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**South Korea's democratic  
social movements: how they  
impacted South Korea's history  
and consequently influenced its  
foreign  
policy with Japan.**

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## **Abstract.**

The 1980s represented a turning point for South Korea compared to the previous three decades. Although the First Republic of South Korea started out as a democratic government, it has become more and more autocratic over time. Furthermore, following its collapse during the 1960s, the four successive South Korean republics were run by autocratic military governments that left room for democracy only on a theoretical level and not on a practical level. The absence of democracy and the persistence in government of oppressive autocratic regimes fueled a strong revolutionary sentiment not only on the part of citizens but also on the part of prominent political figures. Their commitment to the democratic cause and sometimes their sacrifice in severely repressed uprisings led to a fundamental political turning point in the country which consolidated with the Sixth Republic at the dawn of the 1990s.

Can it be affirmed that social movements are able to intervene in one country's policy making?

The focus of this thesis is precisely on the democratic social movements present in South Korea during the 1980s, and the way in which they were influential not only as regards the internal politics of the country but above all as regards foreign policy. Therefore, the main aim of this thesis is to show how social movements, in this case the democratic social movements in South Korea, were able to intervene and influence the policy and decision making of the country. In the specific case of this thesis, it will be shown how, following the wake of social movements for democracy occurred in 1980s, different types of social movements consequently developed to highlight important unresolved issues between Japan and South Korea, thus influencing the international relations between the two countries. Through this analysis, it will be explained how not only the perception towards Japan but also the demands towards Japan have changed due to the rediscovery of historical and social issues previously set aside by South Korean autocratic regimes and thanks to democracy, which granted citizens the freedom of speech.

## **Riassunto.**

La Corea del Sud e il Giappone sono due paesi noti per la loro meravigliosa cultura, per la loro interessante storia e soprattutto, per le relazioni spesso altalenanti intercorse tra loro.

La ragione per cui queste relazioni sono risultate problematiche nel corso degli anni, risiede negli avvenimenti storici che hanno contraddistinto il periodo in cui il Giappone, dal 1910 al 1945, ha colonizzato la penisola sudcoreana. Il colonialismo giapponese è stato fonte di grande sofferenza per gli abitanti della Corea, non solo in passato, in quanto anche nei recenti anni queste vicende sono state riportate alla luce e continuano ad essere motivo di incomprendimento tra i governi dei due paesi coinvolti.

A seguito della Seconda Guerra Mondiale che comportò la resa del Giappone, ebbero inizio delle trattative tra il governo di quest'ultimo e della Corea del Sud che avevano come obiettivo la normalizzazione dei rapporti fra i due paesi, in funzione di una stretta collaborazione, aiuto reciproco e in vista di un futuro prospero per entrambi. Il 1965 segna infatti un momento importante dal punto di vista storico in quanto, dopo anni di negoziati, i governi dei due paesi giunsero finalmente ad un accordo, firmando il cosiddetto "Treaty On Basic Relations Between Japan and Republic of Korea". La firma di questo Trattato però, comportò un grande sacrificio, vale a dire, tralasciare delle importanti questioni storiche avvenute durante il periodo coloniale giapponese, un sacrificio che tuttavia non fu ben accolto dalla popolazione sudcoreana.

Entrambi i governi coinvolti, in funzione di una stretta collaborazione economica e di sicurezza, decisero di ignorare le problematiche scaturite dal colonialismo giapponese. Nonostante ciò, i cittadini sudcoreani in questa prima fase tentarono, invano, di esprimere il proprio disaccordo. Tuttavia, la libertà di espressione non era contemplata durante le prime Repubbliche sudcoreane, in quanto, specialmente durante il regime di Park Junghee, il governo condusse una durissima repressione nei confronti di qualsiasi forma di dissenso. Non risulta difficile comprenderlo specialmente se si considera che, proprio grazie al Presidente Park Junghee, fu firmato il Trattato tra il Giappone e la Corea del Sud. Park, era fortemente ispirato dal Giappone sia dal punto di vista economico che tecnologico, ed aveva come obiettivo quello di rendere la Corea del Sud un paese altrettanto forte e degno di rispetto nel panorama internazionale. Per farlo, il Presidente era determinato a seguire il proprio progetto politico e non era disposto a cedere ad alcuna protesta.

Tutto questo però, cambiò a seguito del 1987, anno in cui finalmente in Corea del Sud venne instaurato un regime democratico, dopo decenni di dittature mascherate da Repubbliche. Quest'anno così significativo dal punto di vista storico e politico, suscita un'importante domanda: che cosa ha permesso un cambiamento di tali proporzioni dopo decenni in cui i regimi dittatoriali in Corea del Sud sembravano ormai una prassi consolidata? Inoltre, cosa ha comportato successivamente?

La seguente tesi, si concentra su ciò che ha costituito il fattore di tale cambiamento, vale a dire i movimenti sociali democratici presenti in Corea del Sud durante gli anni Ottanta. L'obiettivo di questo elaborato è dimostrare come, i suddetti movimenti sociali, abbiano non solo permesso alla democrazia di affermarsi in Corea del Sud, ma abbiano anche scaturito dei cambiamenti su larga scala durati nel tempo, specialmente per quanto riguarda le relazioni tra quest'ultimo e il Giappone. Infatti, la tesi mostra come a seguito dell'affermazione della democrazia dopo il 1987, sia stato possibile per la società civile un considerevole sviluppo, che ha permesso alle varie organizzazioni sociali nate in questa fase di intervenire attivamente nella politica sudcoreana. Inoltre, i movimenti sociali democratici degli anni Ottanta hanno riportato alla luce problematiche importanti risalenti al periodo coloniale giapponese che erano state messe da parte nei decenni precedenti. Questo, ha permesso alle varie organizzazioni civili sudcoreane di chiedere giustizia in merito alle questioni storiche lasciate in sospeso, il che ha considerevolmente influenzato e continua ad influenzare, oggi, i rapporti tra i governi della Corea del Sud e del Giappone.

Nel primo capitolo della tesi, viene discusso il concetto generale di movimento sociale: attraverso gli esempi di vari studiosi, è possibile notare che questi sono spinti principalmente da ragioni storiche, sociali e politiche. Tali fattori sono riscontrabili specialmente nei movimenti sociali per la democrazia sudcoreani degli anni Ottanta: queste organizzazioni hanno lottato per sovvertire un sistema politico ingiusto, che violava i diritti umani e non garantiva ai cittadini né libertà di parola né giustizia in merito a controversie ritenute importanti. Al fine di mostrare il grande cambiamento avvenuto rispetto al passato, il secondo capitolo della tesi accenna brevemente al periodo coloniale giapponese nella penisola coreana. Ciò, aiuta a comprendere perché tuttora, per i sudcoreani, sia impossibile dimenticare gli eventi accaduti durante tale periodo storico.

A seguito di questo breve accenno, il capitolo si concentra principalmente sul “Treaty On Basic Relations Between Japan and Republic of Korea”, a partire dalle trattative attraverso le quali è stato possibile raggiungere tale risultato fino agli accordi pattuiti a seguito della sua ratifica. All’indomani della Seconda Guerra Mondiale e soprattutto a seguito della Guerra di Corea, la Corea del Sud era un paese fortemente impoverito che necessitava nuove tecnologie ed uno sviluppo economico. Per questa ragione, il Giappone risultava un valido alleato per raggiungere tale obiettivo, dal momento che sotto questi punti di vista risultava un paese all’avanguardia in Asia.

D’altro lato, per il governo giapponese, ristabilire i rapporti con la Corea del Sud risultava economicamente vantaggioso, specialmente per quanto riguardava le esportazioni. Inoltre, considerando il periodo storico contraddistinto dal concetto di Guerra Fredda, per il governo statunitense era fondamentale far riconciliare finalmente il Giappone e la Corea del Sud, al fine di avere due validi alleati che potessero anche collaborare pacificamente tra loro contro i paesi comunisti in Asia, i quali rappresentavano una grande preoccupazione. Questi fattori di convenienza e sicurezza spinsero i governi del Giappone e della Corea del Sud a raggiungere finalmente un accordo nel 1965. Con la firma del “Treaty On Basic Relations Between Japan and Republic of Korea” avvenuta nello stesso anno, i governi dei due paesi stabilivano relazioni pacifiche e di mutua collaborazione, specialmente orientata verso lo sviluppo economico. Si realizzava così un obiettivo del Presidente sudcoreano Park Junghee, salito al potere nel 1963. Park, che in gioventù aveva ricevuto formazione presso l’accademia militare giapponese in Manciuria, era fortemente ispirato dal Giappone sotto diversi punti di vista, in particolare quello economico, e mirava a rendere la Corea del Sud un paese altrettanto all’avanguardia: mettere da parte le questioni storiche sorte durante il periodo coloniale giapponese era per il Presidente un sacrificio necessario, nonostante i cittadini sudcoreani avessero tentato di protestare in merito al Trattato già durante le negoziazioni precedenti al 1965.

Il terzo capitolo della tesi, mostra infatti come Park Junghee si impegnò, specialmente durante i primi anni del suo mandato, a rinnovare la Corea del Sud non solo per quanto riguarda la struttura amministrativa del paese, ma anche economicamente. Infatti, in questo capitolo, particolare attenzione è rivolta ai rapporti tra la Corea del Sud e il Giappone in questa fase, dei rapporti particolarmente proficui dal punto di vista economico e i quali incentivarono le esportazioni.

La cooperazione tra i due paesi fu in questa fase notevole: i governi della Corea del Sud e il Giappone si impegnarono ad organizzare diverse conferenze, durante le quali venivano discusse collaborazioni economiche e di sicurezza. Tali relazioni floride sono molto diverse rispetto a quelle sviluppatesi a seguito dell'affermazione della democrazia avvenuta in Corea del Sud dopo il 1987: ciò, aiuta anche a comprendere meglio il grande cambiamento conseguito dai movimenti sociali democratici sudcoreani degli anni Ottanta. In seguito, nel terzo capitolo, viene spiegata l'ultima fase della presidenza di Park Junghee, fino alla sua morte avvenuta nel 1979. Nell'ultima fase, la politica di Park si inasprì considerevolmente, in particolare a seguito della promulgazione della costituzione Yushin. Questa equivaleva ad un perenne stato di legge marziale nel paese, inoltre, garantiva al Presidente dei poteri tali da rendere ardua qualsiasi forma di protesta nei suoi confronti. Infatti, numerose furono le purghe non solo all'interno del proprio partito, ma ci furono anche numerose repressioni nei confronti della popolazione che tentava di ribellarsi a questa dura condizione in cui era costretta a vivere e alle decisioni discutibili prese dal Presidente. La goccia che fece traboccare il vaso fu la rivolta di Pusan del 1979, una rivolta che Park Junghee tentò di reprimere con la violenza nonostante il dissenso da parte di un suo stretto collaboratore, nonché capo della Korean Central Intelligence Agency, Kim Jaekyu. Fu proprio quest'ultimo che lo assassinò, ponendo fine ad un regime durato quasi vent'anni. Il terzo capitolo, dunque, aiuta a comprendere non solo come fossero i rapporti tra la Corea del Sud e il Giappone in una fase positiva, ma anche cosa aveva patito la popolazione sudcoreana durante gli anni del duro regime di Park. Quest'ultimo concetto è particolarmente importante in quanto, a seguito della morte di Park la situazione addirittura peggiorò, ma fu proprio ciò a spingere i movimenti democratici sudcoreani degli anni Ottanta ad agire.

Nel quarto capitolo, infatti, viene presentata la situazione immediatamente successiva alla morte di Park Junghee: una situazione di forte incertezza, precarietà, che portò all'instaurazione di un debole governo provvisorio che, tuttavia, non si dimostrò in grado di colmare l'enorme vuoto lasciato da Park, il quale durante il suo regime aveva privato la Corea del Sud di personalità politiche in grado di succedergli. Approfittò di questa situazione il Generale Jeon: attraverso un preciso piano politico, riuscì ad essere nominato capo della Korean Central Intelligence Agency, nonostante fosse già il comandante del Defense Security Command.

Questo gli garantiva dei poteri tali da suscitare un forte dissenso e sdegno da parte della popolazione sudcoreana che, nel maggio 1980, insorse. La rivolta di Kwangju avvenuta nel maggio 1980 è particolarmente significativa per la storia sudcoreana, non solo per la violenza con la quale questa venne repressa per ordine del Generale Jeon, ma anche perché diede inizio ad una fase di proteste da parte della popolazione sudcoreana che culminò nel giugno 1987, quando finalmente i movimenti sociali per la democrazia sudcoreani riuscirono a raggiungere il loro obiettivo. A seguito della Rivolta di Kwangju, il Generale Jeon rinunciò alle posizioni di potere sopraelencate per farsi nominare Presidente nell'agosto 1980. La Presidenza di Jeon, contraddistinta da politiche interne severissime nei confronti della popolazione, è segnata da numerose proteste da parte dei cittadini sudcoreani: è proprio negli anni Ottanta, infatti, che le organizzazioni sociali sudcoreane decisero finalmente di agire in modo coeso, spinte da precise ideologie, obiettivi e riposando su solidi metodi organizzativi.

Nel quarto capitolo, vengono elencate le ideologie principali su cui i movimenti sociali per la democrazia sudcoreani si basavano, unite alla spiegazione dei dibattiti che davano vita a precise strategie politiche da adottare. In questi dibattiti, erano numerosi i riferimenti alla storia coreana, perciò, non sorprende che poi queste tematiche riemersero nel momento in cui la democrazia e la libertà di parola si affermarono in Corea del Sud. I movimenti sociali per la democrazia sudcoreani degli anni Ottanta, quindi, hanno influenzato la società civile sudcoreana dei decenni successivi anche in questo senso, per quanto riguarda le tematiche, esortando i cittadini a protestare per avere giustizia anche in merito alle questioni del passato coloniale giapponese che erano state messe da parte. In questo capitolo, inoltre, attraverso la spiegazione dei metodi organizzativi delle suddette organizzazioni, appare chiaro il motivo per cui negli anni Ottanta le proteste ebbero poi successo a differenza di quelle tentate durante il regime di Park. Qui, infatti, si spiega come i movimenti sociali che combattevano per la democrazia in questa fase tentarono di coinvolgere anche le masse, i lavoratori, coordinando le proteste fra i vari gruppi sociali per una maggiore efficacia, cessando di essere delle organizzazioni che interessavano principalmente gli studenti come negli anni precedenti. Furono questi fattori a garantire finalmente il successo dei movimenti sociali per la democrazia negli anni Ottanta. Il capitolo segue citando le maggiori rivolte che hanno contraddistinto tale decade in Corea del Sud, le quali culminarono nella cosiddetta "Rivoluzione di Giugno" del 1987.

Quando il Presidente Jeon, in questo mese, comunicò di aver nominato No Taewoo come suo successore in occasione delle elezioni presidenziali indirette, la popolazione sudcoreana insorse. Le proteste raggiunsero l'apice con la "Grand Peace March", occasione in cui un milione di cittadini sudcoreani manifestarono. A questo punto, No Taewoo decise arbitrariamente di comunicare il 29 giugno 1987, un piano di democratizzazione che prevedeva soprattutto l'accettazione delle richieste mosse dalla popolazione sudcoreana. Iniziava così il processo di democratizzazione della Corea del Sud e veniva raggiunto l'obiettivo per il quale le organizzazioni sociali per la democrazia sudcoreane avevano lottato per decenni.

Il quarto capitolo, dunque, si occupa di analizzare i movimenti sociali per la democrazia sudcoreani non solo dal punto di vista ideologico e organizzativo, ma anche per quanto riguarda le principali proteste di cui sono stati artefici e i risultati raggiunti. Tali organizzazioni, hanno costituito, a mio avviso, il fattore di cambiamento principale non solo per quanto riguarda la politica interna della Corea del Sud, ma anche per quanto riguarda le relazioni col Giappone. Avevano creato una condizione di democrazia nella quale la società civile poteva fiorire: quest'ultima, ispirata dal successo dei movimenti sociali per la democrazia degli anni Ottanta e influenzata dalle tematiche affrontate da quest'ultimi durante i loro dibattiti, cominciò durante gli anni Novanta a sottolineare l'importanza di questioni lasciate in sospeso, in particolare quelle col Giappone, sollecitando il governo sudcoreano a prendere dei provvedimenti. Infatti, nella parte conclusiva del quarto capitolo, attraverso esempi concreti, viene mostrato come la società civile sudcoreana degli anni Novanta riuscì ad intervenire nella politica estera del paese, ponendo l'accento sulle controversie col Giappone tanto da spingere il governo sudcoreano ad adottare una dura politica nei confronti di quest'ultimo, al fine di ricevere giustizia in merito alla questione delle donne di conforto coreane, alla controversia legata ai libri di testo scolastici giapponesi e al territorio conteso delle Rocce di Liancourt.

Se si considera il modo in cui, prima del 1987, risultava impossibile ai cittadini sudcoreani esprimere una qualsiasi forma di dissenso, intervenire nella politica del proprio paese o chiedere al governo di risolvere le controversie col Giappone e lo si paragona con la situazione presente negli anni Novanta, appare ulteriormente evidente quanto grande sia il cambiamento portato dai movimenti sociali per la democrazia degli anni Ottanta e il contributo su più livelli che questi hanno dato, anche indirettamente, nel lungo periodo.



A riprova di quest'affermazione, è sufficiente considerare che la tendenza a lottare per far valere le proprie richieste, tra cui la risoluzione di controversie storiche col Giappone, incominciata dai movimenti sociali per la democrazia degli anni Ottanta e proseguita dalle organizzazioni degli anni Novanta, non è svanita nemmeno negli anni recenti: infatti, la società civile sudcoreana ha continuato ad intervenire in merito alle relazioni tra il proprio paese e il Giappone. Nella parte relativa alle conclusioni di questa tesi, viene fatto riferimento alle proteste avanzate dalla società civile sudcoreana in merito alla controversia delle donne di conforto coreane, la quale ha causato una condizione di particolare tensione tra i governi della Corea del Sud e del Giappone dal 2015 al 2019. Tale questione non fu l'unica a suscitare incomprensioni tra i governi dei due paesi in quanto, nella stessa decade, i cittadini sudcoreani supportati dal proprio governo, chiesero che il governo giapponese facesse riferimento nei siti industriali di Kyushu e Yamaguchi all'impiego di coreani in lavori forzati durante il periodo coloniale.

Riassumendo, è possibile concludere dicendo che, i movimenti sociali democratici degli anni Ottanta, non solo hanno consentito l'instaurazione della democrazia, ma sono stati importanti anche per gli anni Novanta, in quanto hanno permesso lo sviluppo di una società civile propugnatrice di questioni storiche e capace anche di influenzare i rapporti tra Giappone e Corea del Sud. In secondo luogo, hanno continuato ad esercitare la propria influenza anche negli ultimi tempi, poiché la tendenza che hanno instaurato non si è mai interrotta. Le questioni riguardanti il passato coloniale non sono più state messe da parte dopo gli anni '90. In primo luogo, perché non ci sono più le esigenze di sviluppo economico che avrebbero potuto indurre i governi dei due paesi coinvolti a ignorare ancora le polemiche storiche, in secondo luogo perché ormai la società civile sudcoreana non è solo capace di intervenire nella politica estera del Paese, ma è anche determinata a ricevere giustizia per questioni considerate importanti. Infine, la tendenza del governo sudcoreano ad ascoltare le preoccupazioni della società civile, instaurata anche negli anni Novanta grazie ai movimenti democratici sudcoreani, non si è fermata. Di conseguenza, è possibile a mio avviso affermare che, i movimenti democratici sudcoreani degli anni Ottanta, sono stati capaci di intervenire non solo nella politica interna del proprio paese, ma anche di influenzare con i propri successi e ideologie a distanza di decenni, i rapporti tra la Corea del Sud e il Giappone.

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## **Chapter 1. Methodological approach and chapters' outline.**

### **1.1 Methodological approach.**

South Korea and Japan are known for their wonderful culture, their interesting history and above all, the often-fluctuating relations between them. The years between 1910 and 1945 left an indelible mark, to the point that many scholars have wondered if the South Korean and Japanese governments could one day collaborate having definitively overcome the controversies that involve the two countries. Their relations were flourishing from 1965, the year in which the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea was signed, up to the recent 1990s, a phase in which there was the consolidation of democracy in the latter country. Starting from this period, relations became difficult again.

Therefore, the first question that arises is: what was the factor that contributed to such a change? Careful studies and research led me to hypothesize that it was the South Korean democratic social movements of the 1980s. To corroborate this belief of mine, I began to conduct research on several levels to demonstrate that, in fact, the democratic movements that developed here in the 1980s influenced relations between Japan and South Korea, due to historical, political, and social reasons.

The approach used to write this thesis was a mainly qualitative one. The sources consulted for the documentation and for the elaboration of the research plan are qualitative sources taken from articles or books specialized in the topics addressed: social movements, the history of Korea, the history of Japan, international relations, social problems linked to history. The qualitative research was conducted through books found in my university library, for example Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel's "The Park Chung Hee Era. The transformation of South Korea", Larry Diamond and Byung-Kook Kim's "Consolidating Democracy in South Korea" and Mi Park's "Democracy and Social Change: a History of South Korean Student Movements, 1980-2000". Moreover, the research was also conducted by referring to online articles published by major universities around the world, such as Oxford University, University of California, Cambridge University and Harvard University. To structure the thesis adequately, and therefore to formulate the research question regarding how the democratic social movements of the 1980s intervened in the long term, mainly regarding the international relations between South Korea and Japan, it was necessary to think starting from the basic concept of social movement.

The first question used as a starting point was: what are social movements mainly stimulated by? What are the reasons, in general, that encourage them to gather and act to achieve a goal that could potentially lead to changes in the long term and on several levels? The theories of the new social movements distance themselves from the Marxist approach, which exalted the economic component as a major stimulus for social movements, and consequently overshadowed the social logics, which instead become a priority as regards the new social movements.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, many theorists of the new social movements extol politics, ideologies, cultures, and gender as important stimulating factors of the new social movements.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, from the research conducted to answer this initial question, it emerged that in general, social movements are stimulated mainly by historical, political, and social factors, which are all related. Mi Park, an author widely quoted during this thesis, argues that first and foremost, when there are structural contradictions in a society, this results in the presence of an unfair context.<sup>3</sup> The unfair context is therefore perceived as problematic by the people who experience it.<sup>4</sup>

Timo Böhm as well, in his article named “Activists in Politics: The Influence of Embedded Activists on the Success of Social Movements”, points out that one of the most common reasons why social movements decide to intervene is linked to the intolerance towards the ruling political system, which is perceived as insensitive towards specific issues.<sup>5</sup> In this scenario, Mi Park believes that an important role is played by intellectuals and activists as they strongly affect the political process: this happens because these figures question the existing problems in their context and consequently spread subversive ideas.<sup>6</sup> Mi Park, for this reason, believes that social organizations question the political culture of a given place, a culture made up of laws, norms, and ideas.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Steven M. Buechler, *New Social Movement Theories*, The Sociological Quarterly, Summer, 1995, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Summer, 1995), Taylor & Francis, Ltd., pp. 441-442

<sup>2</sup> Steven M. Buechler, *New Social Movement Theories*. pp. 441-442

<sup>3</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change: a History of South Korean Student Movements, 1980-2000*, Peter Lang Pub Inc, 1st edition, 2008, p. 25

<sup>4</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 25

<sup>5</sup> Timo Böhm, *Activists in Politics: The Influence of Embedded Activists on the Success of Social Movements*, Social Problems, November 2015, Vol. 62, No. 4 (November 2015), Oxford University Press on behalf of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, p. 478

<sup>6</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 26

<sup>7</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 26

It follows, as a direct consequence, that those who have to do with the political sphere of a given place feel challenged by these social movements and the clash of these two realities, according to Mi Park, leads to important changes at the political level but also regarding institutional structures.<sup>8</sup> This chain does not break when a political change occurs, because the political clash also brings about a change for the social movements themselves, at the level of activities they conduct and the ideas on which they are based.<sup>9</sup> Park, in fact, argues that social organizations recalibrate their strategies and ideologies also based on how the situation evolves at the political level.<sup>10</sup>

Other social movement theorists, such as Tilly and Tarrow, in their studies on social movements, exalt the component of conflict with the authorities. Specifically, Tilly talks about collective action that rests on five fundamental pillars: interests, mobilization, organization, opportunities, and collective action.<sup>11</sup> However, these types of studies mentioned, tend to leave out the cultural aspect, which is very important.<sup>12</sup> A theorist who, on the other hand, exalts the importance of the cultural aspect, is Habermas: in fact, he argues that the new social movements are by now little interested in the material aspect and much more attentive to the cultural one, therefore this also means that the objectives and the policies they propose are more oriented towards cultural and social aspects.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the cultural aspect has been central to social movements in South Korea and how they have influenced foreign policy with Japan. On the contrary, Mi Park insists that social movements are strongly connected to historicity, as it is important, for those who are part of it, to question themselves about history to also draw inspiration on an ideological and cultural level and exploit it in their favor.<sup>14</sup> Mi Park argues that a recurring motif when talking about social movements is the concept of "rewriting history": this means that social movements often concur with the development of a new historiography.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 26

<sup>9</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 26

<sup>10</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 26

<sup>11</sup> Craig Calhoun, "New Social Movements" of the Early Nineteenth Century, *Social Science History*, Autumn, 1993, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Autumn, 1993), Cambridge University Press, P. 387

<sup>12</sup> *ibidem*

<sup>13</sup> Steven M. Buechler, *New Social Movement Theories*, pp. 445-446

<sup>14</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 31

<sup>15</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 32

The past, therefore, becomes fundamental for social movements: by questioning history, those who are part of social organizations want to shed light on little-known historical issues that would however corroborate their political and cultural claims.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, also Buechler, in his article called “New Social Movements Theories”, argues that social movements are important carriers of messages that express opposite tendencies and therefore implicitly repudiate the instrumental rationality of the dominant society.<sup>17</sup>

As social movements become problematic, the state tries to discourage any allegedly threatening activity through social control, which manifests itself in suppression, compromise or concessions, or even through ideological restrictions.<sup>18</sup> Mi Park points out that ideological suppression and restrictions often occur together, while as far as concessions are concerned, these are often used as a containment strategy in order not to exacerbate a fragile situation.<sup>19</sup> However, the social control operated by the state is not passively accepted but finds a valid opponent in social movements: the latter, to escape from it, develop real countermeasures both on a concrete and discursive level.<sup>20</sup> Through social movements, which create opportunities to learn, those who participate can enrich their knowledge in terms of political skills, beliefs and values and a real political empowerment occurs.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, another important factor regarding social movements and their success is the identity one, which is also linked to the concepts of history and ideology. Indeed, the theorist Melucci argues that as far as the involvement of people in social movements is concerned, an important factor of success is related to the ability of those who are part of them to define a collective identity. The latter is both an important feature but also a great accomplishment brought about by the new social movements.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 32

<sup>17</sup> Steven M. Buechler, *New Social Movement Theories*, p. 446

<sup>18</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 41

<sup>19</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, pp.41-42

<sup>20</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 42

<sup>21</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 43

<sup>22</sup> Steven M. Buechler, *New Social Movement Theories*, p. 446



Furthermore, according to Mi Park, it is possible to say that social movements mainly bring political change in three ways: by recalibrating the power relations between the authorities and protesters, by forcing a change at the policy level, or finally, by causing large-scale changes that result in lasting systemic changes.<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, these are all characteristics present in the South Korean social movements for democracy of the 1980s. Regarding the historical aspect, the South Korean social movements for democracy active during the 1980s, were particularly interested in the historical questions concerning their own country, so much so that, as will be mentioned in the course of the thesis in more detail, the historical matters were a topic of discussion in their debates and will then be resumed during the nineties. This is also linked to the concept of identity mentioned by Melucci: South Korean citizens, driven by the sense of belonging to their own nation, were deeply interested in the historical problems suffered by their fellow citizens, especially the ones related to the colonial past. This constituted both a strong reason for cohesion and an important factor of strength and effectiveness of the democratic social movements. As for the South Korean democratic social movements of the 1980s, it is possible to identify another important characteristic, namely their ability to oppose the mechanisms of ideological and social containment of the state, both through concrete solutions and at an ideological level.

This is also closely related to another concept mentioned so far, namely the fact that historical and cultural issues become a powerful means of changing the politics of a country, and, at the same time, it relates to what Buechler argues regarding the capability of social movements to be carriers of messages that question the dominant society. Indeed, this occurs during the 1990s in South Korea: important historical issues related to the colonial past between the latter and Japan re-emerged, especially thanks to the importance given to these topics during the 1980s by social movements for democracy, and consequently the social movements during the 1990s significantly intervened in the foreign policy between Japan and South Korea, a result previously unthinkable.

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<sup>23</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 44

Indeed, social movements bring about large-scale systemic changes that last over time: in the case of the South Korean democratic social movements of the 1980s, these not only achieved a real political change by transforming South Korea into a democratic state, but they also allowed the development of a civil society in a democratic context, a society capable of intervening in foreign policy with Japan, regarding which citizens could not express themselves during the autocratic regimes.

Understanding what social movements were stimulated by was fundamental to properly documenting and structuring the thesis. Indeed, with the due considerations, it is possible to understand but also to demonstrate that these concepts are not unrelated to each other but strictly connected, furthermore it is possible to conclude that the South Korean democratic social movements of the 1980s were able to influence, in the long run, also the foreign policy between South Korea and Japan. The first research method, therefore, was to question the concept of social movement and choose as a case study that of the South Korean democratic social movements of the 1980s because they represent a valid example of how these organizations are strongly moved by historical, social, and political factors and have way of intervening in the politics of a country.

