

As Chungsung said, the activist's proposal for a poor workers' community of the disabled was declined because most other activists at the Norae Sharing Home viewed the disabled as 'the unorganisable poor'. From such activists' viewpoint, the working-age recipients, derogatorily perceived as 'the undeserving poor' by the state, represented the most easily 'organisable poor' for workers' cooperatives. For this reason, anti-poverty activists began to form and operate SSP Centres, as the comments below illustrate:

> …forming workers' cooperatives…although not exactly a communist society, cooperative work was what we dreamt of. Communal ownership, communal property…I came here to accomplish such a revolutionary mission (AP-2008-11).

> Offering a job to individual recipients was not at all our mission.

SSP Centre was in the line of workers' cooperative movements. Workers' cooperative is an alternative model against wage labour. I thought it was a brilliant idea for SSP Centres to actualise this model (AP-2005-16).

For this reason, SSP Centres tried to disseminate the idea for workers' cooperatives to SSP recipients at every opportunity. When Centres held induction courses or workshops for recipients, they would include introductory sessions on workers' cooperatives nearly every time. Table 8-2 shows part of a workshop schedule from the Younggwang SSP Centre, which reveals the Centre's endeavours to propagate the cooperatives' ideas. Most of the workshops focused on teaching on workers' cooperatives (e.g. weeks 2 and 5) or the communication skills needed for cooperative work (e.g. weeks 3, 4, 6, and 7).

**Table 8-2 Younggwang SSP Centre Workshop Schedule**

| Month | Week | Contents | Coordinator |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | Understanding SSP | Junior staff |
| | 2 | Understanding Workers' Cooperatives | Director |
| | 3 | Human Relationship Workshop - 1 (communication training) | External teacher |
| | 4 | Group Activity Workshop -1 (making common goals) | External teacher |
| 3 | 5 | Cases: Workers' Cooperatives | Director |
| | 6 | Human Relationship Workshop -2 (dealing relationship, mind control) | Senior staff |
| | 7 | Group Activity Workshop -2 (cooperation skills, the role of community leaders) | Senior staff |
| | 8 | Excursion (Climbing Mt. Bukhan) | - |

Source: Younggwang SSP Centre, informal material (2008).

The Junim SSP Centre would also educate recipients on workers' cooperatives, making it their internal plan to provide basic lessons in workers' cooperatives for every recipient. The lesson titled 'Steps to Live Together' involved the introduction of: 1) the economic implications of workers' cooperatives; 2) the seven co-operative principles of International Co-operative Alliance; and 3) the typical matters that demand special attention when setting up workers' cooperatives (Junim SSP Centre 2000).

Workers' cooperatives represented not only the hegemonic goal of individual

Centres. When the KASSPC officially launched in 2000, it manifested its motto as 'sharing, production, and cooperation' and declared "SSP Centres will try to open the new world where human dignity and values are prioritised" (KASSPC 2010). The KASSPC even scouted and hired Sungsu Lee, a senior researcher of the Korean Institute of Workers' Cooperative (KIWC) as director of the KASSPC's Information Centre to concretise this objective. As a KASSPC Information Centre staff said, the core role of the KASSPC Information Centre was "to update theories and international trends of workers' cooperatives for member SSP Centres" (AP-2005-16). The Information Centre held 'Workers' Cooperative Seminars' for SSP Centre staff, and formed a 'Workers' Cooperative Study Group' in 2001 together with the KIWC's researchers. Further, the Information Centre shared the same office as the KIWC until the Information Centre closed in 2006. Sharing an office represents the ideological link between SSP Centres and workers' cooperatives. In this way, workers' cooperatives remained the indisputable mission of SSP Centres. However, as the next section illustrates, their initial aim did not last long due to internal limitations and external state pressures.

## 8.3 Marketisation of SSP Work Projects

### 8.31 Internal Failure of Workers' Cooperatives

Although SSP Centres strived to deliver the idea for workers' cooperatives to recipients, it had internal limitations in actualising the ideals because they did not suit the reality of the recipients.

The Illusion of the Organisable Poor: First, many SSP recipients failed to meet the requirements of 'the organisable poor,' who could fully devote themselves to work activities. General criticism has held that workfare recipients do not necessarily neatly fit into the categories of those 'who can work' or those 'ready to work' (Dean 2003; Dean, MacNeill, and Melrose 2007; Edin and Lein 1997). Not a few workfare recipients undergone difficulties and suffer trauma due to poor health, disability, additions to or disruptions in family relationships. Thus they often find it hard to work immediately. SSP recipients shared similar situations as other countries' workfare recipients. As a staff member of the KASSPC commented, "Low skill, low education, old age, chronic illness, and female are the five typical characters of SSP

recipients" (AP-2005-15).

Due to the stigma surrounding workfare, relatively younger and healthier people showed a reluctance to participate in work projects. Although activists regarded SSP Centres as "the starting point" to construct a new economic system (AP-2005-03), poor people tended to view Centres as the last place to go "when life totally conks out" (WR-2008-12). To borrow expressions used by recipients, poor people "knocked on the doors of SSP Centres, daring shame" (WR-2008-11) only when they "got down to bedrock" (WR-2005-01; WR-2008-12) and "had no straw to grasp at" (WR-2008-13). Although falling below poverty line, many working-age people preferred not to involve themselves in the stigmatised workfare projects and chose to go back to the secondary market instead. Local government officials explained it as follows:

> Young people normally give up application for benefits when they hear of the work obligation. Working as nannies or janitors might be better than SSP Centres in terms of self-respect. People who decide to work at SSP Centres are women with children or with illnesses. For the men, they are mostly old aged, who cannot even find any work at the market (GO-2008-03).

> Quite a lot of young people return home if I say you need to work at SSP Centres. In the case of young men, mandatory work hurts their pride. They say they would rather die than suffer such disgrace (GO-2008-06).

For this reason, as shown in Table 8-3, although open to poor people aged 18-64, young people below the age of 30 accounted for only 3.7% of recipients, whereas 69.6% were over 40 years, and even 6.1 % recipients were over 61 (comprising the groups for whom it is actually the hardest to find even the poorest jobs).

**Table 8-3 Preponderance of Elderly SSP Recipients**

| Age | Below 20 | 21–30 | 31–40 | 41–50 | 51–60 | Over 61 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recipient (%) | 0.1 | 3.6 | 26.7 | 38.4 | 25.1 | 6.1 | 100% |

Source: KIHASA (2005).

Second, women made up 60-70 % of SSP work activities (KIHASA 2005). As Table 8-4 shows, for some Centres, females constituted 90% of SSP work participants (SGFR 2001). The issues surrounding women involved the fact that they

could not concentrate only on 'work', but must also deal with other 'life' issues like housework, rearing children and/or other or care-giving for family members. Furthermore, according to a survey by Namsik Kang and her colleagues, 61.8% of female recipients had divorced, separated from or lost their partners, and 83.2% of them had children under 18 (2002). This meant that most female recipients had to take on the entire responsibility for their families. For this reason, labour itself could not be their priority, let alone founding a workers' cooperative. For this reason, people in the SSP field often said that "*jaehon* (re-marriage) is the fast track to *jahwal* (self-sufficiency) of recipients".

**Table 8-4 Feminisation of SSP Work Participants**

| SSP Centre | SSP Recipients (person) | | Female Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | |
| Gwanak SSP Centre | 31 | 33 | 52 |
| Mapo SSP Centre | 33 | 80 | 71 |
| Guro Life SSP Centre | 4 | 38 | 90 |
| Nowon SSP Centre | 28 | 45 | 62 |
| Sungdong SSP Centre | 12 | 14 | 54 |
| Total | 108 | 210 | 66 |

Source: SGFR (2001 p. 15).

Third, even if officially defined as 'able-bodied', many SSP recipients had physical or mental illnesses, which made them virtually unable to work. Many female recipients typically suffered from depression owing to divorce, separation or bereavement, and male recipients commonly had an addiction to alcohol. The remarks below reveal a serious side of recipients' health problems:

> Three teachers (recipients) died while I was working at an SSP Centre. Three people in the last three years[235]. Why? Illness…. It made my heart ache. They should not have worked here. I don't want to say that work directly drove them to pass away. But the SSP is not immune from the responsibility for their deaths (AP-2005-15).

> Whenever raining, some recipients drink, kick up a riot and scuffle at the Centre office. They drink all day long and stay being absent. Why the hell are they behaving like this? I came to know that many of them suffer manic-depressive psychosis and alcohol addiction, which need regular medical treatment (FN-06.01.2005-Enchong).

Although these may represent extreme cases, they certainly reflect the general health conditions of SSP recipients. According to policy monitoring of the KIHASA, in 2006, 25.3% of SSP recipients indeed suffered from chronic diseases (KIHASA 2006b p. 101). Of course, the work capacity of SSP recipients could be basically better than unconditional recipients. Therefore, state officials, who had mainly dealt with the elderly, the disabled or children as main welfare recipients under the old social assistance, the LP, tended to view new SSP recipients as "comparatively wholesome persons, who have quite different images from feeble and needy clients" (GO-2008-08). However, anti-poverty activists, who wanted to discover potential protesters from SSP recipients, found the conditions of SSP recipients "shocking" (AP-2005-16):

> When meeting recipients for the first time…well… it was shocking. Not fit, alcoholics and mostly women…. Let alone workers' cooperatives, working itself looked daunting to them. They qualitatively differed from the young people we had met previously in poor workers' communities. My first hunch was that our ideal for SSP Centres would be really hard to make come true (AP-2005-16).

Unrealistic Principles of Workers' Cooperatives: Even for SSP recipients virtually able to work, workers' cooperatives did not exactly meet what they could or want to do. The idea for workers' cooperative was not an autogenous idea that grew from the minds of Korean recipients but as an ideology that SSP Centres imported from Western societies and intended to pass on to recipients. Thus, the gap between poor people's lives and the Western theory was inevitable. As a rule, many discussions and agreements among founding members signify a prerequisite to the foundation of workers' cooperatives. For this reason, founding members of workers' cooperatives need to be "voluntary associations" of like-minded people (ICA 2007). On the other hand, SSP recipients had not voluntarily gathered. As public welfare beneficiaries, they merely happened to assemble at the same SSP Centres where the state allocated them. Notwithstanding the obvious difference between a voluntary association and compulsory welfare, SSP Centres wanted recipients to found workers' cooperatives together with other recipients. Hence, perpetual friction could not but occur among fellow recipients, and the recipient groups frequently dissolved before they actually

embarked as actual workers' cooperatives. Myeongsu, one of the recipients, used to work for establishing a cleaning workers' cooperative, but returned to SSP Centres due to disharmony with other recipient members.

> The Centre grouped five people at first, preparing a cleaning cooperative. But one person simply disappeared. I don't know why. Maybe he found a job elsewhere? The other two kept brawling with each other. Well, I don't think they were faulty. Even blood brothers would have easily broken up if they had to work together (WR-2005-05).

Recipients found not only cooperative work but also other cooperative principles such as collaborative investment or equal distribution difficult to follow. SSP Centre staff would try to collect some of the recipients' money; their rationale being that cooperative members should invest seed money cooperatively. However, the idea of sacrificing their material interests for the sake of a future noble cause failed to appeal to poor people who had struggled for daily survival. To them, an immediate livelihood represented a more urgent concern than building an alternative economy. The following recollection of Anglican Priest Hongil Kim, the director of Sangye SSP Centre, described how uncomfortable poor people were with the concept of worker cooperatives:

> I taught poor people the principles of workers' cooperatives and introduced Spain Mondragon Cooperatives as a role model. I kept talking about the theories that we had to keep in mind to organise such a successful workers' cooperative. But people played it cool. They seemed to have no interest in cooperatives. They appeared to feel over-burdened (Shin and Kim 2002 p. 15).

Consequently, owing to the poor conditions of recipients and the unrealistic ideals of workers' cooperatives, few SSP Centres succeeded in establishing workers' cooperatives. We have no official aggregate of the number of actual workers' cooperatives, because workers' cooperatives do not fall under the official objective of the SSP. We generally acknowledge that around 10 SSP work projects—such as 'Mothers' Hands' (care-giving project) of the Youngdengpo SSP Centre, 'Mother-Made Meals' (lunch-box project) of the Gwanak SSP Centre, 'Sharing Meals' (lunch-box project) of the Nowon SSP Centre, or 'Com-win' (computer recycling project) of the Kyeonggi SSP Centre—developed into decent workers' cooperatives.

Considering the fact that 242 SSP Centres have operated more than 2,500 SSP work projects per year, this small number of successful cases shows the difficulty of actually establishing workers' cooperatives.

Distance between Ideology and Reality: In fact, one could have predicted the meagre results given the unrealistic ideals of anti-poverty activists. As Scott states, progressive activists tend to demand impractical resistance from the subordinate people, "assuming that the key task for any subordinate class is to create counter-hegemony that ultimately will be capable of transforming the society" (1985 p.346). On the other hand, to poor people, pragmatic issues such as food and shelter rank higher than an abstract concept such as the transformation of society. Nonetheless, during the early stages of SSP Centres, activists did not question the practicability of workers' cooperatives, at least outwardly. Workers' cooperatives represented the hegemonic discourse that activists had taken for granted. As senior staff members of the Gwangye and Sungdo SSP Centres reported, "there were no doubts about the superiority of workers' cooperatives" (AP-2008-07) and "it used to be the only way of thinking that we (activists) had learnt" (AP-2008-11). Therefore, rather than being introspective on their own unrealistic ideology, Staff used to find fault with recipients. They regarded the uncooperative attitudes of SSP recipients as "unenlightened" (AP-2005-03) and "short-sighted" (AP-2008-14).

Finding fault in the poor has a long history in anti-poverty movements even before the SSP partnership. Drawing on the concepts of 'class in itself' and 'class for itself', political scholar Wonsang Han explained the difference between progressive intellectuals and *minjung* during the military regime. He stated:

> *Minjung* is basically a 'class in itself' who do not yet recognise their historical mission. Meanwhile, the role of intellectuals is to become a vanguard that wakes up *minjung* to become 'a class for itself' and guide them toward their real mission of revolution(Han 1978 p. 228).

Along this line of thought, anti-poverty activists would also suggest 'conscientisation' and 'enlightenment' of poor people. At an assemblage of anti-poverty organisations in 1992, Jongryeol Park, a leading activist of the CACO, proclaimed, "*minjung* will never voluntarily become member-workers of cooperatives. They must be cultivated by activists as if fertile soil needs to be

cultivated by farmers" (Park 1992). This way of thinking has continued at SSP Centres. A comment by an SSP Centre staff member shows the genealogical tree of the 'class in itself' and 'class for itself' division:

> We (SSP Centre staff) need to lend recipients our heads. Recipients are so accustomed to capitalism and don't feel capitalism is actually appropriating them. Although a hungry eagle is flying above their head ready to attack them, they don't recognise it. They are blind for their immediate interests. They need our guide (AP-2008-14).

In some aspects, the patronising attitude of SSP Centre staff resembles what Foucault termed 'subjectivation'. *Subjectivation* originally referred to a technique of dominant power that constructs an individual subject into certain forms (Foucault 1982 p. 212). However, like the dominant power, anti-poverty organisations also intended to guide and correct poor people into certain forms according to their ideology. They considered the poor as potentially 'active historical leaders', who could save and revolutionise society. At a deeper level, however, activists believed that poor people must be first cultivated (under their guidance) to become such historical leaders (Park 1992). Only a few activists recognised the distance between their ideology and poor people's reality. Sungoh Kim, a leading activist of the ASH, was one of them. In 1999, he circulated some of his writing entitled 'Honest advice on the SSP' to fellow activists, beginning:

> I feel like I am in the middle of a long and gloomy tunnel. There is an exit ahead, but I am still in darkness… Dilemmas between social movements vs. social policy ideal vs. reality…tones of confusion entice me to step backwards. We have immersed ourselves in SSP Centres and moved on….But now is the time to reflect. Are SSP Centres really a fight that we could win? We need to speak more candidly about workers' cooperatives (Kim, Sungoh 1999 p. 1).

After the cautious opening, he stated that the theory of workers' cooperatives did not seem to meet the reality of the Korean poor, continuing:

> We used to have a sweet dream of workers' cooperatives, but cooperatives were no candy fluff in reality. They require long-term preparation, deep trust, and high techniques…. We have persisted in workers' cooperatives beyond our capacity… doggedly compelled "the spirit of community" to recipients. We may sleep in one bed

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with the poor people, but have a different dream… We ought to be concerned more about the reality of poor people (p. 2).

His confession failed to gain overt support at that time. The self-criticisms may have represented what many activists might have already conceived in minds, but it was hard to acknowledge their failure publicly since such acknowledgment could harm any remaining pride of the activists. However, many SSP Centre staff could not but gradually admit the failure of workers' cooperatives and openly talked about the impossibility of holding on to the ideas as time went by. No public statements went out from the KASSPC or individual SSP Centres that they would give up workers' cooperatives as their primary goal. We can see, however, that SSP Centres do not prioritise workers' cooperatives any more. The comments of SSP Centre staff below represent just some of the examples that show their changed attitude:

> Straightforwardly speaking, we no longer see workers' cooperatives as possible. It is an overbearing demeanour of anti-poverty movements, a stuck-up attitude of SSP Centres. Do we have to override survival issues of recipients for the value of workers' cooperatives? It is a haughty attitude (AP-2008-11).

> I will never forget the criticism. An activist said that our goal can be another sort of suppression over poor people. He told me we had forced poor people to follow our ideas. It hit me on the head. I didn't used to see that we could be oppressing recipients. I used to think workers' cooperatives were for the poor, but he said workers' cooperatives are suitable for skilful and healthy workers. I now understand why he said that (AP-2008-08).

*8.32 State Pressure to Make Profitable Work Projects*

State Pressures to Make Profits: While the workers' cooperative gradually lost its hegemonic power among SSP Centres, the state's policy goal became strengthened. As discussed in Chapter 3, the SSP Centres had a twofold official function: 1) to found SSP public work projects and supervise SSP recipients, and 2) to develop SSP public work projects into independent co-businesses called 'Self-Sufficiency Communities'. The term *Self-Sufficiency Community* (*jahwal gondongche*) was a compound noun. *Self-sufficiency* (*jahwal*) stemmed from a previous state welfare programme, 'Self-Sufficiency Protection,' and the word *community* (*gondongche*) came from the community organising practices of anti-poverty organisations. Thus,

the title Self-Sufficiency Community conveyed that the SSP articulated the discourses of the state *and* anti-poverty movements. However, strictly speaking, Self-Sufficiency Community had nothing to do with the original community organising activities. The operational definition of Self-Sufficiency Community was "an independent SSP work project which can make profits to the extent that it can pay monthly income (more than 5,000,000 KRW per person) to recipients without depending on welfare benefits"(MOHW 2009 p. 150). As a senior staff member of the KISSPA remarked, "'community' in Self-Sufficiency Community is not ideological and political term any longer. It has deteriorated into a mere administrative word" (AP-2008-15).

