United We Stand, Divided We Fall: The Anti-US Base Movements in Okinawa and Pyeongtaek

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Abstract

Why are some anti-US base movements more successful than others in influencing basing policies? Scholars have examined such factors as national security contexts, availability of political opportunities and resources to movement activists, and the use of strategic framing to explain the varying degrees of success of these movements. These existing studies, however, tend to neglect the internal dynamics of social movements and the agency of movement participants in shaping movement outcomes. This study addresses this gap through a comparative case study of the anti-US base movements in Pyeongtaek, South Korea and Okinawa, Japan. Drawing on the concept of group cohesion, this study argues that strong group cohesion in the anti-US base movement succeeded in delaying the implementation of the Japanese government’s basing policy while the anti-US base movement in Pyeongtaek failed to stop the implementation of its government’s basing policy mainly due to its weak cohesion.

Key words: anti-base movement, social movement, US military base, Korea, Japan, group cohesion

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I. Introduction

Throughout the Cold War era, the United States maintained a network of overseas military bases to deter the Soviet Union from spreading communism (Davis et al. 2012). It also entered into mutual security alliances with many countries, promising them military protection from external threats. Today, the US maintains a military presence in more than 150 countries (Yeo 2011). The US military presence, however, has been controversial in many host countries (Ohtomo 2009). US military personnel, for instance, have been criticized for introducing social and environmental costs by committing crimes against civilians or causing environmental damage (Han and Bae 2015). Civil societies in many host countries have also expressed their antagonism toward the US military forces, seeing US military bases as a symbol of American neo-imperialism that infringes upon the national sovereignty of their countries (Lutz 2009). Grievances of various societal actors towards US military presence have thus informed numerous anti-US base movements. The outcomes of these anti-base movements vary. In some instances, movements lead to a closure of the US military bases, as seen in the case of the Philippines. In other countries like Italy, anti-base movements are less effective in causing policy change. Yet in other cases, activists manage to forestall policy implementation for a protracted period of time.

This study is interested in unraveling the factors that contribute to these different outcomes of anti-base movements. More specifically, this study addresses an empirical puzzle that arises from the comparison between the anti-base movement in Okinawa, Japan, and that in Pyeongtaek, South Korea (hereinafter, Korea) in terms of each movement’s impact on the implementation of basing agreement. While the anti-US base movement in Okinawa delayed the Japanese government’s attempt to build a new heliport for nearly twenty years, the Korean government implemented its base expansion project after only a few years’ delay (Pyeongtaek Base Relocation 2014). This result is puzzling given more favorable public opinion toward base expansion in Japan than in Korea (Yeo 2011). In a nationwide survey conducted in 2012 with a sample size of 1,800, 45 percent of the Japanese respondents opposed the new heliport construction (Kono and Kobayashi 2013). In a survey conducted by Research Plus in 2006 in Korea, 57.6 percent of 700 citizens from across the country expressed opposition to the base expansion in Pyeongtaek (Half of Koreans 2006). Thus, it is surprising that the Korean government decided to implement
the basing policy despite public skepticism. What explains the differences in these two democratic governments’ different reactions to the anti-base movements?

The existing studies of anti-US base movements focus on factors such as national security contexts, political opportunities and resources available to movement activists, and the use of strategic framing to explain the movements’ capacity to influence governments’ basing policy. This paper argues that these studies tend to neglect the internal dynamics of social movements and overlook the agency of movement participants in shaping different outcomes. To fill this gap and to address the empirical puzzle raised above, this article draws on the concept of group cohesion. It illustrates how the internal cohesion in the case of two anti-base movements in Japan and Korea, measured in five dimensions, affected the policy implementation of each government’s basing policy. Cohesion is a force that retains members in a group for a sustained period of time to achieve group members’ shared goals (Festinger 1950). Existing studies tend to view social movements as unified entities (Pearlman 2011), but it is not necessarily the case because social movements often consist of diverse groups of participants connected by loose networks and organizational structures. Internal cohesion of movements thus can affect the pace and depth of mobilization, the degree of coordination of strategies among participants, and sustainability of movements, which, in turn, influence governments’ decision to implement basing policies.