Secondly, to demonstrate how these intervened in foreign policy between Japan and South Korea, qualitative research was conducted on the main historical disputes between the two countries that emerged after the affirmation of democracy in South Korea. The result of the research led to three very good examples to support the thesis. The three main examples concern the issue of Korean comfort women, the textbook controversy, and the Liancourt Rocks issue. In these cases, the intervention of South Korean social movements was fundamental not only for the claim of certain historical issues or rights related to the disputes, but also because for the first time, the social movements had the possibility to influence the South Korean government which consequently changed its requests towards the Japanese government, in the opposite way to the consenting attitude present from 1965 to the 1980s.

To underline this difference but also the reasons behind the condescending attitude that characterized the relations between South Korea and Japan since 1965, the research conducted was based not only on specialized literature regarding the subject, but also on official documents, in particular the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and Republic of South Korea and the document concerning the Agreements arising from the Treaty.

Having a complete picture of the issue concerning the Treaty of 1965 is useful to highlight the differences regarding international relations between Japan and South Korea, both in this phase and after the 1980s. Furthermore, it is also important to know the historical context in which these international relations developed, as much as it is important to know the historical context in which the social movements developed. The history is not divided into compartments and serves as a scenario that continually influences its protagonists. For this reason, the historical context is always provided throughout the entire thesis, and it is the result of careful qualitative research, to make the understanding of the issues mentioned more complete.

Since "completeness" for the purpose of a "greater and easier understanding" is the foundation on which this thesis rests, it was deemed necessary to convey a general picture both at a historical level and regarding the personalities who have operated in this context. Indeed, regarding the chapter dealing with the figure of President Junghee and the foreign policy that he conducted with Japan, an important research tool among the many consulted sources was the book by Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel, entitled "The Park Chung Hee Era. The transformation of South Korea". This book was an important tool to not only delineate the President's background, but also to understand why he was so inspired by Japan and willing to entertain good diplomatic relations with the latter. Moreover, it has also been useful in reconstructing in a linear way the thirty years during which Park has governed, three decades made up of modernization, economic development, flourishing relations with Japan and unfortunately, also of questionable and severe policies that have exasperated the citizens of South Korea and consequently pushed them to organize themselves in social movements for democracy. Furthermore, when it was deemed necessary for the purposes of greater understanding, especially concerning more complex topics such as historical issues or political processes, reference was made to explanatory tables functional to the explanation, such as the ones contained in Tae-Ryong Yoon's article called "Learning to cooperate not to cooperate bargaining for the 1965 Korea – Japan normalization".

Since social movements, particularly South Korean social movements for democracy, represent a complex topic in which ideological, political, historical, and social aspects converge, to describe them in a way that was accessible to interested readers, it was necessary to reflect on following questions: what were the ideologies that pushed them to act? And how were they organized since they finally managed to achieve such an important goal as the implementation of democracy?

Finally, why did they have a long-term political and social impact? Of great help in answering these questions was Mi Park's book, entitled "Democracy and Social Change: a History of South Korean Student Movements, 1980-2000". Thanks to this book, it was possible to clarify the ideologies on which the South Korean social movements for democracy rested, ideologies that also shaped their political programs, but above it was possible to understand how these social movements were organized. The books mentioned so far, along with all the articles and textbooks contained in the bibliography and the official documents concerning the Treaty signed in 1965 and its Agreements, contributed significantly to the study and research conducted to answer the research question of this thesis, i.e., to explain how the democratic social movements of the 1980s then influenced international relations between Japan and South Korea.

As previously indicated, to explain how the latter intervened in the foreign policy towards Japan in the long run, concrete examples have been identified such as disputes related to comfort women, Japanese textbooks, and the Liancourt Rocks. The entire thesis is structured so that each chapter is fundamental for the understanding of the next one, and to create a complete picture which ultimately leads to answering, through concrete examples, to the research question of this thesis.

In conclusion, the purpose of this thesis is to show the social movements for democracy that developed in the 1980s in South Korea succeeded in influencing the latter's foreign policy with Japan following their success, with the advent of the 1980s. Starting from 1965, the year in which the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and Republic of Korea was signed, through which historical issues were set aside in favor of a close collaboration in terms of economy and security, the thesis explains how the relations between South Korea and Japan were following the signing of this Treaty. Subsequently, to highlight the great change brought by the democratic social movements of the 1980s, the political context in which they operated, and the ideologies and organizational methods used are explained. Therefore, the main research purpose also implies a comparison with what was the situation between South Korea and Japan prior to the 1990s, consequently providing a historical-political framework preceding the effective democratization of South Korea, to facilitate the understanding about the great result achieved by democratic social movements and to help understand why these resonated in the long run especially in terms of foreign policy. The thesis illustrates how South Korea's social movements for democracy represented a breaking point from the past, and a new beginning in terms of domestic, foreign policy and from a social point of view.

Indeed, the final part explains how the democratic social movements of South Korea in the 1980s created not only a democratic environment that allowed the development of civil society, but also a political context disconnected from the need to maintain good relations with Japan for economic or security purposes only. Therefore, in the conclusive part of the thesis it is shown how numerous social movements attentive to the historical issues between Japan and South Korea consequently formed in the latter country, influencing its foreign policy and demands towards the Japanese government.

Since it is a final thesis of the master's degree program in Comparative International Relations, except for personal reasonings, all the sources used for the drafting of this thesis have been noted at end of each page. The bibliography, placed at the end of this work, contains the complete list of all the sources used during the writing of this thesis.

Finally, the reader must be aware that this thesis, while discussing the international relations between South Korea and Japan which occurred between the 1960s and 1990s, does not intend to take the side of either of the two nations involved. The intent is simply to show historical and political events between the two nations as a function of the explanation of how the democratic social movements of the 1980s in South Korea managed to influence relations between the latter's government and the Japanese one.

## **1.2 Chapters' outline.**

### **Chapter 2. Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and Republic of Korea. The dawn of a new era after the Japanese colonial rule.**

The thesis is divided into four chapters.

While the first chapter focuses on the methodology used for the drafting of this thesis and provides the various chapters' outline, the second chapter represents a fundamental starting point as it would not be possible to understand the change in international relations between Korea and Japan brought about by the South Korean democratic social movements without explaining the situation prior to their success. Indeed, the second chapter briefly mentions the colonial past that involved Korea and Japan up to the Second World War: this, because the historical issues will be taken up by the South Koreans in the 1990s.

Following this brief parenthesis, the chapter focuses mainly on a fundamental achievement, which after the troubled colonial past, started a real collaboration between Japan and South Korea: The Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and Republic of Korea signed in 1965. In this chapter, particular attention is paid to the Treaty: it explains the process that led to its realization and why it took a long time for this to happen, the reasons that led the two signatory countries to find an agreement and the contents.

The chapter also mentions the various negotiations that took place over the years up to 1965 for the signing of the Treaty, so that the reader can better understand why, during the several phases, the negotiations have been interrupted or resumed. The second chapter mentions an important figure, which the next chapter then focuses on, namely Park Junghee.

### **Chapter 3. Park Junghee's era. Modernization, relations with Japan and internal policies until 1979.**

The third chapter, indeed, focuses on the figure of South Korean President Park Junghee. The reader may wonder why this topic is being addressed and what it has to do with South Korean democratic social movements in the 1980s. The reason is that analyzing Park Junghee's domestic and foreign policy is important for two reasons: the first concerns foreign policy with Japan, as this chapter explains how Park, as a promoter of South Korea's economic development, therefore decided to entertain a close economic collaboration with Japan.

The second reason is that explaining his oppressive domestic policy and his foreign policy with Japan, is necessary to understand in the first place why the South Korean population was exasperated considering that his domestic policy was perpetrated even after his death, fomenting then the democratic social movements, and secondly it helps the reader to understand the difference between the foreign policy with Japan during the Park era compared to the foreign policy following democratization and therefore the result of the influence of social movements for democracy. In the third chapter, first, Park Junghee's domestic policy program is explained to demonstrate the change at the organizational and political level that Park implemented after his election with respect to the Presidents who preceded him.

Subsequently, proceeding with the speech, the harsh domestic policy adopted by him is made known in the chapter and above all, the flourishing relations and collaborations entertained with Japan during his mandate are mentioned.

The chapter concludes with the explanation of the degeneration of his policy, that is, the promulgation of the Yushin constitution, a political line perpetrated beyond Park's death and due to which the discontent and the experiment of the South Korean population at the time becomes easy to understand. It is essential to analyze the figure of Park Junghee also because his method of government, which lasted thirty years, was even exasperated by President Chun during the 1980s, a period in which social movements for democracy proliferated and were activated. Consequently, it is understandable that the figure of Park has been deepened as it marked an important era for international relations with Japan and as regards the politics of South Korea itself, due to which democratic social movements found a reason to intervene.

#### **Chapter 4. The 1980s in South Korea: the temporary government, the military takeover, the uprisings that made democratization possible and the consequent influence on Republic of Korea– Japan relations.**

The fourth chapter is mainly concentrated on the South Korean democratic social movements of the eighties and deals with explaining how these, through specific organizational methods and driven by precise ideologies, managed after a decade of struggles, to obtain the desired result, that is, democracy in South Korea. The chapter is of great importance because, through the explanation of the structure and ideologies on which the democratic social movements rested and the historical-political context in which they developed, it is possible for the reader not only to understand the great change these brought about, but also the ways in which they subsequently influenced future generations of activists and South Korea's foreign policy. The chapter begins by providing the historical-political context immediately following the death of President Park. It presents the situation of uncertainty that ensued, explaining how the provisional government established was soon supplanted by the military government of President Jeon, who not only initially continued the policy of the deceased Park but also exasperated it, to the point that South Korean citizens they were in a constant state of martial law. This is mentioned in the chapter to explain how, in this oppressive context, democratic social movements were able to develop.

The fourth chapter focuses precisely on this issue: in fact, it carefully illustrates the ideologies of these democratic social movements, shows how much activists were interested in the historical aspects of Korea, in the weaker social classes, in South Korea's dependence on historically advanced countries. With the explanation of these aspects, the aim is to help the reader understand why certain issues are then taken up by the social movements of the 1990s: also in this sense, the democratic movements of the eighties have influenced future generations of activists.

Secondly, the fourth chapter refers to the organizational methods of the democratic social movements of the 1980s, because this explains the reason why these organizations were finally successful compared to previous years despite having developed in an equally severe and oppressive context. Continuing with the chapter, the most important uprisings that marked the 1980s in South Korea are listed and explained. This is because, starting from the Kwangju Uprising, a wave of unstoppable change has begun: in this section explained how the brutality of this uprising not only left a mark on a historical level but above all on a social level, as the subsequent uprisings were partly inspired by this, also to claim an apology from the government against the victims. In the fourth chapter it is explained how the activists, despite the harsh repressions by the South Korean government, managed in 1987 not only to obtain presidential elections that were democratic, but also a public apology for the Kwangju Uprising with consequent sentences for the guilty.

Therefore, in the chapter, it is explained how following the achievement of this result, a democratic regime has finally been established in South Korea which has had various consequences on several levels, creating a real "domino effect". In fact, this section explains how the South Korean democratic social movements of the 1980s allowed the consolidation of democracy, influencing politics in this sense and beyond. Indeed, with the affirmation of democracy, the thesis shows how it was possible to create a social and political context that allowed the development of civil society, which, inspired by the democratic social movements of the 1980s, gathered in many new organizations that dealt with important issues, many of these were historical and social issues that drew inspiration precisely from the topics addressed during the 1980s by social movements for democracy.



In this fourth chapter, it is pointed out how the creation of a democratic context and a large civil society, both possible thanks to the success of the democratic social movements of the 1980s, consequently allowed South Korean citizens to influence the politics of South Korea, especially at the level of foreign policy. In this thesis, more specifically in this chapter, to answer the main research question, concrete examples are provided that show how the civil society of the 1990s, born and strongly inspired by the democratic social movements of the 1980s, was able to intervene in international relations between South Korea and Japan in the period considered. The examples given to corroborate this statement concern the protests of South Korean organizations regarding the textbook issue, the Dokdo issue but above all, regarding the issue of Korean "comfort women" that were exploited during Japanese colonialism until 1945. The thesis shows how in all these issues, Korean civil society not only acted and had a say, but also how the South Korean government listened to the protests of its citizens and consequently changed its politics and demands towards Japan.

A situation which, especially if compared to that since 1965 and more generally the foreign policy situation between Japan and South Korea in the period of the latter's autocratic governments, is completely different and denotes a great change. If in the past civil society was not able to make its requests heard nor to influence foreign policy between Japan and Korea due to the need, as explained in the previous chapters, to maintain good relations for economic and security purposes, everything changed during the nineties, and the greatest merit must be attributed to the sacrifices made by the South Korean democratic social movements of the 1980s.

## **Chapter 2: Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and Republic of Korea. The dawn of a new era after the Japanese colonial rule.**

### **2.1 Korea and Japan's historical background prior to 1965.**

1965 represents an important date for relations between South Korea and Japan: in this year, the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea was signed. The importance of this event is difficult to understand unless one takes a step back in time, albeit brief, to understand what the situation was between the two countries just mentioned, before that date.

On August 22, 1910, Korea officially became a colony of Japan, initiating the so-called Japanese colonial rule.<sup>24</sup> The colonial period represents a historical fact of great importance between the two countries which also has repercussions in the long term, but the latter question will be dealt with in the following chapters. The Japanese colonial rule<sup>25</sup> determined the abolition of political participation for Koreans, limited Korean business activities and intensified rice production in Korea to export what was produced directly to Japan. At first, Japanese colonialism in Korea was very oppressive, until the popular uprisings in the latter country became such as to force Japan to change its policy. Korean nationalist movements tried to counter oppression firmly on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1919, when members of the movement signed a Declaration of Independence and marched peacefully in the name of liberation from Japanese colonialism. The Japanese response to the protest was initially mass arrests and executions, however the Japanese Empire later decided to introduce a "cultural government" in Korea, which allowed much more freedom of association and expression than the policy previously adopted in Korea, as well as the possibility to establish Korean businesses.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the situation for Koreans became tough again during the last fifteen years of Japanese rule, which ended in 1945.<sup>27</sup> As the historical period under consideration suggests, the last phase of the colonial rule coincides with the Second World War.

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<sup>24</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia. A Cultural, Social and Political History. Third Edition*, Wadsworth Pub Co, 2013, electronic version of the print textbook, p. 404

<sup>25</sup> The Japanese colonial rule refers to the period of Japanese occupation in Korean territory starting from 1910 until 1945. From this point on, the term will be used interchangeably with Japanese occupation or colonial rule to indicate this historical event.

<sup>26</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*, p. 404

<sup>27</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*, p. 404

This event, which for Japan begins with the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, determined economic and labor costs that the Japanese empire had to face anyway. Considering this, it is not difficult to imagine the implications determined by these needs.<sup>28</sup> If in the preceding decades of occupations large resources of the Korean territory were exploited to the advantage of Japan, in the last period of the colonial rule, Korean human resources were also employed in the war. Korean citizens revolted against the occupation, however this only increased the forced assimilation of the Korean people in the period under consideration, an assimilation that was carried out through school curricula, religion, and official language, since it was established as such the Japanese.<sup>29</sup> However, one of the thorniest issues related to the Japanese occupation in Korea concerns the so-called Korean comfort women, who were young Korean women kidnapped for the soldiers of the Japanese army. They were deceived with the false promise of a job and then forced into prostitution for Japanese soldiers, not in the motherland but in places where at that time the Japanese troops were fighting wars for expansionism such as in China, Manchuria, and Southeast Asia.<sup>30</sup>

This matter will also be explored in later chapters, as it is of great importance in contemporary international relations between South Korea and Japan. With the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, the Japanese colonial rule in Korea ended: on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the occupation by Japan in Korea was officially abolished.<sup>31</sup> Following this date, the Korean Peninsula was rocked by a particularly significant event known as the Korean War. The conflict, which was sort of predictable during the previous years due to political reasons related to the Cold War, ultimately broke out in 1950.<sup>32</sup> Following the collapse of the Japanese empire, the Korean peninsula was divided by mutual agreement between the governments of the Soviet Union and the United States into two zones of influence: the north of Soviet influence and the south, of US influence.

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<sup>28</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*, p. 404

<sup>29</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea. Dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, Giunti Editore S.p.A/Bompiani, 2018, p. 369

<sup>30</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*. pp. 411-412

<sup>31</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p.370

<sup>32</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, pp.379- 389. In this chapter, it is not possible to deepen the events concerning the Korean War in detail, however for any further information regarding this specific historical event, please consult this source.

In 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was officially proclaimed in the north, while the Republic of Korea was instituted in the south.<sup>33</sup> However, in 1950, Kim Il-sung, the President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, decided to invade the rest of the peninsula. The governments of the Soviet Union and China decided to help North Korea's government, the former with indirect aid and the latter by sending troops.<sup>34</sup> This urged the United States government to intervene in aid of South Korea, not only with its US troops but also with UN troops under the command of General Douglas MacArthur.<sup>35</sup> The war continued without significant or decisive progress for another 3 years, years in which Seoul was first lost by South Korea and subsequently reconquered. The fighting stabilized in 1951 on a front that would later become the Demilitarized Zone<sup>36</sup>, and ended definitively in 1954 in Geneva, an occasion in which the division of the peninsula into two distinct parts at the 38th parallel was reaffirmed.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to having to explain, albeit briefly, the situation between Japan and Korea prior to 1965 to understand the importance of the Treaty among them, it is also necessary to point out what was the political and economic situation in South Korea following the Korean War and up to 1965. This, first because it is thus possible to understand the reasons that led the South Korean government to sign a treaty with Japan despite the countries' historical precedents. Secondly, it is also important to explain it to show how, compared to when there was an autocratic regime in South Korea that encouraged relations with the Japanese government for economic reasons, things have changed with the rise of democracy. Once this is explained, it will be clearer to understand the main aim of this thesis, which is to explain how the social movements, in this case the social movements for democracy in South Korea, had the ability to intervene and thus influence the national foreign policy. Moreover, after the explanation of what the foreign policy between the Republic of Korea and Japan was like following the Treaty on Basic Relations signed in 1965, the difference will be even more evident and easy to understand. Although South Korea was internationally recognized as the Republic of Korea, it cannot be said that it ruled a democratic regime.

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<sup>33</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*, pp. 491

<sup>34</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*, p. 492

<sup>35</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*, p. 492

<sup>36</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*, pp. 491-494

<sup>37</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 401

Syngman Rhee, the first president of the First Republic of Korea, had exercised a dictatorial policy from the beginning, depriving citizens of any form of dissent regarding his methods.<sup>38</sup> The Republic of Korea had a constitution that prevented presidents from exercising more than three terms, but considering the way Rhee ruled, it is not hard to imagine that revoking this law was simple for him.

In fact, by resorting to violence to intimidate anyone who opposed him and with the support of his party, in 1954 he managed to obtain the necessary majority in parliament to abolish the law, thus being re-elected for a third term in the 1956 elections.<sup>39</sup> Towards the end of the third term, popular dissensions against the political regime existing in South Korea became increasingly bitter. When Syngman Rhee was reappointed as president again in 1960, the popular uprisings became particularly heated to the point of being bloodily suppressed by order of Rhee himself.<sup>40</sup> The United States' government, hitherto silent towards the abuses perpetrated against the population of South Korea for mere political reasons related to the Cold War, could no longer pretend that this violence did not exist because otherwise, the rest of the world would have noticed what was the true nature of South Korea's political regime, which had very little democracy. Considering this, with the lack of US support, Syngman Rhee was forced to retire, and this officially marked the end of the so-called First Republic in South Korea.<sup>41</sup>

Unfortunately, it cannot be said that the experience of the First Republic became only a distant memory at the dawn of the Second Republic. After Syngman Rhee's deposition, the Democratic party won the election and Yoon Bosun became the new president in the same year.<sup>42</sup> It must be not forgotten, however, that South Korea was a strategically important territory for the United States' government in the context of the Cold War, which absolutely could not allow an allied country or one that was in any case part of the US sphere of influence, to hand over power to a government of left.

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<sup>38</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 451

<sup>39</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 452

<sup>40</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 453

<sup>41</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 453

<sup>42</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 454

Among other things, this concern was fueled by the fact that in South Korea, people viewed with great admiration North Korea as a country that was growing economically.<sup>43</sup> South Korea was embroiled in a US political plan that was too delicate to break away from it easily. The end of the First Republic, coupled with the need to avoid anyone in power who supported leftist positions, forced the United States' government to act promptly. The latter supported the coup perpetrated by General Park Junghee to overthrow the second president of the Republic of South Korea in 1961. Park established a military government taking power with the help of the United States' executive, so that the actual president in office Yoon Bosun resigned. Park Junghee, after having founded his own party which took the name of the Republican Democratic Party, won the 1963 elections, officially starting the phase of the Third Republic.<sup>44</sup> The beginning of the Third Republic marks a time of economic change for South Korea. The latter, impoverished by wars and ineffective economic policies implemented during the First and Second Republic, was still unable to achieve economic growth.

However, Park Junghee was particularly determined to put an end to the miserable condition the country found itself in, and he was also determined to earn South Korea a position of respect internationally, despite being a US-funded country. Policies for economic recovery and, more specifically, foreign policy with Japan during Park Junghee's administration will be discussed thoroughly in the next chapter. In this chapter, this is mentioned, together with the political framework of South Korea up to the Third Republic, to make the reader aware of the main reasons why South Korea's government decided, after many years, to finally re-establish relations with the Japanese one, and to make it clear that this event is not the result of a simple desire to open up abroad but is part of a carefully calculated political plan by Park Junghee.

Considering then the purely economic reasons on the part of South Korea's government for signing the Treaty with Japan in 1965, what were the reasons for the Japanese one that made it convenient to re-establish diplomatic relations with South Korea? As it was done for Korea, it is also important to explain the situation in Japan immediately after the Second World War, to better understand the reasons that led the latter's government to sign the Treaty with South Korea. The US influence in this case is particularly significant.

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<sup>43</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 457

<sup>44</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 457

In fact, the role played by the United States in the signing of the Treaty between Korea and Japan in 1965 will be easier to understand with the due historical hints as the reader proceeds with the reading of the chapter.

First, it must be borne in mind that for Japan, after the defeat that took place during the Second World War, a period of great importance for the history of the country began, namely that of the joint occupation by US and the allied powers who won the war. After the end of the conflict, the government of the United States made it clear to the rest of the world that Japan would be part of their sphere of influence.<sup>45</sup> After the surrender of Japan in August 1945, the US government designed an occupation plan with allied nations that featured General MacArthur as the supreme commander. The United States could thus have administrative control of Japan. In addition, the Washington Far Eastern Commission, which had the task of designing the policies to be implemented in Japan, and then the Tokyo Based Allied Council for Japan, which had the task of supporting Mac Arthur as an advisory body, were developed.<sup>46</sup> On October 2, 1945, the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander of the Allied powers (SCAP) was officially created.<sup>47</sup> The SCAP implemented very drastic occupation measures against what was the society, economy and political structure of Japan until its surrender in the world conflict. Officers and all those identified as guilty in the war waged by the Japanese Empire were purged, and this was not the only solution adopted by the SCAP. One of the most important decisions was to implement a process of demilitarization of the country with the annexed abolition of army and police. All those found guilty even of the aggressive expansion of the Japanese empire in the years between 1931 and 1945 were sentenced to death.<sup>48</sup>

In 1946 a new constitution was approved for Japan, which gave an innovative cut to what had been the political structure of Japan up to that moment. It was established that the executive power should respond directly to the electorate, that the legislature should have financial power and furthermore that the ministers should be accountable to it, that the judiciary should be independent but above all, the most important decision was linked to the figure of the emperor.

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<sup>45</sup> Toshihiro Minohara, Makoto Ikoibe, *The history of US-Japan Relations: from Perry to the present*, Palgrave MacMillan, Londra, 2017, Ebook, pp. 114

<sup>46</sup> Toshihiro Minohara, Makoto Ikoibe, *The history of US-Japan Relations*, p. 115

<sup>47</sup> Toshihiro Minohara, Makoto Ikoibe, *The history of US-Japan Relations*, p. 115

<sup>48</sup> Toshihiro Minohara, Makoto Ikoibe, *The history of US-Japan Relations*, pp. 115-116

The latter no longer had full powers, and he was deprived of his executive powers and had to act by consulting the cabinet for any reason.<sup>49</sup> At an economic level during the occupation, plans were developed that allowed Japan to develop industries that were peaceful and therefore not for war purposes, in order also to give Japan the possibility of being inserted into the world market. The aim was to encourage not only domestic production in Japan, but also trade between Japan and the rest of the world.<sup>50</sup> After reformulating Japan's internal structure, it became necessary to think about the terms and conditions for a future peace treaty between the victorious Allied Powers with Japan. In retracing those key moments in the democratization process of Japan, combined with the history of Japan from the post-war period up to the signing of the Treaty with South Korea in 1965, it is important to keep in mind that Japan, as well as South Korea, was evidently embedded in a US political design created for the Cold War.<sup>51</sup>

This is essential to understand that the Japan that made agreements with South Korea in 1965 was a new Japan and of US influence, as well as an important country together with South Korea in the policy of containing communism in Asia. The veracity of the last statement is confirmed by the content of the document called US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, signed in San Francisco on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1951, together with another treaty, namely the Treaty of San Francisco with Japan which, unlike the first mentioned, was not bilateral and consisted of the actual peace treaty between Japan and the victorious countries of the Second World War. Regarding the US - Japan Security Treaty and how fundamental this was for the United States' government to create support in Asia for needs related to the Cold War, it is enough to know that the Treaty allowed the United States to legally establish the US army in Japan as a function of maintenance of peace also in this area of the world.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Hugh Borton, *American Occupation Policies in Japan*, Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science, Vol. 22, No. 4, America's New Foreign Policy (Jan., 1948), The Academy of Political Science, p.40

<sup>50</sup> Hugh Borton, *American Occupation Policies in Japan*, pp. 41-43

<sup>51</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea: Japan- Korea Reapprochement and America's "Far Eastern Problems"*, Pacific Historical Review, vol. 71, No. 4 (November 2002), University of California Press, p. 636

<sup>52</sup> Toshihiro Minohara, Makoto Ikoibe, *The history of US-Japan Relations*, p.123



It becomes further clear how entangled Japan was in the US sphere of influence and it is not surprising that the reasons for restoring relations with South Korea in 1965 were also tied to this, at least as far as Japan was concerned. As proof of this, it must be considered that in terms of foreign policy, the rest of the world was still skeptical towards Japan but at the same time, it was very important for the US government's plans that Japan presented itself internationally as a valid ally of the West, therefore re-entering the international political scene. Given the lack of trust in Japan, the United States' government acted as an intermediary between Japan and the countries that had once been enemies of the latter.

## **2.2 The normalization of relations between Japan and South Korea: reasons that led to an agreement and the important intermediary role played by the United States.**

Of great importance are the negotiations begun between the governments of South Korea and Japan starting from February 1952, which began with considerable pressure from the United States.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, it is possible to say that one of the main reasons that prompted the two countries to sign the Treaty on Basic Relations was US pressure.

However, as mentioned in the previous pages, now the economic reasons will also be examined and it will be explained why, although the negotiations began in 1951, they led to the drafting and consequent signing of a treaty between Japan and South Korea only in 1965. Answering the last question will be simpler and more immediate in the light of the historical references of the two countries involved mentioned in the previous pages. One of the aspects most taken into consideration by scholars, and which would therefore explain the difficulties associated with reaching an agreement between Japan and South Korea, refers to the historical events that took place between the two countries. What would have exacerbated the relations and therefore the mutual perception between the two, is linked to the Japanese colonial rule previously mentioned.

Japanese domination in Korea in the years between 1910 and 1945 was particularly severe: hangul was forbidden, the adoption of Japanese surnames was imposed on the Korean population, and the colonial police brutally repressed any dissent, and it must not

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<sup>53</sup> Toshihiro Minohara, Makoto Ikoibe, *The history of US-Japan Relations*, p. 131

be forgotten that many Korean civilians were used as human resources in the wars waged by Japan during this period.

Furthermore, Koreans were subject to severe discrimination.<sup>54</sup> Scholars indicate that the Korean perception of Japan is manifested through a victim psychological complex, which recurs throughout history.<sup>55</sup> A practical example are the statements of the delegates of South Korea at the first meetings between the latter and Japan in 1951. These essentially accused Japan of the fact that the economic and social problems present in South Korea derived directly from years of Japanese occupation, and that, moreover, these problems were now so ingrained that they could not be solved easily.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, the delegates mentioned the past historical events occurred between the Japanese Empire and Korea, indirectly asking Japan why these actions were perpetrated against Korea, since the latter had never attacked Japan.<sup>57</sup> As for the latter country mentioned, however, during the colonial period it presented a superiority complex compared to other Asian countries dictated by the colonial policy perpetrated, a complex visible for example in the statements of a Japanese ministry official regarding the disposition of the Korean population in Japan.<sup>58</sup> This had affirmed that the Koreans were inferior to the Japanese from the social, mental point of view and that this in a sense justified the hostility towards them felt by the Japanese.<sup>59</sup> Considering the historical and psychological background, it is not surprising that relations between the two countries were so complicated a few years after the end of the Second World War, and these mutual feelings are known by scholars as the Korea-Japan tangle, a phenomenon that refers precisely to this lack of mutual understanding which then affects international relations between the two public administrations.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap: The Strategic Context of the 1965 Korea – Japan Normalization Treaty*, Korean Studies, Vol.20 (1996), University of Hawaii Press, 1996, p. 125

<sup>55</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 126

<sup>56</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 126

<sup>57</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 126

<sup>58</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 126

<sup>59</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 126

<sup>60</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 126

But if the two countries exhibited deep-seated hatred due to previous historical events, then why did they finally come to an agreement in 1965? The agreement was not reached because suddenly the hatred in question had disappeared, but for other reasons related more to domestic and foreign policy.