Further, the state began to pressure SSP Centres to create independent Self-Sufficiency Communities. In July 2004, the Korean Board of Audit and Inspection (KBAI) ordered the MOHW to cancel contracts with SSP Centres that had failed to construct any Self-Sufficiency Communities in the previous three years, and accordingly, 10 SSP Centres received warnings (KBAI 2004 p. 37-38). Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter 6, the MOHW began to subsidise SSP Centres differently according to performance results after the inspection by the KBAI, and the Self-Sufficiency Communities became an important yardstick to determine the amount of state funding. The state measures pressured SSP Centres to initiate as many Self-Sufficiency Communities as possible. This implied SSP Centres ought to strive to found commercially 'profitable' work projects that would pay the wages of recipients.

Competition with Private Businesses: The state's command to create lucrative work projects backed SSP Centres into a corner. They faced a dilemma. First, it became unavoidable for SSP Centres to compete with the private sector to make a profit. Take the Junim SSP Centre as an example. This Centre ran five SSP work projects to realise the profits shown in Table 8-5: '*Samyeong*' offered care for elderly patients; 'Barbecue house' ran a Korean restaurant; '*Ilgun*' (workplace) meant a construction project; '*Hana*' (one) cleaned barbecue grills; and 'Flower Garden' ran a flower shop. Because such businesses already existed in the market, they needed to contend with existing stores and firms for limited customers. *Ilgun,* for example, needed to compete with private interior and construction companies; Barbecue house rivalled

other restaurants; and Flower Garden contended with other local flower shops to attract more customers.

**Table 8-5 Market-targeting Work Projects of the Junim SSP Centres**

| Project Title | Project Type | Target Customer | Profit (KRW) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Samyeong | care-giving | private market | 3,347,808 |
| Barbecue House | cooking | private market | *-110,067* |
| Hana | cleaning | private market | - |
| Ilgun | refurbishment | private market | *-9,755,257* |
| Flower Garden | flower shop | private market | 6,063,525 |

Source: Junim SSP Centre, informal material (2008a p. 1)

However, competition with private businesses proved no easier than establishing workers' cooperatives because SSP recipients did not have technological competitiveness. According to a KIHASA national survey in 2005, 67.1% of SSP recipients did not have any vocational skills, and 62.35% of recipients had graduated only from lower secondary school. Further, only 38.35% received primary school education (KIHASA 2006b p. 102). Most of the recipients whom I interviewed had some second-market job experience, such as nannies, night car drivers, housemaids, restaurant assistants or 24-hour supermarket clerks before coming to SSP Centres. Only one exceptional case had qualified skills: Namhee Oh used to be a nurse (WR-2008-08).

Of course, according to the official policy plan, SSP recipients needed to learn new skills such as construction, cooking, or cleaning, while working at SSP work projects. But, with just short-term training, it proved difficult to overtake experienced veterans who had been performing the same work in the private market for a long time. For this reason, as for the businesses where quality of skills was essential, SSP work projects failed many times. The aforementioned work projects of the Junim SSP Centres also confronted the same difficulties as staff members in charge of Barbeque House and *Ilgun* reported:

> Most SSP work projects are far from contesting with other companies. How could we (Barbeque House) captivate customers and get the restaurants out of the way? Even restaurants with professional chefs can go belly up (AP-2008-06).

> There are loads of builders skilled in construction work out there.

They normally have more than 10 years' experience. No matter how hard recipients work to learn painting and carpentry, it is difficult to catch up with them within just a couple of years. If recipients could do so, they wouldn't have come to SSP Centres, would they? (FN-28.11.2008-construction staff).

For this reason, SSP work projects would regularly fail, even before Centres had attempted to transform them into workers' cooperatives. Indeed, both 'Morning Bee' and 'Barbecue House' suffered deficit operations (see Table 8-5) and were forced to close within a year of their conception in December 2006.

Competition for Contracts with the Public Sector: To avoid having to compete in an overcrowded market place, some Centres looked to secure contracts with the public sector. Junim SSP Centre, for example, organised four separate work projects targeting the public sector (see Table 8-6). Unlike the *Samyeong* care-giving project, 'Gwanak Care-giving Support Centre' was to provide free care-giving services for low-income patients in association with the Junim district government. Similarly, instead of selling food, 'Welfare Institution Assistant Service' cooked free meals for shelters, nursing homes and orphanages. A cleaning project, 'Clean Korea', targeted public schools, parks and transport services as their main consumers, while '*Ilgun* Interior' focused on refurbishing low-income family houses on behalf of the government.

**Table 8-6 Public-sector Targeting SSP Work Projects of the Junim SSP Centre**

| Project Name | Project Type | Target Customer | Profit (KRW) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gwanak Caregiving Support Centre | care-giving | public sector | 0 |
| Welfare Institution Assistant Service | cooking | public sector | 0 |
| *Clean Korea* | cleaning | public sector | 14,558,160 |
| *Ilgun Interior* | refurbishment | public sector | 16,479,855 |

Source: Junim SSP Centre, informal material (2008a p. 1)

These projects benefited both public organisations and SSP Centres. In the case of the former, offering contracts to SSP Centres was a reasonable move as their services were usually cheaper than those of normal companies; being seen to help poor recipients could also improve their public image. For SSP Centres, meanwhile, public organisations were stable customers. Since public offices must implement

yearly social service programmes, SSP projects could submit tenders to deliver these on commission from the public authorities. For example, refurbishment projects could be engaged in social housing programmes; Care-giving projects could join hands with public health care programmes. Above all, these public sector-oriented work projects "at least helped distinguish SSP Centres from private businesses" (AP-2005-01), as one SSP Centre staff member commented.

For this reason, the KASSPC claimed "SSP work projects contribute to offering 'socially beneficial services' and this should be evaluated as the most essential achievement of SSP Centres" (KASSPC Information Centre 2006a p.27). Professor Sangjin Hahn, the director of Ulsan SSP Centre, wrote in a British academic journal that Korean SSP work projects could offer an alternative model to the market-oriented workfare of Western countries (Hahn and McCabe 2006; McCabe and Hahn 2006). Social policy scholar Boram Hwang has also claimed that public sector-targeting SSP work projects could be interpreted as what Ulrich Beck defined as 'civil labour' (1999) in the sense that they are separate from the private market and pay attention to the public good (2007 p. 27-28).

However, their arguments that see public sector-targeting SSP work projects as free from market principles are ideal and naive. In reality, SSP work projects had to face a certain degree of competition even when trading with the public sector. Although the state had encouraged public offices to purchase SSP Centres' products and services, there was no legal obligation to do so. If other for-profit enterprises proposed better deals, public organisations could easily terminate their contracts with SSP Centres. Thus, SSP Centres needed to prepare for competition with the for-profits. Otherwise, they could end up "tasting betrayal" as an SSP Centre staff said (AP-2008-01).

Pajong SSP Centre exemplified this predicament. After pondering business opportunities, the staff decided to start a business cleaning the seats on underground trains, which had not be done for many years. They suggested this idea to the Seoul Public Transport Corporation (SPTC), who, impressed with proposal, awarded them a one-year contract. After a year, the passenger responses to the clean seats were highly satisfactory, and the Pajong Centre was confident that the SPTC would renew their contract. Having witnessed the project's success, however, the SPTC drew up a regular budget for the cleaning and announced a public invitation for bids. Since

public transport cleaning is a massive industry with huge potential profits, many cleaning companies applied for the contract. Some corporations even lobbied high-ranking officials in the hope of securing the tender. Consequently, Pajong Centre lost the competition, which was "bitter experience" (AP-2005-03).

The Norae SSP Centre also had a similar experience. Green Environment, its cleaning project, carried out large-scale tunnel cleaning work at Mt. Namsan under a one-year contract with the Seoul Metropolitan City Hall. After a year, the Norae SSP Centre expected to have its contract renewed, but it found that the cleaning work was snatched by another private company. Since Green Environment was the most promising project at the Norae SSP Centre, the Centre underwent difficult times following this loss. The Norae SSP Centre director recalled this experience:

> We made a mistake. We did not have any know-how at that time. We should have had an intimate relationship with the executives to refresh the contract. They expected us to hand in some bribe...or we should have entertained (*jeopdae*) the people of high rank. We didn't know the customs of the market (AP-2005-01).

In this way, as long as SSP Centres had to seek a profit, they could not escape fierce competition and adjusting to market customs such as treat customers (*jeodae*). As a staff member in charge of a cleaning project illustrated, SSP Centres had to "market themselves" (AP-2008-05) even in the public sector:

> On special days like [Korean] Thanksgiving Day, we go to the City Hall to greet and give present to officials. It is an opportunity to advertise *Tidy* (a cleaning project) and ask them to choose our service when they need cleaners. Even an SSP Centre needs to think about P.R.! (AP-2008-05).

Internal Competition among SSP Centres: While competition with private businesses was clearly undesirable, a more worrying factor was that the pressure for profitability was destroying solidarity among SSP Centers. Although an administrative district normally had an SSP Centre, many districts had more than one SSP Centre. Although not belonging to the same jurisdiction, many SSP Centres were practically contiguous with each other. The problem arose that most Centres ran similar work projects. Particularly, in 2002, the MOHW introduced care-giving, refurbishment, cleaning, waste recycling, and food recycling projects as 'five standard project

models', and encouraged Centres to replicate these so that they could be controlled more easily (MOHW 2002). Subsequently, the five types of work projects became predominant in the SSP field. According to 2006 KASSPC's statistics, 95% of SSP Centres ran care-giving projects, and 78% of SSP Centres organised refurbishment projects. As Table 8-7 displays, the five standard projects accounted for 58% of total work projects, and 63.27 % of recipients belonged to the five projects (KASSPC Information Centre 2006b). In addition to the five standard projects, some projects like preparing lunch-boxes and sewing or car-washing projects gained popularity because they could reach public schools and offices as their stable consumers. Including these popular projects, 76.2% of projects belonged to 12 typical businesses (Kang, Kim, and Baek 2002 p. 11).

**Table 8-7 Standardisation of SSP Work Projects (%)**

|  | SSP Centre | Work Project | SSP Recipient |
|---|---|---|---|
| Care-giving project | 95% | 18.73% | 25.13% |
| Refurbishment project | 78% | 17.13% | 15.90% |
| Cleaning project | 52% | 12.03% | 11.38% |
| Recycling project | 45% | 9.88% | 10.45% |
| Food recycling project | 4% | 0.72% | 0.42% |
| Total | - | 58.49% | 63.27% |

Source: KASSPC Information Centre (2006b).

Though practical in terms of governance, these uniform project models gave rise to tensions between neighboring SSP Centres. For example, an SSP Centre in Enchong district (pseudonym) organised a computer-recycling project in 2005 and had mainly collected and recycled second-hand computers within the district. However, one day, a nearby company located in Sunjong district (pseudonym) phoned them to collect their used computers without cost. Since it offered a great opportunity to obtain a number of computers at once, the SSP Centre welcomed the offer and proceeded to pick them up. However, SSP Centres in Sunjong district disliked this move; since they also had a waste-recycling project, they thought the computers at Sunjong should have gone to them. In a casual conversation, a staff member of the Enchong SSP Centre grumbled over this experience.

Did we wheedle the company into giving me the computers? The

company phoned our Centre, and our recycling project didn't have any reason to decline the offer. Wouldn't it have been worse if we had declined the offer? (FN-06.01.2005-Enchong)

As long as they conducted similar projects, such tensions between SSP Centres were inevitable. The Norae SSP Centre experienced a similar quandary.. In 2004, the Norea SSP Centre formed a free lunch-box project called 'Sharing Food,' and had stably supplied meals to public offices and schools. In the meantime, the Southern Norae SSP Centre (pseudonym) was operating a poorly performing private restaurant project. Having witnessed the successful Sharing Food, the Southern Norae SSP Centre decided to transition the restaurant business to a lunch-box project. As a matter of course, the Norae SSP Centre did not sincerely welcome this transition. As a Norae SSP Centre staff member confessed, it meant that they "should covertly compete with each other to secure existing costumers or ought to share some parts of the limited pie" with the Southern Norae SSP Centres (AP-2005-02).

In this manner, whereas the dreams of workers' cooperatives gradually grew fainter, SSP Centres faced competition with private businesses and other SSP Centres to make more profits. SSP Centres had originally valued solidarity and aimed to form an alternative economy, but their actual projects became "shamefully akin to private businesses" and drew this self-mockery from the director of an SSP Centre (AP-2005-01):

I couldn't tell when this tragedy started, but looking back upon the past, the spirit of community has disappeared unawares. I find myself doing shamefully similar private business in the capitalist market. We are claiming to stand for cooperative production, yet actually cooperation has become impossible even among SSP Centres (AP-2005-01).

SSP Centre Staff as Pseudo-boss: The state pressure for maketisation also caused a deterioration of staff–recipient relationship. To upgrade normal work projects into profitable Self-Sufficiency Communities, staff had to prompt recipients to maximise their labour. Borrowing a comment from a staff member, they had to act "like a boss wearing a mask of activist" (AP-2008-08):

If we want to make a profit, further work is necessary. Even by working from 9 to 6, we could not turn out a profit. Other private

corporations would be similar. I found myself forcing recipients to extend their labouring hours like a boss of private companies (AP-2008-08).

A staff member in charge of the Norae SSP Centre lunch-box project also explained how he demanded recipients to work more:

> I occasionally meet lucrative orders. Several days ago, for example, a company ordered 120 lunch boxes, and asked us to deliver the meals by 11 a.m. the next morning. Here is a problem. The officially required work time of recipients is from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. If they work 8 hours a day, they satisfy their obligation. They don't need to work more. But sometimes I demand them to work extra hours for profits (AP-2005-02).

As they said, staff had to promote recipients to intensify their labour, and it made them "feel self-alienated from their previous value of social activism" (AP-2008-08). Worse, it bred trouble between staff and recipients. In fact, from the angle of recipients, there were not very many motives to work more hours. A work project was basically not a 'real job', but part of the 'welfare programme'. Recipients received money in terms of benefits, and the daily SSP benefits were pre-determined under SSP rules (e.g. 26,000-30,000 KRW per hour in 2009) (MOHW 2009 p. 73). Thus, no matter how much profit an SSP work project produced, the amount of benefits recipients finally gain remained the same. In this sense, as a recipient rightly said, "Making profits is just SSP Centres' concerns, not (recipients') interests" (WR-2008-09). For this reason, many recipients harboured discontent about staff requests to work more hours.

> Regardless of how much extra time you work, our pay is equal. It's annoying. I am not lazy. I am willing to work, but for reasonable treatment (WR-2008-12).

> It is awkward. SSP work project is neither welfare nor market. At private firms, people work for promotions or incentives. Here are no ranks and income is equal. But SSP Centre asks us to act like workers. If they really want to borrow the market logic, they should first introduce promotion and bonus. Otherwise, it is ironic (FN-05.08.2008-Enchong).

SSP recipients deemed the SSP Centres' demand for improving 'performance'

while still providing 'equal' wages for every recipient unreasonable. As the aforementioned recipient acutely pointed out, *welfare* and *market* do not make a compatible combination because they are based on opposing values. Whereas welfare is traditionally assumed to distribute resources equally based on people's needs, the market allocates resources differentially according to people's performance. Nonetheless, workfare policies have sought to combine the incompatible market logic and welfare programmes by offering benefits according to individual work performance (Peck and Theodore 2002).

The MOHW, aware of this contradiction, thus devised the 'Self-Sufficiency Preparation Fund' (SSP Fund) to improve participants' performances (MOHW 2009 pp.141-143). If a work project made a profit, it was supposed to save the money for the recipients working on the project. The reserved money was called the SSP Fund. Table 8-8 shows the SSP Fund for Flower Garden of the Junim SSP Centre in 2008.

**Table 8-8 Flower Garden SSP Fund (KRW)**

| Month / Recipient | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Song | 78,300 | 66,700 | 72,500 | 75,400 | 72,500 | 69,600 | 78,300 | 72,500 | 72,500 | 78,300 | 736,600 |
| Lee | 78,300 | 66,700 | 72,500 | 75,400 | 72,500 | 69,600 | 78,300 | 72,500 | 72,500 | 78,300 | 736,600 |
| Park | 78,300 (leave) | | | | | | | | | | 78,300 |
| Chang | 78,300 | 66,700 | 72,500 | 75,400 | -974,400 (leave) | | | | | | -681,500 |
| Lim | | 52,200 (enter) | 72,500 | 75,400 | 72,500 | 69,600 | 78,300 | 72,500 | 72,500 | 78,300 | 643,800 |
| Yoon | | | 55,100 (enter) | 75,400 | 72,500 | 69,600 | 78,300 | 72,500 | 72,500 | 78,300 | 574,200 |
| Kim | | | | | | | | | | 75,400 (enter) | 75,400 |
| Total | 313,200 | 252,300 | 345,100 | 377,000 | -684,400 | 278,400 | 313,200 | 290,000 | 290,000 | 388,600 | 2,163,400 |

Source: Junim SSP Centre, informal material (2008b).

As the table shows, Flower Garden earned 2,163,400 KRW during 2008. The money was initially divided into the number of Flower Garden participants and reserved for each individual as their SSP Fund. However, the tricky point was that the Fund could not be immediately distributed to recipients. It could be first offered as 'seed money' when recipients succeed in starting up their own co-business (Self-Sufficiency Community). For instance, the recipients at Flower Garden could receive the money when they finally open an independent flower shop. Therefore, nobody

knew when they would actually receive the money. Second, the fund could be offered as a 'retirement payment' when an individual recipient leave the work project. However, in this case, only the recipients who had worked at the project for more than one year were entitled to the SSP Fund. According to Table 8-8, Park and Chang left the Flower Garden project in January and May 2008, respectively. But only Chang could obtain her SSP Fund (974,400 KRW), while Park could not because her working period was under one year, whereas that of Chang exceeded one year.