The anti-US base movements in Korea and Japan offer excellent cases for comparison. First, both countries have maintained a stable and strong alliance with the US. Policy elites in both countries tend to agree on the need for a continuous security alliance with the US, which serves as a constraining factor upon the effectiveness of anti-US base movements in both countries. Second, the US has similar interests and motivations for maintaining bases in these two countries. The Obama administration considers security alliances with Korea and Japan crucial for peace and security in Asia. The US also considers bases in these countries essential for balancing and deterring any potential threats (Davis et al. 2012). Third, both Japan and Korea are democracies. Freedom House has classified both as free for the past twenty years in terms of political rights and civil liberties (2015). These commonalities suggest that various factors can be controlled for by comparing two anti-base movements that took place in these countries, allowing one to focus on the effects that different degrees of cohesion and internal movement dynamics have on policy outcomes. Notwithstanding these similarities, the two anti-US base movements resulted in different outcomes in policy implementation. In Korea, the government embarked on the new
base construction in 2011; it is expected to be completed by 2015. In contrast, in Okinawa, the construction of a new heliport in Nago City has been stalled for nearly two decades despite Japan’s 1996 agreement with the US to replace Futenma Airbase within five to seven years (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). Although neither anti-base movement succeeded in a complete policy reversal, there is a significant variation in policy outcome between the two cases.

This comparative research adopts qualitative methods, as they allow for more accurate analyses of the internal cohesion of each movement. Aside from the difficulty in quantifying the diverse and complex aspects of social movements, qualitative methods can reveal subtle variations across movements. This study uses a wide range of primary sources such as archival materials, memoirs of movement participants, and government documents in addition to various secondary sources. Moreover, a total of fourteen qualitative interviews (see Appendix for details) were conducted to strengthen the validity of the arguments and offer a deeper understanding of the internal dynamics of the movements based on the accounts of movement participants.

The rest of this study is organized as follows. Section II reviews various existing studies and discusses their weaknesses. Section III presents an alternative theoretical framework for this study by defining movement cohesion and discussing five dimensions that help measure the degree of cohesion. This framework is then applied to the anti-base movements in Japan and South Korea in Sections IV and V. Section VI summarizes the findings and discusses several academic and policy implications.

II. Literature Review

A Realist Perspective

Various existing studies emphasize different factors to account for the different degrees of success of anti-base movements. A realist explanation argues that the security environment surrounding the basing policy as well as the perceived strategic importance of the target base for the US and host governments constrain anti-base movements’ ability
to effect policy change. Posen (2003) argues that the US regards its overseas bases as a symbol of American global power and military supremacy over global commons. The US views major bases in Asia as crucial for balancing any potential threat, such as rising China (Fargo 2012). The US is unlikely to accede to the demands of anti-US base movements if the base in question is critical to its strategic interests. This realist perspective, however, holds little validity when juxtaposed to the outcome of the two anti-US base movements in this study. The strategic significance of the new airbase in Okinawa is comparable to, or arguably greater than, the base expansion project in Pyeongtaek. The base expansion project in Pyeongtaek is consistent with the new security vision of the US toward Asia, which entails enhancing its combat readiness by streamlining US installations and reaffirming key alliances (Fargo 2012). The new airbase in Okinawa that is to replace the dilapidated facilities of the Futenma base has similar strategic value to the US in that this new airbase, if constructed, will serve as a major US base in Okinawa, which houses US forces headquarters and an additional eight thousand US personnel. The Obama administration’s Defense Secretary Robert Gates emphasized the base’s strategic value in 2009 by saying that the Futenma replacement facilities are the “linchpin” for Asia’s peace and there will be “serious consequences” if the Japanese government tried to renegotiate the agreement (McCormack 2010). Despite this strategic value that the US attaches to the new base, the base relocation policy has not yet been implemented in Okinawa.