During the 1960s, both in South Korea and Japan, the internal conditions of both countries made cooperation desirable.<sup>61</sup> First, as far as South Korea is concerned, there was still heavy inflation, unemployment and weak economic growth despite the Five Year Development Plan<sup>62</sup>: Park Junghee realized that in order to put a second development plan in place that effectively worked, it also needed Japanese capital<sup>63</sup>, especially considering the fact that the United States was also going through a time of economic crisis dictated by the conflict in Vietnam.<sup>64</sup> From the point of view of foreign policy, on the other hand, the communist powers in Asia became more and more threatening, due to the communism consolidated in China after 1949<sup>65</sup> but also the very close North Korea. Furthermore, even Korean companies wished for a rapprochement between Japan and South Korea, aware that in this way they would have access to advanced Japanese technologies.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, the main goal for Park to sign the 1965 Treaty was the national and economic development of his country.<sup>67</sup> In Japan, Park Junghee's strong need to re-establish formal relations in order to have access to Japanese capital did not go unnoticed, indeed, numerous pressures were made especially by the Japanese Foreign Minister for this to happen, also because in this circumstance Japan could have re-established relations with South Korea under favorable conditions<sup>68</sup>, in the sense that potentially the demands on Japan would have been less heavy to sustain than in normal conditions. Furthermore, South Korea was an attractive market for Japanese exports.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 128

<sup>62</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 128

<sup>63</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 129

<sup>64</sup> Giovanni Arrighi, *The World Economy and The Cold War, 1970-1990*, Cambridge Histories Online, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 23

<sup>65</sup> Mario Sabattini, Paolo Santangelo, *Storia della Cina*, Editori Laterza, 2005, p. 661

<sup>66</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 129

<sup>67</sup> Fuji Kamiya, *The Korean Peninsula after Park Chung Hee*, Asian Survey, Jul., 1980, Vol. 20, No. 7, Japanese Perspectives on International Developments (Jul., 1980), p. 744

<sup>68</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 129

<sup>69</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 130

Another important factor that contributed to the restoration of relations between the two countries were the necessities regarding the international framework, particularly in Asia, linked to the Cold War<sup>70</sup> and the United States' government played a great role in this. The negotiations between the governments of Japan and Korea had already begun in 1951 but were interrupted due to claims of difficult reconciliation between the two countries. First, the delegates from South Korea had made proposals for an agreement that included a formal apology from Japan for the crimes perpetrated against Koreans under the Japanese colonial rule. The Japanese delegation, on the other hand, had rather focused on two other aspects to reach an agreement, which consisted of the repatriation of Koreans present in Japan and the demarcation of international waters.

The first negotiations ended with a stalemate<sup>71</sup> and were then resumed between February and April 1952<sup>72</sup> which, however, did not go through, due to disagreements regarding financial restitution issues.<sup>73</sup> Unfortunately, disagreements also arose in the following year's negotiations. Indeed, in 1953, the main problem was again that of reparations as the Japanese delegation believed, if South Korea demanded reparations, then the latter too owed them to Japan, given how much the latter had invested in South Korea during the colonial era in terms of economy, infrastructure, and education.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the most serious statement made by the Japanese delegation concerns the fact that if it had not been Japan, another country would have occupied Korea with far worse implications.<sup>75</sup> It is not difficult to understand why considering this, the negotiations were interrupted for many years.

A timid resumption of negotiations took place between 1958 and 1959, and then they were seriously resumed with the rise to power of Park Junghee in 1961.<sup>76</sup> In 1962, secret meetings began between the director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency or Kim Jongpil and the Japanese Foreign Minister Ohira regarding repairs.

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<sup>70</sup> John G. Ikenberry, *Leviatano liberale. Le origini, le crisi e la trasformazione dell'ordine mondiale americano*, UTET University, 2013, p. 198

<sup>71</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 130

<sup>72</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 130

<sup>73</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 130

<sup>74</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 131

<sup>75</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 131

<sup>76</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 131

However, these meetings got leaked in 1963 and given the problems caused by public outrage, once again the consultations between the two countries did not resolve themselves in anything concrete.<sup>77</sup> The United States' government pressure to reach an agreement became more decisive in 1964, due to the tensions caused by the Cold War and the consequent need to create a solid anti-communist front in Asia. A rapprochement between South Korea and Japan was particularly desirable for the United States also because if it had happened, the South Korean economy would have benefited and consequently the country would have come out stronger, to represent, from the US point of view, a reliable ally against the looming threat of neighboring North Korea.<sup>78</sup>

US President Johnson was interested in the issue, stressing its importance on several occasions. His insistence made the governments of Japan and South Korea understand that the issue had now become of priority importance, and that therefore it was necessary to reach an agreement to benefit not only relations between the two countries, but also relations with the United States.<sup>79</sup> The assurances made by the United States' government regarding the treaty were encouraging for both Japan and South Korea. First, as regards South Korea, it was promised that reaching an agreement and signing a treaty would not affect the US commitments made in that country and above all, this reduced the fears present in the country of a possible return to Japanese submission. The US commitment also reassured the Japanese administration, which felt supported in its commitment to the ratification of the treaty and was less afraid of a possible anti-government sentiment in South Korea that would eventually invalidate it.<sup>80</sup>

However, another problem arose which threatened the ratification of the treaty and on this occasion US intervention was crucial. The problem was that the South Korean government refused to go to Tokyo as this was humiliating, as if the latter had to somehow beg the Japanese to reach an agreement. On the other hand, however, the Japanese government considered demeaning apologizing for the Japanese colonial rule.<sup>81</sup> Decisive, therefore, was the intervention of the US Ambassador Reischauer who managed to convince the Korean foreign minister Lee to go to Tokyo in September 1964 and beyond, he also managed to convince Japan's administration to publicly apologize for the past

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<sup>77</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 131

<sup>78</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, pp. 131-132

<sup>79</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 138

<sup>80</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 138

<sup>81</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 138-139

when the minister Japanese Foreign Office Shiina visited Seoul.<sup>82</sup> Shiina in February 1965, during the meeting in Seoul, made an important statement regarding the historical precedents between the two countries, affirming the guilt on the part of Japan and the need for reflection on the issues of the past.<sup>83</sup>

This event is particularly significant given the importance of South Korea in receiving a public apology for the events and the resolution of the issues was fundamental in reaching an agreement between the two countries. Having solved the problem related to the public apology, other thorny points remained to be addressed. First, it was necessary to think about how to resolve the legal status of Koreans residing in Japan, moreover, it was also important to resolve the issues related to the number of reparations that Japan would have to pay to South Korea and those related to the demarcation of the fishing zones. The problems just mentioned were resolved in March 1965 thanks to visits made by Minister Lee first to Tokyo, then to Washington and then again to Tokyo. This made it possible to start the final phase of negotiations in April 1965.<sup>84</sup> The final stages for ratification of the Treaty were strengthened by the renewed promise by the US government to South Korea's one that the United States would not default on its commitments in the country and most importantly, it was earmarked for South Korea \$ 150 million to support its imports, technical assistance and agricultural programs.<sup>85</sup> As for Japan, in the final phase of reaching the agreements, the US government pushed on other issues to ensure that Japan ratified the Treaty.

Japan's administration at that time complained to the United States about operations in Vietnam and therefore the use of bases in Japan for this purpose and secondly, the ports of call for US nuclear submarines. Regarding the first question, the government of the United States emphasized the fact that missions in Vietnam were also conducted for the safety of Japan itself, while as regards submarines, the visit to them was postponed until after the Satō government had signed the treaty with South Korea.<sup>86</sup> In the light of the considerations made so far and the reconstruction of historical events, several issues can be explained. First, it is possible to shed some light on why it took so many years for the Treaty On Basic Relations to be signed.

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<sup>82</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 139

<sup>83</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 138

<sup>84</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, pp. 138-139

<sup>85</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 141

<sup>86</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, pp. 141-142

Secondly, it is possible to confirm what was found in the previous paragraphs, that is, not only that Japan and South Korea were part of a specific US political plan, but also that the United States played an important intermediary role that allowed two countries to tolerate, although not to overcome but on the difference of this term we will return later in the thesis, their hard historical past.

The last thing that can be ascertained, as well as the most important regarding this thesis and its aim of demonstrating how relations with Japan have changed with the rise of true democracy in South Korea, is that for both countries a determining factor for the ratification of the Treaty was the economic one. In the specific case of South Korea, Park Junghee, also urged by the US government, wanted to prioritize the economy and development of South Korea over its historical past with Japan and the thorny issues determined by it. This is especially true because, after the signing of the Treaty in 1965, Rostow, President Kennedy's Deputy Special Assistant for foreign security affairs<sup>87</sup>, visited South Korean President Park Junghee in May of the same year and gave a presentation at Seoul National University on economic development in Asia<sup>88</sup>, stressing that the state of the South Korean economy corresponded to what he called a "take off" stage, shared with other countries such as India, the Philippines and Malaysia.<sup>89</sup>

His presentation placed particular emphasis on the South Korean economy's need for foreign aid to speed up development.<sup>90</sup> His speech was a source of great debate on the part of South Korean society, especially considering that between 1964 and 1965 a strong nationalist sentiment was widespread in South Korea that caused citizens to oppose the Treaty with Japan.<sup>91</sup> However, the concept of economic take off became crucial for President Park in his conception of economic development. Another claim that can be made is that in the period between 1951 and 1965, Japan and South Korea had particularly troubled relations and negotiations, however through the various failures in reaching an agreement the two countries, although assisted by the United States, have managed to

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<sup>87</sup>Tae-Gyun Park, *W. W. Rostow and Economic Discourse in South Korea in the 1960s*, Journal of International and Area Studies, Vol. 8, No. 2 (December 2001), Institute of International Affairs, Graduate School of International Studies, Seoul National University, P.55

<sup>88</sup> Tae-Gyun Park, *W. W. Rostow and Economic Discourse in South Korea in the 1960s*, p. 63

<sup>89</sup> Tae-Gyun Park, *W. W. Rostow and Economic Discourse in South Korea in the 1960s*, p. 63

<sup>90</sup> Tae-Gyun Park, *W. W. Rostow and Economic Discourse in South Korea in the 1960s*, p. 63

<sup>91</sup> Tae-Gyun Park, *W. W. Rostow and Economic Discourse in South Korea in the 1960s*, p. 63

achieve a balance that would allow collaboration. Tae-Ryong Yoon, in his article “Learning to cooperate not to cooperate: bargaining for the 1965 Korea – Japan normalization”, provides tables that list the various stages of the process that led to the ratification of the Treaty On Basic Relations signed in 1965 in a schematic way.<sup>92</sup>

From the tables shown in his article, it appears that in all there were seven rounds of talks to reach an agreement on the Treaty. An important fact, which may seem apparently trivial, is that the first four meetings were held during the Syngman Rhee’s regime which was strongly anti-Japanese and that despite the failures, there were subsequently other attempts to reach an agreement.<sup>93</sup> The two countries involved did not pretend to get along because they were urged by the United States. The United States’ government was useful as a mediator, but both Japanese and South Korea’s governments understood the benefits that normalizing their relations could bring. Japan’s administration was not aiming for short-term economic benefits but had a primary desire to expand the Japanese market and investments in South Korea.<sup>94</sup>

From the numerous failures during the 14 years of negotiations, the governments of the two countries slowly realized that the turning point in reaching an agreement was to put aside historical issues, since if both countries were uncompromising on them, it was impossible for Japan to meet the interests of South Korea and vice versa.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, over time, they learnt to be less intransigent about their own demands. A first example is already given by the first conference held through the offices of the SCAP, with the condition that in the meeting, the legal status of the Koreans residing in Japan at the time was discussed. However, after the negotiations began, it was decided to include the other requests made by the South Korean government in the negotiations as well.<sup>96</sup> As explained in previous paragraphs, the meetings between the two countries suffered a major disruption in 1953 following the unfortunate claims made by the Japanese delegation regarding the Japanese colonial rule in South Korea.

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<sup>92</sup> Tae-Ryong Yoon, *Learning to cooperate not to cooperate: bargaining for the 1965 Korea – Japan normalization*, Asian Perspective , 2008, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2008), Published by: {lrp}, p. 69

<sup>93</sup> Tae-Ryong Yoon, *Learning to cooperate not to cooperate*, pp. 65-67

<sup>94</sup> Tae-Ryong Yoon, *Learning to cooperate not to cooperate*, p. 68

<sup>95</sup> Tae-Ryong Yoon, *Learning to cooperate not to cooperate*, pp. 66-68

<sup>96</sup> Tae-Ryong Yoon, *Learning to cooperate not to cooperate*, pp. 69-70



However, to reopen the talks, the Japanese administration took a step back about that declaration, not trying to justify it: Foreign Minister Shiina in fact, on the seventh conference held in Seoul in 1965, used the words "regret" and "reflection" referring precisely to the unhappy historical past between the two countries.<sup>97</sup>

Japanese government, at this stage, was very careful not to arouse anti-Japanese sentiments in South Korea, although as previously stated in this thesis, it was very difficult for the Japanese government to talk about the colonial period and apologize for it.<sup>98</sup> However, the Korean government welcomed the apology.<sup>99</sup> Even the South Korean government, just like the Japanese one, agreed to be less uncompromising on its demands. In fact, it put aside the policy known as the "Rhee Line" and has also reduced its claims on Korean properties. Furthermore, the latter has complied with the Japanese request, albeit tacitly, not to use delicate terms as forced repatriation regarding the Koreans now part of North Korea who at that time lived in Japan.<sup>100</sup>

### **2.3 Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and Republic of Korea.**

The Treaty was therefore finally signed on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1965 and took the name of Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea. It established the basic diplomatic relations between the two countries just mentioned. Through this Treaty, diplomatic relations between the two countries were officially established. In the first article in the treaty just shown, diplomatic and consular relations are established between Japan and South Korea: moreover, the governments of both countries undertake to establish consulates in a mutually agreed manner.<sup>101</sup>

The second article, on the other hand, nullifies all the agreements stipulated between the Japanese empire and Korea in the years of Japanese colonial rule starting from 1910 until the fall of the empire.<sup>102</sup> The third article, of great importance, establishes that the only legitimate government present in Korea is that of the Republic of Korea, therefore the

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<sup>97</sup>Tae-Ryong Yoon, *Learning to cooperate not to cooperate*, p. 70

<sup>98</sup>Tae-Ryong Yoon, *Learning to cooperate not to cooperate*, p. 70

<sup>99</sup> Jennifer Lind, *The Perils of Apology: What Japan Shouldn't Learn From Germany*, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 88, No. 3 (May/June 2009), Council on Foreign Relations, p. 134

<sup>100</sup> Tae-Ryong Yoon, *Learning to cooperate not to cooperate*, p.70

<sup>101</sup> *Japan and Korea: Treaty on Basic Relations*, International Legal Materials, September 1965, Vol. 4, No.5 (September 1965), Cambridge University Press, p. 925

<sup>102</sup> *Japan and Korea: Treaty on Basic Relations*, p. 925

government present in South Korea, in accordance, among other things, with the provisions of the United Nations Assembly.<sup>103</sup> The importance of the United Nations is reiterated in the fourth article of the Treaty. Here, in fact, it is established that relations between Japan and South Korea must develop in accordance with the United Nations Charter, both as regards common interests and as regards mutual welfare.<sup>104</sup>

Articles five and six instead deal with agreements in various matters that the two countries must reach after the Treaty. Respectively, article five stipulates that the contracting parties must reach agreements as soon as possible that will allow for the establishment of friendly relations from a commercial point of view, while article six urges Japan and South Korea to reach agreements as soon as possible regarding civil air transport.<sup>105</sup> The last article, namely number seven, establishes that this Treaty must be ratified and that the instruments for its ratification must be exchanged in Seoul as soon as possible. Furthermore, the article establishes the entry into force of the Treaty from the moment in which the instruments of ratification were exchanged in Seoul. At the end of the Treaty, it is emphasized that there are three equally valid copies of this text: in Japanese, Korean and English. If there are any differences in interpretation, the Treaty finally establishes that in this case the English text prevails.<sup>106</sup>

After having analyzed the text of the Treaty and therefore having understood the new bases and principles on which the renewed international relations between Japan and South Korea rested, it is important to analyze also the more delicate issues deriving from the Treaty, namely the Agreements which derive from it. These Agreements, which will be dealt on the next page, derive from the Treaty on Basic Relations signed on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1965, just analyzed, ratified in Seoul on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1965. It is important to say that the incipit of the document concerning the Agreements established that the agreements present in the document concerned first and foremost the properties of both countries and their citizens and the claims between both countries and their peoples, and that these were

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<sup>103</sup> *Japan and Korea: Treaty on Basic Relations*, p. 926

<sup>104</sup> *Japan and Korea: Treaty on Basic Relations*, p. 926

<sup>105</sup> *Japan and Korea: Treaty on Basic Relations*, p. 926

<sup>106</sup> *Japan and Korea: Treaty on Basic Relations*, p. 927

reached in view the desire on the part of both countries to promote economic cooperation.<sup>107</sup>

The document concerning the Agreements refers to the agreements made between Japan and the Republic of Korea on various issues. The document established above all that Japan would provide the Republic of Korea with products of Japan and services of the Japanese people free of charge, with a total value of three hundred million US dollars and whose annual value was equal to thirty million US dollars. The duration established for the provision of goods and services by Japan to the Republic of Korea was for a period of ten years. Furthermore, the document established that if Japan was not able to offer products and services equal to this agreed sum in one year, the remaining part of goods and services would be added to that to be paid the following year.<sup>108</sup> Second, the document stated that Japan would also have to provide the Republic of Korea with long-term, low-interest loans equivalent to two hundred million US dollars. The loans would have been provided by the Over Seas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan which, among other things, was to undertake to ensure that these funds were guaranteed every year. These funds would be used for the economic development of the Republic of Korea as sanctioned by the document.<sup>109</sup>

Furthermore, in the document, it was stipulated that a joint committee composed of the representatives of the two governments as an advisory body would be created, so that this joint committee could act as an advisor on issues concerning the implementation of the agreements present in the document.<sup>110</sup> In the document, it was also established that both Japan and the Republic of Korea considered the issues concerning their respective rights, properties and interests, as well as those of their peoples and legal persons, and the claims of the aforementioned including those mentioned by article IVa of the San Francisco

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<sup>107</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, International Legal Materials, January 1966, Vol. 5, No.1 (January 1966), Cambridge University Press, pp. 111-117

<sup>108</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 111

<sup>109</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 111

<sup>110</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 111-112

Treaty, as completely and definitively resolved in this document.<sup>111</sup> In this case, however, the measures had no effect on the properties, rights and interests of Japanese citizens who lived in South Korea and vice versa in the period between August 15<sup>th</sup> 1947 and the signing of the document. In addition, the properties, rights and interests of both contracting parties or their peoples that had been acquired or brought to the country of the other contracting party during ordinary contacts after August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945, were also excluded.

Finally, it was also established that in compliance with the decisions taken in the following document, claims could not be advanced on the property, rights and interests of one of the two contracting parties which was brought under the control of the other contracting party on the date of signature of the aforementioned document, this also applied to the persons of the two contracting parties in the event that they had made claims against the other contracting party for reasons which occurred prior to the signing of the aforementioned document.<sup>112</sup> Following these agreements, it is also important to mention the agreements made in the document if disputes arose between the contracting parties: it was established that these would be resolved in a diplomatic way. Furthermore, if it was not possible to resurrect it diplomatically, a commission of three members would have taken over, that is two of the contracting parties and a third member chosen by mutual agreement but coming from a country outside the opposing parties. The judgment of that decision was indisputable for both contracting parties.<sup>113</sup> In the document of the agreements, it was reiterated that the products and services that Japan would have to supply to the Republic of Korea would be listed in an annual program prepared by the latter and fixed through consultation with the governments of both countries. Moreover, the supply of the products and services that Japan would have supplied to South Korea should have been done in a way that does not interfere with normal trade between the two countries and without imposing additional exchange charges on Japan.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 112

<sup>112</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 112

<sup>113</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 112

<sup>114</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 113

One of the most important measures taken in the document of the agreements concerns the so-called "Mission" established by the Republic of Korea in Japan. The Mission involved the submission of the program by the Republic of Korea to Japan, the conclusion and execution of contracts for the government of the Republic of Korea, and the forwarding to the Japanese government of the contracts authorized by the government of the Republic of Korea for further verification by Japan. In addition, mission offices were established in Tokyo, and the Mission was classified as inviolable.<sup>115</sup>

Regarding the products and services provided by Japan to the Republic of Korea, the document stated that the Japanese who worked to offer such services had to be able to enter and leave South Korea without being hindered, furthermore Japanese citizens and legal entities had to be exempt from tax in respect of income from the provision of the goods and services. Another important detail regarding this issue was that the Republic of Korea was prohibited from re-exporting products and goods granted by Japan.<sup>116</sup> However, according to the agreements made, Japan was not the only one having to provide money, goods, or services to the Republic of Korea. For its part, as far as South Korea was concerned, the latter had to pay Japan as the balance of the clearing account between the two contracting parties for a total of forty-five million seven hundred twenty-nine thousand three hundred and ninety-eight dollars and eight cents in US dollars, as this amount had already been previously confirmed in the notes exchanged between Japan and South Korea on April 22, 1961. This sum of money would not have been paid in a single time, in fact, according to the document, this amount had to be divided into nine annual installments for a period of ten years from the signing of the Agreement.<sup>117</sup> However, if the Republic of Korea had made a request regarding any of the annual installments that it had to pay to Japan, the supply of the Japanese products and services provided for in the agreements of the document must be considered as if they were made for an amount equal to that requested from the Republic of Korea. It therefore followed that the quantity of products and services that Japan had to provide to the Republic of

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<sup>115</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 113-115

<sup>116</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 115

<sup>117</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 116

Korea and the amount to be supplied in that year of the request would be reduced by an amount equivalent to the amount requested by the Republic of Korea.<sup>118</sup>

Furthermore, according to the document, if the Republic of Korea had any requests to submit, these had to be made considering the Japanese fiscal year, so by October 1st.<sup>119</sup>

The signing of the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of South Korea was a very important event for relations between the two countries as it was possible to find an agreement on various issues: for this achievement, US President Lyndon B. Johnson congratulated his ambassadors of Japan and South Korea in December 1965.<sup>120</sup> Following the end of World War II, South Korea and Japan for twenty years found it difficult to consider themselves allies. Finally, with the signing of the Treaty, not only were relations between the two countries re-established but the anti-communist front in Asia was also consolidated, and this consisted in a great victory for the United States.<sup>121</sup> After years of distrust between the two countries derived from a troubled past, after the devastation caused by the Korean War, the administration of the Republic of Korea began to reconsider starting negotiations with the Japanese government. The negotiations turned out to be problematic especially in relation to historical past and not only, also as regards the terminology used during the negotiations. On the one hand, Japan's administration initially showed a willingness to pay reparations to the Republic of Korea but only if these were defined as "aid"<sup>122</sup>: indeed, it had often been reluctant to admit the guilt of the Japanese colonial past, and a good example for this last statement consists in the diplomatic slip of 1953, which interrupted negotiations with the South Korea's government until 1958. However, the latter on the other hand initially showed no signs of abating and remained firm on its own positions regarding the requests related to the former Japanese colonial rule.

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<sup>118</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 116

<sup>119</sup> *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, p. 117

<sup>120</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea*, p. 633

<sup>121</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea*, p. 633

<sup>122</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea*, p. 635

A result was achieved only when the two decided to learn from their diplomatic errors and thus prioritize the utilitarian aspects of their relations rather than giving more importance to historical backgrounds. Both the Japanese and South Korean governments, starting from Park Junghee, understood the various economic advantages that such an agreement would bring about and gave priority to the economic development of their countries. Furthermore, the other utilitarian aspect of the Treaty, namely the development of relations between South Korea and Japan to create a solid alliance in Asia against China and North Korea, was made possible thanks to US support and diplomatic efforts made by the latter, as both the Republic of Korea and Japan were part of the US political plan in Asia.

The United States' government, for its part, saw the signing of the Treaty as the solution to the problems in Asia, and the attempts by the US government to bring about a reconciliation between Japan and South Korea were immediate after the end of World War II. According to United States' government expert calculations, this would solidify the front against China, bring Japanese capital with its technological innovations to South Korea and at the same time allow Japan to enjoy South Korea's markets and cheap labor. Furthermore, South Korea's economic development would have meant that the country actively contributed to its military potential in Vietnam<sup>123</sup>. The United States were particularly keen to bring Japan closer to South Korea because they knew the market in China could be attractive to Japan. Japan needed China's natural resources while China needed Japanese technology. As for South Korea, on the other hand, the United States had to make it as independent as possible from them and according to their vision, South Korea could only obtain this independence if it had finally developed relations with Japan which at the time represented the center of capitalism in Asia.<sup>124</sup> From whatever point of view this Treaty is observed, whether from the point of view of Japan, South Korea, or the United States, its very existence was convenient in various aspects for all the governments of the three countries examined.

Indeed, they mostly looked at the utilitarian implication that this could have had, and therefore decided to leave out important historical issues that would subsequently resurface especially in the Republic of Korea after the rise to power of an effectively democratic regime.

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<sup>123</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea*, p. 637

<sup>124</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea*, pp. 641-643

The normalization of relations between the Republic of Korea and Japan in 1965 basically rested on two pillars. The first was Japan's legitimization of the Republic of Korea, which consequently also implied that Japan did not recognize the government established in North Korea as legitimate. This recognition also implied Japan's definitive alignment with the United States.<sup>125</sup> Secondly, but not least, the other pillar consisted of the agreements on property, claims and economic cooperation: Japan in total promised to provide the Republic of Korea with 800 million US dollars in grants and loans and above all, Japan contributed further with private investments.<sup>126</sup> The result was that two years after the signing of the Treaty, huge Japanese investments began to flow into South Korea. From 1967 to 1971 these direct investments amounted to 89.7 million US dollars to reach a total of 627 million US dollars in 1976.<sup>127</sup>

Following the normalization, the US government congratulated South Korea first for having moved from a situation of economic and political instability, isolation from neighboring countries to a stable and robust political situation with an attached economic take-off.<sup>128</sup> Then, the US administration also complimented South Korea's commitment as defenders of freedom and therefore as allies in the fight against communism and in favor of the free world. On the other hand, the United States saw Japan more than ever as an Asian power not only a US partner but a country that played the role of a real leader in Asian and political development.<sup>129</sup> The Treaty on Basic Relations was much more than a simple bilateral treaty and its effects did not end immediately but had a notable resonance over the years not only for their implications at the international level but above all as regards relations between South Korea and Japan. The Treaty on Basic Relations is the starting point of this thesis to try to demonstrate how the historical problems set aside after its ratification were only quiescent, as they would later reignite with the impetuous advance of the democratic social movements in South Korea.

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<sup>125</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea*, p. 656

<sup>126</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea*, p. 656

<sup>127</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea*, p. 657

<sup>128</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea*, p. 662

<sup>129</sup> Kil J. Yi, *In Search of a Panacea*, p. 662



## **Chapter 3. Park Junghee's era. Modernization, relations with Japan and internal policies until 1979.**

### **3.1 Japan: an inspiration for Park Junghee's modernization process in South Korea.**

In this chapter, the figure of Park Junghee will be examined more specifically, regarding internal and foreign policies with Japan that he implemented during his mandate. The reason for this analysis lies in the fact that his persona, as well as the political decisions taken during his mandate, are closely linked to the reasons that led the Democratization Movement to arise in South Korea. Getting to know Park Junghee and his policies will be necessary to better understand not only the events connected to it, such as the social uprisings that will be subsequently examined, but it is also important to grasp the differences between the approach with Japan and foreign policy at this stage, and subsequently the relations between South Korea and Japan after the rising of an effectively democratic regime. Hence, examining Park Junghee and his internal and foreign policy with Japan is important not only because it provides the basis for understanding the triggers of the uprisings in favor of the Democratization Movement, but also to further clarify that social movements are able to intervene in a country's foreign policy and decision making.

The previous chapter provided the historical context of South Korea and Japan prior to the signing of the Normalization Treaty between the two countries in 1965, to show not only the importance of this result given the difficult historical precedents, but also for showing how these historical precedents had been set aside in favor of utilitarian objectives, such as the economic development of the countries involved, and the political needs linked to the Cold War. This Treaty represents one of the pillars on which the reasons that stirred the Democratization Movement in South Korea lie. The second pillar on which the motivations of those who fought to establish a truly democratic regime in South Korea rest, consists precisely in Park Junghee's policy and his decisions. Both factors were crucial in the awakening of democratic sentiment in South Korea and the consequent birth of the social movements for democratizations, which brought about numerous changes in domestic and foreign policy with Japan once they consolidated.

The President of the First Republic of South Korea, called Syngman Rhee, who was already mentioned in the previous chapter, constituted a police-based dictatorship, a new army, and a centralized bureaucracy. He managed to stay in power for over a decade thanks to the creation of a National Security Law that oppressed all his political opponents, and through brutal methods against anyone who was against his politics, until in 1960 the heated protests in the country suppressed with blood forced him to flee South Korea and retire to Hawaii.