The SSP Fund system looked extremely unfair to recipients who could not receive their share. Therefore, the SSP Fund frequently caused trouble between recipients and SSP Centres. The dissension at the Kangrim SSP Centre (pseudonym) shows one such example. In August 2008, a recipient lodged a civil appeal against a Kangrim SSP Centre staff member. She belonged to a private restaurant project that sold pizza. The official reason given for her civil appeal said that staff had forced her to into 'illegal' street-stalling. For purposes of making a profit, the staff had encouraged their recipients to sell tea and waffles at a street stall. The recipients initially accepted the staff's suggestion, but a conflict between the staff member and a recipient occurred later when the recipient decided to quit the project. The recipient requested her SSP Fund money from the staffer. But since she had taken part in the project for less than one year, the staffer refused. The recipient then pestered the staff member day and night by phone to get her share, but the staff member continued to refuse. Thereupon, she submitted a civil appeal to the government, stating that the staff had run the restaurant against the commercial laws. It was actually very normal for restaurants to build street stalls in front of shops to increase sales. However, strictly speaking, street-stalling without state permission was illegal according to the commercial laws. The recipient thus could accuse the staff of illegal sales. This conflict was apparently about street stalling, but at a deeper level, it was a conflict over the SSP Fund.

In this manner, the state pressure for lucrative businesses drove SSP Centres into ambivalent situations of various dimensions. Activists originally aimed to create an alternative economy together with their recipients. However, their initial aspirations evaporated and SSP Centres had to compete with the private sector and other SSP Centres. Also, the pressure changed staff–recipient relationships into a

pseudo employer–employee relationship. As one activist summarised, the SSP Centre staff came to suffer "schizophrenia" (AP-2005-15) between their initial dreams and current reality.

> We are suffering from schizophrenia. We used to dream of revolution, but SSP Centres are closer to workhouses! I condemned senior activists who decided to operate SSP Centres. They certainly cannot avoid blame for the current situation. They shouldn't have decided to walk hand in hand with the state to run SSP Centres. Junior activists now undergo hardships because of their fatal mistakes (AP-2005-15).

Nonetheless, the fact that SSP Centres gave up on creating workers' cooperatives does not mean that they completely lost their spirit of resistance to the capitalist market. As Section 8.4 delineates, they began to work out other ways to recreate alternative discourses and practices to contend with the competition-driven, work-first policy.

## 8.4 Resistance to Marketisation

### 8.41 Defending the Cooperative Spirit among SSP Centres

As discussed in Chapter 8.3, features of the capitalist market—such as limitless competition for maximising profits—gradually permeated SSP work projects, and SSP Centres had to adapt to the new environment. But rather than passively enduring the market competition, they began to creatively appropriate various commercial marketing strategies to survive in the market.

Dividing the Market: Dividing the market through pseudo-cartels was one of the strategies adopted to reduce internal competition. As mentioned in section 8.3, competition among similar SSP work projects run by nearby SSP Centres was inevitable, and it was thus difficult to sustain solidarity among Centres. To protect against this, however, some SSP Centres had begun to form pseudo-cartels, changing the competitive market environment into an oligopolistic market. A *cartel*, an association of similar businesses, prevents competition through price fixing, market sharing or allocation of customers and territories. Similar to the conventional technique of cartel building, SSP Centres embraced economic collusion and divided marketing territories among neighbouring Centres. Gwangye, Junim and Bongsa SSP

Centres (pseudonyms) formed one such case. Since all three had care-giving projects in Gwanak district, they had to vie for customers from the same area. To avoid intra-Centre competition, they divided the district, consisting of 25 villages (*dong*), into three zones (Table 8-9), and only dealt with patients within their respective areas.

**Table 8-9 Market Division in Gwanak District**

| SSP Centre | Zone (pseudonym) | |
|---|---|---|
| Gwangye SSP Centre | Sinsung village 2, 6, 9, 10 /Bongsa village 1,4,8, 9 | 8 villages |
| Bongsa SSP Centre | Bongsa village 2, 3,5, 6, 7, 10, 11/ Hyeonja village | 8 villages |
| Junim SSP Centre | Singsung village 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13 | 9 villages |

Source: Junim SSP Centre, informal material (2008c)

SSP Centres from nearby districts developed similar coalitions to avoid conflicts. The cartel agreements involved a certain degree of sacrifice, as sometimes Centres would have to pass over opportunities to increase sales in favour of other Centres. Nonetheless, many SSP Centres willingly abided by the informal consensus. The marketing boundaries served as a kind of bulwark to keep the tidal swell of competitive culture from breaching SSP Centres. As a senior staff of the Gwangye SSP Centre said, "If work projects only seek after immediate profits, the remaining trust among SSP Centres can easily disappear like a flash"(AP-2008-11).

Merging Markets: While market division helped as a form of defensive cooperation designed to 'minimise internal competition', more active coalitions served to 'maximise external profits'. Merging SSP work projects and working like chains became the foremost strategy here. SSP work projects, usually small-scale businesses, generally involved recipients with little technical and marketing know-how. For this reason, individual projects could scarcely reach a higher competitive position in the market in terms of product quantity, quality or popularity. To make up for the weakness, similar work projects from different Centres began to build up consortiums to jointly compete with private companies.

Eco-Green, a merged company of two recycling projects, exemplified this trend. Originally, it was a recycling project of the Kuri SSP Centre run by a Protestant anti-poverty organisation. When Eco-Green was established in 2002, it boasted only six recipients. Like other SSP work projects, it experienced typical

difficulties in making a profit. Due to insufficient capital, skills and workers, the business was limited to rudimentary recycling work like bottle washing. Through simple recycling, it was hard to make the project financially sustainable, and Eco-Green's sales figures barely exceeded 5,400,000 KRW up until 2006. A nearby recycling project of the Pochun SSP Centre, run by the Pochun Sharing Home, was facing similar hardships. Having shared the common limitations, the two SSP Centres began to consider tackling the problem cooperatively. As activist-run SSP Centres, they had individual experiences of fighting together for anti-poverty movements. Thus, the two work projects merged together smoothly. In November 2006, the two Centres finally combined their projects into one joint venture, and titled it Eco-Green, taking the name from the Kuri SSP Centre project. Through this affiliation, the two recycling projects could expand their business into more profitable recycling areas, such as electronic appliances and plastics. Recycling the former requires a lot of workers to disassemble the machinery, while for plastic recycling, expensive plastic compressors are needed. A small-scale recycling project could not cope with the costs alone, but the two SSP Centres were able to invest capital together for the joint project (Image 8-1, left). They could also mobilise more workers from among recipients to dismantle electronic appliances. Owing to the consortium, Eco-Green successfully developed into a large-scale recycling company. On average, it recycles 50 tonnes of electronic appliances and 100 tonnes of plastic per month; it has 64 workers, and makes sales of around 100,000,000 KRW per month (2009) (Jahwalnet 2009).

Although not entirely amalgamated into one company like Eco-Green, many SSP work projects began to form regular marketing networks through which they could exchange technical know-how and share management costs. Baby Greeting (*Agamazi*) is a national network of childcare projects. To tackle their low competitiveness, five childcare projects in Seoul formed an informal network called Agamazi in 2007. The Agamazi members began by organising joint training workshops for care-giving project participants. When an individual Centre invited childcare trainers, that Centre had to pay all the expenses. But if they organised joint training, they could share the training costs and consequently could afford more frequent training sessions. The Agamazi network also enabled joint advertising. Under the same brand name, Agamazi, they ran a nationwide web portal,

economising on the costs of advertising while intensifying their national brand power. Having seen the efficiency of joint management, childcare projects from other cities also joined the Agamazi network.

This image [**Image 8-1 SSP Work Project Consortiums**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.
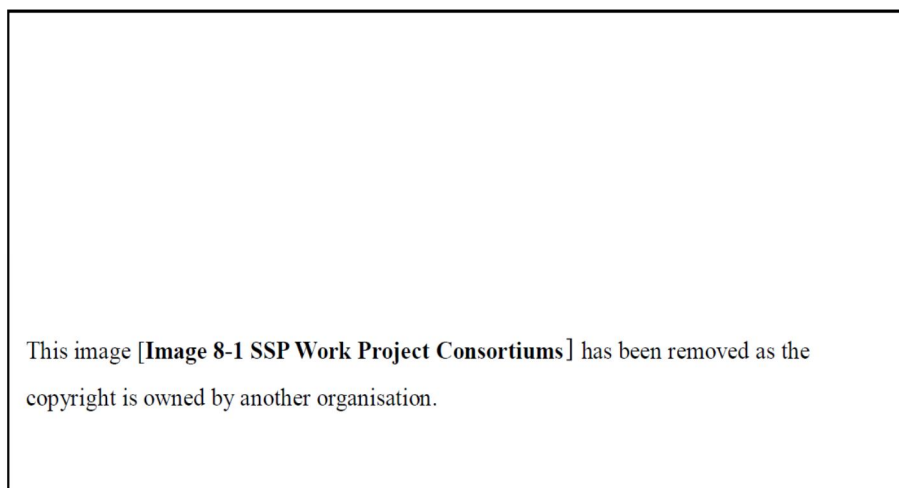
To borrow a notion from microeconomics, such consortiums were intended to realise 'economies of scale'. If a company expands its scale of production, it can gain cost reduction advantages through the bulk buying of materials, having access to a greater range of financial support or spreading the cost of advertising over a greater range. Based on this principle, SSP Centres also attempted to expand their scale of operation by forming consortiums like Eco-Green or Agamazi, and sought to obtain cost advantages through joint investment, production, training and advertising. We have no official data about such consortiums, but the frequency with which they are mentioned (see Table 8-10) suggests that joint management is not an uncommon strategy in the SSP field.

**Table 8-10 Consortiums of SSP Work Projects**

| Project Type | Consortium Title | Member SSP Work Projects |
|---|---|---|
| Recycling | Eco-Green | 2 recycling projects |
| | Bike for Love | 7 bike-rental and repairing projects |
| | Com-win | 2 computer recycling projects |
| | Recycling Social Enterprise | 11 recycling work projects |
| Cleaning | Clean Service, *Chung* | 24 cleaning projects |
| Child Care | *Agamazi* | Association of child care projects |
| Refurbishment | Solidarity of Refurbishment Communities | 21 refurbishment projects |
| Care-giving | Pusan Care-giving Service Centre | 4 care-giving projects in Pusan City |
| | Mother with Healing Hands | Association of Seoul care-giving projects |

Creating the Market: 'Internal trade' represents another strategy used to sustain the cooperative spirit among SSP Centres. SSP work projects produced diverse goods from handmade oil, soaps, and diaries to traditional snacks, as Image 8-2 displays. As discussed in Chapter 8.3, SSP Centres had to sell their services and goods to customers to make a profit. However, despite their sales efforts, they found it hard to draw customers and beat the private companies. The annual average sales of a goods-producing SSP work project in 2009 reached only about 25,000,000 KRW, far less than the annual average income of one normal worker (KASSPC 2009b). With such meagre profits, the agencies found it difficult to develop sustainable Self-Sufficiency Communities.

This image [**Image 8-2 Goods of SSP Work Projects**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

Internal trade offered a self-directed solution to such low competitiveness of the market for SSP Centre products. Since SSP Centres hold workshops, meetings and many other events, they offer frequent chances to buy food, gifts or souvenirs in quantities. For this reason, some SSP Centres began to think about buying the products of other Centres instead of consuming goods from the ordinary market. As one activist explained, the internal trade could serve as "an attempt to create an alternative market, protected from the capitalist market" (AP-2005-15).

The Junim SSP Centre was one of those that put the idea into practice. During

an observation in 2008, I had a chance to accompany a Junim Centre staffer to the Dobong SSP Centre. The purpose of the visit was to order winter uniforms for 26 recipients working for Junim care-giving projects. The Dobong Centre had a sewing work project, which made and mended clothing, and the Junim SSP Centre wanted to assist the sewing work project by purchasing their clothes. Actually, it had no advantage for the Jumin Centre to buy the clothes of the Dobong Centre. The latter was located in Northern Seoul, many miles from the Junim Centre in the south of the city. Also, when it came to quality, the sewing project's products were hardly top-of-the-range. Recipients working on the sewing project were not very skilled at needlework and could only make a few styles of uniforms. The Junim Centre also had to wait a long time for their uniforms as the sewing work project worked more slowly than ordinary shops. Nonetheless, the Junim SSP Centre was willing to have their uniforms made by the sewing project team. Indeed, the fact that the sewing project lacked competitiveness was the very reason why the Junim Centre wanted to buy their products. As the Junim Centre staff explained:

> They couldn't make nicer clothes than the others, so we need to protect them. If we buy their clothes, they don't have to worry about how to sell them to the merciless market (AP-2008-07).

Such intra-Centre trade was ubiquitous. The Junim SSP Centre bought their lunches every day from a lunch-box project of the Gwangye SSP Centre. Many Centres also bought their office furniture from the furniture-making projects of other Centres. According to a survey of the KASSPC, 46% of SSP Centres had purchased the products of other Centres in 2008. On average, individual Centres bought products from others in 2008. On average, individual Centres bought products of others 4.5 times a year, spending 1,000,000 KRW on intra-Centre trade (KASSPC 2009a p. 156).

While the internal trade was mainly conducted at the level of individual Centres, in late 2009 it began being promoted in a more collective way. On December 8, 2009, the KSSPC proposed a so-called Good Consumption Campaign to member Centres, stating: "We should consume what we produce, and protect our own work projects" (KASSPC 2009b p. 2). Citing 'fair trade' as a role model, the KASSPC stated: "In the SSP field, the internal trade can be a good consumption,

which can save poor workers" (KASSPC 2009b p. 2). The KASSPC suggested six action plans for the Good Consumption Campaign: 1) the KASSPC should establish a 'professional distribution team', which has full responsibility for internal trade; 2) the KASSPC should devise an 'SSP trade mark' and put it on all SSP products to distinguish them from normal market products; 3) individual SSP Centres should try to buy SSP products as much as possible; 4) SSP Centres should create 'special committees', which could monitor the quality of SSP products; 5) SSP work projects should try to make use of the raw ingredients that other SSP Centres produce (e.g. farm products, meat) when producing SSP products (e.g. lunch boxes or cakes); and finally 6) SSP Centres should devise various strategies to animate intra-Centre trade, such as forming a barter system, setting up SSP product stores or selling gift vouchers. Real actions followed the Good Consumption Campaign. In January 2010, the KASSPC created an SSP product catalogue for the Chinese New Year, a time, when, according to Korean tradition, people send gifts to relatives, friends or neighbours to whom they wish to express gratitude. The KASSPC utilised the New Year as an opportunity for member Centres to buy SSP products. In December, the KASSPC collected the information of 85 SSP products that could easily serve as gifts, such as tea, jam, rice cakes and cookies, and distributed catalogues to every SSP Centre.

This image [**Image 8-3 SSP Projects' Catalogue Poster**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

To sum up, even if SSP Centres could not establish workers' cooperatives, they did not discard their initial motto of 'sharing, production and cooperation'. They

managed to sustain cooperative production within a given setting by dividing, merging or creating alternative markets. Such strategies are far from the fixed image of anti-capitalist movements. Rather than fundamentally opposing capitalist practices, SSP Centres appropriated the dominant market strategies (e.g. cartels, internal transactions) as a means to survive against the private market. We can view their strategies as a type of resistance rather than conformity to capitalist logic because they aimed to minimise internal competition and maintain cooperation instead increasing individual profits. Nevertheless, such strategies cannot be seen as fundamental challenges to the SSP in the sense that they still prioritised economic activities. It was the 'Mass Humanities Courses' that earnestly defied the 'work-first' principle of the SSP.

*8.42 Searching for a Path from 'Work-first' to 'Life-first' Programme*

Recreating non-economic discourses of self-sufficiency: As we saw in Table 8-1, the aims of SSP Centres actually opposed the state's official goals. Whereas the state wanted to protect the capitalist market by pushing recipients into the labour market, SSP Centres aimed to challenge this by founding a cooperative production system for the poor. It is important to note, however, that both ventures were built on the same foundation. Although seemingly adverse, both capitalism and communalism share economic-determinist worldviews and hold that certain economic systems can consummate human happiness. Similar to the work-first principle of the SSP, poor workers' cooperative movements also attributed primacy to work activities. Such a resemblance explained how the two apparently contrasting parties could construct an SSP partnership. Table 8-11 summarises the economic-determinism of state welfare and anti-poverty movements.

**Table 8-11 Economic-oriented Values of the State and Anti-poverty Movements**

|  | *Ideological Foundations* | *Strategy* | *Ultimate Objective* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***The State*** | Capitalism (Capitalist principles) | Work activities (competitive production) | *Economic independence of poor people* (independent from state welfare) |
| ***Anti-poverty movements*** | Communalism (Community organising & Marxism → Workers' cooperatives) | Work activities (communal production) | *Economic independence of poor people* (independence from the capitalist state) |

However, the economically focused strategies could not provide affluence for recipients. As detailed in Section 8.3, poor health, old age, low education and poor skills barred many recipients from working. As a result, the Self-Sufficiency Success Rate, i.e. the percentage of recipients who succeeded in finding jobs or organising Self-Sufficiency Communities, was less than 5% (KBAI 2004). Worse, many of the 'successful' ex-recipients did not enjoy stable economic self-sufficiency. The occupations of the ex-recipients were mainly in secondary labour market jobs like building, cleaning or care-giving, and, as Atkinson argues, such peripheral jobs cannot disengage recipients from poverty (1998). Moreover, due to the structural instability of the secondary labour market, many ex-recipients tended to lose their employment and return to SSP Centres. The working-age poor had oscillated between the secondary job market and state welfare, rather than breaking the vicious cycle of poverty. Such low-paid, unstable employment offered no more than a "disempowering form of inclusion" (Anthias 2001 p. 839) or "unfavourable inclusion" (Sen 2000 p. 28-29) into the labour market.

Another critical reason why the work-first strategies could not ensure recipients' self-sufficiency was that their deficiency is not only limited to economic destitution. The central tenet of workfare is that social inclusion is best achieved through economic participation. Yet social exclusion is related to all major spheres of life (Townsend 1993 p. 26). As many scholars have stressed, deprivation of poor people relates not only to lack of monetary income, but also to isolation from social, cultural and political life, such as disrespect, humiliation, assault on dignity and self-esteem, shame and stigma, insufficient social networking and a lack of social participation and political voice (Atkinson 1998; Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud 1999; Hills, Le Grand and Piachaud 2002; Richardson and Grand 2002). In particular, as Wilkinson has emphasised, once material survival has been satisfied to some degree, the non-monetary aspects of deficiency tend to emerge as matters of profound import (2005). This also rang true in Korean society, as an SSP Centre staff member illustrated:

> We all used to be poor in the past. Poverty was not contemptible. Wealth was simply eating a lot. But poverty is now more than eating well. It is humiliation. Do you know what happens here? In this district, social housing and a luxury condominium face each other. Residents of the condominium

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drove stakes between the two apartments, so poor people can't easily access their residential area. Schools here are also segregated. Condominium residents don't want to send their children to the nearest primary school where poor children attend. They nickname the school "welfare school"! Imagine our recipients could earn 100,000 KRW (50 pounds) more than now. Do you think they can escape from such discrimination? No way! Poor people would still feel despised by the rich unless they can get out of the social housing (AP-2008-14).