The security perception of elites in host countries can also affect the outcomes of anti-base movements. Yeo (2011), for instance, shows how the level of consensus among domestic elites affects the outcomes of anti-US movements. Elites in Japan and Korea largely agree that a security alliance with the US is vital for their national security. In 2002, then Korean President Kim Dae-Jung commented, “America is an ally that is necessary and important for our national interest. US troops are here for peace on the Korean Peninsula” (Kim 2004). Similarly, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto remarked in 1999, “Were I to pass on the demands of the Okinawan people, it would be for the complete return of Futenma. However, bearing in mind the importance of US-Japan security … I realize that this is extremely difficult” (Funabashi 1999). These remarks suggest that elites in both countries acknowledge a need for US military presence, explaining why anti-base movements in both countries have often failed to revoke their governments’ basing policy.

Although these arguments, based on US strategic interests and host countries’ security perceptions, help explain what challenges and constraints anti-base movements face
in Japan and Korea, they do not explain the varied outcomes produced by anti-base movements because such security factors tend to remain rather stable. The realist analysis that emphasizes the elite security perception, in particular, fails to explain how the anti-base movement in Okinawa led to the delay in the policy implementation despite the possibility that Japanese elites were more united in their stance regarding military alliance with the US than their Korean counterparts. While Korean policy elites agree on the necessity of the US military presence, conservatives and progressives are often divided regarding the details of the alliance responsibilities, with the latter advocating the transfer of wartime operational control from the US to Korea while the former tends to support greater US control (Yeo 2011). Furthermore, the Korean public’s polarized attitude toward the US has also contributed to the fragmentation of the elite position on the alliance (Yeo 2011). In contrast, Japanese elites have maintained a firm and united stance regarding the US-Japan alliance. Unlike in Korea, elites in Japan are reluctant to challenge the scope and boundaries of the US-Japan alliance, as its domestic security structures and norms are heavily constrained by the post-war security arrangement imposed by the US (Yeo 2011). If the elite’s security perception is a determinant of an anti-base movement’s success, one cannot explain why the basing policy was implemented more promptly in Korea than in Japan.

Resource Mobilization

Various studies of social movements argue that their success is determined by the movement leaders’ ability to mobilize resources such as people and money (Jenkins 1983). Williams, for instance, argues that the anti-base movement in Okinawa failed to reverse the US basing policy due to its failure to mobilize residents in Henoko (Williams 2013). When the Japanese government provided development incentives and material compensation to several villages, outdoing the material resources of the anti-base movement, many local villagers accepted the government plan (Cooley and Marten 2006). The concept of resource mobilization, however, offers little explanation for the different policy outcomes in Okinawa and Pyeongtaek. Although the anti-base movement in Korea enjoyed bountiful resources from the participation of more than a hundred national civic organizations, it was unable to stop the base expansion policy, while the movement in
Okinawa was able to halt the heliport construction despite possessing a relatively few resources due to the grassroots nature of the movement. The resource mobilization theory does not explain how movements with meager resources and resource-poor groups can succeed in achieving their goals through the exercise of strong leadership, organization, and effective strategy (Ganz 2009). The theory of resource mobilization simply assumes that resources can be directly translated into influence.

**Political Opportunity**

Other studies argue that political opportunities, which are defined as consistent, but not necessarily formal or permanent, dimensions of the political struggle that encourage people to engage in contentious politics (Tarrow 1994), affect the success of social movements. For instance, a shift in external environmental conditions such as the realignment of political elites or a decline in a state’s repressive capacity creates political opportunity structures conducive for activists (Tilly 1978). Negative public opinion toward the US, for instance, can lead host governments to accede to the anti-base movements’ demand to avoid negative political consequences (Kim 2004). Yeo’s study (2007), for instance, showed that public opinion against the US military enabled the anti-base protestors in Korea to close down Kooni Range in Maehyang-ri in 2005.