After a brief democratic interlude, Park Junghee took power in 1961<sup>130</sup>, officially becoming the President of the Third Republic following the 1963 elections.<sup>131</sup> Park's rise to power marks a very important moment in the history of the Republic of Korea, both from the point of view of internal policies but above all from the point of view of foreign policy. Park Junghee proved to be very open towards Japan, but his past would explain the reason for this behavior, in addition to the previously mentioned political reasons. He was described as pro-Japanese as he graduated from the military academy in Manchuria where he attended the Japanese War School: this possibility was not given to anyone, but was offered by the Japanese only to those who, coming from a colonized country, in this case Korea, showed absolute dedication to the Japanese cause.<sup>132</sup> It is even assumed that he took part in repressions against the Koreans during the period of the Japanese rule under the Japanese name of Okamoto Minora, entering into a network of relations with the Japanese during this period that would later prove themselves useful once he came to power.<sup>133</sup> However, it was precisely his precedents that helped facilitate the reconciliation process between Japan and South Korea.<sup>134</sup>

Park Junghee's military training in close contact with Japan greatly influenced the political and modernizing approach adopted once he came to power as President of the Republic of Korea. Furthermore, Park's government was also heavily inspired by Japan's economic development during the 1960s, and much of Park's modernizing policies were widely inspired by it.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*, pp. 499

<sup>131</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 457

<sup>132</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 458

<sup>133</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 458

<sup>134</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 458

<sup>135</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era. The transformation of South Korea*, Harvard University Press, London, 2011, pp. 119-120

Following his rise to power, Park Junghee pivoted his policy on economic development, however, to combat poverty and ensure economic development, he understood that he also had to carry out an administrative reorganization, building a large presidential staff in response to the complexity of the objectives that his new government had set.<sup>136</sup>

The presidential staff began precisely with Park, with his rise to power there were profound changes from the administrative point of view compared to the past. The number of personnel supporting the President increased significantly compared to that which supported Presidents Syngman Rhee during the First Republic and Yoon Bosun during the Second Republic.<sup>137</sup> Park realized that an efficient government needed an equally efficient executive as the backbone. In this regard, he took the opportunity to establish the "Office of the President" including a policy support staff for him, which would later become the "Blue House Office" and the "Executive Office of the President". The last became the real personal staff arm of the President and was born with the purpose of being totally distinct from the staff who occupied the Blue House Office.

However, over time, the Blue House Office became the most important division within the Office of the President, as the other units in the President's Office are subordinate to the Blue House Office and carry out their work directed by key politicians.<sup>138</sup> In 1963, Park Junghee could count on a highly specialized staff in various subjects, this large and highly specialized staff existed with the express purpose of providing the President as much support as possible in terms of administration.<sup>139</sup> The fact that the President needed highly skilled staff is understandable also given the historical moment and the demands that the Park government had to face. The economic conditions in 1963 and then Park's rise to power were miserable, not to mention that he had come to power through a coup in 1961 and that he subsequently also broke his promise not to devote himself to politics

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<sup>136</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung- Hee presidency*, Asian Perspective, Vol. 26, No.2, 2002, Published by: {lrp}, p. 102

<sup>137</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung- Hee presidency*, pp. 104-106

<sup>138</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung- Hee presidency*, p. 106

<sup>139</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung- Hee presidency*, p. 107

once his military rule was over.<sup>140</sup> Given the assumptions, Park encouraged the economic development of South Korea as much as possible, first through the creation of industrial development-oriented bureaucratic arrangements, but also through a result's oriented economic growth policy.

This strategy was adopted by him because according to the President of the Third Republic, the success of the country's economic growth would have ensured his political survival.<sup>141</sup> For this purpose, due to his lack of previous knowledge in economic matters, Park joined economic technocrats: during the period from 1963 to 1969, the Economic Planning Board was the President's main advisory body in economic matters. This choice proved to be particularly effective about short-term policy initiatives because it brought immediate results, especially regarding export promotion.<sup>142</sup> Concerning the exports, Park prioritized the issue by initiating measures that could incentivize them. The decision that the Park government took in this regard was to encourage exporters through various solutions such as accelerated depreciation, the reduction of rates on various services such as infrastructure, electricity, transport services and reductions on income taxes.<sup>143</sup> Another maneuver that the Park regime carried out in order to promote exports was to allow exporters to buy inputs without being taxed even if the quantity was greater than what was necessary to produce something and then export it.<sup>144</sup> Park decided not only to facilitate but also to protect exporters by providing guarantees for the repayment of foreign loans.<sup>145</sup> The Japanese influence in Park's policies, even economic ones, is also indistinguishable in his decision to introduce in South Korea, as it already existed in Japan, the concept of General Trading Company. The goal, through its creation, was to coordinate exports. Compared to the Japanese model, Park's General Trading Company placed great emphasis on export growth.

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<sup>140</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung-Hee presidency*, p. 110

<sup>141</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung-Hee presidency*, p. 111

<sup>142</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung-Hee presidency*, p. 111

<sup>143</sup> Sudip Chaudhuri, *Government and Economic Development in South Korea 1961- 79*, Social Scientist, Nov- Dec 1996, Vol. 24, No. 11/12, Published by Social Scientist, p. 19

<sup>144</sup> Sudip Chaudhuri, *Government and Economic Development in South Korea 1961- 79*, p. 20

<sup>145</sup> Sudip Chaudhuri, *Government and Economic Development in South Korea 1961- 79*, p. 20

However, the way in which the General Trading Company worked, was of Japanese invention: the system consisted in developing large national economic groups, to which even small and medium exporters would have relied, to facilitate the sharing of information but also to increase quality control and production coordination. This also facilitated dialogue and cooperation within the state bureaucracy.<sup>146</sup>

Japan was a great inspiration for Park Junghee also about industrialization itself, an example is the "Machinery Industry Promotion Act" of 1967 which was none other than the "Temporary Measures to Promote the Machinery Industry" already introduced in Japan a decade earlier, in 1956.<sup>147</sup> Another example is South Korea's "Electronics Industry Promotion Act" of 1969, another replica of Japan's "Temporary Measure to Promote the Electronics Industry" of 1957.<sup>148</sup> Japan's rapid economic growth and Japan's ability to become an economically relevant nation in the world has strongly inspired South Korea's development in this sense.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, Park Junghee praised the Meiji Restoration and tried to incorporate its values into South Korean's modernization process. The dismantling of the old political groups in favor of a modernizing elite, as well as the military force and industrial development both led by the state, were fundamental concepts during the Japanese Meiji Restoration, and precisely for this reason they were then emulated by Park during his regime.<sup>150</sup>

The impact that Japan had on Park Junghee's political projects was evident after the signing of the 1965 Treaty of Normalization, as Park tried to incorporate Japan's ideals and institutions.<sup>151</sup> However, he planned on doing so even before the signing of the Treaty. Indeed, when Park visited Japan in 1961, he told leaders Kishi Nobusuke, Ishii Mitsujiro and Kosaka Zentarō about how influential the Meiji Restoration was to him.<sup>152</sup> Park on that occasion stated that his plans included that of implementing in the Republic of Korea a modernization like that of the Meiji Restoration and beyond.

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<sup>146</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p.121

<sup>147</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p.121

<sup>148</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p.121

<sup>149</sup> Sang Mi Park, *The Paradox of Postcolonial Korean Nationalism: State-Sponsored Cultural Policy in South Korea, 1965-Present*, *The Journal of Korean Studies* (1979-), fall 2010, Vol. 15, No. 1 (fall 2010), Duke University Press, P. 71

<sup>150</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era.*, p. 118

<sup>151</sup> Sang Mi Park, *The Paradox of Postcolonial Korean Nationalism*, p. 71

<sup>152</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 118

He further disclosed openly that he, having received military training at the Japanese Imperial Military Academy in Manchuria, firmly believed that Japanese military education was the best way to develop a strong army.<sup>153</sup>

Even the armed forces represent an important aspect of the modernization implemented by Park Junghee as compared to the previous republics, with the Third Republic the armed forces had become more cohesive, also encouraged by the need on the part of South Korea to carry out the defensive role against the Communists in Asia.<sup>154</sup> With Park's rise to power, military forces became directly involved in the political sphere. For Park Junghee, being able to count on obedient armed forces was also and above all necessary to eliminate any form of opposition and political adversaries, so to implement this, he needed to politicize them.<sup>155</sup> The politicization of military personnel perpetrated by Park did not lower its quality. On the contrary, during the Third Republic they became further professionalized and modernized.<sup>156</sup> It may be difficult to understand how the military could be military professionally and political at the same time. The reason for the effectiveness of this dualism lay in Park's ability to balance these two aspects. First, to obtain the absolute confidence of military personnel, he was isolated from all political and social forces other than himself.

In doing so, they were used as a control tool for any internal problem in the Republic of Korea.<sup>157</sup> In addition, Park divided the armed forces into praetorian guards who dealt with strategic military units and then professional soldiers who were members of the field army.<sup>158</sup> In this way, by dividing the members of the army into two categories for the armed forces, he prevented the formation of political adversaries and more: The Army Security Command was controlled by the Capital Garrison Command, but both were controlled by the Korea Central Intelligence Agency and the Presidential Security Service.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 118

<sup>154</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 169

<sup>155</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era i*, p. 168

<sup>156</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 169

<sup>157</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 170

<sup>158</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 170

<sup>159</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era* p. 171

Therefore, it can be concluded that Park Junghee saw economic development and national security as two closely related concepts. A strong army needed a strong economy and vice versa, moreover, to protect the prosperous economy it was also necessary to be able to protect South Korea from any threat: this is the reason why Park, during his rule, tried to increase the military capability of his country to comply with his need of a greater self-defense.<sup>160</sup> Finally, it is important to remember that it was the armed forces that thwarted the student uprisings and political obstacles to the Normalization Treaty between Japan and South Korea, precisely because Park believed in the political and economic opportunities that this Treaty would bring.<sup>161</sup>

The Japanese influence on Park Junghee from the point of view of his own *forma mentis*, as well as the Japanese influence on the political and modernization ideas that Park had in mind for the Republic of Korea, explain the decisions of the latter on foreign policy with Japan and the cooperation of the two countries during the Third Republic of Korea.

### **3.2 Japan – Republic of Korea relations during Park Junghee’s era.**

With the Park Junghee regime, relations between South Korea and Japan were particularly prosperous in terms of economic benefits. As already explained in the previous chapter and then reiterated in the previous paragraphs, the economic aspect was important not only for Park but was also in general one of the many reasons that pushed South Korea to normalize relations with Japan. Therefore, it is not surprising that the cooperation between the two countries was particularly significant, especially at an economic level. During the Third Republic, therefore in the period between 1961 and 1979, South Korea received a much higher amount of economic assistance than that agreed between the two contracting parties in the 1965 Treaty.<sup>162</sup> It should be remembered that Japan owed South Korea 500 million US dollars in grants and credits every year<sup>163</sup>, however Japan decided to agree to provide additional credits to allow the construction of important infrastructures in the Republic of Korea, such as the Seoul subway system.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung-Hee presidency*, p. 121

<sup>161</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 172

<sup>162</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, Nov. – Dec. 1981, Vol. 9, No. 2, Published by Taylor & Francis Ltd., p. 86

<sup>163</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p. 86

<sup>164</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p. 86

It appears that in 1979, Japan had given very high sums of money to South Korea, respectively: 1.130 million US dollars in government credits, 610 million US dollars in Japanese equity investments and finally, even 2.423 million US dollars in commercial loans.<sup>165</sup>

On the part of both the governments of Japan and Korea, there was a great desire for cooperation for several reasons previously explained<sup>166</sup>, during the Park regime. To better communicate regarding the common interests of both countries, both Japanese and South Korean administrations agreed that there would be an annual conference called the Korean - Japanese Ministerial Conference starting in 1967.<sup>167</sup> At the first meeting held in August 1967, the Korean Deputy Premier and Economic Planning Minister and the Japanese Foreign Minister, jointly agreed to increase mutual collaboration in order to incentivize further development of the societies of both countries.<sup>168</sup> Indeed, in this regard, it was decided that Japan would provide Korea by 1970 with a figure of 200 million US dollars in additional commercial loans essential for the success of South Korea's economic development plan.<sup>169</sup> In addition, it was also established, again by mutual agreement, that the Japanese government would allow exports to South Korea in fishery and shipbuilding funds for a figure of 30 million US dollars by the end of 1968.<sup>170</sup> The conferences continued even after these important agreements. The second conference, which took place the following year as agreed, in 1968, was a great opportunity to reach further agreements in economic and cooperative matters between the two contracting parties. This time, the conference was divided into four committees, namely Economic Cooperation, Trade, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Transportation and Shipping. On this occasion, Japan promised further funds to the Republic of Korea for the following year: the aforementioned funds consisted respectively of 90 million US dollars in commercial loans, 60 million US dollars for Korean purchases of industrial plants and finally, also 30 millions of US dollars to be used for the import of raw materials

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<sup>165</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p. 86

<sup>166</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, pp. 129-130

<sup>167</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p.87

<sup>168</sup> Seung K. Ko, *South Korean – Japanese Relations since the 1965 Normalization Pacts*, Modern Asian Studies, 1972, Vol. 6, No.1, Cambridge University Press, p. 53

<sup>169</sup> Seung K. Ko, *South Korean – Japanese Relations since the 1965 Normalization Pacts*, p. 53

<sup>170</sup> Seung K. Ko, *South Korean – Japanese Relations since the 1965 Normalization Pacts*, p. 53



that would have been used not only for the construction of ships but also for the equipment for costal fish cultivation projects.<sup>171</sup>

In exchange, on this occasion, the South Korean government approved a prevention pact with respect to double taxation prevention and undertook to honor Japanese trademarks in accordance with a future treaty on industrial property trademarks, design, patents and others.<sup>172</sup> The third conference, held in 1969, had two main issues as its pivotal points, namely the construction of an integrated steel mill industrial complex for a cost of 98 million US dollars and the reduction of Japanese taxes on South Korean products.<sup>173</sup>

Cooperation did not stop at this level alone, as a Korea - Japan Cooperation Committee was also established in 1969, in order to further promote collaboration between the two.<sup>174</sup> Since the economic aspect was, as already pointed out several times, extremely important for both of them, the establishment of the Korean-Japanese Private Economic Cooperation Committee should come as no surprise.<sup>175</sup> In the mid-seventies, the governments of the two countries also decided to found the Korea-Japan Friendship Association and then, in order to facilitate consultation with the legislators of the two countries involved, the Korean-Japanese Parliamentarians League was finally established.<sup>176</sup>

Through the creation of these committees mentioned above, collaboration and communication between the two countries was encouraged on various issues, including those related to security. In this regard, the Japanese government proved to be proactive in tackling any problems in South Korea alongside the Republic of Korea and the United States. Since 1969, Prime Minister Satō Eisaku had emphasized how much the security of South Korea was closely related to that of Japan, and that if problems arose in the Republic of Korea, they should not be treated as something that did not concern Japan.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Seung K. Ko, *South Korean – Japanese Relations since the 1965 Normalization Pacts*, p. 53

<sup>172</sup> Seung K. Ko, *South Korean – Japanese Relations since the 1965 Normalization Pacts*, p. 53

<sup>173</sup> Seung K. Ko, *South Korean – Japanese Relations since the 1965 Normalization Pacts*, p. 53

<sup>174</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p. 87

<sup>175</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p. 87

<sup>176</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p. 87

<sup>177</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p. 87

After the war in Vietnam, in 1975 the Japanese government stated that the security and stability of the Republic of Korea influenced the stability of the whole of Korea and East Asia, including Japan<sup>178</sup>, in fact the Miki government showed its willingness to offer constant use of Japanese military bases used by the United States should emergencies arise in South Korea.<sup>179</sup>

During Park's rule, the various Japanese governments of the period under consideration showed a great deal of interest in South Korea and its security. Indeed, when the Carter administration announced in the late 1970s that it wanted to withdraw U.S. troops from South Korea, Japan, despite the possibility of not receiving U.S. backup for security reasons, nevertheless continued to provide concrete aid to the Republic of Korea.<sup>180</sup>

### **3.3 Park Junghee's last decade: road to his downfall.**

Park Junghee contributed considerably to the development of the Republic of Korea from many points of view: taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the Treaty on Basic Relations with Japan of 1965 and strongly inspired by Japan itself due to its youth military training<sup>181</sup>, he implemented in South Korea modernization at the state, economic and military levels. However, despite the advantages gained from close contacts with Japan and the economic and security agreements entered with the latter, his foreign policy decisions and therefore his closeness to Japan, were not well regarded by the Korean people even before the signing of the Treaty in 1965<sup>182</sup>, as South Korean citizens had not forgotten the colonial past. The relations with Japan explained in the previous paragraphs, combined with the reforms implemented by Park Junghee in the last decade of his era and the way he implemented them, fueled the discontent of the Korean population which then resulted in the uprisings for the Democracy Movement.

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<sup>178</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p. 87

<sup>179</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p. 88

<sup>180</sup> Hong N. Kim, *South Korean – Japanese Relations in the Post- Park Chung-Hee Era*, p. 88

<sup>181</sup> Sang Mi Park, *The Paradox of Postcolonial Korean Nationalism: State-Sponsored Cultural Policy in South Korea, 1965-Present*, p. 71

<sup>182</sup> Tae-Gyun Park, *W. W. Rostow and Economic Discourse in South Korea in the 1960s*, p. 63

In this section, the reforms of the last decade in which Park ruled and the responses from the Korean population will be explained. With this section, the circle is closed around the figure of Park Junghee and completes the pieces of the historical puzzle that allows us to understand not only what arose the uprisings of the Democratization Movement, but also how, with the success of the latter, they would later change the decisions in domestic and foreign policy with Japan. Consequently, it is precisely what helps the reader to better understand the main purpose of this thesis: to explain how social movements, in this case the social movements for democracy in South Korea, can intervene in the decision making of a country. In the 1967 election, Park struggled to win.<sup>183</sup> Immediately after being re-elected, he worried about the National Assembly elections to be held in the month following his re-election.<sup>184</sup> The National Assembly elections were important because Park Junghee wanted to promulgate a reform that would allow him to exercise a third mandate in the future.<sup>185</sup> To do this, his party had to have two-thirds of the parliament: in this way, the reform would have been surely approved and it would have been possible to submit it in a public referendum.<sup>186</sup> In the elections of the National Assembly, Park's party managed to obtain the desired result.<sup>187</sup>

In the project to exercise another mandate, Park Junghee certainly had several advantageous conditions to carry it out. Park had a strong security apparatus, numerous economic successes, and his party represented two-thirds of the parliament.<sup>188</sup> The main problem for Park, as he planned how to exercise his presidential third term, were the factions present within his own party. Within his party, the faction led by Kim Jongpil insisted on rejecting the constitutional reform proposed by Park.<sup>189</sup> On the other hand, there was another faction within Park's party that was committed to approve the reform that would allow Park to exercise a presidential third term.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 238

<sup>184</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 238

<sup>185</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung- Hee presidency*, p. 111

<sup>186</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 238

<sup>187</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung- Hee presidency*, p. 111

<sup>188</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 239

<sup>189</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 239

<sup>190</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 239

At this point, Park became particularly determined to put an end to the internal struggles of his party and restore order.<sup>191</sup> The President, therefore, began to purge all members of the faction who opposed to his reform: in doing so, the leader of this faction, who was Kim Jongpil, lost credibility as he was not able to hinder the President and his constitutional reform.<sup>192</sup> Park had managed not only to purge uncomfortable members within the party, but also to defeat a potential political opponent. In this phase, Park undertook to purge or disgrace all his political opponents and made sure that no one could get in the way between him and the National Assembly.<sup>193</sup> This strategy led to the approval of his constitutional reform in 1969 and this was a pivotal point in Park Junghee's regime. Through that reform, he could run again for the presidency of the Republic of Korea.<sup>194</sup> Therefore, Park won the 1971 presidential elections, albeit by a narrow margin over opposition candidate Kim Daejung.<sup>195</sup> Park realized not only that he had become unpopular but also that dissent against him had now become difficult to stem even within his party. This situation led the President to move from an authoritarian regime to a bloody dictatorship.

He then promulgated the "National Defense Law" which allowed him to hold absolute powers.<sup>196</sup> Therefore, Park Junghee began preparing a constitutional revision as well, what would later become the Yushin constitution in 1971.<sup>197</sup> Those who supported Park in undertaking a constitutional revision were agents of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, the Blue House presidential Secretariat and the bureaucrats from the Ministry of Justice.<sup>198</sup> These three bodies, together with Park, had the new purpose of establishing a one-party rule and in August 1972, they organized a team to set up specific aspects of the constitutional revision: this took the name of Good Harvest Project.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 240

<sup>192</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 240

<sup>193</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 242

<sup>194</sup> Yung Myung Kim, *Patterns of military rule and prospects for democracy in South Korea*, The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific, Book Editor(s): R.J. May and Viberto Selochan, Published by: ANU Press, P. 122

<sup>195</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 459

<sup>196</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 459

<sup>197</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 242

<sup>198</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 242

<sup>199</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 243

The new Yunshin constitution was finally approved in 1972.<sup>200</sup> The Yushin era was equivalent to a perennial state of martial law, moreover the presidential term was extended to 8 years and could be extended indefinitely.<sup>201</sup>

Through the Yushin system, the President was empowered to personally appoint one third of the members of parliament, while as far as the president was concerned, he was appointed by the members of a national council made up of Park's trusted men.<sup>202</sup> The introduction of a violent dictatorial regime was a response from the President linked to the evident unpopularity that he had now reached in his own country.<sup>203</sup> With Park's third presidential term, workers' lives became akin to slavery.<sup>204</sup> The whole territory of the Republic of Korea was placed under the strict surveillance of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency<sup>205</sup>: such a harsh dictatorial regime resulted in strong dissent as a natural consequence. As Park's policies tightened, the anti-Yushin movements also grew.<sup>206</sup> This was the prelude to what would later become the real democratization movements. The anti-Yushin movements were initially started by church leaders and students, and then expanded to include politicians as well.<sup>207</sup>

In 1974, the opposition party led by Kim Youngsam allied with Dong-A Ilbo and Dong-A Radio to stir up protests the Yushin system.<sup>208</sup> The protests included both journalists and radio broadcasters, who lamented the heavy censorship imposed in the name of freedom of expression.<sup>209</sup> Church-related personalities also took action to protest the trampling of human rights perpetrated by the Park regime, organizing a Human Rights Committee in 1974.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Fuji Kamiya, *The Korean Peninsula after Park Chung Hee*, p. 746

<sup>201</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 460

<sup>202</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 460

<sup>203</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 461

<sup>204</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 462

<sup>205</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 462

<sup>206</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p.461

<sup>207</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p.461

<sup>208</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p.461

<sup>209</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p.461

<sup>210</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p.461

These different groups engaged in protesting the Yushin system, then channeled into different organizations, including: the Coalition for the Restoration of Democracy in The Motherland, Alliance for Democracy and Unification in Korea and the Alliance of Korean Youth.<sup>211</sup>

Nevertheless, any form of dissent from citizens or politicians was severely repressed, resulting in actual human rights abuses.<sup>212</sup> These harsh repressions were aimed not only at all those who expressed closeness to potential subversive ideas, but also at personalities within Park's own party.<sup>213</sup> The President in those years, used to justify his regime, the threat represented by North Korea and the danger of going to war against the latter, making every decision of him pass as an emergency measure.<sup>214</sup> Park's political decisions as well as the discontent that was now spreading like wildfire within the Republic of Korea, also had resonance abroad and this also had repercussions in South Korea regarding the economic well-being of the country itself and the international relations that the Republic of Korea had with foreign countries. As already mentioned in previous chapter, the United States were both an important economic and political partner for South Korea, particularly since the 1965 Normalization Treaty with Japan. However, the US government, now concerned by Park's attitude and implications that his policy was having in South Korea, increasingly distanced itself from the President.<sup>215</sup>

This would be confirmed if we consider that the meetings at the highest levels between the Republic of Korea and the United States were five in the years between 1961 and 1969, while they were reduced to only two in the decade between 1969 and 1979.<sup>216</sup> Indeed, issues regarding human rights abuses arising from the Yushin regime became a topic of discussion among members of the US government, particularly during the Carter administration.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p.461

<sup>212</sup> Kurtuluş Gemici, *South Korea during the Park Chung Hee Era: Explaining Korea's Developmental Decades*, Asian Journal of Social Science , 2013, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2013), Published by: Brill, P. 183

<sup>213</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p.463

<sup>214</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p.463

<sup>215</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 299

<sup>216</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 299

<sup>217</sup> Kurtuluş Gemici, *South Korea during the Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 183

The president, particularly sensitive to the cause of human rights, in 1977 even considered the possibility of withdrawing US troops from South Korea, an idea that did not materialize but which marked tension in relations between the two countries.<sup>218</sup>

Furthermore, it must be considered that the oil crisis and especially the US protectionism against Korean products resulted in a clear slowdown in the growth of the Republic of Korea with a consequent increase in Park's unpopularity.<sup>219</sup> The event that further exacerbated the President's policy was the assassination of his wife occurred in August 1974.<sup>220</sup> Park then continued the harsh repression against his political opponents: in 1976 he sentenced the Second President of the Republic of Korea Yoon Bosun to prison and Park's political opponent par excellence, Kim Daejung, leader of the opposition.<sup>221</sup> The latter had already been the subject of attacks by Park: once, he was pushed off the road by an unidentified vehicle while traveling by car, while another time he was the victim of a kidnapping when he was in Tokyo and, therefore, outside his country of origin.<sup>222</sup> On that occasion he was attacked in a hotel in Tokyo, drugged, imprisoned in a trunk, and subsequently repatriated to South Korea where he was promptly placed under house arrest.<sup>223</sup> What probably avoided worse consequences is thought to have been the US government's intercession at the time.<sup>224</sup>

These two events just mentioned jeopardized the relations with Japan that Park had meticulously built up to that point through years of thriving cooperation. When Kim Daejung was kidnapped in Japan, Park was highly criticized for conducting such an operation on foreign soil, the Japanese one in this case, despite Park justifying this by accusing Kim Daejung of plotting against him to create an alternative and provisional Korean government in Japan.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Kurtuluş Gemici, *South Korea during the Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 183

<sup>219</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 464

<sup>220</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung-Hee presidency*, p. 121

<sup>221</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 464

<sup>222</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 463

<sup>223</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 463

<sup>224</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 463

<sup>225</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 454

Secondly, to aggravate the situation there was the 1974 attack that Park escaped and in which, however, his wife became the victim. This act was carried out by a Korean resident in Japan under a false identity, therefore the government of the Republic of Korea blamed the Japanese government for not being able to prevent the incident and therefore being responsible for it.<sup>226</sup> At a time when the Japanese government refused to hold itself responsible for this incident, there was also a raid on the Japanese embassy in Seoul.<sup>227</sup> The situation was calmed by the mediation of Shiina Etsusaburō, however, although the relationship between the two countries survived, it can be said that at that time the relations were the most tense since the time of the 1965 Normalization Treaty.<sup>228</sup>

Through his politics, it can be said that Park was destroying everything he had meticulously created during the previous years, not only in terms of international relations by undermining the relations with the United States and especially Japan with whom he had hitherto built some solid partnerships, but he was also destroying the image of a reliable leader within his own party. Despite the problems that arose during these years, since the constitution allowed him to do so, Park got re-elected for another presidential term in 1978.<sup>229</sup>

However, in December of the same year, his party lost in the elections for the renewal of parliament.<sup>230</sup> The discontent with his politics was now undeniable and he could not help but respond with purges. In October 1979, however, Park made a gesture that sparked the popular revolution. On October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1979, Park had his opponent Kim Youngsam expelled from parliament which provoked the revolt of the citizens of Busan.<sup>231</sup> The resonance that this uprising had was such as to induce Park to decree a state of siege.<sup>232</sup> In decreeing the state of siege, Park Junghee met with his closest collaborators to decide the solution to be taken for a situation so serious that had arisen.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 454

<sup>227</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 454

<sup>228</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 454

<sup>229</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 464

<sup>230</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 464

<sup>231</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 464

<sup>232</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 464

<sup>233</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 464



If the President was ready on that occasion to resort to violence once again, the director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, namely Kim Jaekyu , was not of the same opinion:<sup>234</sup> on the contrary, he was willing to find a compromise rather than immediately resorting to violence.<sup>235</sup> This caused great tension between the two, to the point that on the date of October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1979, Kim Jaekyu killed Park Junghee.<sup>236</sup> With this unexpected action by Kim Jaekyu, eighteen long years of the Park regime were put to an end. <sup>237</sup> In his eighteen years of rule, Park Junghee certainly accomplished some significant goals for the development of the Republic of Korea.<sup>238</sup> As can be deduced from this second chapter, Park Junghee owes great economic success.

The president made economic development his priority already in his calculations at the time of the 1965 Normalization Treaty<sup>239</sup>, but he was effectively consistent with this goal even afterwards. Japan was the main source of inspiration and following this model, it not only increased South Korea's exports<sup>240</sup> but also made the Republic of Korea a "new industrial nation".<sup>241</sup> Park also has the merit of having modernized the political structure of the Republic of Korea: from a government governed mainly by the military and the police at the time of Syngman Rhee<sup>242</sup>, the government of the Republic of Korea got modernized under Park's rule, enriching itself with a new technocratic elite.<sup>243</sup>

In addition to the economic sphere, Park had great merit in the political sphere as well. As can be deduced from this chapter, relations with Japan before the Yushin regime were particularly strong and flourishing and South Korea drew unprecedented results, results that in any case exceeded the expectations of what had been envisaged with the agreements of the Treaty On Basic Relations of 1965, especially when one thinks of the

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<sup>234</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 464

<sup>235</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 464

<sup>236</sup> Tim Shorrock, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980s and the Rise of Anti-Americanism*, *Third World Quarterly* , Oct., 1986, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Oct., 1986), Taylor & Francis, Ltd., p. 1199

<sup>237</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 465

<sup>238</sup> Fuji Kamiya, *The Korean Peninsula after Park Chung- Hee*, p. 744

<sup>239</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 129

<sup>240</sup> Seung K. Ko, *South Korean – Japanese Relations since the 1965 Normalization Pacts* , p. 53

<sup>241</sup> Fuji Kamiya, *The Korean Peninsula after Park Chung- Hee*, p. 745

<sup>242</sup> Fuji Kamiya, *The Korean Peninsula after Park Chung- Hee*, p. 747

<sup>243</sup> Sung Deuk Hahm, *The institutional development of Blue House in the Park Chung- Hee presidency*, p.