Social discrimination such as that described by this staff member can hardly be eliminated through mere employment. Even if a recipient can obtain a job and earn a wage higher than the official poverty line, he/she might still lead a lonely and desperate life, shunned by society. Humans are not only economic but also socio-psychological, political and spiritual beings. We search after happy lives through doing meaningful activities as well as gathering wealth. Thus, as proposed in the Easterlin paradox, individuals' self-professed satisfaction with their lives might not increase, even if personal income rises (1974). In this context, policy scholars have begun to propose social 'well-being' as part of social policy beyond the narrow target of 'economic welfare' (Gough and McGregor 2007; Jordan 2008; Searle 2008).

SSP recipients not only find themselves in need of economic welfare, but also see themselves as desperate for social well-being. As Atkinson stresses, poor people are socially excluded not only because they do not have an income at present, but also because they cannot find any hope or prospect of meaning for their future life (1998 p. 8). Actually, it was not very difficult to encounter SSP recipients who had suffered emotional trauma and considered suicide. Namhee Oh was one of these recipients. During our interview, she explained her hopeless condition when sent to the SSP Centres right after the death of her husband from cancer. Highlighting that a self-sufficient life means more than money, she told me the following:

I graduated from the university and used to believe I was brilliant enough to live my own life. But suddenly, my life hit the bottom after losing my husband. I was exhausted, and didn't have any desire to live, not to mention work. I couldn't eat properly and so my daughters forced food into my mouth. I was simply preserving my life. SSP work projects are useless to people in my situation. What we really need first is the time and support for recovery. Self-sufficiency needs social support (WR-2008-08).

To be sure, not every recipient requires emotional healing before beginning work. What Namhee's comment makes clear, however, is that economic independence is not the only urgent need for recipients. As Dean states, "people should be enabled to work because, by and large, they need to do so. But they also need to sustain and to be sustained by caring relationships" (2007 p. 534).

In this context, SSP Centres came to reconsider the economically biased meaning of 'self-sufficiency *(jahwal)*'. As displayed in the names of the Self-Sufficiency Programme (SSP) and Self-Sufficiency Promotion Centres (SSP Centres), "self-sufficiency is everywhere and has been a self-evident term that staff habitually use every day" (AP-2005-02). But the actual observation of recipients' conditions led staff to reconsider their ideological obsession with 'the economy'. A post uploaded on the KASSPC discussion board in 2005 wrote:

> We've witnessed for several years that many SSP recipients found jobs, but could not adapt themselves to the market. I came to recognise that money is probably not the only thing they longed for. Poor people do not only need 'bread for body', but also 'bread for spirit'. The real recovery of dignity seems impossible in a society where social isolation prevails. When people are all mad for more money, top universities and more land, how could poor people live equally in society? Work participation alone can't lead recipients to happiness (KASSPC discussion board. ID: solidarity forest. Date: January 19, 2005).

This keen realisation of the limitations of work-first strategies led SSP Centres to ponder what 'self-sufficiency' actually meant. They began to grow suspicious of its overtly economic definition and widened their focus to non-monetary spheres of life. When the KASSPC held an SSP Centre staff workshop on April 19, 2005, they proposed non-economic self-sufficiency along the following lines:

> Self-sufficiency is impossible without the spirit of autonomy. Autonomy can be stirred up through the improvement of self-esteem, self-respect and the community spirit, not only through that of economic conditions. Self-sufficiency thus should be defined as "the process through which recipients themselves can find out the values of their own existence in their life and the world" (KASSPC 2005i p. 5).

Alternative discourses gradually permeated throughout the SSP Centres;

during interviews at Centres in 2008, almost all staff upheld the alternative discourses. They defined self-sufficiency as achieving "self-esteem" (AP-2008-11), "self-awareness" (AP-2008-06; 09), "psychological independence" (AP-2008-17) or "happiness of life" (AP-2008-08; AP-2008-14), rather than as economic independence. They not only rejected the state's self-sufficiency discourse, but also corrected their previous ideas about movements such as workers' cooperatives, which had similarly downplayed non-economic aspects of life. For example:

> Self-sufficiency should be self-awareness. Of course, here is the capitalist society, and recipients' desires are driven by capitalist paradigm. I never judge that their desires are wrong. I am willing to help them because their material desires are so real to them. But no matter how hard I would promote their economic independence, some recipients would still be unhappy. I want them to regain self-esteem and autonomy, the real independence to freely find out what they really want in their lives (AP-2008-10).

> I used to encourage recipients to form workers' cooperatives within six months. But I found it difficult and even undesirable. Finding jobs is essential. I don't ignore it. But finding happiness is a totally different matter. Our SSP Centre began to ponder again and again what self-sufficiency should be. A lot of recipients are lone parents, so we supposed that some additional programmes were needed for them. We formed parenting workshops for single parents, which we now regard as more important than SSP work projects (AP-2008-07).

The discursive reinterpretations did not simply dissolve into individual reflections. They caused SSP Centres to seek practical ways to actualise non-economic self-sufficiency. The Sungdo SSP Centre, for instance, formed 'parenting workshops' for recipients with children in 2007, but it was only with the introduction of 'Mass Humanities Courses' that the alternative self-sufficiency discourses developed into a more systemic nationwide praxis.

Mass Humanities Courses: The mass humanities courses of SSP Centres derived inspiration from an Earl Shorris book, *Riches for the Poor: The Clemente Course in the Humanities*(2000). As an American left-leaning essayist, Shorris had long searched for answers as to why some people are poor. However, after he met long-time prisoner Viniece Walker, who described poverty as 'having no concerts, museums, lectures or plays to downtown' rather than 'having no job or money', he

came to be aware of the importance of the humanities. Indeed, the humanities represent a rich source of the ideas and language necessary to reflect on the meaning of life. Nonetheless, while progressive intellectuals themselves were actually indebted to the humanities for their own capacity for critical reflection, they had contradicted themselves by dismissing the humanities as "the cultural imperialism of dead white European males" (Shorris 2000 p. 105). After talks with Viniece, Shorris changed his mind-set and started to view the study of the humanities in itself as a redistribution of cultural wealth, exclusively available to the elite (2000 p. 105). After this epiphany, he launched a free mass humanities course (Clemente Course) for homeless people, ex-prisoners and other disadvantaged people at the Roberto Clemente Family Guidance Centre in New York City, and began to teach literature, poetry, philosophy and history from the ancient Greeks to Malcolm X. According to Shorris, poor people started questioning for the first time in their life, "What can I know? How shall I live? What may I hope? And what is man?"(2000 p. 106).The Clemente Course created an international sensation among anti-poverty activists. His book and mass humanities quickly spread to the USA, Canada, Mexico, Africa and eventually to South Korea (Jeju SSP Centre 2006 p. 5).

The first initiator of Shorris-style mass humanities in Korea was a homeless shelter run by the ASH. Impressed by Shorris' book, they founded 'St. Francis Humanities School' for homeless people in September 2005 in Seoul, and even invited Earl Shorris to Korea in January 2006 to introduce mass humanities to fellow social activists. Shorris' ideas were particularly welcome in SSP Centres that had already realised the limitation of economically focused projects. Many Centres saw Shorris' mass humanities as a way to help recipients find hope for their own lives, and they began to launch nighttime courses. For instance, right after Shorris' visit in 2006, the Jeju SSP Centre, run by the Jeju Sharing Home, opened 'Jeju Humanities-for-Hope Course'; the Nowon SSP Centre, from the Nowon Sharing Home, launched 'Nowon St. Francis Humanities School'; and the Gwanak Job-Sharing SSP Centre, from the Nangok *minjung* church, formed 'Gwanak Humanities-for-Hope Course'(Im, Woo, and Choi 2008 p. 220). The Junim SSP Centre also opened a humanities course, teaching philosophy, literature, history and creative writing classes. The Centre held classes every Thursday night from 8 to 10 p.m. after official SSP work projects finished at 6 p.m. The course was open to all recipients, and

journalists, artists and scholars who upheld the values of mass humanities were invited along as teachers.

This image [**Image 8-4 Mass Humanities Courses at SSP Centres**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

The nighttime humanities courses differed from previous night schools (*yahak)* that anti-poverty organisations had offered to slum residents (see Chapter 3). Under the influence of Paulo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), *yahak* had a definite political intent to 'conscientise' the poor into a revolutionary force. The humanities courses, however, did "not have a political ax to grind" (The Philadelphia Inquirer 2001 p. 3). Like Friere, Shorris saw education as an incubator for participation in political life. He understood, however, that the term 'political' connoted reflective thoughts and actions at every social level, beginning with the self and emanating outward to the family, community and society (Shorris 2000 pp. 255-256). In this sense, his Clemente courses were not confined to specific ideologies. SSP Centres followed this principle. Instead of aiming to teach specific political-economic ideas like Marxism, as *yahak* did, they tried to present diverse topics of conversation to recipients. Literature classes discussed works from left-wing novels to popular stories. At philosophy classes, recipients debated their own life issues rather than the maxims of notable philosophers. Classes were intended "to deliver

ideas which can actually be applied to real life" (AP-2008-06).

Mass humanities courses also differed qualitatively from what Euro-American scholars defined as 'human capital development'. Some categorise workfare as 'labour force attachment' (work-first model) and 'human capital development' (education-first model) (Løemel and Trickey 2001; Theodore and Peck 2001). Whereas labour force attachment prioritises market involvement, human capital development prioritises education and training. However, fundamentally speaking, the education-first approach offers a variation of the work-first concept because the ultimate goal of education is to acquire vocational skills through training. For instance, whereas English lessons in TANF or the New Deal are designed to make immigrants employable in the domestic labour market through teaching daily English, literature classes (part of the humanities syllabus) at the SSP Centres had nothing to do with vocational training. As we can infer from the curriculum of a creative writing class, the courses were intended to foster the purely intellectual power of thoughts:

> We repeat one thing in class. Students take any topic and write 2000 words about it. Next time, we shorten the writings into 1000 words, and then into 500 words, and then 100 words. That's the practice to elaborate the way of thinking from the concrete to the abstract. It is to help recipients develop the ability to sort out the essence of their own ideas (AP-2008-14).

Such humanities courses could not offer any practical skills for recipients' careers, unlike job training. Nevertheless, many recipients willingly spent their evenings taking the classes. To recipients who had been largely excluded from cultural and intellectual activities, the humanities classes came as "an oasis in the suffocating world" (WR-2008-13), "an exit from weary manual work" (AP-2008-14) or "a free chance to listen to pricey cultural lectures, which I couldn't otherwise taste in my lifetime" (WR-2008-11). Thus, in the case of the Junim Centre, about 25-35 people have voluntarily attended the nighttime humanities course every week since 2006.

Changes in the Lives of SSP Recipients: The humanities courses did not merely function as an escape from work; they also provided recipients with a route into

different lifestyles. As one SSP Centre staff member explained, "Basically, the outcomes of the humanities courses are related to inner thoughts, and thus invisible, unlike income improvement. But the changes could be sensed through recipients' behaviour or way of speaking" (AP-2008-06). For instance, mass humanities enabled some recipients to be introspective and to restore damaged emotions from past experiences, as the following testimony reveals. The first quotation comes from an essay by a single mother, who wrote about childhood memories for a humanities class at the Junim SSP Centre; the second comes from a male student at St. Francis Humanities School:

> It was my first time to seriously recall my childhood. As the second child, I was desperate for affection from my parents. I was always compared with my older sister who did everything better. Also, no matter how hard I did something well, as younger daughter I occupied no attention of my parents. I was an invisible child. This seems why I was ill very often at that time. My Self was revealing its existence through sickness. After discovering this fact, I again felt pains. I realised this childhood still affects my timid personality. I cried a lot for the wounded little girl of my memory. After that, I could let go of her. As an adult, I now hope to respect my life and give myself another chance. Lack of care and love can damage body and soul. I don't want my children to experience similar suffering (FN-18.11.2008-humanities).

> "I love you."Yesterday, I said it to my wife for the first time. Because of my economic incapacity, we had to repeat separation and reunion numerous times. But over the past 16years of married life, I had never confessed my love to her. This confession was the gift from the humanities course (Im, Woo, and Choi 2008 p. 224).

Inner transformation was not the only outcome; humanities also changed family relationships for some of the recipients. As one SSP Centre staffer said, "While learning the humanities, recipients could understand their children more than before. Some recipients got to understand why children were so mad about computers after learning how to use them themselves" (AP-2008-14). Other recipients said that they found time to read books together with their children or partners instead of watching soap operas on television (WR-2008-13; WR-2008-05). These classes allowed them to get closer to and talk more with family members.

The courses also led recipients to socio-political participation. The humanities

classes offered recipients various chances to deliberate on social issues. For instance, at history classes, recipients could broaden intellectual horizons by learning the modern history of Korea and the world. Some creative writing classes required students to write essays on current affairs. Philosophy classes frequently became a space for discussions about social issues. A philosophy class on happiness that I observed showed how humanities courses could turn into small debates on social matters:

> Teacher: There is a benefit we can get by helping others. Every person can take care of each other. Concerning others is not only a matter for politicians.
> Student1: Well... Actually, teacher, I feel overburdened by what you are saying. I don't have any space to think of others. I have to get up at 6 a.m. and sleep at 2 a.m., looking after children…
> Student 2: You are right that we are busy… But I believe we have pure sympathy with other people's difficulties because we have been experiencing similar hardships. We are not educated enough to help others. But how about going to nursing homes during weekends with your children? It can also be a lively education for your children.
> Student 1: Well…it's still too much. As a single mum, I haven't got any room for extra concerns about the community… Is it really wrong only to take care of my family?
> Teacher: I am not forcing you to do anything right away. At this moment, it may be enough to open our hearts and have a think. Don't push yourself too much. Over-conscience does not bring us happiness (FN-27.11.2008-Philosophy).

As the opinions of Student 1 reveal, it was not that all the recipients were fond of the talks about social affairs. As the philosophy teacher said, the humanities classes were not intended to compel recipients to attend certain social events. However, they provided spaces in which to freely dispute broader social issues, and the continuous discussions did indeed arouse recipients' interests in social affairs, as a student on a humanities course described:

> My way of viewing society has changed. My husband said I am becoming opinionated. In the past, I only read the entertainment section of newspapers, but nowadays my eyes are naturally turned upon political or social sections. I have come to have some ideas about the issues. "Why this way, not that way?", "It shouldn't be like that" I grumble when reading newspapers (WR-2008-13).

This growing interest in social affairs motivated recipient-students to organise groups for social participation. When an oil spill covered the Taean Coast in 2007, students of the Gwanak Humanities-for-Hope Course spent their weekends volunteering on the clean-up operation. In 2008, they also participated in nationwide candle-holding demonstrations against the Korea–USA Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the opening of the domestic beef market to the USA. Humanities course students of Jeju, Enhye, Incheon and many other Centres also partook in the anti-FTA demonstrations. As a student wrote of the candle demonstrations, recipients "normally used to be indifferent to state policies and simply relied upon the decisions of the government. But after learning the humanities, [they] began to have their own opinions and voluntarily interpose objections to state decisions" (Cho 2007).

As such, although the humanities courses did not move recipients from welfare to work as the state had intended, they gradually broadened the life territories of those who had been trapped in welfare. They did not directly aim at the overturning of the capitalist market, as activists had intended, but the practice of humanities courses gnawed away at the hegemonic status of economic determinist ideologies, suggesting alternative lifestyle choices to recipients. These changes would be unattainable through official work projects alone, which had traditionally viewed employment as the keystone of a self-sufficient life.

Mass Humanities Courses as a Life-first Approach: We can view Korean mass humanities courses as a concrete actualisation of what Dean calls a 'life-first' approach to workfare (2003). In many countries, including Korea, so-called work-life balance has been proposed as an alternative to work-first initiatives, to "combine paid employment with the responsibilities of family life" (Dean 2007 p. 520). But insofar as employment is held up to be the ultimate goal of the work-life balance, it is just another version of work-first strategies designed to engage the poor with the labour market. For this reason, Dean proposes a life-first approach as a prerequisite to truly balancing work and life, stating that

> what is required is neither a human capital nor a work-first approach, but a *life-first* approach…If it were possible to expand our understanding of what might be meant by work-life balance, then a

life-first approach would prioritise the life needs of the individual above any obligation to work (Dean 2003 p. 456).

A life-first approach represents an academic proposition yet to be implemented. But Korean mass humanities courses may give an initial hint as to how a life-first approach can be made practical in workfare policies. Through the humanities courses, recipients could have the chance to deal with their multiple exclusions, while simultaneously working on official work projects for economic self-sufficiency. The life-first approach of SSP Centres also resonates with what Arendt termed 'the active life' (*vita activa*). In *The Human Condition*, she explains that the active life comprises three basic human activities -labour, work and action - which correspond to three basic human conditions (the economic, the socio-cultural and the political) (1958). To actualise freedom, the three human conditions need to be harmoniously encouraged. Nonetheless, the current forms of workfare have lopsidedly promoted the activation of 'labour' (or economic activity) for physical survival. On the other hand, the humanities courses have enabled the activation of the socio-cultural 'work' and political 'action' of recipients. In this sense, we may be able to say that mass humanities present a practical and balanced life-work model to promote the real 'active life' of the poor.

Dormant Challenges to Mass Humanities: Of course, the outlook for humanities courses was not always bright. Even though the courses were founded on the realisation that "money is not the absolute measure of our life" (AP-2008-10), Centres needed money to operate classes, invite lecturers and buy course books. However, since the courses were not an official task of SSP Centres, they could not in principle be financed by state funds. Thus, when the Junim SSP Centre launched a Humanities-for-Hope Course in 2006, the staff of eight had to chip in for the course's operational costs. Since self-sacrifice was not a sustainable funding source, however, the Junim Centre soon began to apply for external aid from educational institutions like the Korean Research Foundation and the Kyunghee University. In a similar vein, many other SSP Centres also started applying for outside sponsorship for their humanities courses.

However, as one SSP Centre staffer worriedly speculated, "The reliance on external sponsorships could curb freedom to do what Centres want to do because

funders prefer specious outcomes for a short period of time to display their benevolence, rather than persevering with the steps of recipients" (AP-2008-06). Moreover, external support would likely be cut off according to the funders' financial conditions. To buffer the dormant financial risks, SSP Centres had to endeavour to minimise the dependence on institutional funds by utilising various voluntary resources. For the Junim Centre, it recruited unpaid volunteers (like me) to assist in nighttime classes. The Centre also purchased books and course materials using donations from citizens who approved of the mass humanities courses and created a mini-library with 300 donated books (see Image 8-5). Furthermore, the student-recipients who had graduated from the humanities courses formed an alumni association and began to raise money (5,000 KRW per person) to finance the course.