However, the concept of political opportunity has limited explanatory power when applied to Pyeongtaek and Okinawa. Political opportunities seemed more favorable to activists in Pyeongtaek than to those in Okinawa for several reasons. First, the Korean public was more hostile to the US at the time of the movement. According to Pew Research Center (2014), in 2002, only 46 percent of Koreans surveyed responded that they liked the US. On the other hand, the Japanese perception of the US was more positive, as 59 to 85 percent of survey respondents indicated favorable views of the US between 1996 and 2014. Moreover, in 2008, anti-US protests occurred in various regions in Korea opposing the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement, but this widespread public resentment toward the US, which created an opportune political moment, did not help the anti-US base movement in Pyeongtaek change the government’s basing policy.

In addition to these limitations in explicating such empirical observations, the concept of political opportunity is criticized for being too vague and broad to have analytical import.
Given the wide variations in political contexts across countries, it is hard to ascertain what exactly constitutes political opportunities (Buechler 2011). Meyer (2004) states that the term political opportunity is in danger of becoming like a sponge that soaks up every aspect of the social movement environment.

**Framing**

Another group of studies on social movements argues that the success of movements depends on the ability of movement elites to use effective frames to mobilize people’s support (Benford and Snow 2000). Frames are interpretative schemata that people use to identify, label, and render meaningful events in their lives (Goffman 1974). Takazato, for instance, argues that the base movement in Okinawa was able to impede the basing plan as activists effectively mobilized broad public support by framing the issue in the contexts of injustice, human rights violations, and environmentalism (Yonetani 2001). While these frames might have contributed to the success of anti-base movements in Okinawa, framing does not account for the different outcomes between Japan and Korea. Like their counterparts, movement participants in Korea framed the basing policy as a case of injustice inflicted upon local residents. To evoke public sympathy, movement leaders used slogans such as “we shall continue farming this year” (Park 2010). Despite the use of these similar frames, the movement in Pyeongtaek was less effective in changing government policy.

In sum, various studies delineate different factors to explain anti-base movements’ influence on governments’ decisions. These studies, however, tend to focus on factors that are external to movements, overlooking the internal dynamics and characteristics of movements. The security-based approach regards states and policy elites as the main players in politics regarding basing policies, neglecting the agency of anti-US base movements and their influence on basing policies. Similarly, the political opportunity explanation focuses on several exogenous factors to explain outcomes of anti-base movements. Likewise, the resource mobilization framework says little about the mechanism through which resources are translated into policy influence and obscures the agency of movement activists.
III. Theoretical Framework

A number of studies on small groups pay attention to cohesion as a defining characteristic of social groups and their collective action. Although few studies on social movements have engaged the concept, it can prove useful for examining the internal dynamics of anti-base movements by giving more agency to movement participants and their interactions. This study’s attention to factors endogenous to the movements can generate a more comprehensive understanding of anti-base movements and their policy effects when combined with the findings of various studies discussed in the previous section.

Sherif and Sherif (1956) and Dion (2000) argue that social groups can be differentiated according to different degrees of cohesion, which serves as a glue that unites members in a stable and enduring social unit. These studies maintain that a cohesive group is bound by common demographic backgrounds, interests, values, and culture. Members of such cohesive groups enjoy a high degree of intragroup interaction and are likely to remain in the group for a prolonged period (Sherif and Sherif 1956).

While agreeing that group cohesion has many sources, existing studies examine various dimensions to measure it. Cartwright and Zander (1953) look at the existence of group goals, similarities among members, and group size as determinants of group cohesion. Szilagyi and Wallace (1983) suggest that such factors as agreement on group goals, frequency of interaction, members’ feeling of attraction to one another, intergroup competition, and favorable evaluation tend to promote cohesion.