Japanese government's great commitment to the security and economy of the Republic of Korea mentioned in the previous sub-chapter. However, the negative aspects must also be taken into consideration. The Yushin system was absolutely unsuitable for South Korea as evidenced by the fact that Park had resorted to emergency solutions several times to ensure that the regime did not collapse.<sup>244</sup> Furthermore, the Yushin system meant that the image of South Korea in the last years of the Park regime was transformed into that of a corrupt dictatorship due to events and questionable choices such as that of the kidnapping of Kim Daejung.<sup>245</sup> All the prestige that the Republic of Korea had gained through its "economic miracle" had been erased by Park's repressions.<sup>246</sup> Once Park's regime ended, the situation in South Korea became particularly difficult and unstable. The aftermath of Park's regime had such repercussions as to lead to real popular uprisings which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

The 1980s, of great importance for the history of the Republic of Korea, mark a time of great change. Popular movements against the authoritarian regime, from a slight spark during the Park era, turned into a fire during the 1980s ready to burn years of suppressed past in favor of democracy. In particular, the Kwangju Uprising of 1980 represented an unprecedented turning point. These topics will be dealt thoroughly in the next chapter, which represents the core of this thesis. In chapter two, the situation prior to the Treaty between South Korea and Japan is analyzed to make it clear at what price this result was achieved, that was, putting aside important historical issues between the two countries that would later be brought back with the transition to an effective democratic regime. In the third chapter just concluded, the figure of Park Junghee is analyzed to better understand what the relations between South Korea and Japan at this stage were, to show how later, with the advent of democracy, historical issues were prioritized rather than economic relations.

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<sup>244</sup> Fuji Kamiya, *The Korean Peninsula after Park Chung- Hee*, p. 746

<sup>245</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 463

<sup>246</sup> Fuji Kamiya, *The Korean Peninsula after Park Chung- Hee*, p. 746

Secondly, this political figure has been examined because Park Junghee's political decisions laid the groundwork for the Democratic Movement's insurgency in South Korea. Without the explanation of the historical events of these years, it would be impossible to fully understand the magnitude of the change brought about by the Democratization Movement in South Korea, and without it, it would also be impossible to explain the main purpose of this thesis, which is as previously mentioned, that to show how social movements, in this case those of South Korea, are able to intervene in the decision-making of a country, including on foreign policy.

## **Chapter 4. The 1980s in South Korea: the temporary government, the military takeover, the uprisings that made democratization possible and the consequent influence on Republic of Korea – Japan relations.**

### **4.1 The transitional government and the military takeover after the end of Park's regime. A breaking point that awoke the social movements for democracy.**

In this chapter, the situation of uncertainty caused by the death of Park Junghee will be addressed, with the consequent democratic movements arising from the political situation in South Korea in the period considered. The intent of the chapter is to show the great impact that the democratic movements have had, as they made possible a change in a country that, for long decades, had been governed in an authoritarian way, leaving little room for concepts related to the democracy. Without the explanation of the uprisings, the ideology on which they were based, the explanation of the situations from which they arose and the consequences they had, it is not possible to fully understand the main purpose of this thesis, that is to explain how social movements are able to intervene in the policy making of a country. It was precisely the democratic movements in South Korea that changed not only the country's internal politics, but also revolutionized relations with Japan, which from the 1960s to the 1980s had proved to be a faithful economic and commercial partner for the Republic of Korea.

In this chapter, it will be paid particular attention to the political situation created after the end of the Park Junghee era. Eighteen long years of dictatorship were destroyed in a second with one shot, leaving South Korea without the leader who had ruled it for nearly two decades. Considering the despotic way in which Park had ruled during the last years of his era, as explained in the previous chapter, it is not difficult to imagine that the Republic of Korea lacked a political plan that could replace the now ex-president. The totally unpredictable way in which Park Junghee died caught the political figures unprepared, resulting, as will be explained later, in a chaotic and fragile management of the politics of the Republic of Korea, a country that once again became the scene of a military takeover. It was precisely this event that fueled the popular uprisings that spread like wildfire throughout the country, thanks to which it was possible to build a democratic Republic of Korea.

Following the sudden death of President Park, the Republic of Korea fell into chaos, as the country was unprepared for such an event. The motivation lies in the fact that Park Junghee, governing in an authoritarian way for almost twenty years, had concentrated all political power in the figure of him.<sup>247</sup> As a result, with his death, a political vacuum occurred.<sup>248</sup> The lack of strong political figures who could replace Park Junghee as leader in the country was aggravated by the fact that even the personalities closest to Park and second only to him in terms of power, were no longer available to fulfill this role for several reasons. In fact, as regards one of Park's closest subjects, the director of the presidential security forces, he was assassinated with the President.<sup>249</sup> At the same time, the director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, despite being the head of the other major political instrument, could not hold any political office since, being the perpetrator of Park's assassination, he was immediately arrested for this act.<sup>250</sup> In this fragile situation, it was also impossible to exploit the National Assembly as a political resource. It must be borne in mind that a third of the assembly was rendered powerless in 1972 due to the introduction of the Yushin Constitution<sup>251</sup>, this aspect should also help to understand how much, after Park's death in 1979, the political scene in South Korea was a terrain now sterile due to the twenty years of dictatorship perpetrated by the now ex-President. As proof of this last statement, it is important to remind the reader that even Choi Kyuha, who was prime minister during Park's regime and subsequently forced by the situation to take power after the latter's death in 1979, represented a decidedly weak and inexperienced political figure compared to his predecessor. In fact, Choi Kyuha owed much of his weak position as a political figure to his past during the Park regime, as he, until 1979, had simply been a career bureaucrat without political experience.<sup>252</sup> As is clear from this first explanation of the situation regarding the South Korean scenario following Park's death, the political atmosphere was quite tense and the balance particularly fragile.

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<sup>247</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.125

<sup>248</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea 1979*, P. 70

<sup>249</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.125

<sup>250</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.125

<sup>251</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.125

<sup>252</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.125

In fact, the turn that events took a short time later should not be surprising. The need to point out what the political scenario was after the death of Park Junghee is in fact important because without the explanation of the events arising from this situation, it is not possible to understand the reason why the social movements for democracy then arose with vehemence. In this regard, therefore, it is necessary to mention at this point, what happened when Choi Kyuha took power, since from that moment on, the events had such an impact as to make sensational the why social movements for democracy finally rose in South Korea.

Choi Kyuha, as previously mentioned, was mainly a bureaucrat and did not have an independent political base<sup>253</sup>, so after Park's death, he mainly tried to receive as much consent as possible from everyone.<sup>254</sup> He ordered that a serious investigation be opened into the assassination of his predecessor, moreover, he broadly maintained the policy perpetrated by Park Junghee in the last years of his regime.<sup>255</sup> As proof of this last statement, he did not actually cancel the severe Yushin constitution on the contrary, the latter continued to be in force despite the fact that its inventor was no longer in power.<sup>256</sup> However, Choi Kyuha decided to soften the strict policy held until then in South Korea, eliminating some emergency measures and at the same time promising to draft a new Constitution within a year.<sup>257</sup> The need for a new constitution to be promulgated was affirmed by the President in his inaugural speech given on December 21st.<sup>258</sup> On this occasion, he promised that he would undertake to promulgate a constitution that was approved by the majority of the population and that furthermore, following the drafting of a new constitution, there would be general elections that were legitimate and fair.<sup>259</sup> His government actually presented itself as a transitional government, in view of a new political order created by future elections.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea 1979*, P. 70

<sup>254</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 465

<sup>255</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 465

<sup>256</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 465

<sup>257</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 465

<sup>258</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 126

<sup>259</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 126

<sup>260</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 126

Indeed, the Yushin constitution was a strict constitution that required great political power, furthermore it was tailored to Park Junghee and only he had the power to control and manage it.<sup>261</sup> No one else in his place had the capacity to act according to the principles of that constitution.<sup>262</sup>

The claim that Choi Kyuha sought consensus from all sides is corroborated by his decision to release prominent and well-known political prisoners who had once been great and feared political adversaries for Park Junghee, one of whom is also already been mentioned during this thesis and therefore it will not be an unknown name for the reader. Choi decided to free the well-known opponent Kim Daejung<sup>263</sup>, who during the Park regime had been the victim of numerous unsuccessful attacks and imprisoned so that he would not constitute a political threat to the severe regime established in the Republic of Korea. This openness towards those who were once political opponents or in any case considered leaders in the opposition, could lead the reader to think that finally in the Republic of Korea a healthy and multi-party-political scenario was being reconstituted, with strong opposition capable of balancing political power. Nevertheless, this was not the case because on the contrary, even the opposition proved to be as fragmented and fragile as the new leader of South Korea.

The political realignment process in this period was very difficult, especially due to the misunderstandings and power struggles within the opposition party. The main opposition party, known as The New Democratic Party (NDP), was rocked by a power struggle between its former president Lee Chulseung and the new party president Kim Youngsam<sup>264</sup>, who had defeated the former president at the national party conference held in May 1979.<sup>265</sup> The election of the latter as party president would secure him that office for three years, however this did not take into account the fact that the Choi government would restore Kim Daejung's civil rights after his release.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 126

<sup>262</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 126

<sup>263</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 465

<sup>264</sup> Tim Shorrock, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980s and the Rise of Anti-Americanism*, p. 1199

<sup>265</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.127

<sup>266</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea 1979*, P. 71

The latter, had been in the past NDP's presidential candidate, moreover, despite having been absent from the political scene for almost a decade, he was a political figure of such prominence that he still had a large political following.<sup>267</sup> At that time, it was common to think that NDP would win future elections, in this regard, there was political pressure for Kim Daejung to be elected as the new President of the Republic of Korea. However, for this to happen, it was necessary not only to reintegrate Kim Daejung into the party, but also his followers.<sup>268</sup> It is not difficult to imagine that, given the delicate situation, the negotiations for this to happen did not go to a new end, culminating in a stalemate and with the admission by Kim Daejung that he no longer had any intention of rejoin the NDP.<sup>269</sup>

One of the main problems with the opposition was that the different groups that were part of it had taken different attitudes during the Park regime or had different ideologies and approaches to politics, so they could not become a cohesive political opposition. While it was true that Kim Youngsam and his followers had fought hard against the harassment perpetrated by the Park regime to bring about his government, it was also true that many members of the NDP party had at the same time been accommodating towards the now former President Park Junghee, in order to avoid harsh retaliation.<sup>270</sup> On the other hand, Kim Daejung as well as his most fervent political supporters represented the active part of the opposition.<sup>271</sup> The latter included students and dissident intellectuals, progressive Christians, all those who had actively expressed their dissent against Park Junghee and his political regime even at the cost of severe consequences, such as arrests, loss of their positions in the society or at worst, imprisonment.<sup>272</sup> This fringe of opposition, therefore, represented the most radical part from the ideological point of view within the party.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.127

<sup>268</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.127

<sup>269</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.127

<sup>270</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 128

<sup>271</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 128

<sup>272</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 128

<sup>273</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 128



As proof of this last statement, it is enough to consider that Kim Daejung himself stated to the press that in his opinion, the NDP party six months after Park's death had proved naive towards the current ruling party, thus wasting not only precious time for the restoration of democracy, but also thus allowing the ruling party to strengthen itself at their expense.<sup>274</sup> The situation, evidently, was not particularly promising: on the one hand there was a provisional government established after the death of a very strong leader and which was therefore unprepared in comparison with him, a government which nevertheless had the intention of promulgating a new constitution and to call for new elections. On the other hand, however, there was a political opposition fragmented by struggles within the party often which therefore could not be cohesive.<sup>275</sup> Political realignment was particularly difficult and in this situation that did not show a promising future, the first to feel the need to act for a change of course were the students. Student activism manifested itself at this stage in various ways. The students initially began asking for the dismissal of professors who had previously had ties to the Park regime, and they also asked for universities to be made autonomous from the government control.<sup>276</sup> However, student protests pressed into place as the ruling government was demonstrating to delay the enactment of a new constitution in order to keep the Yushin Constitution and the state of martial law in power.<sup>277</sup>

The situation was further aggravated when General Jeon was appointed as director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency<sup>278</sup>, although he was also commander of the Defense Security Command.<sup>279</sup> The students, at that point, could no longer tolerate the political turn that events were slowly taking, so in early May 1980, they demanded the immediate abolition of martial law and the elimination of all that constituted the remnants of the Yushin system, including General Jeon.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 128

<sup>275</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p.465

<sup>276</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 128

<sup>277</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 128

<sup>278</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 466

<sup>279</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 128

<sup>280</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 128

The student protests on that occasion did not stop exclusively at the political sphere, as they began to make requests also from a socio-economic point of view. They demanded guarantees for workers' rights, protection of farmer rights<sup>281</sup>, and their protests, initially confined to campuses, began to spread like wildfire, resulting in street demonstrations.<sup>282</sup> Student protests worsened on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1980, when 50,000 students demonstrated in the streets of Seoul<sup>283</sup>: this act inspired students from other cities such as Kwangju, Daegu, Chonju, places where thousands of students began to protest in the streets just like in Seoul.<sup>284</sup> The protests, now no longer limited to the capital of the Republic of Korea, became such as to induce Prime Minister Shin Hyunhwak on May 16<sup>th</sup> to promise, in a speech, that the government would undertake to speed up the process that would have allowed the adoption a new constitution.<sup>285</sup> The student protests not only paralyzed the nation but also had the desired effect. In fact, even the Executive Council of the DRP or the government in power, urged the government to plan a detailed schedule that could speed up the drafting of a new constitution.<sup>286</sup> While it might seem that events were finally taking a positive turn thanks to the intervention of the students, unfortunately this was not the case.

The situation of instability given by the government's uncertainties and clumsy policies, combined with the poor cohesion of the opposition party that made it difficult to implement political alignment, and because of the student riots that had already put the fragile government in difficulty, the military had had time to organize and consolidate their power behind the scenes. The provisional government's explanation, together with the explanation of the failed political realignment and student protests, are necessary to understand what arose from this situation, namely the military takeover. It was the latter that represented the ultimate breaking point and therefore incited the social movements to act definitively in the name of democracy.

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<sup>281</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 128

<sup>282</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 129

<sup>283</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 129

<sup>284</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 129

<sup>285</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 129

<sup>286</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 129

This section represents the prelude to finally get to the heart of this thesis and explain how social movements can intervene in the decision making of a state, in this specific case regarding the relations between South Korea and Japan following the rise of democracy in the Republic of Korea. The situation created by the student riots began to worry the military, as for various reasons, it threatened their power. It is important to notice that in the interim government, the military still managed to retain some degree of power. As proof of this, it must be remembered that General Jeon had replaced the Army Chief of the Staff in December 1979<sup>287</sup>, moreover from April 1980 he had also officially assumed command of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency<sup>288</sup>: he had every violent means to exercise power and control, for this reason giving in to student demands was by no means an option contemplated by General Jeon. Indeed, if the latter had met the students' requests, there would have been considerable consequences on several levels. First, if the government overturned martial law as required, this would translate into an even faster return to democracy.<sup>289</sup> Secondly, giving in to student protests would have meant that the latter would become so vehement as to make it impossible to contain them.<sup>290</sup> As a third consequence, directly linked to a possible restoration of democracy, was the political rise of Kim Daejung: since he was a historical enemy of Park and his kindreds, his rise to power would have meant the deposition of General Jeon.<sup>291</sup>

It seems clear that such a scenario was not conceivable for the military, so General Jeon would have done everything in his power to prevent this from happening. General Jeon's decisions show that he had well planned his strategy.<sup>292</sup> Not only did he have a careful plan for the maintenance of his own power, but the way he carried his plan out makes it seem evident that he had no intention of backing down on his position or relinquishing power. Indeed, he proved ruthless in carrying out his plans and particularly resolute in the means employed. Beginning in May 1980, therefore in conjunction with the pressing student protests, he began to implement his large-scale plan which would allow him not only to quell the riots but also to forcibly consolidate his power.

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<sup>287</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 129

<sup>288</sup> Maurizio Riggio, *Storia della Corea*, p. 466

<sup>289</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>290</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>291</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>292</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

On May 17, General Jeon commanded policemen to arrest 110 student leaders from different universities, who on that date had decided to meet at Ewha Woment's University in order to plan future strategies.<sup>293</sup> Furthermore, martial law, at the center of the controversy, was not annulled as required: on the contrary, General Jeon decided to implement martial law on that day by extending it throughout the country<sup>294</sup>, including the island of Cheju.<sup>295</sup> Furthermore, he decided to promulgate a new decree on martial law, namely the "Martial Law Decree Number 10".<sup>296</sup> With the latter, the categorical closure of all universities was imposed<sup>297</sup>, furthermore any kind of political meetings were prohibited<sup>298</sup>, regardless of whether they were gatherings outdoors or indoors.<sup>299</sup> With these early stages of the plan, it is clear that Jeon Doohwan's main objective was not solely to prevent protests, but also to eliminate any kind of political opponent or competition, so that he could freely build a new political order congenial to him.<sup>300</sup>

The fact that General Jeon was implementing increasingly harsher measures in a sense heralded the incarceration of Kim Daejung and all those who had always been hostile to the Park regime<sup>301</sup>, however, it was surprising that Jeon decided beyond these to get rid of even of those who had hitherto been considered not only loyal followers of Park but also important political figures within the regime itself.<sup>302</sup> In fact, Jeon ordered that Kim Jongpil, Park Jongkyu and Lee Hurak also be jailed: during the Park Chung-Hee regime, Kim and Lee were the heads of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, Kim also carried out the function of Premier, while as regards Lee and Park they were Chief Presidential Secretary and Chief Bodyguard respectively.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>294</sup> Hong N. Kim, *Japanese-Korean Relations in the 1980s*, Asian Survey, May, 1987, Vol. 27, No. 5 (May, 1987), University of California Press, p.499

<sup>295</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>296</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>297</sup> Maurizio Riotto, *Storia della Corea*, p. 467

<sup>298</sup> Hong N. Kim, *Japanese-Korean Relations in the 1980s*, p.499

<sup>299</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>300</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>301</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>302</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>303</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

Their incarceration was unexpected, precisely because from a political ideology point of view they were not General Chung's opponents. The Martial Law Command justified this decision by saying that these people had in the past corrupted and damaged the political and social sphere by committing irregularities by exploiting their power and influence, which is why they had to be punished.<sup>304</sup> Of course, this was nothing more than a mere excuse. The reason for their incarceration lay in the fact that Kim, Park, and Lee had, over the years, amassed a fortune and above all built a network of acquaintances that could easily undermine General Jeon's position, if only they wanted to.<sup>305</sup> Considering the policy adopted by Jeon at a time when the student protests were pressing, it seems easy to understand the future outcomes resulting from these severe decisions. Those who fought for democracy had no intention of backing down, and it was in 1980, when Jeon took these drastic measures, that the movements for democracy rose like never before.

The 1980s in the Republic of Korea are particularly notable for having been studded with social revolts for democracy, one of the most famous in response to Jeon's military takeover was the Kwangju uprising that occurred in May 1980, which will be explored in the next section. Indeed, it will deal with the ideologies on which these social movements were based, how they were structured, and finally will deal with the main uprisings that occurred in the 1980s, including the Kwangju Uprising. The revolts of the 1980s in the Republic of Korea were particularly significant as, finally, the social movements proved to be cohesive and effective in pursuing their goal, namely the restoration of a democratic regime. However, in the light of these considerations, a question spontaneously arises: if popular dissent towards the ruling regime was already present during the Park government, why did the social movements for democracy not work at that time and were finally cohesive only in the 1980s?

Student protests were nothing new in the 1980s: as previously mentioned in the last chapters of this thesis, students tried to protest back in the days of Park's regime against the policies adopted by the latter. In the sixties, numerous protests broke out in South Korea regarding the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1965<sup>306</sup>, moreover the students in these years also asked for social reforms, for which the Park government was repeatedly forced to

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<sup>304</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>305</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 131

<sup>306</sup> Tae-Gyun Park, *W. W. Rostow and Economic Discourse in South Korea in the 1960s*, p. 63

intervene to restore order.<sup>307</sup> The student protests were rekindled in the seventies due to the promulgation of the Yushin constitution<sup>308</sup>: although this has already been mentioned in the thesis, it is necessary to remember it in the reasoning that leads the reader to understand why these protests did not have the desired effect as opposed to those of the eighties. In the seventies, social movements for democracy were not particularly cohesive as they were isolated from each other, making them ineffective in achieving the goal of democracy.<sup>309</sup>

Furthermore, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s were mainly student-centered, so they lacked a fundamental component: they were in a sense exclusive and lacked the involvement of the masses.<sup>310</sup> The underground revolutionary organizations of these years faced constant persecution by the government.<sup>311</sup> In order not to be discovered, they operated through small reading groups on university campuses, or used educational activities provided by religious groups as a ploy.<sup>312</sup> The aid of religious groups during the 1970s in South Korea was conspicuous, as religious groups provided support for independent trade union movements and anti-government student groups.<sup>313</sup>

Religious groups were involved in organizing independent unions, industrial strikes and pro-democracy movements.<sup>314</sup> Furthermore, during Park's dictatorship, it was Jaeya, the name with which a network of political dissidents, religious leaders and intellectuals is referred to: these organizations, all of them, worked mainly with student organizations and political dissidents such as Kim Daejung and Kim Youngsam<sup>315</sup>, but it is clear that the reason why these social movements had no particular effect was that they relied only on restricted categories and not precisely on the masses.

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<sup>307</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 65

<sup>308</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 65

<sup>309</sup> Seongyi Yun, *Democratization in South Korea: Social Movements and Their Political Opportunity Structures*, Asian Perspective, Winter 1997, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Winter 1997), pp. 145-171 Published by: {lrp}, p.146

<sup>310</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 65

<sup>311</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 65

<sup>312</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 67

<sup>313</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 67

<sup>314</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 68

<sup>315</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 68

Also, during the 1970s, the main opposition party, the New Democratic Party, did not particularly oppose the Park regime but proved to be quite compliant towards Park Junghee.<sup>316</sup> It was finally during the 1980s that the NDP gradually began to take on more political weight and finally join Jaeya and the students in the struggle for democracy.<sup>317</sup> In the 1980s, the turning point was marked by the Kwangju Uprising, a revolt that became total and therefore no longer exclusive to students, intellectuals, or religious groups, as had happened until then. The details of the uprising will be deepened in the next sub-chapter, for now it is enough to know that it was a fundamental turning point regarding the social movements for democracy in the Republic of Korea.

The Kwangju Uprising represents a turning point in South Korea's history and the era of democratic movements.<sup>318</sup> During the 1980s, South Korean students and intellectuals began to question why, until then, social movements for democracy had never really had the desired effects.<sup>319</sup> Many attributed the failure of the uprisings of the previous years to the lack of organized revolutionary leaderships that could transform the initiatives of the dissidents into real revolutionary movements.<sup>320</sup> Others, on the other hand, argued that the failure lay in the fact that in the previous decades, the vision of an alternative society was not yet clear.<sup>321</sup> With this section, it is concluded the explanation of the chain events that led to a severe stance by the social movements during the 1980s, which finally succeeded in this decade after years of bloody riots, in setting up a democratic regime in the Republic of Korea.

If the Treaty On Basic Relations between South Korea and Japan, the Park regime and the Yushin constitution were not enough to shake up the social movements and turn them into real mass revolts on a large scale, the harsh political decisions of General Jeon and its military takeover represented the breaking point that finally shook the social movements. In the following section, the focus will be precisely on social movements, the ideologies on which they rested and the most significant uprisings, up to the point of explaining how these have succeeded in their intent to restore a democracy and to

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<sup>316</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 68

<sup>317</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 69

<sup>318</sup> In Sup Han, *Kwangju and beyond: Coping with past State Atrocities in South Korea*, Human Rights Quarterly, Aug., 2005, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 2005), The Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 1000

<sup>319</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 69

<sup>320</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 69

<sup>321</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 69

intervene in the political decision making of South Korea, as regards the foreign policy between Japan and South Korea. The next sections will therefore be decisive in answering the main question of this thesis and in making it clear how social movements were then decisive in changing relations and requests between South Korea and Japan.

## **4.2 The social movements for democracy in the Republic of Korea. Ideologies, organizational methods, and main uprisings during the 1980s.**

### **4.2.1 Ideologies.**

The 1980s in South Korea were marked by important debates among democracy activists, who questioned various issues regarding social movements for democracy. During this period, activist students engaged in theoretical debates, organized tactics, and tried to understand how to interface with political issues.<sup>322</sup> Among the main topics of the debates, to which activists were trying to respond, there was finding a driving force that would induce a revolutionary social transformation.<sup>323</sup> Secondly, on these occasions, activists tried to understand what the role of students was within revolutionary movements, and tried to understand how the working masses should be organized.<sup>324</sup> These topics of discussion were recurrent in the debates of activists belonging to various social movement sectors. The debates in which the activists tried to answer these questions had very specific names: the "Social Formation" debate in Academia, the C-N-P debate in the youth movement<sup>325</sup>, the MT-MC debate in the student movement and finally, the MPO-MO debate in labor movement.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, Higher Education, Sep., 1991, Vol. 22, No. 2, Student Political Activism and Attitudes (Sep., 1991), Springer, p. 177

<sup>323</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 93

<sup>324</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 93

<sup>325</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p.179

<sup>326</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 93



These debates just mentioned are very important for the history of social movements of the 1980s in the Republic of Korea, as their contents formed the pillars of the discursive repertoire of the Korean left.<sup>327</sup> The ideas that came out in these debates were subsequently transformed into real political programs<sup>328</sup>, for this reason to better understand the social movements for democracy and the impact they had in the decision-making process of South Korea when the latter became a democracy, it is essential to understand what were the underlying beliefs on which these debates and consequently the social movements laid.

As for the first category mentioned, that is the "social formation" debates in the 1980s, these mainly focused on issues concerning the Korean economy, which was then compared with the economy on an international level.<sup>329</sup> Some Korean dependency<sup>330</sup> theorists were of the opinion that South Korea was a country characterized by dependence on industrially developed countries and that this condition made South Korea what they termed "peripheral capitalism".<sup>331</sup> The developed countries to which these theorists referred, and on which South Korea was in their opinion dependent, were for example Japan or the United States.<sup>332</sup> Furthermore, to corroborate their claims, the theorists referred for example to the fact that South Korea was dependent on these countries from the point of view of technological imports.<sup>333</sup> Due to these considerations, therefore, according to them, South Korea, failing to be independent, was unable to achieve internal growth.<sup>334</sup> To this, another theory was opposed: the latter argued that in reality South Korea had become, starting during the seventies and then during the presidency of Park Junghee, a state-monopoly capitalism.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 93

<sup>328</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 93

<sup>329</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 94

<sup>330</sup> Economic dependence theories hold that, in a world made up of developed and underdeveloped countries, the latter can sometimes be dependent on developed countries to such an extent that their own independent development is compromised.