This image [**Image 8-5 Mini-library of the Junim SSP Centre**] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.

Despite the financial challenges, the humanities courses have gained popularity among Centres and have successfully taken root in the SSP field. Beginning with the first three humanities courses initiated in 2006, the number of courses has rapidly increased. We have no official statistics on the humanities courses as they are extracurricular activities. However, from the available information, we know that at least 3,000 recipients joined humanities courses in 2009, and all the SSP Centres I visited were offering such classes.

## 8.5 Concluding Remarks

Chapter 8 has discussed the struggle of SSP Centres against marketisation in the SSP partnership. As we saw in Section 8.3, the initial aspiration of anti-poverty organisations to create alternatives to the capitalist market went up in smoke in the

face of the actual SSP circumstances. The abstract ideology of alternative economy, including such issues as workers' cooperatives, was a long way away from the real life conditions of recipients. Furthermore, SSP work projects had to face market competition with existing businesses and fellow SSP Centres. In this sense, marketisation of SSP work projects appeared inevitable.

Nevertheless, the critical perspective, which tends to emphasise only marketisation, seems a somewhat brash interpretation, not least because new tactics of resistance have been taken up to guard and maintain the egalitarian spirit from within the SSP system. Dividing, merging or creating the markets for SSP work projects are exemplary strategies. One characteristic of the tactics is that SSP Centres no longer completely reject the capitalist market system, but rather make use of it for their own ends. In other words, while the strategies of cartel-building, consortiums or internal transaction are typical protectionist techniques used by capitalists themselves to manipulate market forces, SSP Centres appropriate such strategies to obstruct fierce profit-driven competition.

Mass humanities courses also show how SSP Centres' tactics of resistance transcend the binary division between pro- and anti-capitalism. If one narrowly defines resistance as obvious anti-capitalist movements like Marxist revolutions or workers' disputes, it may be hard to discern the significance of mass humanities courses, as these represent attempts to attain non-economic happiness and self-sufficient lives beyond material concerns. For this reason, some may fail to see mass humanities courses as an example of resistance against marketisation. Nonetheless, it seems certain that the street-level activities of SSP Centres gradually chip away at the economic foundations upon which workfare is based, and provide alternative lifestyle choices to recipients. The final chapter will discuss further theoretical and policy implications of these findings.

# Chapter 9
# Conclusion

## 9.1 Main Research Findings

This research presents a detailed case study of the political struggles in a South Korean workfare programme administered through a state–civil society partnership. In the last three chapters, we have examined how anti-poverty organisations were encroached upon by waves of depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation after they aligned themselves with the SSP administration. We also observed how these organisations tackled intrusions by the dominant system in order to sustain their autonomous positions. Now, at the conclusion of this study, we can respond to the five research questions posed in Chapter 1 with the following answers:

1) Unlike the mainstream policy viewpoint, the state–civil society partnership does not guarantee a mutual and equal relationship.

2) However, partnered civil society organisations do not merely act as shadow states, since they can retain the spirit of resistance to the dominant system.

3) In the state–civil society partnership, civil society actors tend to express their opposition in informal, unofficial and street-level modalities.

4) The street-level forms of resistance can be seen as 'defensive' modes of social movement, rather than as 'conservative' adaptations to the existing system.

5) The implication of this study for the politics of partnership is that current forms of state–civil society partnership need not entail the 'mutual coproduction' or the 'complete co-option' of civil society to the state. Partnership can be a site of 'complex struggles' where civil society actors continue to counteract the control of the dominant system in inflected ways.

These five findings are expanded upon in the following sections, which conclude with a statement clarifying this study's core contribution to the field of civil society politics.

*9.11 Rejecting the Mainstream Policy Viewpoint*

The first finding is that, contrary to the mainstream policy viewpoint, the state–civil society partnership does not guarantee a mutual and equal relationship. In classical political theory, civil society has generally been regarded as a space that is distinctive from either the state or the economy. Fraser defined civil society as "a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state" (1990 p. 57)[5]. In particular, civil society associations such as voluntary organisations or social movement groups have been emphasised as the core of autonomous civil society. Habermas claimed that civil society associations should be at the heart of political struggles against the political-economic system (1987, 1992). More specifically, he proposed that civil society organisations should function as a fortress from the influence of welfare states, which tend to bureaucratise and monetarise the lifeworlds of citizens. Following Habermas, Cohen and Arato have likewise argued that the essential role of civil society organisations is to resist the imperatives of the dominant system and revitalise communicative actions in society (1992 p. 416-417).

As we have seen in Chapter 1, however, welfare partnership between the state and civil society agencies has challenged classical civil society theory. The current phenomenon of partnership does not accord with the traditional understanding of independent civil society. Multi-sectoral partnership often elides those qualities of the civil society sector that set it apart from other sectors. Instead, it tends to promote mutuality and networks across sectors. By exploring the Korean workfare partnership, however, this research has shown that state–civil society partnerships cannot always be 'mutual networks', as the dominant policy discourses suggest. Rather, we have seen how partnerships could facilitate the 'colonisation of civil society' by the dominant political-economic system (see Figure 9-1).

As Chapter 6 revealed, we were able to detect the 'depoliticisation' of anti-poverty organisations after they began to operate SSP Centres. Anti-poverty organisations used to be centres of anti-government *minjung* movements; however, the organisations' reliance on state money after partnership makes them subordinate

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[5] Interestingly, in her latest book, *Scales of Justice* (2009), Nancy Fraser has become more critical of civil society actors, arguing that even the best civil society organisations are neither sufficiently representative nor sufficiently democratic to legitimate their proposals to reframe justice. She also argues that civil society organisations lack the capacity to convert their proposals into binding political decisions.

to government commands, unlike their original aspirations for 'symbiotic partnership'. When anti-poverty organisations came to face state surveillance over their performance in 2005, they initially mounted widespread opposition to increasing state intervention. However, due to their new institutional status as state-sponsored welfare agencies, the organisations' direct actions ultimately met with failure. After the 2005 all-out struggle, the public defiance of SSP Centres against state policies was curtailed.

**Figure 9-1 Colonisation of SSP Centres by the Dominant System**
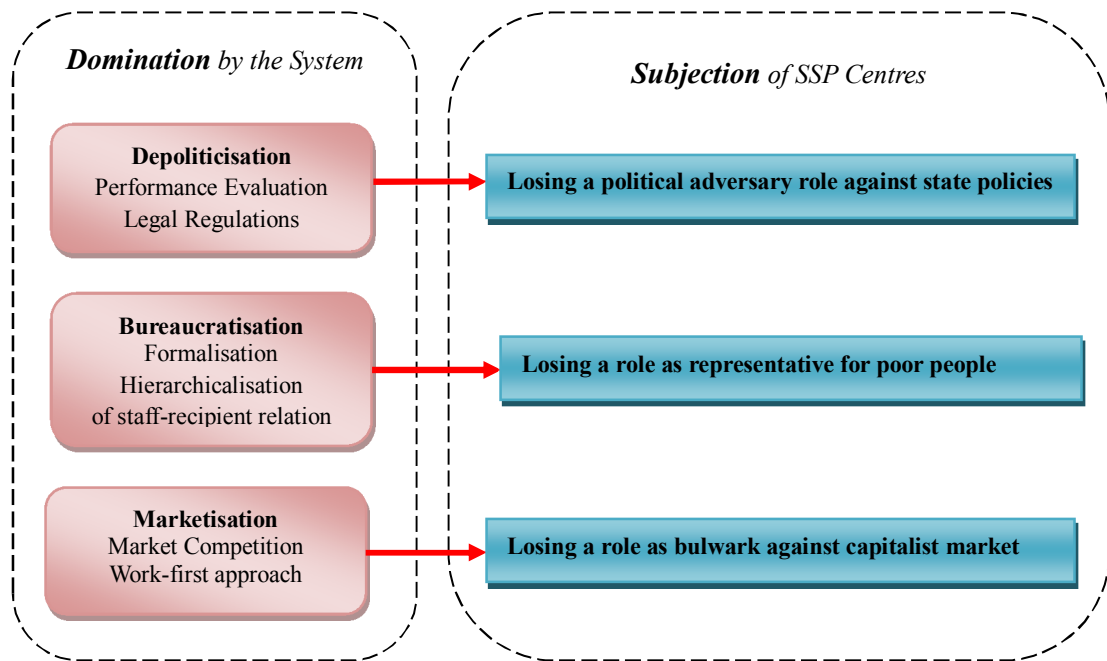


The study also uncovers the 'bureaucratisation' of activist-run SSP Centres. Following Alinsky's idea of community organising, Korean anti-poverty activists had endeavoured to befriend slum residents and employed 'assimilation principles' to live and work with poor people. Indeed, the assimilation principles served as a core justification for anti-poverty organisations to be chosen as appropriate local partners when new democratic government searched for frontline SSP agencies. Because of the engagement of community-based anti-poverty organisations, the SSP has been roundly acclaimed as a bottom-up welfare initiative. However, as Chapter 7 revealed, the SSP partnership has also severed ties between anti-poverty activists and people in poverty. In the SSP system, what had been an informal relationship between activists and poor people has now become a formalised and bureaucratised staff–recipient

relationship.

Finally, among the changes brought by the SSP partnership, we have observed the 'marketisation' of SSP Centres, which connotes the loss of traditional cooperative and anti-capitalist visions. As 'nonprofits', anti-poverty organisations not only kept their distance from the profit-seeking culture of the market sector, but also actively experimented in alternative economies against capitalism by upholding communism or workers' cooperatives. In fact, anti-poverty organisations decided to join in the SSP in order to make use of state funds as seed money for establishing workers' cooperatives. However, as Chapter 8 explains, their initial vision had evaporated during the practical management of SSP work projects. Furthermore, due to the pressure of market competition and work-first policy principles, SSP Centres had to follow a business-like model when managing SSP work projects.

To some degree, the aforementioned findings coincide with the critical viewpoint inspired by (post-)structuralists such as Althusser and Foucault. These scholars generally regarded the state–civil society relationship as one of domination and subordination. Althusser argued that civil society agencies such as philanthropic organisations, churches or schools all serve the capitalist state as 'ideological state apparatuses', inculcating dominant ideologies in the state's subjects (1971). Foucault also considered civil society actors to be docile subjects for the dominant power. He viewed civil society as a space where governing power operates throughout to discipline individuals' everyday conduct (Burchell et al. 1991). Drawing on this (post-)structuralist understanding, critical studies on partnership have agreed that the dominant political-economic system has significant control over civil society actors in partnerships. From this perspective, the latter become 'junior partners' who assist the state to regulate society (Wolch 1990). This study also accords with the critical literature, for as we have seen, the SSP partnership has gradually put anti-poverty organisations under state surveillance.


*9.12 Modifying the Critical Viewpoint*

As this study has shown, however, the critical viewpoint provides only a partial picture of the power dynamics involved in partnership. Activist-run SSP Centres have not been entirely swallowed up by the dominant system. Despite the indubitable threats of depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation, the SSP Centres still

conceive of autonomy and the potential for resistance.

When it comes to depoliticisation, it is true that SSP Centres hardly oppose state regulations, especially after the failure of the 2005 struggle. However, their present attitude does not mean that they have completely abandoned their advocacy role. SSP Centres have employed various discretionary tactics to evade dominant policy rules. While apparently complying with state guidance, they have surreptitiously fabricated administrative reports to evade state intervention in their performance. Also, SSP Centres have played an essential role in cultivating recipients' critical minds by informally disseminating welfare knowledge and backing up recipients' claims for social rights, as shown in SSP Workers' Rights Movements.

Also, notwithstanding the obvious threat of bureaucratisation, SSP Centres have not been totally absorbed into public welfare bureaucracy. While conducting administrative duties as workfare managers, activists have strived to restore the lifeworlds of recipients within their SSP Centres. To alleviate the formalisation of the SSP Centre setting, staff have made efforts to form social events and circles. They have also endeavoured to dismantle hierarchies between staff and recipients by sharing substantial bureaucratic authority with recipients and encouraging them to participate in the decision-making processes of the SSP Centre administration.

Lastly, despite the general tendency towards marketisation, SSP Centres have tried to evade market competition. To reduce inter-organisational competition and sustain solidarity, SSP Centres have launched pseudo-cartels, consortiums or internal trade networks. Moreover, some SSP Centres have become suspicious of the economic-focused discourse of 'self-sufficiency', and have begun to voluntarily organise pedagogic humanities classes, during which recipients are encouraged to consider and reflect on alternative, non-economic meanings of a self-sufficient life.

In these ways, SSP Centres have consistently conceived of the spirit of insubordination, autonomy and reflexivity, even in partnership. They have attempted to actualise their values, goals and identities by creating distinct strategies for resistance. In this sense, partnership ceases to be a relationship defined by domination and subjection; rather, it becomes a field of political struggle where domination, subjugation and resistance occur simultaneously. Figure 9-2 presents a fuller picture of the political dynamics found in the SSP partnership system.

**Figure 9-2 Political Struggles in the SSP Partnership System**

*Domination* by the System

- Depoliticisation
- Marketisation
- Bureaucratisation

*Subjection* of SSP Centres

- Losing a political adversary role against state policies
- Losing a role as bulwark against predatory capitalism
- Losing a role as representative for poor people

*Resistance* from SSP Centres

* Performance manipulation

* Unofficial dissemination of knowledge

* Legal claims to social rights

* Cartel, consortium, internal trade

* Alternative self-sufficiency discourse

* Mass humanities courses

* Unofficial social events and circles

* Informal designation of recipients

* Leadership sharing

* Democratic decision-making process

Colonisation of civil society

Restoration of civil society

Such findings coincide with Gramsci's classic work on civil society (1971, 2006). Gramsci contended that civil society agencies have dual functions. Like Althusser, he acknowledged that civil society actors can serve dominant ideologies, becoming enmeshed within both state and market. But he also emphasised the political potential for civil society actors to create counter-hegemonic discourses and practices from below. His emphasis on the possibility of autonomous civil society can help us to understand civil society agencies in partnership. According to his view, SSP Centres can be seen to have dual functions. As the left side of Figure 9-2 illustrates, SSP Centres are places where dominant policy rules are imposed and exercised. However, SSP Centres are also spaces where activists can perform various actions that are counter to the rules, as the right side of Figure 9-2 shows. Therefore, it is misleading to interpret SSP Centres simply as being trapped in a linear 'dominance–subjection' relationship. Rather, the SSP field is a battlefield where top-down policy rules are enforced, but bottom-up counter-actions can be germinated.

When discussing the counter-actions of SSP Centres, we cannot avoid mentioning the role of SSP Centre staff. One core reason why SSP Centres are able to maintain the spirit of resistance may be the legacy of anti-government movements among SSP Centre staff. A considerable number of SSP Centre staff members have experience in conduct anti-government movements during the authoritarian regime. When anti-poverty organisations created SSP Centres, they did not recruit the Centre staff from external sources. Rather, they drew almost all of the staff from their own activist members. As Chapter 5 explained, first and second generation senior activists, who had been involved in anti-government movements from the 1970s and 1980s onward, filled director positions in the SSP Centres. Second or third generation activists, who were also involved in anti-power movements, later took the senior and junior staff positions.

The staff members' previous careers as extralegal activists may have stimulated their critical attitudes toward the dominant policy. Of course, SSP Centre staff can no longer be seen as authentic social activists. However, this study shows that they have played a paramount part in creating counter-discourses and actions at SSP Centres. Although members of staff currently work '*in*' the dominant structure, they still act '*against*' it. Their position 'in' and 'against' the structure accords with certain tenets of the 'structuration theory' articulated by Giddens (1979). He argued

that the constraints of the dominant structure cannot completely determine human actions, since actors have their own autonomy and reflectivity. As reflexive subjects, activists in SSP Centres have not simply compromised and adapted to dominant policy mandates; they have also struggled to adjust and change these mandates. In this sense, SSP Centre staff members share similar characteristics with what Santoro and McGuire term "institutional activists", denoting social movement participants who occupy formal positions within the government but who pursue movement goals through conventional bureaucratic channels (1997 p. 503). As former activists, SSP Centre staff members retain a rebellious spirit and conduct various activities to empower SSP recipients at the street level.

*9.13 Discovery of Street-level Resistance*

The third finding is that civil society actors in partnership tend to employ informal, unofficial and street-level forms of resistance in order to challenge the dominant power. In general, mainstream literature on resistance has focused on collective and manifest opposition to ruling classes (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tarrow 1998). As Scott has summarised, the mainstream literature describes that '*real resistance*' is "(a) organised, systematic, and cooperative, (b) principled or selfless, (c) has revolutionary consequences, and/or (d) embodies ideas or intentions that negate the basis of domination itself" (1985 p. 292). Because of these strict guidelines, we tend to consider only very visible movements as meaningful resistance. In *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (1977), Piven and Cloward also characterised radical protests as the success of political resistance while deeming subsequent institutionalisation of poor people's movements as the failure of resistance.

From this strict definition of resistance, civil society organisations in partnership with the state cannot be considered authentic agents of resistance. State-sponsored SSP Centres no longer aim for revolutionary consequences; instead, they work for an established welfare policy. They do not work against their conditions of domination as they rely on state money. According to the traditional view, partnership is contrary to genuine resistance, and it is in this context that partnership sceptics such as Wolch have argued against the idea of a statutory-voluntary

partnership. Wolch asserted that to restore a space of resistance "rather than helping the non-profits to hold the centre through partnership models…we need to *decentre* the non-profit sector – away from dominant institutions, powerful groups and privileged places" (1999 p. 26).

However, rather than contrasting resistance with partnership, this case study argues that resistance can be compatible with partnership. For this, we need to broaden the relatively rigid notion of resistance, reasoning that if we lock resistance within the narrow scope of public revolts, we may neglect some significant activities that do not fit into four aforementioned criteria of 'real' resistance. The performance document manipulation is not a collectively planned action; rather, it is a private and impromptu act of individual SSP Centres. It is neither principled nor selfless; instead, it is opportunistic and selfish. Nonetheless, as was discussed in Chapter 6, the accumulation of the petty performance manipulations has finally brought an unexpected consequence to the SSP system, reducing the accuracy of the state's performance evaluation procedure. Many of the SSP Centres' activities had similarly unexpected consequences. Those enumerated in Figure 9-2 did not begin with public protests. On the contrary, they were casual and quotidian expressions of defiance. However, these unofficial practices had considerable counter-power effects, eventually clashing with the directions of state authorities. For this reason, this study sought to investigate not only public activism but also the low-level activities of SSP Centres, which gradually contributed to the disruption of existing orders.