Demographic similarities among movement participants in terms of age, gender, and race are also closely associated with a high degree of cohesion (Lott and Lott 1965; O’Reilly III, Caldwell, and Barnett 1989). Similarities in these features create a bond and sense of belonging based on visible commonalities among participants. Members with similar backgrounds also tend to share compatible values and world views, which strengthens group cohesion and unity.

Group members’ commitment to and focus on the movement’s goals contribute to cohesion as well. When movement participants assign high priority to the movement’s objectives and align their personal goals with the movement’s goals, they form more cohesive groups to achieve their collective goals (Pearlman 2001). Strong focus on
movements’ primary objectives is vital for unity, as shared goals serve as a glue that binds participants together and prevents them from drifting away or defecting.

Scholars also argue that high frequency in interaction leads to more cohesive groups by promoting regularities in formal and informal communication among participants (Szilagyi and Wallace 1983). They also argue that face-to-face meetings are more effective in developing cohesion than communications through e-mails or text messages. Buechler (1990) argues that regular meetings at “movement centers” where participants gather informally to exchange ideas regarding movements foster a sense of solidarity and unity.

Democratic and inclusive decision-making within movements also tends to promote group cohesion. Such decision-making can be institutionalized in the forms of voting, elections, and open discussions. Lippitt and White (1943) argue that a democratic form of leadership increases group cohesiveness by facilitating a sense of ownership and allowing members to match their personal goals with those of the movement, whereas a top-down leadership can affect participants’ motivation negatively and weaken their commitment to the group goals. Non-democratic leadership also increases the likelihood of internal fragmentation, as members have fewer opportunities to discuss their views to reconcile differences.

Finally, group cohesion can be promoted when group members share experiences of suffering, such as painful experiences that the majority of participants went through collectively. Durkheim (2012) maintains that painful experience promotes group cohesion by creating a collective memory that evokes emotional bonding among members. Shared experiences of suffering facilitate the development of a sense of identity that reduces the probability of members feeling detached and drifting away from the movement (Halbwachs 1992).

Once cohesive groups are formed based on these contributing factors, such groups are more likely to achieve their common goals than less cohesive groups (Szilagyi and Wallace 1983). Mullen and Copper (1994, 213) argue that cohesion acts as a “lubricant” that minimizes the friction that arises due to the “human grit” in the system. As members of a cohesive group have the common mental model of the group’s task, they share similar views on how the task should be accomplished, which facilitates their performance (Mullen and Copper 1994). In his analysis of 49 studies involving 8,720 members of various groups, Forsyth (2009) found that cohesive groups tend to outperform non-cohesive groups. Furthermore, cohesion and performance mutually reinforce each other. That is, a cohesive
group is likely to perform well, and this experience of success, in turn, strengthens cohesion, motivating the group members to perform even better. Ferrara and Weishaupt’s study on European parliamentary elections (2004) also concluded that parties with internal fragmentation consistently perform worse than united parties.

Regarding more specific mechanisms through which cohesion contributes to better performance, studies argue that cohesion facilitates speedy mobilization, which is critical to timely collective action (Yalom 1995). Highly frequent interaction among united group members allows swift dissemination of information, which is also critical for speedy mobilization. Moreover, strong commitment to the movement’s goals enables participants to sacrifice their time and energy to participate in mass mobilization on short notice.

Other studies note that participants in cohesive movements are more likely to cooperate with one another, as they share a strong desire to achieve the movement’s common goal. Cohesive groups exercise significant power over their members’ behaviors, attitudes, and goals, facilitating coordination of activities for leaders (Cartwright and Zander 1953). As opposed to fragmented, sporadic, and ineffective activities, coordinated strategies are more coherent and organized, which can lead to greater policy effects.