<sup>331</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 94

<sup>332</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 94

<sup>333</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 94

<sup>334</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 94

<sup>335</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 94

This belief stemmed from the fact that during the 1970s in the Republic of Korea, the Park administration, the Korean conglomerates known as chaebol and the state entertained a close relationship: the state and the latter penetrated and influenced each other's organizations.<sup>336</sup> This theory, which held that South Korea perceived high development at this stage, failed to consider the actual internal growth of the country.<sup>337</sup> However, this theory, which was critically opposed to the theory of dependence according to which South Korea was dependent on advanced countries, was combined by some theorists with the latter: hence the theories of "neo-colonial state monopoly capitalism" and "colonial semi-feudal social formation" were developed.<sup>338</sup> At this point, the reader may wonder how these theories concerning South Korea and its economy were significant in political or formative terms for social movements. The answer lies in the fact that these social formation debates were particularly significant for social movements, especially for student activists, who were considered a driving force in countering the political and social abuses.<sup>339</sup> In fact, the latter developed political strategies according to the theories to which they felt most ideologically close. From the theories that supported South Korea's dependence on developed countries and spoke of foreign domination came the so-called "National Liberation (NL)" strategy, instead from the theories that emphasized the concept of exploitation perpetrated by the capitalist class, political strategies that focused on the independent political role of the working class were born.<sup>340</sup> Continuing with the analysis of the questions arising from the debates, which later proved to be formative for the political strategies adopted by the social movements in South Korea, it is also important to illustrate the theories arising from the C-N-P debate in the youth movement. The main topic of discussion dealt with during the C-N-P debate concerned which social classes were to act as main agents for a revolution,<sup>341</sup> along with issues concerning South Korea's economy and the role of student activism.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Byung-Kook Kim, Ezra F. Vogel, *The Park Chung Hee Era*, p. 265

<sup>337</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 95

<sup>338</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 95

<sup>339</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 176

<sup>340</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 176

<sup>341</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 176

<sup>342</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 179

The name of the debate, or C-N-P, arose from three main revolutionary strategies born out of this debate: Civil Democratic Revolution, National Democratic Revolution and People's Democratic Revolution.<sup>343</sup> The first of these strategies mentioned, identified students, intellectuals and progressive politicians as the main forces that should have led a civil revolution, moreover this strategy also included a hypothetical alliance with the opposition party.<sup>344</sup> This strategy was bourgeois, as opposed to the National Democratic Revolution and the People's Democratic Revolution, which were definitely anti-capitalist.<sup>345</sup> As proof of this affirmation, it is enough to consider that the National Democratic Revolution envisaged the working class and peasants as the protagonist of the revolution<sup>346</sup>, furthermore this strategy contemplated collaboration with the opposition party only for a limited period of time and functional to its objectives<sup>347</sup>; moreover, as regards the People's Democratic Revolution strategy, compared to the previous one, it absolutely did not contemplate an alliance with the opposition party.<sup>348</sup> For the latter strategy mentioned, it was necessary to rely only on the working class as a revolutionary force and considered electoral issues as a waste of time that distracted activists from the main objective, namely that of carrying out a revolution.<sup>349</sup>

Another important debate to be analyzed for the contribution that the strategies resulting from this have given to the revolutionary cause is the so-called MT-MC debate in the student movement. The name of this debate has its roots in the clash between two student factions called Moolim and Haklim, who were discussing how to respond to some political liberalization measures adopted in 1983.<sup>350</sup> The Moolim faction was of the opinion that student political demonstrations should be more cautious without risking being reckless and consequently damaging the social movement<sup>351</sup>, on the contrary, instead, the Haklim faction argued that the student activism had openly demonstrate,

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<sup>343</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p.95

<sup>344</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p.95

<sup>345</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p.95

<sup>346</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 179

<sup>347</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 96

<sup>348</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 96

<sup>349</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 96

<sup>350</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 96

<sup>351</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 97

through direct struggle, against the government.<sup>352</sup> From these two factions, most of the socialist students organizations sprang up during the 1980s: moreover, the Moolim faction was particularly inspirational to the Korean nationalists, while the Haklim had particular resonance among the Korean Leninists.<sup>353</sup>

At the end of this excursus, but not least in importance, regarding the debates that have given rise to the main political strategies that have guided the social movements for democracy in South Korea, it is important to mention the MPO-MO debate in the labor movement. The main questions to which activists tried to answer in this specific debate were essentially two: the first question concerned how to combine political struggle with economic ones, while the second question asked what kind of organization it was ideal for transforming workers into revolutionaries while being in a police state.<sup>354</sup> Labor activists in Seoul were divided into politicists and economists: the former argued that there was a need to expose the economic problems of workers to a high political level, so their solution was to create an organization halfway between a vanguard party and a mass labor organization.<sup>355</sup> Economists, on the other hand, were pushing for a Mass Organization to be created that would focus primarily on mass-orientation and day-to-day struggle.<sup>356</sup>

Continuing with the analysis of the revolutionary social movements present in South Korea during the 1980s, it is important to explain how these were organized and therefore operated. As has been previously said, from an organizational and involving point of view in the 1980s there was a qualitative leap compared to the previous decades, as before the concept of revolution had been in a certain sense sectorial and limited to students, intellectuals, and religious organizations. In this section, in addition to explaining the numerous debates held during the 1980s that therefore inspired the revolutionary strategies which have been previously mentioned, it will also be explained how activists organized and gathered. Considering this, the great involvement of different social classes regarding the issue of the democratic revolution will be evident to the reader.

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<sup>352</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 178

<sup>353</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 97

<sup>354</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 97

<sup>355</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 98

<sup>356</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 98

Moreover, the following explanation will also be helpful to understand why social movements in the 1980s made a difference compared to those of the past, consequently succeeding in their attempt to establish a democratic regime in the Republic of Korea.

#### **4.2.2 Organizational methods.**

In this section, reference will be made to the different forms of organization of revolutionary groups for democracy in South Korea during the 1980s. Organizational methods included seminars, factory activities, countryside activities, night-study activities, and urban poor activities.<sup>357</sup> Interestingly, these activities were also used as methods of recruiting and training activists from movements for democracies.<sup>358</sup> As for the reading groups, the first to join were university students. They were called seminars because the readings dealt with concerned the history of Korea but also about the revolutions that occurred in other countries such as China, moreover, different theories from Marxist to those of addiction were discussed.<sup>359</sup> Indeed, these activities took place in secret and were actual underground study circles.<sup>360</sup>

Like these seminars were the so-called night-study activities. Also in this case, just as regarding the seminars, the protagonists were the dissident students. These student activists transformed these apparently student activities into real organizational weapons<sup>361</sup> and these activities during the 1980s also extended to workers: in this period, workers were taught, through these night-study activities,<sup>362</sup> what their rights as workers and labor laws were as well.<sup>363</sup> Those who explained these topics to the workers were not students prepared only from a theoretical point of view, but also from a practical one. In fact, to become teachers, students not only had to deepen their knowledge through seminars but had to devote themselves to activities concerning workers also from a practical point of view, for example by working in the factory.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 123

<sup>358</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 123

<sup>359</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 123

<sup>360</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 123

<sup>361</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 124

<sup>362</sup> Seongyi Yun, *Democratization in South Korea*, p. 160

<sup>363</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 124

<sup>364</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 125

This kind of activities, created an efficient bridge that connected labor and student organizations.<sup>365</sup>

During the 1980s, large numbers of students and workers attending these businesses were arrested on suspicion of engaging in Communist activities<sup>366</sup>, however, this was not enough to dissuade activists from continuing. In fact, in these night study sessions numerous labor activists were trained over the years.<sup>367</sup> From the night-study activities it should be clear that the movements for democracy during the eighties were decidedly more inclusive than those of the previous decades. Interestingly, these initiatives did not involve different parts of society in a separate, compartmentalized way, because during the 1980s, activists from different spheres of society came together and collaborated. Another effective example of this statement, which highlights the inclusiveness and collaboration of activists from different backgrounds, concerns countryside activities. The countryside activities were so called because, the activist students who participated, first had to inform themselves through two weeks of seminars<sup>368</sup>, which were then followed by a couple of days of conferences that focused on the Korean economy<sup>369</sup>, and secondly, they had to face some intense days of work in the rice fields. After this last phase of practical work, the students met with the farmers to discuss with them the issues concerning the latter. These issues included their debts, lack of work and the liberalization of the Korean agricultural market.<sup>370</sup>

Continuing with the explanation of the organizational methods of social movements for democracy, and in a certain sense continuing with the trend that demonstrates how by now at this stage the students were in close contact and collaborated with other people belonging to different social spheres, it is important to mention the urban poor activities. The Seoul Olympics that would be held in 1988, represented a great occasion for South Korea to get worldwide attention and, at the same time, the Olympics were an opportunity

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<sup>365</sup> Seongyi Yun, *Democratization in South Korea*, p. 160

<sup>366</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 125

<sup>367</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 125

<sup>368</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 125

<sup>369</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 125

<sup>370</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 126

for the government to be associated with an economic miracle.<sup>371</sup> The Jeon government decided to remove the slums of Seoul<sup>372</sup>, consequently thousands of poor families residing in the slums of the capital, suddenly became homeless.<sup>373</sup> In this case, the students actively sided with the poor families left homeless, in fact, in the years between 1983 and 1985 not only were there more than one hundred protests and rallies<sup>374</sup>, but thanks to the student contribution the Council of Evicted was also created in Seoul, which main aim was precisely representing these families victims of Jeon's city redevelopment policy.<sup>375</sup>

As a last activity concerning the organizational methods of the activists, it is worth mentioning the factory activities. These activities, of which there had been tentative attempts during the 1970s<sup>376</sup>, became particularly popular activities during the 1980s as they became a truly mass phenomenon, highly organized.<sup>377</sup> The revolutionary movement organizations created real explanatory booklets for students to help them understand how to find out about working conditions<sup>378</sup>, how to get in touch with workers<sup>379</sup>, but above all, these booklets taught students how to set up a union.<sup>380</sup> Also in this case, to get effectively in tune with the working class, the students undertook to attend factories, villages, to understand better the working class, because only in this way they could be fully committed to the worker's cause and effectively achieve the goals that the revolutionary movements for democracy set out. Considering this explanation, it appears clear that compared to the past, a substantial difference in the success of the revolutionary movements for democracy consisted not only in the involvement of the masses, but also in the different forms of organization of these social movements.

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<sup>371</sup> Jarol B. Manheim, *Rites of Passage: The 1988 Seoul Olympics as Public Diplomacy*, *The Western Political Quarterly*, Jun., 1990, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Jun., 1990), University of Utah on behalf of the Western Political Science Association, p. 281

<sup>372</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 126

<sup>373</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 126

<sup>374</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 126

<sup>375</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 126

<sup>376</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 126

<sup>377</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 126

<sup>378</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 127

<sup>379</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 127

<sup>380</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 127

Indeed, that during the 1980s, activist organizations, from being limited to a few universities, had become more inclusive as regards the scale of organizations involved, and more organized in coordinating the different groups.<sup>381</sup> These different forms of organization contributed into bringing activists belonging to different social classes together effectively, to make them understand each other's problems, aims and concerns. In this way, activists of any social class were fully focused on the objectives to be achieved, because they were not only endowed with knowledge of the existing problems at an exclusively theoretical level, but also at a practical level. The contribution that the students made to the revolutionary movements during the 1980s was particularly significant from the organizational point of view of the revolutionary movements. The students had the task not only to become professional revolutionaries<sup>382</sup>, but also to become members of the proletariat, a practice that was literally called "total commitment to the workplace".<sup>383</sup> Students who hid their academic membership from government and thus became workers were referred to as student-turned workers.<sup>384</sup> The role they played during the 1980s was of fundamental importance, as they facilitated the organization of trade unions and strikes.<sup>385</sup>

The activists used different techniques to spread their subversive messages, especially during the eighties, in addition to the traditional methods of protest, forms of protest were added that drew inspiration from Korean culture, consequently these demonstrations became real cultural weapons of protest.<sup>386</sup> Among the forms of protest that took inspiration from tradition were masked dance and situational plays, used by activists to criticize Korean society.<sup>387</sup> Other forms of peaceful protests included building occupation and absence from lessons or exams.<sup>388</sup> Clearly, these were not the only means of protest used, as during the 1980s, social movements for democracy proved particularly resourceful when it came to maximizing the dissemination of their messages and goals.

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<sup>381</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, 186

<sup>382</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 127

<sup>383</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 127

<sup>384</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 128

<sup>385</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 128

<sup>386</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 131

<sup>387</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 131

<sup>388</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183



If any forms of protest typical of this period under consideration were to be identified, illegal street demonstrations should certainly be mentioned, as well as firebombs and the wall newspapers.<sup>389</sup> Activists would also recur to bombs such as molotov cocktails.<sup>390</sup> Moreover, it is also necessary to remember another form of protest that is particularly popular at this stage, namely conscious raising letters<sup>391</sup>: all these means, some of which are not exactly peaceful, spread especially when the government made all political channels unusable for non-violent demonstrations.<sup>392</sup> However, the goal for the activists was to reach as many people as possible. In order to achieve this goal, the student activists mainly used illegal street demonstrations, which very often took on the character of surprise protests<sup>393</sup>: activists, hiding in strategic points, suddenly came out invading the streets and at the same time chanting slogans and distributing leaflets.<sup>394</sup> They were so organized that the government police did not even have time to intervene at the protest site, since in the meantime, the activists moved promptly to another predetermined place to continue the protests.<sup>395</sup> The activists were thus able to carry out more illegal street demonstrations simultaneously, in different places and at the same time.<sup>396</sup> During these protests, activists cheered passersby with slogans, while others wrote these political slogans on the streets of the city.<sup>397</sup> It is evident that these illegal street demonstrations required a high level not only of secrecy, but also of organization by various activist groups for the success of these protests.<sup>398</sup> Therefore, the various social movement organizations that organized various protests were divided into different groups. Some took care of the logistics, other groups had the task of dealing with propaganda, other groups, on the other hand, oversaw the organization of these illegal street demonstrations.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 132

<sup>390</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>391</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>392</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>393</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>394</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>395</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>396</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>397</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>398</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>399</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

A sad implication of the protests carried out by the activists, however, concerns the self-immolating protests.<sup>400</sup> Unfortunately, this practice was widespread in the eighties, and concerned desperate activists who in extreme protest gestures decided to set themselves on fire.<sup>401</sup> This protest technique was not viewed negatively, indeed, until the end of the 1980s, self-immolation as well as hunger strikes were considered a noteworthy act, as it was seen as an act full of meaning from a moral point of view.<sup>402</sup> The victims of the repressions or in any case the victims of the protests perpetrated against the South Korean government in the 1980s were not simply numbers for the other activist comrades. On the contrary, mass funeral marches and commemoration ceremonies were conducted, which were always accompanied by speeches, reading of poems and dances belonging to the Korean tradition.<sup>403</sup>

In short, it is possible to say that, from what emerges from section 3.1, the situation in South Korea precipitated with the death of Park Junghee, as the transitional government that found itself in power was not prepared to take the reins of the situation, a direct consequence of Park's accumulation of power over the previous two decades. Because of this, the military was able to gradually take over, especially during 1980, the year in which General Jeon adopted internal policies so severe and repressive as to represent the breakpoint as regards the revolutionary movements, which arose in vehement way. It is also possible to deduce, from what has been indicated so far, that these social movements managed to carry out their plans, compared to the past, thanks to the political strategies resulting from the debates organized by the various social movements, and above all thanks also to the involvement of the masses. Furthermore, the social movements were successful in the 1980s due to the practical identification of students with the world of the proletariat, to the communication between students and workers but above all because during the 1980s, revolutionary organizations were particularly organized compared to the past.

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<sup>400</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>401</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 133

<sup>402</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 134

<sup>403</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 135

Having made the necessary premises and explanations regarding the political situation in South Korea during the eighties, which allows the reader to understand why the social movements definitively rebelled, and also having mentioned what were the ideologies and organizational methods that allowed these uprisings to obtain important results compared to the past, it is possible to proceed with the explanation of the main uprisings occurred in South Korea during the 80s, which changed the history of the country by succeeding in establishing a democratic regime in the Republic of Korea.

Moreover, the explanation of the ideologies upon which the movements for democracy rested, and the fact that the activists also brought as topics for discussion events concerning the history of Korea, as indicated before, also helps the reader to better understand why these movements for democracy intervened in the foreign policy between South Korea and Japan. Indeed, they intervened by insisting on reconsidering important historical issues occurred between the two countries that were left unresolved at the time of the 1965 Treaty, which had been the source of numerous protests back in the 1960s.<sup>404</sup> The next section will therefore deal with the main uprisings that represented the turning point for democracy in the Republic of Korea during the 1980s.

### **4.2.3 Main Uprisings: the protests that led to democracy.**

In this section, the focus will be the famous Kwangju Uprising, which started a particularly significant period for democratic social movements in South Korea. In fact, this revolt can be considered a crucial turning point for the history of the Republic of Korea<sup>405</sup>: the massacre that derived from it was a clear proof of the atrocities of which the regime was capable<sup>406</sup>, moreover, the democratic movement resulting from this occasion culminated in June 1987 with the so-called "June Revolution"<sup>407</sup>. Starting with the latter, considerable progress was finally made regarding democracy.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> The fact that the Treaty between Japan and the Republic of Korea had been source of protests during the 1960s has been already mentioned in this thesis, however, it is possible to find this information in Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 65

<sup>405</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p. 1000

<sup>406</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p. 1000

<sup>407</sup> Tim Shorrocks, *South Korea: Chun, the Kims and the Constitutional Struggle*, Third World Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 1, Succession in the South (Jan. 1988), Taylor & Francis, Ltd., P. 98

<sup>408</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p. 1000

This section will therefore also deal with the other uprisings subsequent to that of Kwangju and which have in any case followed its wake, as the explanation of the main uprisings is fundamental not only to reconstruct the framework of the main events that led to democracy in South Korea, but it is also useful for understanding the impact that social movements had in the country. Democratic social movements had the power not only to overthrow a type of regime that had been perpetrated for decades, but also managed to establish a democracy and intervene in the decision making of the Republic of Korea. However, this last issue mentioned, which also answers the main question of this thesis, will be dealt later in this chapter.

To understand how Kwangju arose in May 1980, it is necessary to take a small step back: in short, to take stock of the situation, it must be kept in mind that General Jeon had declared martial law on May 17<sup>th</sup> 1980<sup>409</sup>, along with other severe policies such as the prohibition of political activities, the dissolution of the National Assembly and total censorship<sup>410</sup>. This represented a further step forward by the military to take total control at the expense of the provisional government<sup>411</sup>, who also on this occasion, to curb any kind of resistance from civilians, had also occupied the streets of the major cities of the Republic of Korea.<sup>412</sup> For the aforementioned reason, on May 18<sup>th</sup> 1980, citizens of the city of Kwangju rose up to protest against the military regime of Jeon.<sup>413</sup> Initially, the protests took a peaceful turn as they consisted of simple peaceful demonstrations.<sup>414</sup> The protests were initially conducted by 200 Chonnam University students, however they pressed hard enough to reach 1000 demonstrators.<sup>415</sup> At that point, the situation worsened when the military troops that had the task of containing the civil protests, called Special Warfare Commando, actively intervened in Kwangju, implementing a violent repression.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> Tim Shorrock, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980s and the Rise of Anti-Americanism*, p. 1202

<sup>410</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p. 999

<sup>411</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p. 999

<sup>412</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p. 999

<sup>413</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p. 1001

<sup>414</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p. 1001

<sup>415</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.131

<sup>416</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p.1001

In fact, the troops indiscriminately attacked people protesting in the city, regardless of age, sex or whether they were actually protesting or not.<sup>417</sup> Due to the indistinct violent repression, the entire city revolted against the Jeon regime.<sup>418</sup> Two days later, on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1980, the demonstrators reached 10,000 people.<sup>419</sup> From this moment on, the protests, from being peaceful, took a different turn: some citizens began an armed self-defense, and the streets of Kwangju turned into a real battlefield.<sup>420</sup> For the first time, the rioters achieved an important victory as three days after the start of the uprising, that is on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1980, the troops were forced to withdraw from Kwangju leaving the city in the hands of the demonstrators.<sup>421</sup>

The rebel citizens on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1980, collected the corpses of the citizens who fought against the regime and that were therefore killed by the troops and held a memorial service for them on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1980, in which 15,000 citizens participated.<sup>422</sup> However, the demonstrations did not stop after that day. In fact, the day after the memorial service, on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1980, 50,000 citizens demonstrated for the elimination of martial law and for the release of Kim Daejung<sup>423</sup>, who is important to remember that he was imprisoned when General Jeon imposed the restrictive measures in May 1980.<sup>424</sup> The protests continued until May 27, 1980, when troops were sent to put down the revolt again, during which 1740 rioters were jailed.<sup>425</sup> After the Kwangju uprising, General Jeon continued its rise to power, but this failed to quell the rioters who, on the contrary, following the Kwangju uprising, were now even more motivated to pursue the struggle in favor of democracy: the General Jeon's rise to power until he reached the Presidency, did nothing but further fuel the popular uprisings.

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<sup>417</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p.1001

<sup>418</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p.1001

<sup>419</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.131

<sup>420</sup> In Sup-Han, *Kwangju and beyond*, p.1001

<sup>421</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.131

<sup>422</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.132

<sup>423</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.132

<sup>424</sup> This has been already mentioned in the 3.1 section, the source is the following: Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 130

<sup>425</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p.132.

After suppressing the Kwangju uprising, Jeon Doohwan continued his rise to power in the following months. As early as June 1980, he withdrew from the Korean Central Intelligence Agency<sup>426</sup> while in August of the same year, he withdrew from the army.<sup>427</sup> While General Jeon was preparing to implement his political project, the provisional government also collapsed as Choi Kyuha resigned in August 1980<sup>428</sup>, justifying himself needing to look at the situation in the Republic of Korea from a different perspective.<sup>429</sup> This represented an important moment as on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1980, Jeon Doohwan managed to get himself elected as President of the Republic of Korea by the National Conference of Unification.<sup>430</sup>

With his election, Jeon Doohwan was ready to implement his political projects on a large scale, plans which he did not fail to enunciate during his inaugural speech on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1980. President Jeon's main aim was to completely renew society in South Korea, abolishing what in his opinion were the corrupt practices of the past.<sup>431</sup> This renewal had, in his plans, to take place above all in the political sphere, through the purge of members of the political class considered corrupt to make way for political personalities whose careers were not tainted by the corruption of past regimes.<sup>432</sup> On the occasion of the inaugural address, the new president also promised the promulgation of a constitution<sup>433</sup>, apparently democratic if it were not for its supplementary provisions. The constitution promised citizens democratic rights as well as the abolition of torture especially as regards the extortion of confessions.<sup>434</sup> The President, according to the constitution, had to exercise a single term of seven years: however, he even had the power to dissolve the National Assembly if he deemed it necessary.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 133

<sup>427</sup> Maurizio Riotta, *Storia della Corea*, p. 467

<sup>428</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 133

<sup>429</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 133

<sup>430</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 133

<sup>431</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 133

<sup>432</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 133

<sup>433</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 134

<sup>434</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 134

<sup>435</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 134

Furthermore, this constitution was a “promissory note”<sup>436</sup> until the new National Assembly would be elected in June of the following year.<sup>437</sup> In essence, therefore, until that moment, the Republic of Korea would have been fundamentally a constitutional dictatorship<sup>438</sup>, since in the absence of the National Assembly, a National Security Legislative Council appointed by the President himself, had the task of enacting laws.<sup>439</sup> President Jeon then continued his plan for the renewal of the political class also through the National Security Legislative Council appointed by him.

The first law promulgated by the Council was that to purify political culture.<sup>440</sup> The latter, consisted in banning from the political scene until June 1981, when the new National Assembly was elected, all the elements that in previous years, according to the Council, had fomented social and political corruption in the Republic of Korea.<sup>441</sup> Therefore, 835 politicians and intellectuals were reported<sup>442</sup>, moreover, the attempt at political renewal was not limited to the simple exclusion of these individuals for a limited period of time. Indeed, the second law promulgated by the Council was the one concerning the restriction of political parties.<sup>443</sup> Even once he was elected President, the greatest concern for President Jeon and his government was with the revolutionaries, especially the students who were often the main protagonists and organizers of uprisings in favor of democracy. Students continued to demonstrate their dissent against Jeon's presidency: on October 17th, 200 students from Korea University protested, resulting in arrests and university closure.<sup>444</sup> However, they were also emulated by students from Sungkyunkwan, Sukmyong and Yonsei universities in November of that year.<sup>445</sup> In this regard, the government imposed heavy punishments on Yonsei University, demanding the resignation of the president, the vice-president, the heads of three undergraduate colleges, the head of student affairs and that of academic affairs as well.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 134

<sup>437</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 134

<sup>438</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 134

<sup>439</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 134

<sup>440</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 136

<sup>441</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 137

<sup>442</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 137

<sup>443</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 137

<sup>444</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 137

<sup>445</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 138

<sup>446</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 138

These measures were, according to the government, necessary to restore a normal university atmosphere so that there would be no severe repercussions on students who were not involved in the protests.<sup>447</sup>

The government's drastic measures make it clear how much, for the Jeon administration, the students nevertheless represented a serious problem for the regime<sup>448</sup> because of their relentless desire to protest and the strong convictions that pushed the rioters to act in the name of democracy. As proof of this statement, it is enough to know that in 1982, about two thirds of the prisoners for political causes were student activists<sup>449</sup>, who in the following years continued their struggle for democracy. For the activist students, a turning point in the struggle for democracy against the Jeon regime was the spring of 1984. The Jeon government, thinking of stemming the problem of activists by showing a docile attitude towards them<sup>450</sup>, decided to free numerous activist students imprisoned in the previous years.<sup>451</sup> Obviously, this move was a complete failure on the part of the Jeon administration<sup>452</sup> as the students regained control of the subversive activities.

The student contribution towards the democratic cause was particularly significant the following year, when in 1985 there were the elections of the National Assembly. On this occasion, the two opposition parties such as the New Korea Democratic Party (NKDP) and the Democratic Korea Party (DKP) which would later merge into the first mentioned, obtained a percentage of 48% in the vote<sup>453</sup>, thus surpassing the party in power of the President Jeon, or the Democratic Justice Party (DJP) which had obtained only 35% of the votes.<sup>454</sup> This result meant that the NKDP had won a third of the seats in the New National Assembly.<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>447</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 138

<sup>448</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *South Korea in 1980*, p. 138

<sup>449</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics: Patterns of Radicalization in the 1980s*, *Journal of International Affairs*, Winter/Spring 1987, Vol. 40, No. 2, *Opposition and Political Change* (Winter/Spring 1987), *Journal of International Affairs* Editorial Board, p. 238

<sup>450</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 241

<sup>451</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 241

<sup>452</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 241

<sup>453</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 242

<sup>454</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 242

<sup>455</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1207



This occasion showed how fragile not only was the Jeon government in terms of popular consensus, but also how much the youth voting population could no longer be ignored.<sup>456</sup> The student contribution on this occasion consisted in the fact that the great electoral success obtained by the NDKP was mainly due to the commitment of the students, who had actively contributed to the success of this enterprise through active campaigns in favor of the party.<sup>457</sup> Democracy activists did not stop with this success and continued with campaigns and protests against President Jeon's regime.

If the Kwangju Uprising was significant in terms of the struggle for democracy, especially considering its long-term aftermath, it can be said that second only to Kwangju Uprising was the occupation of the United States Information Service in May 1985.<sup>458</sup> The building was besieged by activists for democracy from 23 to 25 May 1985<sup>459</sup> in the period in which recurred the fifth anniversary of the Kwangju Massacre.<sup>460</sup> The reason was that the activists through this gesture were asking not only an explanation but also an apology from the US government<sup>461</sup>, regarding the US support for the Jeon government even when the latter made the decision to use the Korean troops to quell the revolt in Kwangju<sup>462</sup>, which indeed ended in a massacre. Given the efforts by activists during the years of the Jeon Presidency and considering their continued commitment which, despite the repressions of the government achieved moderate success, it is evident that the social movements were, during the 1980s, obtaining the desired results.

Social movements for democracy, through protests, occupations, and political engagement, were slowly not only succeeding in crumbling the Jeon government but were also managing to intervene in the politics of the Republic of Korea. As proof of this last statement, the explanation of the events occurred in 1986 and 1987 is fundamental, not only because these events highlight the desired effects brought by the hard work of activists, but also because through this explanation it is possible further understand how, in the 1980s and especially in the last years of this decade, the opposition for democracy

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<sup>456</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 242

<sup>457</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 243

<sup>458</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 244

<sup>459</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 244

<sup>460</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 246

<sup>461</sup> Wonmo Dong, *University Students in South Korean Politics*, p. 244

<sup>462</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1208

and therefore also the social movements had been able to intervene in the policy making processes of South Korea.