Usefulness of the Concept of Informal Resistance: To investigate the underlying politics of the state–civil society partnership, this study borrowed Scott's concept on 'hidden resistance' (1985, 1990). Scott argued that a view of politics focused on 'open rebellion' represents an overly narrow conception of subordinate groups' resistance. In ordinary circumstances, subordinate groups like the proletariat, peasants, serfs, slaves and workers have a vested interest in avoiding any *explicit* display of insubordination and antagonism. It is true to say that they have a practical interest in resistance, that is, in minimising the exactions, labour and humiliations to which they are subject. However, owing to the fear of negative sanctions, they often prefer to avoid face-to-face conflicts. Instead, they seek for *implicit* ways to defy the structures of authority. For example, "…in the interest of safety and success, the

peasantry has historically preferred to disguise its resistance…if it were a matter of taxes, they would prefer evasion rather than a tax riot; if it were a question of rights to the product of the land, they would prefer poaching or pilfering to direct appropriation" (Scott 1990 p. 86). Scott defined the everyday survival strategies as "disguised, low-profile, undeclared resistance" in contrast to "open and declared forms of resistance" (1990 p. 198). He stated that such shows of obedience and backstage defiance are "the key survival skills of subordinate groups" (1990 p. 3).

A widened perspective on forms of resistance allows us to interpret subtle and complicated power struggles in partnerships. Scott originally claimed that the informal resistance of subordinate groups is vigorous in a politically suppressive environment. He assumed that "the greater the disparity in power between dominant and subordinate and the more arbitrarily it is exercised, the more the public transcript of subordinate will take on a stereotyped, ritualistic case…In other words, the more menacing the power, the thicker the mask of subordinate groups" (1990 p. 3). For this reason, he has preferred to study unequal, power-laden human relationships like slavery, serfdom or concentration camps to explore informal resistance, instead of seemingly equal relationships such as friendship or interactions among people of similar status.

However, this study demonstrates that subordinate groups may prefer indirect expression of opposition not only under extreme forms of coercion but also in ostensibly harmonious relationships such as partnerships. In a partnership, discipline over civil society actors does not always result in an oppressive situation such as slavery. However, just as slaves fear punishment for public acts of defiance, civil society actors in partnership are likewise afraid of disincentives or the loss of resources from the state or donor. Civil society actors may thus prefer to appear amiable before their funding partners. To borrow a phrase from Scott, they may 'perform consent' to state instructions while hiding treacheries behind their backs. This strategic conduct of subordinate partners is neither 'genuine consensus', as the mainstream policy discourses suggest, nor is it a condition of 'perfect surrender' to superior partners, as the critical viewpoint claims. Thus, it is important to incorporate in the analysis the disguised, low-profile and undeclared resistance found in state–civil society partnerships.

Multiplicity of Informal Resistance: Through the street-level investigation, this study uncovered instances of diverse informal and unofficial resistance within the SSP Centres. Scott has contended that everyday forms of resistance are multiple and contain a whole range of discourses and practices (1990 p. 14). For example, in *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1985), he described covert and ordinary weapons that peasants have used: poaching, dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson or sabotage (1985 p. XVI). Political disguise, gossip, rumour, grumbling, folktales, anonymous threats or carnival are also typical acts of resistance employed by subordinate groups (1990). The research presented here also unveils a wide variety of informal resistance techniques practised in SSP Centres. As Figure 9-2 illustrates, day-to-day resistance tactics include: performance manipulation; informal dissemination of welfare knowledge; social rights claims; social events and circles; the use of informal names; leadership sharing; market division, consortium, and internal trade; alternative self-sufficiency discourses; and mass humanities courses.

It is worth noting that street-level resistance is often internally inconsistent. While some activities (e.g. performance document fabrication) are illegal, others (e.g. social rights claims) make use of legal procedures. Whereas social events or circles are organised at the level of individual SSP Centres, market division, consortiums or internal trade are based on inter-organisational collaboration across SSP Centres. Market division, consortium and internal trade are designed to facilitate survival in the capitalist market, but mass humanities courses are geared towards happiness outside of the market system. Mass humanities are thoroughly planned projects, but the use of informal designation (i.e. father/mother and teacher) when talking to recipients is in fact an unconscious custom of SSP Centre staff. As this sample list of SSP Centre street-level activities demonstrates, the staff's everyday resistance constitutes a hybrid and cannot be condensed into one conscious form of movement. To quote Foucault, "there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt…instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case" (1978 p. 96).

This 'plurality of resistances' is a conspicuous difference between the street-level strategies of SSP Centres and previous anti-poverty movements. As radical activist groups, anti-poverty organisations usually aimed to mobilise a cohesive and

unified force in order to overturn the ruling bloc. After partnership, however, they do not want to lose gains from the state. Since SSP Centres experienced complete defeat during the all-out struggle in 2005, it has become increasingly difficult to establish a systemic movement. Even when the SSP Workers' Labour Rights Movements arose in 2008, anti-poverty activists no longer stood at the forefront. Instead, they preferred to back up the recipients' fighting force by giving indirect support at the rear offices. In short, their strategies of opposition were more like guerrilla tactics, chipping away at the dominant power structure almost imperceptibly. We have seen how SSP Centre staff members have come to prefer silently maintaining their values and discourses, carrying out their own small 'projects in the Project'. The small projects are not what we could find at the SSP's official documents. Hence, had we only examined the official SSP *Project* and tried to uncover the rare instances of radical rebellion, we would have overlooked the immense raft of smaller SSP *projects* that lies behind it. Consequently, the SSP partnership would have been misinterpreted as the end of resistance.

Ambivalence of Informal Resistance: Although the small projects of resistance are diverse and inconsistent, they share a certain quality: they do not aim to completely subvert the dominant policy system. This is an ambivalent characteristic of street-level resistance. As Figure 9-2 highlights, the street-level struggles of SSP Centres have withstood the intrusive waves of depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation. Nonetheless, SSP Centres do not run counter to the dominant policy system completely. Performance manipulation, rights claims, social events, market division and mass humanities courses are in no way intended to upset and undermine the SSP; rather, they are designed to alleviate the negative side effects of partnership while continuously receiving material support from the state. Indeed, there is no record of an SSP Centre that has actually left the territory of partnership, seeking for total freedom from state intervention. For this reason, their street-level resistance can be viewed as opportunistic 'survival strategies' within the world of partnership.

The concept of *Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect* (EVLN) helps us interpret the survival strategies of the SSP Centres. The EVLN is a modification of Hirschman's seminal work *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, which includes three basic options as responses to dissatisfaction with the dominant system (1970). When

subordinate actors experience difficulties in the dominant system, they first attempt to *voice*—"to change the unfavourable situations rather than to escape from the objectionable state" (Hirschman 1970 p. 30). 'Voice' usually involves appeals to higher authorities and protests. However, when the appeals are not accepted, they try to *exit*. 'Exit' is equivalent to voluntary separation or turnover from a dissatisfactory system. An example would be when workers quit their unsatisfactory jobs. An exit is usually a 'painful decision' because it requires considerable effort to withdraw from appointed benefits such as income and material resources. Thus, some actors choose to stick with the system instead, displaying *loyalty*. They "suffer in silence, expecting that things will soon get better" (1970 p. 38). However, Hirschman-inspired scholars have identified a fourth possible response, which can be termed *neglect* (Farrell 1983; Rusbult, Zembrodt, and Gunn 1982). Although workers decide to stay with their companies, they might not always be genuinely loyal to their duties. They can passively express their grudges against employers by exhibiting inattentive or lax behaviour such as lateness, absenteeism or dereliction of duty. The deviation and disregard for superior actors is another option open to subordinate actors.

Within the EVLN model, '*neglect*' can be a useful concept to explain some unofficial forms of resistance employed by civil society actors in partnership. When a performance-based funding scheme was announced in 2005, SSP Centre staff would initially *voice* their disgruntlement, as Chapter 6 described. Some SSP Centre leaders even boasted that they would resign and leave the partnership contracts unless the state recalled the plan. However, there were no anti-poverty organisations that actually *exited* the SSP partnership system despite the failure of the 2005 protest. Nonetheless, we cannot claim that they chose to be *loyal* to the system because their actions resemble *neglect*. While acknowledging the overall performance-based funding scheme, some SSP Centres began to break with state guidance on performance evaluations and exploit its loopholes. When it came to the pressures of marketisation, many SSP Centres also began to neglect the primacy of economic self-sufficiency and set mass humanities classes to promote non-economic self-sufficiency. Many other day-to-day modes of resistance are also neglectful of – or at least irrelevant to – official policy commands, rather than overtly opposing the rules. These forms of negligence in discharging official mandates may function as a vent that gives civil society agencies some breathing space in the otherwise densely

intertwined partnership network.

## 9.14 Emancipatory Characteristics of Street-Level Resistance

The fourth finding is that although street-level resistance was not fundamentally subversive, it is wrong to assume that it was or is conservative, existing for the maintenance of dominant system. Due to the lax and ambiguous qualities of street-level activities, some might disagree with the interpretation presented here, which defines the survival strategies as a part of resistance. In fact, performance fabrication can be viewed as a cowardly and unethical breach of rules rather than as a righteous objection to them. Indeed, as Dean and Melrose cogently explain, street-level resistance techniques within the existing welfare system are "essentially conservative [in] nature" compared to radical social movements (1997 p. 115). They argue that survival strategies like welfare fraud do not have the conscious intention to rebel; rather, welfare fraudsters are interested in making use of the welfare system for petty gains. For this reason, Dean and Melrose are reluctant to 'romanticise' survival strategies as resistance, saying that they might "provide the leverage by which the dominant discourses of capitalist modernity are 'repaired' and its power maintained" (1997 p. 115). Their caution is worth considering. Nonetheless, distinguishing survival strategies from total co-option is still necessary in order to comprehend the political struggles of subordinate actors, as Scott aptly vindicates:

> One might argue perhaps that even such practical resistance…amount to nothing more than trivial coping mechanisms that cannot materially affect the overall situation of domination. This is no more real resistance… At one level this is perfectly true but irrelevant since our point is that these are the forms that political struggle takes when frontal assaults are precluded by the realities of power. At another level it is well to recall that the aggregation of thousands upon thousands of such 'petty' acts of resistance have dramatic economic and political effects (Scott 1990 pp. 191-192).

Scott's emphasis on low-level resistance is also applicable to the SSP partnership as well. The street-level practices of SSP Centres show how civil society agencies have kept autonomy and discretion in partnership without triggering overt conflicts with the state. To the subordinate civil society actors who have to rely on state resources, passive and ambiguous resistance can be the most effective means to

retain both internal identities and external resources. Furthermore, the informal resistance of SSP Centres could sometimes develop into more collective forms of resistance. As previously discussed, a few SSP Centres began to experiment with performance manipulation or mass humanities courses. As time went by, these activities proliferated, spawning 'subcultures' that altered the geography of the SSP system inch by inch. Furthermore, without the informal dissemination of welfare knowledge by SSP Centres, SSP Workers' Rights Movements cannot be explained. In this sense, the quotidian activities of SSP Centres serve as the "infra-politics" (Scott 1990 p. 183) of more active resistance.

Interpreting Cartels, Consortiums and Internal Transactions: Needless to say, this research does not make the claim that all forms of street-level resistance are liberating to the same degree as radical social movements. Indeed, defining some survival strategies of the SSP Centres as 'resistance' is especially problematic because they exist on a fine line between 'opposition' and 'adaptation' to the dominant system. For example, Marxist critical scholars might construe cartel or internal trade among SSP Centres as adaptations to capitalist ideologies. Cartel-building and internal transactions between associated organisations are indeed typical protectionist techniques that capitalists themselves may use in order to manipulate market forces.

Nevertheless, defining these practices as mere adaptations is inflexible and dogmatic. Such a view fails to carefully consider the actual intentions of civil society actors and also confuses 'goals' with 'means'; appropriating capitalist marketing strategies such as cartel-building or consortium (means) does not necessarily imply that SSP Centres pursue solely capitalist ideologies (goals). Even if one of the reasons for the formation of cartels, consortiums and internal trade networks was to attain stable profits in the capitalist market, their primary purpose was not simply to 'maximise profits'. Rather, SSP Centres preferred to 'share profits' with other SSP Centres, help them to increase profits and maintain internal solidarity in the competitive environments by utilising capitalist marketing strategies. SSP Centres were willing to sacrifice their own interests and convenience for these reasons. They referred their orders to neighbour Centres or bought products from others even if these had lower quality products or inconvenient locations.

Interpreting Leadership Sharing: Leadership sharing is also a questionable practice. Foucauldians might find that the SSP Centres' attempts to entrust leadership to recipients sounds not dissimilar to one of Foucault's "disciplinary techniques" (1979). Selecting favourable recipients to become recipient-leaders can be viewed as a 'divide and rule' tactic or an instance of 'co-option'. In these situations, employers are likely to mitigate workers' possible opposition by rewarding some diligent workers with promotion. Indeed, when some recipients assumed leadership positions, tensions and divisions occurred between co-opted recipients and the rest.

However, a view that merely regards leadership-sharing as a disciplinary technique also confounds 'goals' with 'effects'. The original intention of leadership-sharing was to make SSP Centres more democratic and participatory by including the voices of recipients in the management of SSP Centres, although this practice led inadvertently to the division of recipients into 'chosens' and 'not-chosens'. However, this side effect does not mean that staff aimed to divide and rule recipients. The reaction of SSP Centres to this matter shows that their aim was not to survey recipients. After witnessing the internal division, SSP Centres began to modify their strategies and expanded authority-sharing to every recipient, rather than continuing to pick out a few recipient-leaders. In this sense, it is rather misleading to label leadership transfer as simply an advanced technique of self-discipline or self-responsibility.

Interpreting Workers' Rights Claims: Critical scholars may denounce workers' rights claims as revisionist strategies in the sense that the claims do not directly reject the liberalist foundation of human rights. The claims do not overturn the existing division between workers and non-workers; rather, they aim to secure gains from the current legal system by asserting that SSP recipients, currently defined as non-workers, are also rightful workers.

However, the workers' rights claims certainly have a transformative potential; they may disrupt discriminative redistribution principles that are deeply seated in social policy, such as the principle of less eligibility. As welfare beneficiaries, workfare participants have to accept this principle. However, if they are recognised as workers, they can enjoy a national minimum income as well as social insurance,

retirement allowance, and menstruation allowance, blurring the division between worker and recipient that existed in the social welfare system. The claim to be 'workfare workers' is thus not merely a symbolic complaint about social stigma; to borrow from Fraser's discussion of 'recognition' and 'redistribution', identity recognition is tightly intertwined with material redistribution because "economic disadvantage and cultural disrespect are entwined with and support one another" (1997 p. 12). In this sense, recipients' rights claims meaningfully problematised the current two-tiered welfare system, discriminating against recipients in favour of workers.

Interpreting Mass Humanities Courses: Some critical scholars might contend that mass humanities courses are not genuine forms of resistance against capitalism in the sense that they do not manifestly espouse anti-capitalist platforms (unlike previous workers' cooperative movements). However, this kind of thought stems from a binary way of thinking in which 'A' can only be defeated by 'anti-A' forces. From the binary standpoint, mass humanities, which do not obviously stand against capitalism, can be degraded. But fundamentally speaking, capitalism (A) and anti-capitalism (anti-A) are biovular twins, having its genesis in economic determinism, as discussed in Chapter 8. As Figure 9-3 visualises, capitalism and anti-capitalism are antagonistic/opposite only in the context of economics.

**Figure 9-3 Transcendent Position of Mass Humanities Course**
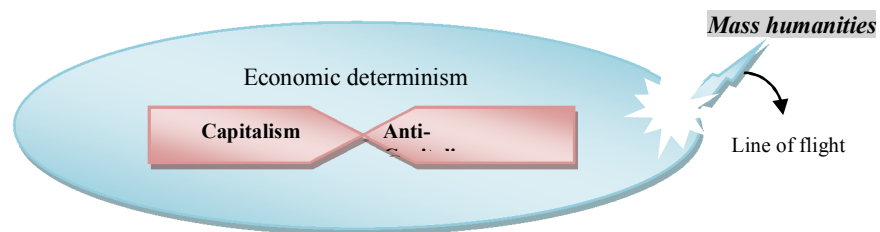


On the other hand, mass humanities classes transcend the economic-focused world, and propose 'B' (non-economic activities) as a solution to 'A' (capitalism). The orientation of mass humanities departs from the binary logic of pro- and anti-capitalism, laying waste to the established terrain of economic determinism. Using Deleuze and Guattari's neologism (1983, 1987), the mass humanities course is a "line of flight" cutting its own way beyond the established paradigm. Of course, the

line of flight is thin and micro-scaled compared to collective anti-capitalist movements. However, as we discussed in Chapter 8, mass humanities courses have done more to change the everyday lives of individual recipients than any macro-ideologies such as Marxism or workers' cooperatives. It led recipients to more active social, cultural and political participation beyond the economic sphere. For this reason, it seems impetuous to characterise mass humanities as a conservative survival strategy. In actuality, it has transformative qualities, surpassing capitalist modernity.

Indeed, in many cases, street-level resistance in SSP Centres opposes the narrow pursuit of economic welfare, and presents transformative paths to a desirable future of social welfare policy. The SSP Centres' non-economic activities shift our focus from workfare to well-being. It is generally agreed that the purpose of social policy is 'normatively' concerned with improving the well-being of individuals, communities and society (Alcock, Glennerster, Oakey, and Sinfield 2001; Dean 2006). Indeed, the term 'well-being' might be used interchangeably with 'welfare'. As Dean indicated, though, the undertones of the two terms are different "because well-being is about how well people *are,* not how well they *do* (strictly speaking, which is what welfare means)" (Dean 2006 p. 1). In essence, well-being implies the holistic conditions of human beings, whereas welfare refers only to physical and material conditions. Between well-being and welfare, existing social policies in modern welfare states have traditionally focused on the improvement of (economic) welfare by providing disadvantaged people with financial resources. It was in this context that some scholars have called for a paradigm shift in social policy away from economic welfare and towards social well-being (Jordan 2008; Kendall and Harker 2002; Searle 2008). They argue that money doesn't necessarily buy happiness and that the link between economic factors and well-being is not as straightforward as conventional economic theory would predict (Dean 2009 p. 313).

Notwithstanding the academic reconsideration of well-being, the contemporary focus of social policies has shifted from 'welfare' to 'workfare', as Figure 9-4 illustrates. Workfare is characterised as economic support in return for the strict fulfilment of work obligations. It is concerned chiefly with what people must *do* rather than who they *are*. Many countries have introduced workfare schemes worldwide, declaring "the end of welfare as we know it" (Lødemel and Trickey

2001; Theodore and Peck 2001; Wad 1999; Kildal 2000).