Cohesion also contributes to group performance by promoting the sustainability of collective action. Studies show that other things being equal, cohesion leads to an increased level of participation (Evans and Dion 1991). Demographic similarities, high frequency of interaction, and shared experience of suffering contribute to loyalty and unity, which make it more likely for participants to remain in the movement for a prolonged period (Cartwright and Zander 1953). Focus on the movement’s goals plays a crucial role in fostering commitment and resilience in the face of adversity or failures. Conversely, a movement whose members are weakly attached to the movement’s goals will drift away after some time, leading to dissolution of the movement. Furthermore, democratic decision-making boosts the self-esteem and satisfaction of members by allowing them to determine important matters, which lowers the chance of turnover (Klein 1971). Although the longevity of a movement does not always guarantee more influence on policy outcomes, it tends to increase the probability of policy change (Tarrow 1994).

Drawing from these existing studies on group cohesion and its constituting elements, this case study defines movement cohesion as: unity of the movement’s participants that facilitates commitment to achieve shared goals. The strength of movement cohesion can be examined in five distinct, but inter-related, dimensions: 1) demographic composition,
2) participants’ commitment to shared goals, 3) frequency of interaction, 4) democratic decision-making, and 5) collective memory (Table 1). The rest of this study will examine the level of cohesion in the two anti-base movements in Japan and Korea in terms of these five dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Elements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic composition</td>
<td>• Similarities in age, race, educational and geographical background, income level, etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Participants’ commitment to shared goals | • Participants’ assignment of high priority to the movement’s goal  
• Alignment of personal goals and movement’s goals  
• Agreement on the movement’s goals |
| Frequency of interaction            | • Formal and informal networking sessions  
• Presence of movement centers or sites for interaction  
• Regular participation in protest activities |
| Democratic decision-making          | • Decision-making processes reflecting majority opinion  
• Informal discussions involving ordinary members  
• Free and fair elections and voting processes  
• Small power distance between leaders and members |
| Collective memory                   | • History of oppression  
• Marginalization from external society  
• Experiences of adversity such as war, famine, natural disaster, etc. |

IV. Okinawa, Japan: A Case of a Cohesive Group Movement

Located in the southernmost part of Japan, Okinawa Prefecture comprises hundreds of islands spanning more than 1,000 kilometers (Hook and Siddle 2003). Occupying only 0.6 percent of the Japanese territory, Okinawa has been home to 75 percent of the total US military bases in Japan. These bases, however, have been sources of environmental pollution, accidents, and crimes, contributing to local residents’ rising grievances toward the US military (Kerr 2000). In 1995, a 12-year-old girl was raped by three US servicemen near Futenma Airbase in Ginowan City, which led to large-scale protests demanding
a complete removal of the Air Station in Okinawa. The protests led the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO), a formal basing agreement between the US and Japan, to agree to close the Futenma base in 1997 (Miyagi and Tanji 2007). However, it was later revealed that the two governments had agreed to build Futenma’s replacement facilities in Henoko, a small coastal village in Nago City (Figure 1). The new facilities would include a new heliport with a platform running into the sea of Henoko (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012, 130). Although the base relocation plan was catalyzed by the anti-US base protest in 1995, the US regarded the new basing agreement as an opportunity to build an upgraded and enlarged version of the dilapidated Futenma Airbase (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012, 92).

The mainland Japanese were largely apathetic toward the base relocation plan. They considered the US bases necessary for the national security while remaining reluctant to share the burden of having bases in their neighborhoods (Interview No. 1). The national media paid scant attention to the issue (Gil 2014). Local residents in Okinawa, however, sympathized with the movement’s primary cause as a result of their shared experience of hosting such a large number of US military bases on the island. In a survey conducted in 2012 involving 1,800 Okinawans and people from all over Japan, 66 percent of Okinawans responded that the base should not be in Okinawa, whereas only 33 percent of mainland Japanese responded likewise (Kono and Kobayashi 2013).