In 1986, given renewed strength on the part of student and workers' movements and in function of the urgency of a change in the Constitution related to direct presidential elections<sup>463</sup>, the activists decided to act cohesively in favor of this cause.<sup>464</sup> In March 1986, a united front was created to urge the promulgation of a new constitution, which took the name of the National Alliance for Constitutional Reform.<sup>465</sup> This united front was the architect of numerous provincial mass rallies<sup>466</sup> that posed a serious threat to President Jeon and his administration. Indeed, the President's reaction was immediate, as he condemned this united front as subversive and as a major threat to national security.<sup>467</sup> Despite the impetus of the activists, President Jeon tried to stall on the issue: the situation for the president was now delicate, considering that the opposition was trembling for direct elections<sup>468</sup>, an issue also supported by the US government<sup>469</sup>, therefore he could do nothing but affirm that he was open to dialogue for a constitutional change<sup>470</sup>, but that this would not have happened before 1988, the year in which there would be indirect elections and the Olympics in Seoul.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>463</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p.1210

<sup>464</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p.1210

<sup>465</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p.1210

<sup>466</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p.1210

<sup>467</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1211

<sup>468</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1211

<sup>469</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1211

<sup>470</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1211

<sup>471</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1211

Furthermore, the President called on the opposition to work with his government to maintain national stability until 1989<sup>472</sup>, a proposal that was promptly rejected by the opposition.<sup>473</sup>

The President's proposals and his attempt to postpone such an urgent issue only fueled popular dissent that resulted in numerous rallies in March 1986<sup>474</sup>, protests in which thousands of citizens of the Republic of Korea participated to demonstrate in the name of democracy and for a democratization to take place in the country.<sup>475</sup> It seems clear that social movements were now unstoppable as well as determined, they had become difficult to manage even for the President and increasingly capable of forcibly intervening in the political processes of South Korea. The crucial importance of social movements in this phase is especially evident considering that these, were particularly engaged in the political campaigns of the NKDP to change the constitution<sup>476</sup> because they believed that their contribution would also involve the masses and would help Korean citizens to understand the nature of the military dictatorship exercised by Jeon.<sup>477</sup>

The decisive year for the struggle for democracy, which was also the year par excellence in which social movements showed how influential they could be, was 1987. In 1987, the issue regarding the constitutional revision had not yet been addressed and this was already in itself a source of tension between the NKDP and the DJP<sup>478</sup>, indeed, student demonstrations to protest about the issue continued.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>472</sup>Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1211

<sup>473</sup>Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1211

<sup>474</sup>Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1211

<sup>475</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1211

<sup>476</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1212

<sup>477</sup> Tim Shorrok, *The Struggle for Democracy in South Korea in the 1980 and The Rise of Anti Americanism*, p. 1212

<sup>478</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987: The Politics of Democratization*, Asian Survey, Jan 1988, Vol. 28, No.1, A Survey of Asia in 1987: Part I, University of California Press, p. 52

<sup>479</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 52

The fragile balance on which the Chun regime now rested was further damaged when the news of Park Jongchul, a university student who died as a result of torture inflicted on him during an interrogation by the police, got leaked.<sup>480</sup> The government confirmed the news<sup>481</sup>, however, this did nothing but foment the antigovernment movement, which took the opportunity to call for democratic reforms and especially noticed how vulnerable the Jeon government was now.<sup>482</sup> Despite the position in which he now found himself, President Jeon did not seem to show signs of abating and perpetuated with his politics. In April 1987, the President openly decided to suspend the debate regarding constitutional reform, therefore prohibiting any discussion regarding the matter.<sup>483</sup>

He tried to blame on the opposition party, arguing that the latter was not yet cohesive<sup>484</sup> and that therefore this condition made negotiations impossible, because the fragility of the opposition party would have repercussions on the country.<sup>485</sup> Clearly, these statements by President Jeon caused great discontent not only among the activists, but also among the ordinary people who were willing to freely choose the new President<sup>486</sup>. The turning point, as well as the moment par excellence in which the strength of social movements for democracy is evident as regards their ability to influence the politics of South Korea, is dated June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1987. On this occasion the ruling party or the DJP, appointed No Taewoo as the future successor of President Jeon based on the constitution much contested by the public at the time, which provided for indirect presidential elections.<sup>487</sup> The dissatisfaction with this choice resulted in a general protest: thousands of students invaded the streets<sup>488</sup>, this time not demonstrating peacefully but armed with firebombs and even incited by middle-class citizens.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 52

<sup>481</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 52

<sup>482</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 53

<sup>483</sup> Seongyi Yun, *Democratization in South Korea*, p. 162

<sup>484</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 53

<sup>485</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 53

<sup>486</sup> Seongyi Yun, *Democratization in South Korea*, p. 162

<sup>487</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

<sup>488</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

<sup>489</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

The number of citizens gathered to protest was so great that, despite the police intervening to quell the revolt even with the use of tear gas, the policemen were practically helpless in front of the demonstrators.<sup>490</sup> Faced with popular demonstrations of this magnitude, the government had few options left to try to regain the situation and none of the remaining options were particularly welcome to the Jeon government. The government could have chosen to intervene by using the troops<sup>491</sup>, a decision that would have risked causing a civil war<sup>492</sup>, or it could have conceded to the opposition forces what they desired.<sup>493</sup> However, this would inevitably undermine the power that President Jeon and his government held.<sup>494</sup> However, the demonstrators for democracy had weakened Jeon, who was now running out of resources to contain the democratic forces. The President tried to appease the opposition by proposing a meeting with Kim Youngsam: this event took place on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1987,<sup>495</sup> when the President stated that he intended to resume negotiations with the opposition on the constitutional reform<sup>496</sup>, an issue which, as has already been mentioned in this section of the sub-chapter, had been shelved by Jeon using the excuse of a poor cohesion of the opposition party which therefore made it unreliable to reach an agreement. Kim Youngsam, however, had understood that the President's position was now fragile<sup>497</sup> and therefore decided to remain firm on the positions he shared with the demonstrators for democracy, and did not give up. Indeed, he rejected the bland proposal of President Jeon, categorically asking for an immediate national referendum in which South Korean citizens, through a popular and direct vote, would choose between a parliamentary or presidential republic.<sup>498</sup> Moreover, he also demanded the release of political prisoners as well as the restoration of Kim Daejung's civil and political rights.<sup>499</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

<sup>491</sup> Seongyi Yun, *Democratization in South Korea*, p. 164

<sup>492</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

<sup>493</sup> Seongyi Yun, *Democratization in South Korea*, p. 164

<sup>494</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

<sup>495</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

<sup>496</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

<sup>497</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

<sup>498</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

<sup>499</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1987, people's protests peaked in what was named the "Grand Peace March": on this occasion, over a million of South Korea's citizens joined the event.<sup>500</sup> Given the situation and the rather worrying turn events were taking, No Taewoo decided to act arbitrarily, surprising both the opposition and the DJP party and consequently catching President Jeon off guard.<sup>501</sup>

No Taewoo on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1987 announced a democratization plan which provided for the acceptance of the demands made by the opposition.<sup>502</sup> With this arbitrary decision made by presidential candidate No, the wave of discontent that had become particularly severe since the spring of that year was finally put an end to it.<sup>503</sup> No Taewoo's decision represents the confirmation that all the efforts of those who, for almost an entire decade, had fought for democracy had not been in vain. The opposition party and therefore consequently also the social movements for democracy had succeeded in their intent: they had finally managed not only to be heard but also to weaken Jeon's government so much that it could not help but compromise. All those who until then had fought for democracy - students, politicians, workers, and activists for democracy in general - saw, with the statement made by No Taewoo on June 29<sup>th</sup>, their efforts paid off and could even see the dawn of a new democratic era.

The explanation of the ideologies on which the social movements of the 1980s rested, as well as the explanation of their organization and of the main uprisings, offers the reader various insights to understand the importance of what social movements have achieved, and makes to better understand their impact at the national level too. The social movements for democracy of the 1980s thanks to a high organization, strong ideologies that inspired political strategies, and through the involvement of the masses in protests and struggles, succeeded in affirming democracy in the Republic of Korea, which for years since its foundation had been ruled by autocratic regimes. Indeed, the government even had to compromise in 1987: the social movements for democracy had become so strong that they left no alternatives, and this should make the reader understand how incredible was the achievement carried out by the activists for democracy.

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<sup>500</sup> Seongyi Yun, *Democratization in South Korea*, p. 164

<sup>501</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

<sup>502</sup> Tim Shorrocks, *South Korea*, P. 101

<sup>503</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 54

No Taewoo's proposal was approved not only by the opposition but also by President Jeon<sup>504</sup>, and this allowed first the release of all political prisoners, included Kim Daejung, and secondly the resuming of negotiations regarding the new constitution<sup>505</sup>: the democratization process began.<sup>506</sup> Elections were held in December 1987<sup>507</sup>, however, as the opposition had not proposed a single leader but had split into two parties, one led by Kim Youngsam and another led by Kim Daejung<sup>508</sup>, it failed to win.<sup>509</sup> Most of the popular votes and therefore the presidency went to candidate No Taewoo.<sup>510</sup> From the time he was elected, President No implemented political liberalization measures: 431 books hitherto banned by the Republic of Korea were reinstated<sup>511</sup>, and as of 1989 South Korean citizens were again allowed to travel freely outside the country.<sup>512</sup>

No's government pledged to publicly apologize for the events related to the Kwangju Massacre. The government defined Kwangju Uprising as an important part of the achievement of democracy by students and citizens<sup>513</sup> and furthermore, it committed itself so that the former president Jeon not only publicly apologized for the abuses of power carried out during his regime but also hand over its personal assets to the state.<sup>514</sup> President No kept his promises, as he forced to resign all the politicians charged with corruption within the DJP party and in their place, he formed a large number of would-be opposition leaders.<sup>515</sup> No Taewoo showed that he had listened to the democratic demands of the opposition, as his government restored elections at the local, municipal and presidential levels, all elections that had been abolished from the time of Park Junghee to 1961.<sup>516</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, pp. 54-55

<sup>505</sup> Tim Shorrocks, *South Korea*, P. 101

<sup>506</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 55

<sup>507</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 57

<sup>508</sup> Hyaeweol Choi, *The Societal Impact of Student Politics in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 184

<sup>509</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 55

<sup>510</sup> Han Sung-Joo, *South Korea in 1987*, p. 57

<sup>511</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p.185

<sup>512</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p.185

<sup>513</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p.185

<sup>514</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 186

<sup>515</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 186

<sup>516</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 186

President No Taewoo established electoral practices aimed at guaranteeing not only good conduct at the electoral level of political parties but also useful for implementing open political practices.<sup>517</sup>

During the No government, trials were also allowed against policemen accused of inflicting torture on activists, regardless of whether they were students or workers.<sup>518</sup>

Considering No's government actions, it seems safe to assume that social movements for democracy had managed to intervene in policy making of South Korea. Considering these explanations, which therefore help to understand the weight and historical importance of social movements for democracy in the Republic of Korea, the reader will be also able to better understand how these social movements have indeed influenced foreign policy between South Korea and Japan. The social movements for democracy, thanks to the strong historical and political impact and the results obtained, inspired in the following years also other types of social movements, those that brought to light important historical issues and claims between South Korea and Japan. In the next section, therefore, it will be shown how social movements for democracy were not only important at the level of domestic politics, but also at the level of foreign policy for South Korea.

The social movements for democracy of the 1980s inspired other social movements which, thanks to democracy and freedom of speech, and strengthened by the fact that in the Republic of Korea there were no longer autocratic regimes that prioritized economic relations over historical issues, decided to fight for what they considered important. The resonance that social movements for democracy had, therefore, was incredible not only because it even affected foreign policy but also because it was visible in the long run.

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<sup>517</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 186

<sup>518</sup> Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*, p. 186



### **4.3 How social movements for democracy intervened in South Korea's foreign policy with Japan.**

The issues mentioned up to this section are fundamental to achieve the purpose of this thesis: to explain how the social movements for democracy in South Korea have had the power not only to intervene in the internal politics of the state, but above all to influence the foreign policy between the Republic of Korea and Japan. The most immediate question the reader might think about at this point is: how did social movements for democracy influence foreign policy between South Korea and Japan? Social movements for democracy in South Korea mainly intervened in two ways which, at first glance, may not be immediate if the reader tries to answer the question on their own.

Mainly, the social movements for democracy in South Korea after the 1980s allowed democracy to consolidate: this was synonymous with freedom of speech, which previously was not granted.

The most immediate consequence of freedom of speech is that citizens and therefore social organizations can come together, reflect, discuss, and manifest freely: this possibility, combined with the great success in achieving their goals that the social movements for democracy had, urged many other citizens to do the same and fight for issues they felt were right. Following the 1980s, many Korean citizens rediscovered the importance of fighting for important historical issues left unresolved with Japan up to that moment, precisely through the creation of new social movements. Social movements and public opinion in general could freely express their dissent and opinions on these issues, consequently influencing the government of the Republic of Korea, which could not fail to listen considerate citizens' opinions and views, especially regarding historical issues with Japan which were incredibly important.

Basically, the social movements for democracy intervened in the foreign policy between Japan and Korea by creating an echo, a domino effect: they affirmed democracy that equals to freedom of speech, which has as its first consequence the freedom of expression, moreover the success of the democratic social movements in the 1980s inspired new generations of activists that decided to protest over past issues with Japan: ultimately, the South Korean democratic government, not only could it no longer ignore the opinion of citizens as it had become a democracy, but also it was no longer forced to put aside the problems with Japan linked to the colonial rule as the past autocratic regimes had done to obtain economic and strategic advantages.

The citizens' efforts in shedding the light again over the colonial past, influenced the South Korean government's policy towards Japan, which started to stress again the importance for Japan to acknowledge the mistakes that the latter made during the colonial rule.

As a first concept, to understand how democratic social movements have managed to influence foreign policy as well, in the specific case of this thesis, the relations between South Korea and Japan, it is important to start from the origins of the "domino effect" they created. Therefore, it is important to explain, first, how the achievement of democracy was the fundamental starting point for the development of a civil society capable of also influencing the foreign policy of South Korea. As explained in the previous chapters, in the Republic of Korea after the 1980s, social movements and civil society started strengthening, especially since 1993.<sup>519</sup> The reason lies in the fact that, as explained in this thesis, during the autocratic regimes an expansion of civil society was not possible and so was a development at the qualitative level.<sup>520</sup>

Furthermore, the social movements that arose in the 1980s inspired the creation of new organizations, starting from the end of the decade considered.<sup>521</sup> It was the consolidation of democracy that allowed the development of civil society and freedom of speech, absolutely forbidden in the previous decades despite Korean citizens trying to express their dissent on some issues, in particular those concerning relations between South Korea and Japan: it should therefore not be surprising that the protests about the historical past arose after the consolidation of democracy. The previous autocratic regimes prevented the citizens from gathering to discuss about certain topics, expressing ideas<sup>522</sup>, however, there already had been timid attempts to protest despite the circumstances. Indeed, during the Park regime, people attempted to express their dissent against the 1965 Treaty On Basic Relations<sup>523</sup> which would have implied ignoring the problems deriving from the Japanese colonial rule to achieve economic development.<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space: Civil Society and the Women's Movement in South Korea*, The Journal of Asian Studies, May, 2002, Vol. 61, No.2, Association for Asian Studies, p. 474

<sup>520</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 474

<sup>521</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 474

<sup>522</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 474

<sup>523</sup> Tae-Gyun Park, *W. W. Rostow and Economic Discourse in South Korea in the 1960s*, p. 63

<sup>524</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 474

Park's regime eliminated all forms of democracy<sup>525</sup> and the situation worsened with the rise to power of General Jeon: as a response, there was an escalation of protests from civil society<sup>526</sup> which, however, managed to reach the goal of democracy in the late 1980s. The consolidation of a democratic republic then consequently allowed civil society to flourish<sup>527</sup>, through the birth of numerous social organizations independent from the state during the nineties<sup>528</sup>, which also wielded power regarding South Korea's policy making.<sup>529</sup> This result meant an overcoming of what was a suppressed civil society.<sup>530</sup> The transformation of civil society on a quantitative level has been followed by a transformation on a qualitative level<sup>531</sup>: this is because, considering how civil society was in the 1980s, it had a relationship with the state that was not only antagonistic, but which also often resorted to violence.<sup>532</sup>

With the emergence of democracy, the antagonistic aspect declined and the nature of the relationship between civil society and the State changed. A relationship based on collaboration and negotiation was therefore established.<sup>533</sup> Furthermore, a qualitative transformation can also be observed in another sense, not only regarding the relationship with the government. Civil society organizations, from being social movements that mainly dealt with bringing down the ruling regime<sup>534</sup>, became organizations that pursued different goals than the ones of the past, dealing with issues related to improving the quality of life<sup>535</sup> and engaging in raising awareness about important social matters.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 481

<sup>526</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 481

<sup>527</sup> Hagen Koo, *Civil Society and Democracy in South Korea*, *The Good Society*, Volume 11, Number 2, 2002, pp. 40-45 (Article), Penn State University Press, p. 42

<sup>528</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 481

<sup>529</sup> Hagen Koo, *Civil Society and Democracy in South Korea*, p. 42

<sup>530</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 483

<sup>531</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 484

<sup>532</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 484

<sup>533</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 484

<sup>534</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 484

<sup>535</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 484

<sup>536</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 484

The Korean civil society that flourished during the nineties was in fact concerned with human rights for women, the rights of workers, minorities, and peace.<sup>537</sup> Moreover, these organizations, received great support from media and the South Korean government itself.<sup>538</sup> It can therefore be said that the Korean social movements of the 1990s had androcentrism at the center of their battles<sup>539</sup>, but another interesting aspect at the level of change, an aspect derived directly from the social movements of the 1980s, was that of the rediscovery of Korean tradition preceding the years of forced industrialization.<sup>540</sup> Already during the eighties, in the various campuses the activists, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, enjoyed reading texts belonging to the Korean tradition and history.<sup>541</sup> In the 1990s, therefore, there was a rediscovery of Korean values and traditions that had been repressed during the previous years due to a not easy modernization characterized by encounters with western powers and Japanese colonialism<sup>542</sup>.

Considering this, it is therefore possible to note how the democratic social movements present in South Korea in the 1980s influenced foreign policy between Japan and Korea from the very basis: without them, there would have been no democracy, and with democracy it was possible to achieve not only the development but also the transformation of the civil society. Consequently, the organizations born in this context, inspired not only by the success of the associations of the 1980s but also by the issues they faced, were able to rediscover the importance of social problems and the importance of issues related to the tradition and history of Korea. Precisely regarding these two aspects, therefore, it should not be surprising that the Korean social movements of the 1990s undertook to fight for the unsolved social and historical issues with Japan. This too was possible, therefore, thanks to the push given by the Korean social movements of the 1980s: they indeed influenced the foreign policy between Korea and Japan also through indirectly giving an important input that did not get lost after years, but which was instead caught by the new generations of activists that decided to rediscover the Korean history and fight for the unresolved issues with Japan that involved especially human rights.

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<sup>537</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, pp. 484-485

<sup>538</sup> Hagen Koo, *Civil Society and Democracy in South Korea*, p. 44

<sup>539</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 485

<sup>540</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 485

<sup>541</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 486

<sup>542</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 485

This could be considered another way in which the democratic social movements of the 1980s influenced the international relations between South Korea and Japan. An interesting binomial developed in this phase is that concerning the rediscovery of historical and social issues between Korea and Japan combined with the great participation of women in social organizations of the 1990s. This combination has made it possible to shed light again on what is one of the thorniest issues concerning the colonial past between Korea and Japan, namely the problem of Korean comfort women: something that had been set aside for many years but which, with the development of democracy, the new civil society and the participation of women, once again found its place in contemporary history, consequently producing a considerable impact as regards international relations between Japan and South Korea. The phenomenon of democratization, achieved thanks to the struggle of the social movements of the eighties and which led to democratization not only at the political but also at the social level, also encouraged the development of autonomous women's associations.

The women's social movements of the 1990s have become increasingly diversified and complex with ongoing democratization, coming to deal with disparate topics including sexual violence, harassment, prostitution, peace and so on.<sup>543</sup> For this reason, it was inevitable that the issue of Korean comfort women would re-emerge. In this case, the verb re-emerge is used because back to 1980, the founder of what later would be known as Korean Council for Women, already started investigating the matter.<sup>544</sup> Who were the Korean comfort women and why does this have to do with Japan? The comfort women have already been mentioned during this thesis, but the explanation of the issue has been postponed to this paragraph precisely because of the importance it had in international relations between South Korea and Japan when democracy was re-established in South Korea, and when civil society developed in the democratic context.

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<sup>543</sup> Seungsook Moon, *Carving Out Space*, p. 490

<sup>544</sup> Kan Kimura, *Discovery of Disputes: Collective Memories on Textbooks and Japanese—South Korean Relations*, *The Journal of Korean Studies* (1979-) , spring 2012, Vol. 17, No. 1 (spring 2012), Duke University Press, P. 105

When Korea was conquered by Japan and placed under Japan's control from 1910 to 1945<sup>545</sup>, Japan proceeded to recruit young Korean women<sup>546</sup> to serve as "comfort women" for the Japanese Army, intensifying this process from 1937.<sup>547</sup> A very important detail related to the recruitment of these Korean women, a detail for which for a long time the Japanese government insisted that these women not be forced to become sexual workers, is that the recruitment was on a "voluntary" basis.<sup>548</sup> For this reason, Japan insisted until 1993<sup>549</sup> that Korean comfort women voluntarily decided to join the Women's Voluntary Labor Service Corps. The reality is that, despite the drafting of women had been legalized in 1942<sup>550</sup>, these women were recruited on a voluntary basis but with deception<sup>551</sup>: many were deluded into receiving substantial rewards for their work in any factories or hospitals, and then actually being forced into prostitution.<sup>552</sup> The occasion on which the matter resurfaced in South Korea, causing a stir, coincided with the funeral of the Japanese Emperor Hirohito: in January 1989, the South Korean government expressed its willingness to send an emissary to the funeral.<sup>553</sup> Because of this, members of women's organizations organized to protest in Seoul, marching in the streets of the capital.<sup>554</sup> In addition, they also wrote a letter to refer on that occasion to the issue of the Voluntary Labor Service Corps,<sup>555</sup> also known in Korean as Chongsindae.<sup>556</sup> The ability, but also the possibility that social organizations now had to intervene in foreign policy between South Korea and Japan, is evident when one considers what happened in 1990.

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<sup>545</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*, p. 404

<sup>546</sup> Alice Yun Chai, *Asian-Pacific Feminist Coalition Politics: The "Chǒngshindae/Jūgunianfu" ("Comfort Women") Movement*, Korean Studies, 1993, Vol. 17 (1993), University of Hawai'i Press, p. 69

<sup>547</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women": Movement for Redress*, Asian Survey, Dec. 1996, Vol. 36, No.12, University of California Press, p. 1228

<sup>548</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1228

<sup>549</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1228

<sup>550</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1228

<sup>551</sup> Patricia Ebrey, Anne Walthall, *East Asia*, pp. 411-412

<sup>552</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1228

<sup>553</sup> Alice Yun Chai, *Asian-Pacific Feminist Coalition Politics*, p. 78

<sup>554</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1232

<sup>555</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1232

<sup>556</sup> Alice Yun Chai, *Asian-Pacific Feminist Coalition Politics*, p. 78

South Korean President No Taewoo in May 1990 was to travel to Japan<sup>557</sup>: prior to the President's visit, South Korean's women organizations produced a list of requests to be submitted to the Japanese government, one of which asked that the issue of Korean comfort women was addressed and that in its regard, Japan confirmed its involvement and apologized as well.<sup>558</sup> Indeed, this action achieved a first small result: during the banquet organized for President No, the Japanese emperor Akihito formally expressed his regret for the abuses perpetrated against the Korean population during the Japanese colonial rule.<sup>559</sup> However, on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1990<sup>560</sup>, when the Japanese government was asked by a member of the upper house of the Japanese Diet to investigate the issue of Comfort Women<sup>561</sup>, it refused to do so, labeling the comfort women issue as something for which the Japanese government was not responsible, since "private agencies" took care of the matter at that time.<sup>562</sup> However, this gesture by the Japanese government did not deter Korean activists engaged in this cause.

On the occasion of the upcoming visit of the Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu to South Korea, scheduled for October 1990<sup>563</sup>, Korean Women Organizations wrote a letter to the Prime Minister asking that the Japanese involvement in the Comfort Women issue be confirmed, asking for an apology and above all, a compensation by the Japanese government to be allocated to Korean women victims of sexual slavery.<sup>564</sup> Starting from 1991, numerous victims of sexual slavery dating back to the Japanese colonial rule, decided to testify, many of these began to turn to competent associations and others intervened privately through legal channels.<sup>565</sup> In 1992, official documents leaked that clearly showed Japan's involvement in the recruitment of comfort women.<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>557</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1232

<sup>558</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1232

<sup>559</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1232

<sup>560</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1232

<sup>561</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1232

<sup>562</sup> Alice Yun Chai, *Asian-Pacific Feminist Coalition Politics*, p. 78

<sup>563</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1232

<sup>564</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1232

<sup>565</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1233

<sup>566</sup> Hayashi Yōko, *Issues Surrounding the Wartime "Comfort Women"*, *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, DECEMBER 1999-2000, Vol. 11/12, Violence in the Modern World (Special Issue) (DECEMBER 1999-2000), University of Hawai'i Press on behalf of Josai University Educational Corporation, p. 58

Through this discovery, a request to the U.N Human Rights Commission was submitted in March 1992<sup>567</sup>, asking first, that the commission shed light on the crimes perpetrated by Japan against Korean women during World War II<sup>568</sup> and secondly, in which the commission was urged to persuade the Japanese government to pay reparations individually to all those who had reported these crimes.<sup>569</sup> UNHCR's Subcommission for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities found Japan guilty of crimes against humanity, as the comfort women system violated the human rights of Asian women and went against the international agreement banning forced labor, which Japan had signed in 1932.<sup>570</sup> Despite this circumstance, Japan continued to deny that women who had served as comfort women had been forced into prostitution, consequently denying any compensation on the matter.<sup>571</sup> However, this should not lead to think that the efforts of activists and organizations who were fighting to make the issue of comfort women come back were not having the desired effects.

This is because thanks to the commitment of activists and organizations, it was possible to obtain an international resonance as well as an investigation by the United Nations that had effectively judged Japan as guilty regarding the issue of comfort women. Considering what happened in 1993, it is possible to say that the efforts of activists and therefore of civil society had been heard by the government of the Republic of Korea, which was directly committed to resolving this issue with Japan without exacerbating relations, and at the same time while listening to the rights and requests of South Korean citizens. This is a qualitative leap as well as a great change compared to the past, considering that when there was no democracy it was unthinkable for South Korean citizens not only to be listened to, but also to intervene in the foreign policy as it was happening on this occasion. The change regarding the attitude towards the issue is remarkable especially considering that, in 1965, while the negotiations for the signing of the Treaty between Japan and South Korea were underway, the issues of the colonial period and especially those related comfort women were sidelined for two reasons.

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<sup>567</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1235

<sup>568</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1235

<sup>569</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1235

<sup>570</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1235

<sup>571</sup> Hayashi Yōko, *Issues Surrounding the Wartime "Comfort Women"*, p. 58



The first, which has been often addressed throughout this thesis, is linked to the need for South Korea to access Japanese funds and technologies that would have granted development and political stability<sup>572</sup>, the second linked to the fact that many South Korean officers who had collaborated with Japan during the colonial period, including Park Junghee himself, they thought for obvious reasons not to mention the problem during the negotiations.<sup>573</sup> Instead, during Kim Youngsam's administration, the President worked on resolving the issue of comfort women. In March 1993, he stated that he was not demanding any monetary compensation from the Japanese government<sup>574</sup>, however he stressed that it was very important that the Japanese government properly reflected and investigated the matter, making a formal apology if necessary.<sup>575</sup> President Kim, for his part, created with his government a legislature dedicated to the support of Korean comfort women<sup>576</sup>, which consisted of a sum of five million won for each survivor<sup>577</sup>, furthermore the government stated that it was willing to pay additional monthly support.<sup>578</sup> With this gesture, many Koreans felt heard by their government<sup>579</sup> and at the same time, the government showed that it was actively taking care of the problem. President Kim's foreign policy strategy, capable of reconciling both respect for what happened to the Korean people and an attitude of openness to dialogue with Japan, had the desired effect. During the summer of 1993, following a direct hearing session organized in Seoul with the participation of those who had once been comfort women<sup>580</sup>, the Japanese government decided to admit its faults on the matter. Japan, therefore, admitted that it had recruited comfort women under the Japanese colonial rule on a coercive and non-voluntary basis, consequently damaging women's dignity.<sup>581</sup> Furthermore, the Japanese government admitted that it persecuted Korean women in this regard and consequently violated international humanitarian laws in this way.<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>572</sup> Alice Yun Chai, *Asian-Pacific Feminist Coalition Politics*, p. 75

<sup>573</sup> Alice Yun Chai, *Asian-Pacific Feminist Coalition Politics*, p. 75

<sup>574</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

<sup>575</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

<sup>576</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

<sup>577</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

<sup>578</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

<sup>579</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

<sup>580</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

<sup>581</sup> Hayashi Yōko, *Issues Surrounding the Wartime "Comfort Women"*, p. 58

<sup>582</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

The results obtained from the commitment of the activists, combined with the efforts of the South Korean government, were not limited exclusively to the admission by Japan of what happened during the Japanese colonial rule: the impact on foreign policy with Japan was also on an economic level. Indeed, in November 1994, the International Commission of Jurists suggested that Japan payed "as an interim measure" a sum equal to US \$ 40,000 to each surviving comfort woman.<sup>583</sup>

This mobilized within a week, a group of more than a hundred Korean and Japanese lawyers<sup>584</sup> who urged the Japanese government to bear the costs of repairs to comfort women itself<sup>585</sup>, however, the Japanese administration initially was reluctant to take charge of compensation at a governmental level. Indeed, in December 1994, the Japanese government had drafted a compensation plan for comfort women involving non-governmental funds<sup>586</sup>, which nevertheless aroused deep discontent that did not go unheard. Activists and non-governmental organizations in South Korea coalesced with their counterparts in other countries such as the Philippines, Thailand and Japan<sup>587</sup>, and in 1995, during the third Asian Women's Solidarity Forum conference held in Seoul, the unwillingness of the Japanese government to use government funds to compensate military comfort women was severely criticized.<sup>588</sup> The compromise reached by the Japanese government after this occasion was to establish the "Asian Women 'Fund" dedicated to reparations for comfort women<sup>589</sup> and to combat violence against women.<sup>590</sup> Most of the funds derived from voluntary donations<sup>591</sup>, however it can be considered an achievement that the Japanese government then decided, following the revisions of the Asian Women Fund, to contribute directly by providing medical and welfare funds for comfort women.<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>583</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

<sup>584</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

<sup>585</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1236

<sup>586</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1237

<sup>587</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1237

<sup>588</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1237

<sup>589</sup> Hayashi Yōko, *Issues Surrounding the Wartime "Comfort Women"*, p. 58

<sup>590</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1237

<sup>591</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1237

<sup>592</sup> Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women"*, p. 1237

The possibility for Korean civil society to intervene in matters concerning foreign policy with Japan, guaranteed by the existence of a democratic regime, was not limited simply to the question of comfort women. It must be remembered that due to the Treaty On Basic Relations of 1965, several historical issues were set aside which, however, had not been forgotten by the Korean population who now had the opportunity to react. It was common in South Korea to consider that Japan had long overlooked important historical issues or at least tried to minimize them. These beliefs concerned several outstanding issues between Japan and South Korea: that of the comfort women just mentioned<sup>593</sup>, the fact that Japanese history books allegedly downplayed the atrocities of the war<sup>594</sup> and finally, the Japanese claims over Dokdo.<sup>595</sup>

However, the concerns of the South Korean population regarding these historical events were heard by the government of the Republic of Korea, which unlike what happened during the autocratic regimes, did not ignore the issues and intervened, this obviously had repercussions for level of international relations between Japan and South Korea. The South Korean democratic movements of the 1980s brought about a very important political but also social change within the country. Indeed, without their contribution, it would not have been possible for the Korean population to debate important historical events, it would not have been possible for South Korean citizens to be heard by the government, and yet, without their contribution, there would not have been this great change in foreign policy between Japan and South Korea. The social movements for democracy of the 1980s in South Korea, in fact, allowed to pass from a government that for economic and strategic reasons set aside these important historical issues listed, to a government who instead faced them to find a diplomatic but also respectful solution.

In particular, the issue linked to the Japanese textbook controversy that occurred between 2000 and 2001 is very important, as it had a significant impact on relations between South Korea and Japan as well as a strong media and social impact.