**Figure 9-4 Workfare, Welfare and Wellbeing**

*General Welfare Trend*        *SSP Centres' Attempts*

| Workfare | Welfare | Well- |
|---|---|---|
| - Work obligation<br>- Conditional economic supports | - Universal economic safety net | - Economic security<br>- Socio-political participation<br>- Cultural activities |
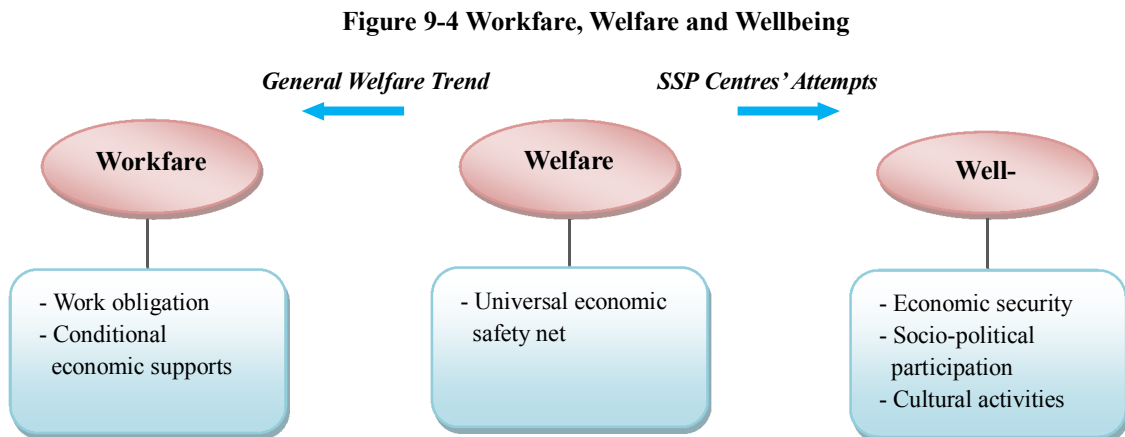
Given this current international tendency to move from 'narrow' welfare to 'narrower' workfare, the street-level activities of SSP Centres SSP Centres follow a unique course that promotes well-being, as shown in Figure 9-4. As we saw in the main chapters, many informal activities of SSP Centres (e.g. leisure circles, social events, participatory decision-making processes and mass humanities courses) are geared towards the holistic improval of quality of life. These informal projects allude to a very real concern about the socio-cultural life of SSP recipients beyond economic self-sufficiency.

Defensive mode of social movement: Given its emancipatory nature, 'defensive' resistance appears to be a more suitable term for street-level activities than the pejorative term 'conservative'. The street-level practices of SSP Centres chime with what some political theories have termed the 'defensive' mode of social movements. Inspired by the Gramscian concepts of 'war of movement' and 'war of position', Cohen and Arato have articulated two opposed strategies of civil society actors that have the potential to emancipate people from dominant political-economic systems: 'offensive' vs. 'defensive' modes of actions (1992 pp. 555-556). An 'offensive' mode of action implies revolutionary social movements directed outwards towards the dominant system. 'Old social movements' like class struggles or revolutions constitute offensive struggles. The 'defensive' mode of movement, on the other hand, is targeted inwards at the lives of the people. As the power of the dominant system interferes with the lifeworlds of people, those individuals are likely to internalise the discourses of the system. Unlike offensive struggles to subvert the system, defensive

actions aim to restore the infrastructure of the autonomous lifeworld. They involve efforts to revive impaired social values, cultural norms or the personal identities of citizens, to re-generate alternative discourses against a system's logic or to re-establish egalitarian and democratic associations within civil society (Cohen and Arato 1992 p. 531). Habermas argued that 'new social movements'— campaigns for social, political and cultural participation, quality of life, self-realisation or human rights — tend to employ defensive modes of action (1981 p. 33).

Applying the two modes, we can see that many of the SSP Centres' activities have something in common with the 'defensive' mode of social movements. The activities attempt to remould the attitudes and mindsets of SSP recipients or change the internal ethos of SSP Centres instead of upsetting the SSP system. Mass humanities courses are intended to encourage self-realisation as well as recipient participation in social, political and cultural affairs. Informal dissemination of welfare knowledge aims also to dissolve the internalised social stigma of recipients and to enlighten them as rightful citizens. Social events, circles or informal titles are designed to restore informal domains of action within SSP Centres. While market division, consortiums or internal trade create solidarity among SSP Centres, recipients' leadership and decision-making participation are also intended to construct a democratic culture. These activities are mostly related to defensive social movements established to recover and protect the lifeworlds of recipients.

Such defensive actions may appear incapable of transforming the system. However, as Alway argues, social transformation involves not only a revolutionary alteration of society, but also the creation and protection of the lifeworld, where alternative ways of thinking can flourish (1995 p. 127). Fraser also offers a vantage point on the interdependencies between 'defensive' and 'offensive' modes of actions (1997 pp. 81-82). She stated that defensive actions can contribute to the mobilisation of subaltern counter-publics by creating "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated groups invent and circulate counter-discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (1997 p. 81). In this way, defensive action can function as a training ground for offensive action. It is in the dialectic between these two modes of action that the emancipation of civil society exists.

In a similar vein, street-level actions of SSP Centres are part of the

emancipatory project. Interpreting the actions in this way does not mean that all the survival strategies will necessarily evolve into conscientious public movements. In fact, when it comes to offensive movements, SSP Centres have tasted bitterness. Often, they have been unable to actualise their original anti-capitalist goal of workers' cooperatives. The 2005 all-out struggle, their first and (so far) only overt confrontation against state intervention met with failure. Nonetheless, in terms of defensive resistance, SSP Centres have certainly produced results. Although their street-level resistances are not overtly subversive, SSP Centres have been trying to invent and circulate internal counter-dominant discourses such as non-economic self-sufficiency, experiments in alternative lifestyles through mass humanities and the re-identification of SSP recipients as right-bearing citizens and workers. They have also created "islands of freedom" (Alexander et al. 1999 p. 467) within SSP Centre offices by forming various social events, circles or informational workshops. Although their political influence on the official policy system might be less immediate than for offensive resistance, the defensive struggles have a significant impact on the daily lives of recipients. In this sense, we should at least acknowledge street-level actions as a bulwark that defends the lifeworlds of recipients against the waves of colonisation by capitalist states.

Reconsidering the Failures and Successes of Social Movements: The findings concerning the SSP Centres' modes of resistance give us the opportunity to reconsider some common methods for determining the successes and failures of social movements. In general, we have evaluated the institutionalisation of social movement organisations as an atrophy of social movements (Feldman 2003; Piven and Cloward 1977). Applying this view to the SSP partnership, the incorporation of anti-poverty movement groups into state-sponsored SSP Centres signifies the expiration of their movements.

However, such immediate judgement should be guarded against for at least two reasons. First, although civil society organisations apparently decided to team up with the state, they could still conceive their own social movement goals within the partnership system. Partnership is normally described as "cooperation to achieve a common goal" (Glendinning et al. 2002 p. 3). But as Chapter 3 illustrated, Korean anti-poverty activists did not sincerely approve of the SSP's official goal. They were

more interested in using the SSP as a means to mobilise recipients for workers' cooperative movements. In short, they would foster their independent goal within the SSP system. Haugaard's elaboration on the degrees of consensus offers helpful insights into partnerships in which participants have divergent goals (1997). Haugaard indicated that consensus and conflict among actors can occur in two dimensions. On one level, actors may agree or disagree on goals; on the other, they may agree or disagree on the means necessary for the realisation of those goals. In these situations, four possible combinations of agreement and disagreement among actors can be proposed, as shown in Figure 9-5: (1) consensus of goals and consensus of means; (2) conflict over goals and consensus of means; (3) consensus of goals and conflict over means; and (4) conflict over goals and conflict over means (see Haugaard 1997 pp. 142-161).

**Figure 9-5 Consensual and Conflictual Situations**
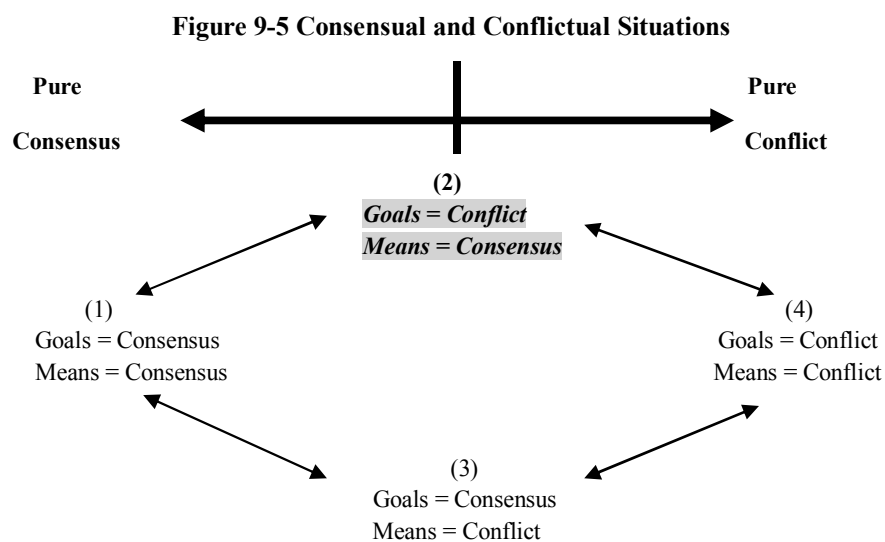


Source: Haugaard (1997 p. 145) modified

When it comes to 'partnership', we are traditionally inclined to think about situation (1): perfect consensus among actors for goals and means. However, to draw on Haugaard's framework, the SSP partnership was constructed in situation (2): the state and civil society actors had consensus in terms of running SSP Centres together (means), but had different visions for how they should be used (goals). In other words, from the beginning of the SSP partnership, the state and anti-poverty organisations harboured seeds of conflict. In a partnership, social movements can be 'dormant' rather than eradicated. In this sense, we cannot instantly equate partnership

with the downfall of social movements.

Of course, the 'succession' of social movement goals does not necessarily imply the 'success' of social movements. As we have discussed in the main chapters, most of initial claims of anti-poverty activists fell through during actual partnership. The original goal of establishing workers' cooperatives was relinquished. The 2005 all-out struggle against state intervention ended without conspicuous gains. When it came to initial intentions, anti-poverty movements proved to be failures. Nonetheless, it would be rash to view the failure of original aspirations as the total washout of anti-poverty movements, not least because unexpected actions have emerged from SSP Centres after a period of time.

For instance, SSP Workers' Rights Movements in 2008 were by no means what anti-poverty organisations had first projected. This was an unintended consequence born when SSP Centre staff happened to be informed by the MOL that SSP recipients could be legally identified as temporary public workers. Nor were mass humanities courses part of anti-poverty activists' initial plans. The alternative pedagogic classes could be organised only *after* SSP Centres came to realise that their ideal goal of workers' cooperatives had clear limitations in terms to bringing poor recipients social well-being and happiness. SSP Workers' Rights Movements and mass humanities courses are irrelevant to the primary movement claims of anti-poverty activists. However, it is difficult to say that the unplanned actions are not the achievements of anti-poverty movements. So far, conventional social movement studies have paid little attention to such unintended actions and consequences of social movements; instead, they have focused almost exclusively on activists' original intentions. However, as Giugni criticised:

> "…studying the ways in which social movements have their demands met is, of course, a legitimate endeavour that will help improve our knowledge of the causal processes involved in social and political change. Yet, like all kinds of actions, the effects of social movements are often indirect, unintended, and sometimes even in contradiction to their goals" (Giugni 1998 p. 386).

Thus, if we deem 'success' to be the attainment of initial movement claims, the broader context of unexpected but meaningful consequences like SSP Workers' Rights Movements or mass humanities is likely to be neglected. This is why Giugni

argues that fixating on a movement's success or failure is "dangerous and problematic because it overstates the intention of movement participants" (1998 p. 383). Given the unexpected outcomes, partnership should not be regarded simply as an extremity of social movements. Since it is always possible for new styles of resistance to germinate within the partnership setting, we need to investigate the politics of partnership over a period of time.

*9.15 Partnership as a Site of Complex Struggles*

The final finding of this study is that the power relations in the state–civil society partnership are complicated, unexpected and versatile. As such, they cannot be explained according to a static domination–subjection model.

Rejecting the Victimisation of Civil Society: First, this study disagrees with the plain description of civil society actors as the 'subordinate victims' of the dominant partnership system. Many critics of partnership have asserted that civil society organisations like Korean anti-poverty organisations have lost their 'original' community-based essence *because* they have adopted a top-down state policy. In this scenario, partnership has become an easy target for reproach in the colonisation of civil society, while civil society actors themselves are simply depicted as the victims of outside threats. The scenario assumes that civil society organisations would have contributed perfectly to the liberation of marginalised people had they been outside of the partnership system.

However, this study finds that the seeds of bureaucratisation and marketisation were latent in civil society organisations *before* these organisations became involved in welfare partnership. As Chapter 7 revealed, from their inception, anti-poverty activists had an undeniable distance from local poor people. Although activists were physically close to slum residents, their socio-economic status and educational backgrounds set them apart from the poor. The higher social statuses of activists led them to leadership roles, while the poor remained policy targets, alienated from the state–civil society partnership. In this sense, it cannot be said that partnership alone led to the bureaucratisation of the relationship between activists and the poor. Rather, partnership unveiled and fortified the hidden hierarchy that had already existed between activists and poor people.

The reason workers' cooperative movements could not achieve success is not simply because of the external pressure of marketisation. The internal discrepancies between activists' ideologies and poor people's needs catalysed marketisation of SSP work projects. As discussed in Chapter 8, the anti-capitalist ideals of Marxism or workers' cooperatives already harboured fatal faults. They did not reflect the real life of the working poor in Korea; instead, they had been imported from foreign countries. Since their anti-capitalist movements were not rooted in poor people's actual needs and desires, they were easily swept away when the waves of marketisation finally broke. In this sense, we cannot accuse the state of the commericalisation of SSP work projects. It is a more accurate to say that the colonisation of civil society organisations (i.e. bureaucratisation, marketisation, depoliticisation) is a consequence not only of partnership, but also of inherent limitations that were conceived before the partnership came into being.

The Dominant System as an Incubator of Resistance: Second, the dominant policy system does not always suppress the spirit of resistance within civil society actors; on the contrary, it can open up a new space for resistance where civil society actors can defend the lifeworlds of low-income individuals against the capitalist state.

In fact, without engagement in the state policy administration, it would have been rather hard for anti-poverty organisations to recognise the special needs of working-age people beyond their own ideologies. For instance, the idea for mass humanities was indeed a result of the actual administration of the SSP. Mass humanities courses could be organised only *after* activists realised the impracticability of their revolutionary visions and the importance of the non-economic needs of recipients. If activists had not had chances to observe the real conditions of recipients at SSP Centres, mass humanities would not have been thought up and executed. In this sense, the SSP partnership setting allowed anti-poverty organisations to develop 'praxis' beyond  mere contemplation (Arendt 1958).

Informational workshops and social rights claims also demonstrate how involvement in top-down state policy can ultimately facilitate bottom-up resistance. After the partnership involvement, anti-poverty organisations became subordinate state agencies prepared to observe statutory rules. Generally speaking, becoming a state-controlled welfare centre can be seen as a disgraceful subjection. However, the

subordinate status of SSP Centres has contributed to the quick and efficient distribution of welfare knowledge to recipients. As state-controlled agencies, SSP Centres are able to receive large volumes of up-to-date welfare rules from the government. This policy information would have remained inaccessible to activists if they were operating outside the public welfare system. To a certain extent, their position as state-controlled agencies resulted in a more efficient acquisition and delivery of welfare knowledge to their recipients, helping them become more knowledgeable about available public services.

In Chapter 6, we saw how conflicts within state bodies accelerated SSP Centres' resistance. Many critical scholars tend (implicitly or explicitly) to assume that the state is a homogenous governing system that exercises a unified hegemonic power over society. Yet the state is actually comprised of diverse specialised ministries, institutions and agencies, and each state body may have disparate opinions and interests in specific matters. Of course, in most ordinary circumstances, the discrepancies among state bodies remain dormant (or at least insignificant), and thus the state may appear to function as a monolithic entity.

However, as we have seen in the discussion of the contrasting viewpoints on SSP recipients put forth by the MOHW and the MOL (Chapter 6), intra-state discrepancies can develop into visible conflicts, intensifying the heterogeneous qualities of the state. Such intra-state discordance can create a rupture in the state system from which civil society actors can benefit. For example, the initiators of SSP Workers' Movements were neither SSP Centre staff nor SSP recipients. The conflicting viewpoints of the MOL and the MOHW on the identity of SSP recipients initiated the movements. The long-pending conflicts between the two ministries halved the hegemonic power of state imperatives because the intra-state conflicts proved that dominant policy discourses on the status of SSP recipients were not the absolute truth. Such intra-state ruptures gave SSP Centres room to manoeuvre, and led SSP recipients to lodge workers' rights claims with the state. This example shows how the state itself can plant the seed of political resistance in civil society actors.

These findings demonstrate that the state policy system can equip civil society agencies with new tools with which actors can continue to defend the voices of the impoverished against the capitalist state. This fact alerts us to the danger of the rigid supposition that the subordinate status of civil society organisations in partnership

may inevitably hamper resistance.

Criticising a Dichotomist Approach to Power Relations: At a deeper level, such findings regarding the complicated power dynamics in the state–civil society partnership raise a fundamental question about the supposed binary logic of power relations that underpin modern political theory. The power dynamics in partnership are complex, ambiguous and unexpected; the street-level forms of resistance are not clearly divided into '(sound) conformity' and '(flawless) subordination'. The street-level resistance cannot be readily defined as 'failed' or 'successful' social movements. Finally, the binary idea of 'subordinate' civil society organisations and the 'suppressive' dominant system might not always hold true in actual partnerships.

This study also rejects the clear-cut division between 'dominant discourses' and 'counter-dominant discourses'. In many political debates, certain types of discourses have been described as, in essence, symbols of dominance. Legal rules and professional knowledge fall under this heading. For instance, Habermas elucidated how the legal-bureaucratic rules of welfare states colonise civil society actors (1987). Foucault also endeavoured to unearth the disciplinary effects of expert knowledge (e.g. law, medicine, social work, psychology) over the bodies and lives of people (1980, 2005). However, as Chapter 6 illustrated, legal knowledge could become a device of resistance, allowing subordinate groups to claim legal rights. Individuals' use of legal knowledge depends almost entirely on their situation. Cartel-building and internal trading are similar cases. These have been viewed as innately pro-capitalist technologies used to protect and maximise the interests of capitalism. However, SSP Centres appropriated the pro-capitalist tactics to safeguard SSP Centres from extremely competitive market environments. From this perspective, typically dominant apparatuses can be appropriated as "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985).

Of course, the opposite is also true; anti-dominant discourses can be appropriated by the dominant system. The 'assimilation principle' is an example. In this case study, organic intellectuals, who strove to assimilate themselves into poor communities, were analogous to street-level welfare workers who administer social services at the local level. Owing to this resemblance, grassroots activists were neatly absorbed into the 'outreach welfare system' as street-level bureaucrats. Taking

another example, the focus of anti-poverty activists on 'work' also became a foundation for the Korean workfare programme. Since the goal of workfare is also to encourage work activities, workers' cooperatives movements could easily be coupled with the work-first policy. As a result, putatively counter-dominant discourses like the assimilation principle or workers' cooperatives movements came to serve as launch pads for the dominant workfare policy in Korea.

Given the unexpected couplings of dominant and counter-dominant discourses, we could say that the political implication of particular discourses is not stationary or preordained. Legal knowledge is not a fixed instrument of the governing power, and assimilation principles are not exclusively counter-dominant practices. No discourse can become a permanent weapon of the strong or of the weak; the uses of discourses are unpredictable, dynamic and uncontrollable.

Deleuze and Guattari's *rhizome* offers an appealing metaphor for the hybrid couplings of discourses. To represent the difference between dichotomy (the modern understanding of discourses) and multiplicity (the post-modern discovery of discourses), they propose a botanical analogy of taproot and rhizome. They first liken binary logic to a taproot with its pivotal spine and tiny surrounding leaves. A taproot-style structure of discourses "plots a point [and] fixes an order" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 p. 7). It is a definitive point out of which a structure develops, having only few points of division and deviation. On the other hand, like the subterranean stem of a bulb or tuber, the structure of a rhizome does not fix an order but creates a multiplicity of connections. It spreads out in an apparently unpredictable manner, propagating fresh plants and making new links. In the preface to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari outline the attributes of rhizome:

> Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature… It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills….When a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoes a metamorphosis (1987 p. 23).

Deleuze and Guattari use the idea of a rhizome to depict the hybrid formation of discourses. Discourses are more like "a tool box", with the potential to be used in multiple ways (Massumi 1987 p. xv). Certain discourses are spoken more frequently in particular situations and have more specific meanings. However, the discourse is not confined to an idiomatic usage. Particular discourses are also connected and contextualised with other disparate discourses. When the discourse changes its direction and joins with others, its original implication undergoes a metamorphosis.

The discourses that constitute the SSP also resemble a rhizomatic network. Figure 9-7 is a simplified picture of the metamorphosis between dominant and counter-dominant discourses in the SSP partnership system. As the figure exhibits, the dominant policy system appropriated putatively anti-dominant discourses like 'assimilation principles'. The political implications inherent in this language were soon dropped or metamorphosed into phrases such as the 'outreach welfare administration model'. The opposite transformation, from dominant to anti-dominant discourses, has also occurred. Cartels and internal transaction, which have been attached predominantly to the dominant classes, were employed by anti-dominant forces in order to minimise the competitive market culture.

Given the versatile usages of discourse, it may be mistaken to have a nihilistic and obstinate view of those that are currently dominant. Many Foucauldians tend to stress the pervasiveness of the dominant power over all aspects of society (e.g. Barry et al. 1996; Burchell et al 1991; Rose and Miller 1992). From their standpoints, civil society agencies in partnership can be seen as being inextricably trapped in dominant discourses. However, there are no particular discourses that are permanently pro-dominance or pro-resistance. If certain discourses are *connected* to the dominant system, they could function for the dominant system, but if *connected* with counter-dominant forces, they could metamorphose into counter-hegemonic discourses. The fact that the usages of discourses are "*in motion*" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 p. 23) renders the political dynamics of the state–civil society partnership both unpredictable and replete with the possibilities of domination, subordination and resistance, beyond a fixed power relationship.

**Figure 9-7 Rhizomatic Connections of Discourses in the SSP Partnership**



*Counter-dominant Discourses*    *(metamorphosis)*    **Discursive Tool Box**    *(metamorphosis)*    *Dominant Discourses*

**Organic Intellectuals**

**Workers' Cooperatives**

**Assimilation Principles**

**Work-oriented Worldview**

**Outreach Welfare**

**Workfare Policy**

**Anti-poverty Organisations**

**Capitalist State**

**Cooperative Culture**

**Social Rights' Claims**

**Cartel, Internal Transaction**

**Knowledge of Law**

**Monopoly, Oligopoly**

**Legal Regulations**

*9.16 Core Contribution of this Study to the Field of Civil Society Politics*

The core contribution of this study stems from its emphasis on *partnership as a space of struggle*. In contrast to the mainstream policy discourses, this study suggests that current forms of partnership do not necessarily entail peaceful coproduction. Nor is it the case that state–civil society partnership leads inevitably to the complete cooption of civil society actors by the state. While civil society organisations are to some extent co-opted, they can continue to create a wide range of strategies to defend the lifeworlds of poor people and maintain a people-centred perspective in relation to a capitalist state. Such street-level resistance makes partnership a complex and protean site of conflict and contestation rather than a linear association of domination–subordination.

In this context, the unveiling of *the street-level micro-resistance in partnership* is a specific and original contribution of this study to knowledge of the political dynamics of partnership. Theoretically, this case study maintains that the traditional understanding of civil society as autonomous and independent space is still valid even in the new era of multi-sectoral partnership. But it also shows that the ways in which civil society agencies retain their spirit of autonomy and resistance in partnership have become more complicated and nuanced than those outside of partnership. Instead of direct and visibly revolutionary actions against the state, civil society organisations tend to express their opposition in unofficial and informal ways, while obtaining material gains within the state system. From the perspective of partnership sceptics, the indirect tactics of civil society actors might be seen as little more than an adjustment to the dominant policy environments. However, this study reveals how seemingly conservative survival strategies may lay the foundations for emancipatory projects, as seen in the examples of SSP Workers' Movements and the Centres' humanities courses.

Such findings concerning the emancipatory potential of projects provide a more balanced picture of the politics of partnership. As we saw in our discussion of the challenges of depoliticisation, bureaucratisation and marketisation, partnership is not a blueprint for the future of civil society actors; one of the state's aims in welfare partnership is to reduce public welfare expenditure by transferring responsibility for people's wellbeing to civil society agencies, which, depending on the availability of subsidies for organisation survival, may become prostheses of the state. Nonetheless,

it would be injudicious to view state–civil society partnerships as simply a drain on the latter's autonomy and independence. As in the case of the everyday struggles of SSP Centres, a wide variety of new forms of resistance can emerge at the street level, and even the characteristics of the state (e.g. the heterogeneous constitution of state organs) can lead to micro-conflicts. Also, as we saw in the discussion of the rhizomatic connection of diverse discourses within the SSP partnership (Figure 9-7), none of these discourses inevitably or invariably sustain mainstream policy assumptions. When, for example, SSP Centre staff and recipients counter-utilise legal regulation and welfare knowledge to claim legal rights, dominant policy discourses, which normally work to regulate poor people, can be unexpectedly appropriated as weapons of resistance by civil society actors. The existence of everyday modes of resistance and the unpredictability of power dynamics in partnership leave civil society organisations a sense of optimism about their potential for autonomy and emancipation in a partnership setting.

## 9.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

We have so far discussed the theoretical implications of this case study, but there are, moreover, three practical limitations and suggestions that one would do well to address in further studies.

### 9.21 Time-restricted Research

First, this study involved time-restricted research. While many existing case studies of partnership have been concerned with a relatively short period of time, this study has strived to take a historical approach. As Farrington and his colleagues observed, "partnership is an evolving process which has both passive and active elements over time" (1993 p. 159). Accepting their observation, this study attempted to closely examine the evolving process of the SSP over an extended period of time, running from the pre-partnership era (1964-1995) to the current partnership stage (1996-2010). Even after the two periods of fieldwork (in 2005 and 2008), the researcher continually reviewed and updated data according to the changes of the SSP. The historical approach has allowed us to discover unexpected consequences and political struggles within the SSP system, which otherwise would have gone undetected.

However, this study could not discuss all of the events that might bring about

considerable structural changes to the SSP system in the future. For example, during the interviews with central officials in 2008, the researcher happened to hear of an internal government scheme that was currently underway. Learning from the Job Services Australia, which has commissioned its frontline agencies both to non-profits and for-profits, the Korean government planned to invite for-profits as well as non-profit anti-poverty organisations to operate local SSP Centres. The MOHW even directly contacted Ingeus, a for-profit Job Services Australia provider, in order to concretise the plan. This project was being called the 'Workfare Advancement Scheme' (MOHW 2008d). However, because the scheme was not yet being enforced at the time of writing, this research could not deal with this issue in the main chapters, despite the fact that it is likely to cause profound changes in the SSP system, stirring up the seismic wave of marketisation. Further investigation on the advancement scheme and its effect on non-profit SSP Centres may be necessary to account for its potential impact.

*9.22 Missing Power Relation*

Second, this study did not discuss the power relations between anti-poverty activists and professional social workers in the field of the SSP. During the fieldwork, the researcher discovered that the government had tried to incorporate SSP Centres into a list of government-authorised social welfare institutions. As Chapter 2 briefly addressed, the Korean government has regulated traditional social welfare institutions under the Social Welfare Institution Law since the authoritarian regime. However, as they originated from anti-poverty organisations, many SSP Centres had distinguished themselves from the traditional government-controlled social welfare institutions. But on January 24, 2005, the MOHW announced an amended Social Welfare Institution Law, which now classified SSP Centres as a type of 'government-permitted' social welfare institution (see Table 9-1 below) (MOHW 2005b).

**Table 9-1 Government-permitted Social Welfare Institutions**

| Type of Social Welfare Institutions | Related Social Welfare Laws |
|---|---|
| Community Social Welfare Centres | Social Welfare Services Law |
| Nursing Homes | Welfare of the Aged Law |
| Orphanages | Child Welfare Law |
| Accommodations for the disabled | Welfare of Disabled Persons Law |
| Single Mom Shelters | Single-Parent Family Welfare Law |
| Shelters for the Homeless; Drop-in Centres | Welfare Law for the Homeless |
| Mental Hospitals | Mental Health Law |
| **Self-sufficiency Promotion Centre** | **National Basic Livelihood Guarantee Law** |
| Community Centres for the Elderly | Special Act on Public Health and Welfare for Agricultural and Fishing Village Residents |

Source: MOHW (2005b), partly omitted

Note: underlined institutions are newly included in 2005.

This official authorisation provided legal grounds on which the state could regulate SSP Centres more closely. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Social Welfare Institution Law contained specific guidelines for every state-sponsored welfare agency, including several concerning staff recruitment (Gwanak District Office 2006). For instance, state-sponsored welfare institutions are supposed to employ staff through an open application process and to recruit more than one qualified social worker (MOHW 2005b pp. 10-24). This guidance on recruitment has affected the personnel of activist-run SSP Centres. Because of the regulation regarding open job applications, it has become difficult for SSP Centres to recruit their own activist colleagues. Also, since it became a legal duty to employ qualified social workers, some junior staff vacancies have begun to be offered to qualified social workers who have no connection with social activism. As a result, many social workers are not working at activist-run SSP Centres.

Until recently, former activists with firsthand experience of anti-government movements have held higher positions than social workers in SSP Centres as directors or senior staff. Nonetheless, the decrease in the number of direct successors to anti-government activism in SSP Centres is inevitable; indeed, it may well serve to blunt the critical edge of SSP Centres in the future, especially once social workers are able to obtain higher posts at therein. The researcher was also able to observe how activist-run SSP Centres were preparing certain buffers for the potential crisis. Some SSP Centres only recruited social workers who had experienced student union

activism, and some activist-staff tried to acquire social work qualification themselves in order to fill the social workers' quota. Due to the word limit of the thesis, however, the effect of the SSP Centres' registration as social welfare institutions and the counter-actions of activist-run SSP Centres could not be explored in the main chapters. Further discussion on this issue may be required.

*9.23 Suggesting Comparative Studies*

Lastly, this study calls for comparative analysis on the politics of state–civil society partnerships. As a single case study, this research does not claim to have found universal characteristics that may be straightforwardly applied to all partnership projects. Indeed, the peculiar characteristics of Korean society, such as its short experience of the democratic state and the remaining legacy of strong anti-government movements, may be the main driving forces behind current hegemonic struggles in state–civil society partnership projects. The political conflicts between the state and civil society actors in western developed countries may be more institutionalised and stabilised, judging by their long histories of democracy and the voluntary sector. Nonetheless, some of the implications of the Korean SSP partnership may still provide theoretical insights for interpreting the politics of partnership projects in other countries. In particular, comparing and contrasting the SSP with Job Services Australia, which likewise utilises civil society organisations as workfare service providers (Wright, Marston and McDonald 2011), could prove an interesting future research topic. In Britain, meanwhile, the issue of state–civil society relations is currently re-surfacing after the Cameron government launched the 'Big Society' as their flagship policy idea in 2010 (e.g. Alcock 2010; Bubb 2010; McCabe 2010; Wind-Cowie 2010). The Big Society manifesto involves civil society actors committing to public service, supporting cooperative enterprises and encouraging community organisations to play active roles in neighbourhood projects. Although the socio-historical contexts are quite different, some plans for the Big Society resemble the Korean SSP partnership, which invites community organisations to become frontline welfare agencies. In this sense, this case study will be able to offer a helpful framework through which to forecast possible political dynamics between the government and civil society actors in the Big Society.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 List of Anti-Poverty Activists (SSP Centre staff) Interviewed

| Code | Name (pseudonym) | Interview Year | Activist's Generation | Sex | Affiliation (pseudonym) | Position |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AP-2005-01 | Chungsung Kwon | 2005 | 2$^{nd}$ | M | Norae SSP Centre | Director |
| AP-2005-02 | Junseob Yoon | 2005 | 3$^{rd}$ | M | Norae SSP Centre | Junior |
| AP-2005-03 | Hosanna Jung | 2005 | 1$^{st}$ | M | Pajong SSP Centre | Director |
| AP-2005-04 | Kido Lee | 2005 | 3$^{rd}$ | F | Kuwon SSP Centre | Senior |
| AP-2008-05 | Hyangsuk Kim | 2008 | 3$^{rd}$ | F | Kuwon SSP Centre | Senior |
| AP-2008-06 | Chungsim Kwak | 2008 | 2$^{nd}$ | M | Junim SSP Centre | Senior |
| AP-2008-07 | Sangrok Oh | 2008 | 3$^{rd}$ | M | Junim SSP Centre | Junior |
| AP-2008-08 | Hyeongsu Kim | 2008 | 3$^{rd}$ | F | Sungdo SSP Centre | Senior |
| AP-2008-09 | Jaewoo Chun | 2008 | 3$^{rd}$ | M | Sungdo SSP Centre | Junior |
| AP-2008-10 | Sungsu Hong | 2008 | 2$^{nd}$ | M | Younggwang Centre | Senior |
| AP-2008-11 | Seungri Lee | 2008 | 3$^{rd}$ | M | Gwangye SSP Centre | Senior |
| AP-2008-12 | Jungenu Choi | 2008 | 2$^{nd}$ | F | Enhye SSP Centre | Director |
| AP-2008-13 | Nari Woo | 2008 | 3$^{rd}$ | F | Enhye SSP Centre | Junior |
| AP-2008-14 | Wonjung Kim | 2008 | 3$^{rd}$ | M | Kangrim SSP Centre | Senior |
| AP-2005-15 | Juni Chai | 2005 | 2$^{nd}$ | M | KASSPC | Senior |
| AP-2005-16 | Sungbae Lee | 2005 | 3$^{rd}$ | M | KASSPC | Senior |
| AP-2008-17 | Seongja Lee | 2008 | 3$^{rd}$ | M | KASSPC | Senior |
| AP-2008-18 | Sungsu Lee | 2008 | 3$^{rd}$ | M | KASSPC | Senior |
| AP-2005-19 | Seongoh Kim | 2005 | 1$^{st}$ | M | KIWC | Director |
| AP-2005-20 | Euisun Lyu | 2005 | 3$^{rd}$ | F | National Alliance | Leading activist |

**Appendix 2 List of SSP Recipients Interviewed**

| Code | Name (pseudonym) | Interview Year | Sex | SSP Work Project | Affiliation (pseudonym) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR-2005-01 | Sunju Lee | 2005 | F | Care-giving | Kuju SSP Centre |
| WR-2005-02 | Youngsun Leem | 2005 | F | Care-giving | Kuju SSP Centre |
| WR-2005-03 | Yunyeong Lee | 2005 | F | Care-giving | Kuju SSP Centre |
| WR-2005-04 | Miyong Park | 2005 | F | Cleaning | Kuju SSP Centre |
| WR-2005-05 | Myeongsu Choi | 2005 | M | Cleaning | Dori SSP Centre |
| WR-2005-06 | Donghun Lee | 2005 | M | Construction | Dori SSP Centre |
| WR-2005-07 | Bora Kim | 2005 | M | Construction | Dori SSP Centre |
| WR-2008-08 | Namhee Oh | 2008 | F | Care-giving | Kuwon SSP Centre |
| WR-2008-09 | Jaejin Park | 2008 | M | Bike-renting | Sungdo SSP Centre |
| WR-2008-10 | Jinhyeok Choi | 2008 | M | Bike-renting | Sungdo SSP Centre |
| WR-2008-11 | Hanbit Lee | 2008 | F | Care-giving | Enhye SSP Centre |
| WR-2008-12 | Bangmi Kim | 2008 | F | Care-giving | Enhye SSP Centre |
| WR-2008-13 | Miae Jo | 2008 | F | Care-giving | Junim SSP Centre |
| WR-2008-14 | Jaekyeong Yang | 2008 | M | Furniture-making | Kangseo SSP Centre |

**Appendix 3 List of State Officials Interviewed**

| Code | Name (pseudonym) | Interview Year | Sex | Government | Affiliation (pseudonym) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GO-2005-01 | Suhyeon Kim | 2005 | M | Central Government | MOHW |
| GO-2008-02 | Soyoung Kim | 2005 | F | Central Government | MOHW |
| GO-2008-03 | Hyeongju Lee | 2005 | F | Central Government | MOHW |
| GO-2008-04 | Hori Kim | 2005 | M | Local Government | Innae District Office |
| GO-2008-05 | Jihei Jang | 2005 | F | Local Government | Sarang Village Office |
| GO-2008-06 | Woojin Nam | 2005 | M | Local Government | Wanju Village Office |
| GO-2008-07 | Hyeyoun Park | 2005 | F | Local Government | Wanju Village Office |
| GO-2008-08 | Juhe Nam | 2008 | F | Local Government | Deok District Office |