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<sup>593</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle: Symbolic Politics and History Disputes Between South Korea and Japan*, Asian Perspective, Jan. – Mar., 2014, Vol. 38, No.1, Published by: Irp, p. 37

<sup>594</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 37

<sup>595</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 37

Problems resurfaced when the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, also known as Tsukurukai, was founded, with the aim of publishing a new history text- book for junior high schools in 2002.<sup>596</sup> However, in early 2000, South Korean newspapers criticized the textbook's draft proposed by Tsukurukai.<sup>597</sup>

The criticisms was related to the fact that the Tsukurukai text not only referred to the 1910 annexation of Korea as "legal"<sup>598</sup>, but the book overlooked many other war atrocities such as the issue of comfort women.<sup>599</sup> This aroused great discontent on the part of the South Korean community, such as to induce not only numerous South Korean politicians to join the so-called "anti-Japanese textbook movement"<sup>600</sup>, but also to induce the South Korean National Assembly in February 2001, to approve the "Resolution to Urge Japan to Stop Falsification of History in Its Textbooks".<sup>601</sup> If one considers the way in which history was simply covered up during the Park regime for higher purposes, it seems incredible how at this point the South Korean government was working to bring it back to light.

Outrage from South Korean media and civil society grew exponentially when, in April 2001,<sup>602</sup> it was discovered that the Japanese Ministry of Education had approved the Tsukurukai's textbook without significant corrections.<sup>603</sup> Twenty-eight civil organizations, which they had jointly founded "the Headquarters to Make the Japanese Textbooks Right"<sup>604</sup>, organized nationwide protests in South Korea in response to this

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<sup>596</sup> Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden, *Historical Memory, International Conflict, and Japanese Textbook Controversies in Three Epochs*, Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society, Spring 2009, Vol. 1, No. 1, Special Issue: Teaching and Learning in a Globalizing World (Spring 2009), Berghahn Books, P. 132

<sup>597</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle: Symbolic Politics and History Disputes Between South Korea and Japan*, Asian Perspective, Jan. – Mar., 2014, Vol. 38, No.1, Published by: Irp, p. 46

<sup>598</sup>Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 47

<sup>599</sup> Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden, *Historical Memory, International Conflict, and Japanese Textbook Controversies in Three Epochs*, p. 133

<sup>600</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 47

<sup>601</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 47

<sup>602</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 47

<sup>603</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 47

<sup>604</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 47

decision by the Japanese Ministry of Education, coupled with the boycott of Japanese products.<sup>605</sup>

With these strong protests, the organizations demanded that the South Korean government take stricter measures against Japan, such as the suspension of cultural exchanges and the recall of the South Korean ambassador to Japan.<sup>606</sup> Once again, it is possible to see the ability of civil society organizations to intervene in international relations and to urge the South Korean government to intervene in a certain way. Indeed, the South Korean government did not hesitate to act: in April 2001, the Korean National Assembly organized a cross-party Committee to Correct the Japanese History Textbooks.<sup>607</sup> Furthermore, due to the social pressure raised by the issue, the South Korean government could not help but suspend the South Korea-Japan joint search-and-rescue exercise<sup>608</sup>, which was a fundamental project for the development of the security relations of the two countries.<sup>609</sup>

In the summer of 2001, on a refusal by the Japanese government to make further corrections to the indicted texts<sup>610</sup>, the tension in relations between South Korea and Japan increased to such an extent that South Korean civil organizations had to organize, in advance compared to the actual anniversary of independence from Japan, a "second Independence Day"<sup>611</sup>. This was an occasion through which these civil organizations asked the South Korean government to take a tougher stance towards Japan on the issue<sup>612</sup>, even if the implications would later damage economic or security relations.<sup>613</sup> This detail is very important: compared to the past, now the security or economic aspect was expendable with respect to historical issues, which represents a radical change compared to the times in which the 1965 Treaty was signed, which instead gave priority to these aspects.<sup>614</sup>

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<sup>605</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 47

<sup>606</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 47

<sup>607</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 47

<sup>608</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 48

<sup>609</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 48

<sup>610</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 48

<sup>611</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 48

<sup>612</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 48

<sup>613</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 48

<sup>614</sup> In the 1965 Treaty of Normalization, the economic aspects are mainly considered, such as the aid that Japan should have provided to South Korea. If the reader refers to the first chapter of this thesis, containing

In fact, even the South Korean government itself agreed, perfectly aligned with the position of its citizens. The government of the Republic of Korea decided to cancel the security negotiations with Japan<sup>615</sup>, in addition, there was a significant reduction in official exchanges between the latter and South Korea during 2001.<sup>616</sup> The situation improved, resulting in the resumption of various exchanges, only when it was communicated that in Japanese schools the percentage of choice of Tsukurukai's textbook was very low.<sup>617</sup>

However, the Tsukurukai issue demonstrates the incredible way in which South Korean civil society was able to intervene in foreign policy with Japan, furthermore this issue highlights the significant change in attitude by the South Korean government not only regarding the consideration citizens' opinions, but also on the historical events that affected South Korea and Japan. Indeed, the South Korean democratic movements of the 1980s had formed a solid foundation for change on several levels: they had brought about a change at the political level, they had allowed a change of priorities by putting economic and security issues in the background, they had made possible the participation of civil society also regarding foreign policy. This was a radical change compared to what had been since the Treaty On Basic Relations of 1965 was signed. It is important to remember that regarding this Treaty, the signing was possible because the countries were solicited by the US government which had strategic interests in Asia linked to the Cold War<sup>618</sup>, and also because according to Park Junghee's plan, a collaboration with Japan would have meant economic aid for the development of South Korea.<sup>619</sup> The obvious priority given to these aspects is clear and was also mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis, in fact in the 1965 Treaty there is no explicit reference to historical issues and their settlements such as that of comfort women or Dokdo's territorial dispute.<sup>620</sup>

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the explanation of the Treaty with the respective Agreements, the priority given to the economic aspect appears clear. The document referred to is the following: *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, pp. 111-117

<sup>615</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 48

<sup>616</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 48

<sup>617</sup> Ji Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 48

<sup>618</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 131-132

<sup>619</sup> Victor D. Cha, *Bridging The Gap*, p. 129

<sup>620</sup>In the Agreements of the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations, no explicit reference is made to specific historical issues such as comfort women or territorial disputes regarding Dokdo. For verification, consult

Precisely the lack of reference to the latter and therefore its unclear status, was a source of heated debate between Japan and South Korea when democracy was restored in the Republic of Korea. For the citizens of South Korea, the dispute concerning Dokdo is a cause of suffering as it is closely linked to historical events between Korea and Japan: in fact, for many Koreans, the beginning of the Japanese occupation coincides with the annexation of part of Dokdo's Japan, which occurred in 1905.<sup>621</sup> Therefore, Dokdo has a strong symbolic value as in a sense, it represents the long decades of Japanese occupation, at least as far as South Korean citizens are concerned.<sup>622</sup> During the period of the Cold War, the authoritarian regimes present in South Korea had put aside any kind of hostility on the issue in function of a profitable and economically fruitful relationship with Japan<sup>623</sup>, an attitude that collapsed with the advent of democracy in South Korea in the late 1980s, which inevitably renewed resentments over the Dokdo dispute.<sup>624</sup>

The Korean name Dokdo, which in Japanese corresponds to Takeshima and in English to Liancourt Rocks, consist of a group of almost uninhabited islands located between South Korea and Japan.<sup>625</sup> The disputes had already started way back in 1952 when the President of the Republic of Korea Rhee had established a peace border with Japan that included Dokdo in the territory of South Korea<sup>626</sup>, and since that time the Japanese government has insisted that, based on international law and historical events, in fact Dokdo should be considered a Japanese territory.<sup>627</sup> When the Conservative Party returned to power in Japan in the 1990s, the country began to claim ownership of Dokdo again after several decades of silence on the issue.<sup>628</sup>

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the following document: *Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea concerning the settlement of problems in regard to property and claims and economic co-operation*, pp. 111-117

<sup>621</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p.50

<sup>622</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 51

<sup>623</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 51

<sup>624</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 51

<sup>625</sup> Kevin J. Cooney and Alex Scarbrough, *Japan and South Korea: Can These Two Nations Work Together?*, *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, Fall, 2008, Vol. 35, No. 3, Japan's Relationship with the United States and Its Allies (Fall, 2008), Taylor & Francis, Ltd., p. 184

<sup>626</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p.48

<sup>627</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 49

<sup>628</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 49

The moment when the Dokdo issue came back to prominence coincides with the year 2005, when Takeshima Day was declared in Shimane prefecture in Japan<sup>629</sup>, which represented the fact that Japan owned the islands in question<sup>630</sup>. This action sparked a feeling of revival of the colonial past in South Korea<sup>631</sup>, moreover this was further aggravated by a diplomatic slip: precisely in this period, the visit of the Japanese ambassador to South Korea had proved unpleasant as, on this occasion, he declared that Takeshima was a Japanese territory.<sup>632</sup> The immediate reaction to the so-called "Takeshima Day" was not only a huge media exposure, but also heated protests across South Korea.<sup>633</sup> South Korean President No Moohyun, who initially affirmed that he did not want to emphasize on territorial disputes with Japan during his presidency<sup>634</sup>, following the rampant protests across the country related to Dokdo, he could not ignore the matter. Indeed, the results of a poll showed that 94% of South Korean citizens believed the South Korean government should take hard measures against Japan on the matter.<sup>635</sup> Thus, President No could not help but refer to the Dokdo issue in March 2005, underlining the importance of receiving "reparations" from Japan<sup>636</sup>: the use of this term is significant as it was the first time since 1965 that a South Korean president referred to it.<sup>637</sup> When Takeshima being part of the Japanese territory was mentioned in the textbook guidelines provided by the Japanese Ministry of Education<sup>638</sup>, the Korean National Assembly approved the creation of a Special Committee for the Protection of Dokdo and Countering the Distortion of Japanese Textbooks.<sup>639</sup>

Relations between the two countries in 2005 proved to be particularly difficult and fluctuating: in the June 2005 meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi and South Korean President No, they discussed the Dokdo issue for most of the time.<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>629</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 49

<sup>630</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 49

<sup>631</sup> Kevin J. Cooney and Alex Scarbrough, *Japan and South Korea*, p. 184

<sup>632</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p.49

<sup>633</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 51

<sup>634</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 51

<sup>635</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 51

<sup>636</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 51

<sup>637</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 51

<sup>638</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 52

<sup>639</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 52

<sup>640</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 52



The debate over historical matters did not end on that occasion, as it was resumed months later during the November 2005 Summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.<sup>641</sup> The Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine<sup>642</sup> was the breaking point that caused the cancellation, by the South Korean government, of the summit with Japan scheduled for late 2005<sup>643</sup>, resulting in a restoration of normal relations from 2007,<sup>644</sup> the year during which the Minister Koizumi resigned.<sup>645</sup>

Considering these controversies and the developments of events, what can be deduced? How is it possible to answer the question that investigates how the democratic social movements of the 1980s were able to influence even the foreign policy between South Korea and Japan? It is evident that the relationship between the state and society, which among other things was decisive for South Korea's foreign policy, has drastically changed thanks to the affirmation of democracy since 1987.<sup>646</sup> From the authoritarian regime of Rhee until the Jeon regime, the state was so powerful that it controlled its citizens even without popular consent.<sup>647</sup> However, following the Revolt of June 1987, a democratic regime was introduced capable of providing citizens with everything they had been deprived of up to that moment: civil rights, freedom of association and speech, political rights, as well as a public space where South Korean citizens, without any fear, could create civil organizations capable of influencing the politics of the state.<sup>648</sup> The new civil society that flourished in democracy could legally exercise its power and influence over the state without resorting to violence or extreme solutions.<sup>649</sup> This is a first merit to be attributed to the democratic social movements of the late 1980s, without which a civil society capable of legally influencing the state would not have existed.

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<sup>641</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 52

<sup>642</sup> The Yasukuni Shrine is source of many controversies between Japan and South Korea, since this Shrine is dedicated to Japan's war dead which also include many Class A war criminals. For this reason, South Korea considers this Shrine a symbol of "unrepentant Japanese Militarism" Cfr. Kevin J. Cooney and Alex Scarbrough, *Japan and South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>643</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 52

<sup>644</sup> Young Kim, *Escaping the Vicious Cycle*, p. 52

<sup>645</sup> Kevin J. Cooney and Alex Scarbrough, *Japan and South Korea*, p. 183

<sup>646</sup> Larry Diamond and Byung-Kook Kim, *Consolidating Democracy in South Korea*, Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 2000, p.87

<sup>647</sup> Larry Diamond and Byung-Kook Kim, *Consolidating Democracy in South Korea*, p.87

<sup>648</sup> Larry Diamond and Byung-Kook Kim, *Consolidating Democracy in South Korea*, pp. 87-88

<sup>649</sup> Larry Diamond and Byung-Kook Kim, *Consolidating Democracy in South Korea*, p. 88

With the growth of civil society, its aims also grew, to the point of covering a very wide range of interests, many of which are closely linked to the social and cultural problems of the Korean population. The expansion of the issues addressed is due both to the qualitative transformation of civil organizations, no longer oriented to destroy the state but also to the foundations laid by the social movements for democracy in the 1980s, which during the debates ranged from economic, social, and historical problems<sup>650</sup> that finally found an adequate space in the new civil society and in the new democratic state: this is a second merit of the social movements for democracy.

Thanks to the social movements for democracy of the 1980s, it was also possible to develop a civil society truly capable of influencing foreign policy between Japan and South Korea. The examples provided concerning the issues related to comfort women, the Dokdo and the textbook controversies, prove effectively that the social movements for democracies developed during the eighties, contributed to creating a civil society that could effectively influence the foreign policy between South Korea and Japan something that had been impossible since 1965, the year in which the Treaty between the two countries was signed. The changes brought by the democratic social movements of the 1990s were several and visible on many levels, their resonance in the long run proves that they were what drastically modified South Korea in terms of politics, society, in terms of approach towards its history and in terms of relations with Japan. The foreign relations between South Korea and Japan went through different phases and were deeply affected by the historical circumstances. However, considered the issues mentioned up to this point, it seems safe to assume that what influenced the relations between the two countries the most, especially after the democratization of South Korea, was the possibility for civil society to express itself in a democratic context, and all of this was all possible thanks to the changes brought by the South Korean democratic social movements of the 1980s.

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<sup>650</sup> Reference is made to the issues addressed in the formative debates of the social movements for democracy of the 1980s mentioned in the "ideologies" section of the third chapter. For references, see: Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change*

## **Conclusions.**

International relations between South Korea and Japan have often been complicated, the result of a colonial past that is difficult to forget, due to the numerous implications caused. In 1965, after several years of negotiations, there was an attempt by the two governments involved to overcome these misunderstandings, in view of a rosy future during which both South Korea and Japan could mutually draw benefits. Indeed, during the period which lasted about thirty years of Park Junghee's presidency, who was strongly inspired by Japan also due to his military training during the colonial period, relations between the two countries were particularly flourishing. In fact, the economic advantages gained by both sides were numerous, and as foreseen by Park himself, the close collaboration with Japan led to great development in South Korea from an economic, technological, export and industrial point of view.

However, this close collaboration with Japan involved a great sacrifice, that is to set aside the important historical questions, regardless of whether they were related to the social or territorial sphere, which occurred during the period of Japanese colonialism. The South Korean citizens, victims of history, had not forgotten the suffering caused by these events, however, the severe authoritarian regime of Park Junghee did not allow them to express their dissent towards the policies not only domestic, but above all foreign conceived by the President, a dissent that existed prior to the actual signing of the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations.

The situation worsened when Park died, a historic moment during which General Jeon took over, who, once appointed president, imposed an even tougher regime than that established by his predecessor. This situation led South Korean citizens, now exasperated by the regime of terror, to act, organizing themselves in social movements in favor of democracy that advocated, in addition to the establishment of a democratic regime with free speech, also other important historical and social issues, including those related to the colonial past with Japan which had been set aside for purely utilitarian reasons. South Korean citizens, regardless of whether they were students or workers, decided to operate in a cohesive way, despite the harsh repressions they suffered, such as the massacre that took place during the Kwangju Uprising.

On the contrary, the latter became a symbol of the struggle for democracy carried out by the brave South Korean citizens, who simply wanted to see their democratic dream realized to finally be able to claim the issues they held at heart from the government. 1987 marks an important year in the history of South Korea: the social movements for democracy succeeded in their goal, winning a struggle that lasted many years and carried out with numerous sacrifices. With the presidency of No Taewoo, the democratic era for South Korea opens. Democracy implies freedom of speech, of association, all things previously denied, the direct consequence was that therefore, South Korean civil society could finally organize itself and advocate for important issues freely, without the fear of harsh repression and with the possibility of having their arguments heard by the South Korean government itself.

The affirmation of democracy marked an important moment in the history of South Korea, as it represented not only a possibility of development and transformation for South Korean civil society, but also of action. Indeed, it is thanks to this result achieved by the South Korean democratic movements of the 1980s that it was possible to develop a civil society capable of influencing foreign policy between Japan and Korea. The relations between these two countries, in fact, changed significantly when during the nineties, the new South Korean social associations, in the wake of the social movements of the 1980s and inspired by the historical issues on which they stressed the importance, began to organize themselves to bring to light important historical issues related to the colonial past with Japan.

The social movements for democracy of the 1980s therefore influenced foreign policy between South Korea and Japan for various reasons: they allowed democracy to consolidate by creating a fertile ground in which civil society could flourish, they created an environment in which civil society could intervene in state politics by actively participating, moreover, they allowed to put aside the utilitarian needs dictated by the old South Korean governments that required an ignoring of historical issues and above all, they also influenced the issues dealt by civil society, which was consequently inspired to advocate issues related to the colonial past with Japan. During the 1990s, therefore, there was a real change in international relations between South Korea and Japan. The South Korean social movements of this phase began to seek justice primarily for the issue of Korean comfort women, not only to the Japanese government but also to the South Korean government itself, which listened to the demands of its citizens.

As a result, there was a change in the attitude of the South Korean government towards the Japanese government, as South Korea actively supported its citizens in demanding justice for the issue of comfort women.

Advocating for the comfort women issue, a topic of such great social but also historical importance, was also fundamental because following in its wake, the South Korean government began to modify its requests to Japan for other issues as well. Indeed, the latter, also supported by its own citizens, adopted a tough policy towards Japan at a time when its government was reluctant to change the contents of textbooks to be adopted in schools that overlooked important historical issues such as those of comfort women, even going so far as to cancel the security negotiations with Japan. Looking at South Korea's approach in the past and comparing it to that of the 1990s, the difference is glaring.

Furthermore, the South Korean government as well as its citizens continued throughout this period to claim the historical injustices that they felt they had suffered. The question of the Liancourt Rocks, and the decision by the Shimane prefecture to hold a day dedicated to these islands, rekindled a sense of suffering for colonial reasons in the eyes of South Korean citizens, so much so that the Liancourt Rocks issue caused many problems in the relations between South Korea and Japan. In fact, not only was the issue discussed several times between South Korean President No and Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi in 2005, but there was even a cessation of relations between the two countries which were restored in 2007.

Considering the situation regarding relations between South Korea and Japan in the period from 1965 to the 1980s and comparing it with the situation that arose when, in South Korea, the social movements of the 1980s allowed the development of democracy and of a free civil society, it seems safe to assume that the social movements for democracy of the 1980s really allowed a great change and, above all, that they managed to intervene, in the long term, in the foreign relations between South Korea and Japan. Considering the situation regarding relations between South Korea and Japan in the period from 1965 to the 1980s and comparing it with the situation that arose when, in South Korea, the social movements of the 1980s allowed the development of democracy and of a free civil society, it seems safe to assume that the social movements for democracy of the 1980s really allowed a great change and, above all, that they managed to intervene, in the long term, in the foreign relations between South Korea and Japan.

Without the contribution made by the social movements for democracy that developed in the 1980s in South Korea, it would not have been possible to undermine an autocratic political system that seemed now consolidated in the country, consequently if this had not been eliminated, not only would it not have existed. democracy and therefore the impossibility of civil society development, but it would not even have been possible to intervene in the politics of the country and finally, international relations based on convenience would probably have been protected.

After analyzing the salient moments of relations between South Korea and Japan from 1965 to the 1990s, and how South Korea's social movements for democracy of the 1980s represented a time of change and rupture, the reader he might ask himself what the situation in the recent years has been and whether these relations are still conditioned by social movements to these days.

The issues related to the colonial past with Japan have not been put aside even in recent years, in fact, relations between the two countries have continued to fluctuate mainly for these reasons. A fortiori, it should seem clear how much the issues brought to light thanks to democracy and social movements have had an impact in the long run. On the one hand, South Korea as a country does not want to forget the painful experiences of the colonial past,<sup>651</sup> on the other hand Japan is unreliable in the eyes of South Koreans due to the often-indelible attitudes that its leaders have shown towards these issues.<sup>652</sup> As proof of this statement, it is enough to consider that in 2013, the South Korean government canceled the meetings concerning security and military exchange programs that would have been held in December, following the visit of the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe to the Yasukuni Shrine, which took place a few days before the aforementioned meetings.<sup>653</sup>

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<sup>651</sup> Kevin J. Cooney and Alex Scarbrough, *Japan and South Korea*, p. 182

<sup>652</sup> Kevin J. Cooney and Alex Scarbrough, *Japan and South Korea*, p. 174

<sup>653</sup> Ja-hyun Chun, *The role of Japan's civil society organizations and the deteriorating relationship between Japan and South Korea*, International Journal, MARCH 2016, Vol. 71, No. 1 (MARCH 2016), Sage Publications, Ltd. on behalf of the Canadian International Council, p. 89

South Korea has become economically independent and has several new economic partners<sup>654</sup>, an undoubtedly valid reason why its government does not feel the need as it did in 1965 to put aside historical issues to maintain good relations with Japan.

In the 1960s, following the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea, it was possible to create a vertically integrated economic structure, which over time however weakened until it almost disappeared in the 1990s.<sup>655</sup> This is because, especially since this decade just mentioned, the concept of globalization has influenced the South Korean economy. In fact, the South Korean president Kim Youngsam, by launching the "segyehwa" political program, encouraged liberalization.<sup>656</sup> Furthermore, at this stage, South Korean companies were trying to carry out projects on a regional but above all international level.<sup>657</sup>

The collaboration with mainly western companies led to a deterioration of the economic hierarchical structure between Japan and Korea existing up to that moment. Moreover, throughout the 1990s, US confirmed themselves as South Korea's number one trading partner, however, China even surpassed Japan as a trading partner in 2001, becoming then South Korea's number one partner in 2004.<sup>658</sup> For this reason, it is possible to affirm that indeed, after the advent of democracy, South Korea no longer even had the economic necessity that forced it to have forcibly good relations with Japan. This would therefore help to understand one more reason why South Korea's leaders are not encouraged to back down on their positions when controversies with Japan arise, such as the one involving Prime Minister Abe and his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine.

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<sup>654</sup> John Delury, *The Kishi Effect: A Political Genealogy of Japan-ROK Relations*, Asian Perspective, Vol. 39, No. 3, Special Issue: The Abe Effect in Regional International Order: Japan and Asia (July-Sept. 2015), The Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 457

<sup>655</sup> Sang-young Rhyu and Seungjoo Lee, *Changing Dynamics in Korea-Japan Economic Relations: Policy Ideas and Development Strategies*, Asian Survey, Vol. 46, No. 2 (March/April 2006), University of California Press, p. 195

<sup>656</sup> Sang-young Rhyu and Seungjoo Lee, *Changing Dynamics in Korea-Japan Economic Relations*, pp. 202-203

<sup>657</sup> Sang-young Rhyu and Seungjoo Lee, *Changing Dynamics in Korea-Japan Economic Relations*, p. 203

<sup>658</sup> Sang-young Rhyu and Seungjoo Lee, *Changing Dynamics in Korea-Japan Economic Relations*, p. 205

Furthermore, it must be considered that civil society in South Korea is still particularly influential with regards to historical issues with Japan. Since the end of 1980, a period in which South Korean civil society successfully achieved the establishment of a democratic regime, this has continued to grow, continuing even in recent years to give a voice to citizens and consequently to strengthen democracy itself.<sup>659</sup> Civil organizations in South Korea since the days of democratization have gained great relevance especially in the sphere of social and political reforms<sup>660</sup>, as they have become increasingly capable of influencing the decisions and policies of the South Korean government.<sup>661</sup>

Issues of the colonial past continue to influence relations between South Korea and Japan even in recent times, as South Korean citizens have continued to seek justice for issues of the past. To give an example, it is possible to consider the protests arose in the 2010s, which were made by South Korean citizens employed as forced laborers during the period of Japanese colonialism. The issue came to light in 2015, when the Japanese government wanted to register the industrial sites in Kyushu and Yamaguchi as UNESCO heritage sites.<sup>662</sup> South Korean citizens who were victims of forced labor, with the support of the South Korean government itself, requested that the sites be registered as such only if the tragic reality of forced labor and forced mobilization of Korean citizens during the colonial period was also recorded.<sup>663</sup>

This resulted in negotiations between the two countries involved, which culminated in Prime Minister Abe's admission that Koreans during the colonial period had been employed as workers at these sites, although he avoided calling them forced laborers.<sup>664</sup> Another good example of how South Korean civil society has been able, even in recent times, to influence relations between South Korea and Japan, concerns the issue of Korean comfort women, for which it has always been difficult to find a meeting point.

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<sup>659</sup> Jennifer S. Oh, *Strong State and Strong Civil Society in Contemporary South Korea: Challenges to Democratic Governance*, Asian Survey, Vol. 52, No. 3 (May/June 2012), University of California Press, p. 529

<sup>660</sup> Jennifer S. Oh, *Strong State and Strong Civil Society in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 531

<sup>661</sup> Jennifer S. Oh, *Strong State and Strong Civil Society in Contemporary South Korea*, p. 538

<sup>662</sup> Cheol Hee Park, *Report Part Title: Expanding Spirals of South Korea-Japan Conflict*, Report Title: Strategic Estrangement Between South Korea and Japan as a Barrier to Trilateral Cooperation, Atlantic Council (2019), p. 4

<sup>663</sup> Cheol Hee Park, *Report Part Title: Expanding Spirals of South Korea-Japan Conflict*, p. 4

<sup>664</sup> Cheol Hee Park, *Report Part Title: Expanding Spirals of South Korea-Japan Conflict*, p. 4



The situation became complex in the years between 2013 and 2015, a period in which the South Korean government, acting as a spokesperson for South Korean citizens, asked the Japanese government to take legal responsibility for the Korean comfort women issue,<sup>665</sup> which, as already indicated in the thesis, until this moment had not occurred yet. A deal was made in 2015, when Japan established a new fund for which government money would be used to compensate the South Korean comfort women<sup>666</sup>, but only if the South Korean government repositioned the comfort women statue in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul.<sup>667</sup> Although the matter seemed finally resolved, the Moon administration, accusing Japan of not properly taking care of the victims' needs and mismanagement of the issue,<sup>668</sup> decided to dissolve the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation created with Japanese government money.<sup>669</sup> In response to this decision, the Japanese government noted that the agreements set back in 2015 ended, in a definitive way, any legal renegotiation regarding the comfort women issue.<sup>670</sup> This situation caused serious problems and a diplomatic silence, which lasted until, after several requests of clarification from the Japanese government, the South Korean government proposed in summer 2019 that both South Korean and Japanese corporations compensate the victims.<sup>671</sup> In South Korea, this proposal was not welcomed, and so happened in Japan, as the latter would have had to compensate the victims anyway.<sup>672</sup>

These last two examples make it clear that even today, not only are most of the tensions caused by the historical past between South Korea and Japan, but also that the tendency of South Korean civil society to intervene and significantly influence relations between the two countries still exists and has never stopped since the 1990s.

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<sup>665</sup> Cheol Hee Park, *Report Part Title: Expanding Spirals of South Korea-Japan Conflict*, p. 4

<sup>666</sup> Indu Pandey, *Tigers on the Prowl*, Harvard International Review, Vol. 40, No. 2, The Art of Revolution Protest in Performance (SPRING 2019), Harvard International Review, p. 15

<sup>667</sup> Cheol Hee Park, *Report Part Title: Expanding Spirals of South Korea-Japan Conflict*, p. 4

<sup>668</sup> Indu Pandey, *Tigers on the Prowl*, p. 15

<sup>669</sup> Cheol Hee Park, *Report Part Title: Expanding Spirals of South Korea-Japan Conflict*, p. 4

<sup>670</sup> Indu Pandey, *Tigers on the Prowl*, p. 15

<sup>671</sup> Cheol Hee Park, *Report Part Title: Expanding Spirals of South Korea-Japan Conflict*, p. 5

<sup>672</sup> Cheol Hee Park, *Report Part Title: Expanding Spirals of South Korea-Japan Conflict*, p. 5

The democratic social movements of the 1980s, after allowing the establishment of democracy, continued to resonate above all during the nineties, allowing the development of a civil society that advocated historical issues and which was also capable of influencing relations between Japan and South Korea, and secondly, they kept resonating also in recent times, as the trend they initiated has never stopped. Issues concerning the colonial past between South Korea and Japan were not put aside anymore after the 1990s. Firstly, because there are no longer the economic development needs that could have encouraged the two countries involved to still ignore the historical controversies, secondly, because by now South Korean civil society is not only strong to intervene in the country's foreign policy, but is also determined to receive justice for matters related to the colonial past considered important. Finally, the tendency of the South Korean government to listen to civil society's concerns, which was also started in the nineties thanks to the South Korean democratic movements, has not stopped.

The South Korean democratic social movements of the 1980s brought significant historical, social, and political changes to South Korea. They allowed to break a vicious circle of autocratic regimes, social injustice, and disregard for important historical issues. Furthermore, they allowed future generations to live in a fairer country, where rights could be respected and where society could express itself freely in a secure and democratic context. The South Korean democratic social movements of the 1980s represent a fundamental part of the country's history, as well as a symbol of positive change and courage, thanks to all those who contributed so that democracy could no longer be a dream but finally become a reality.

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