The new base construction plan angered many Okinawans who had expected a complete removal of the airbase from the prefecture. One protestors said, “To build another military base on Okinawa to replace the old one is like passing goods from the right hand to the left—Okinawa’s military base problem is not solved” (Spencer 2003, 132). Furthermore, Nago City has been home to many rare species of animals and plants (Tanji 2007, 163), which also fueled the movement against the construction of a new heliport in Henoko.
Demographic Composition

The anti-base movement participants shared strong similarities in terms of demographic composition. First, the majority of the participants were Okinawans (Shimoji 2010). According to a participant, about 80 percent of movement participants were from Okinawa (Interview No. 1). Moreover, various local groups such as residents’ organizations and Okinawa-based NGOs played key roles in the movement (Table 2). After the announcement of the basing decision in 1997, local residents initiated the opposition movement by forming grassroots groups such as the Society for the Protection of Life in Okinawa. Existing NGOs and organizational networks in Okinawa such as the Okinawan Environmental Network and Meeting of the Kamados also participated in the anti-base movement to voice their concerns about the potential negative impact of the base construction on society and the environment (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012).
<Table 2> Groups in the Okinawan Anti-US Base Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of participating group</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okinawa Peace Network</td>
<td>Grassroots group advocating the removal of US military presence from Okinawa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Okinawa Outreach</td>
<td>Okinawa-based grassroots network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Okinawan Environmental Network</td>
<td>Okinawa-based environmental group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JukunoKai</td>
<td>Okinawa-based women’s group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save the Dugong</td>
<td>National NGO for conservation of the dugong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting of the Kamados</td>
<td>Women’s network in Okinawa opposing base construction in Henoko</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society for the Protection of Life</td>
<td>Residents’ group formed by the elderly in Henoko</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kushi District’s Futami Ten Ward Committee</td>
<td>Residents’ groups comprising representatives from ten districts in Kushi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Link</td>
<td>Hiroshima, Kure and Iwakuni-based NGO against US military bases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence</td>
<td>Okinawa-based NGO advocating women’s rights</td>
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The movement participants were also similar in that the majority were senior citizens. A participant in his late fifties remarked, “When you go to a rally, you will find few young people there. There are a lot of retired people in protest movements in Okinawa … students are indifferent to most social movements with some exceptions” (Interview No. 3). Nakamura-Huber, a leader of a grassroots peace movement named New Wave of Hope, explained, “The younger generation feels just as angry as their elders but with jobs or children to look after, they are sometimes too busy to attend rallies” (Mitchell 2014). Moreover, participants were largely from the middle class (Tanji 2007, 167). A large number of participants were fishermen, housewives, teachers, and retired elderly individuals with modest savings. These middle-class citizens opposed the base relocation plan for reasons such as environment destruction, noise pollution, and the sexual violence perpetuated by the US military troops. These similar demographic features contributed to the rise of strong movement cohesion.
The movement participants were united by the shared goal of stopping the base construction in Henoko. Many local residents participated in the movement because their lives would be significantly affected by the new base, as it could lead to environmental damage and noise pollution. These personal interests were strongly aligned with the movement’s goal of stopping the implementation of the new basing plan. Mayor Susumu Inamine acknowledged that the lifestyle of Henoko residents would inevitably be threatened by the base due to the environmental damage and noise (Anger Simmers over Okinawa 2010). Many environmental and human rights NGOs joined the movement as they regarded the cancelation of the base construction as critically essential to their organizational missions. Save the Dugong, whose organizational mission is to preserve the dugong, an endangered sea mammal found in the sea of Henoko, strongly opposed the heliport construction, as it would destroy the dugong’s natural habitat (Anger Simmers over Okinawa 2010). As Tanji (2007, 13) points out, the “environmentalist and anti-base movements come in one package” in Okinawa. Base issues also constituted an important part of work for women’s groups in Okinawa, as they address the sexual violence issues associated with US military presence. Women’s groups such Okinawan Women Act Against Military and Violence (OWAAMV) fervently rejected the new base construction plan, arguing that it would perpetuate the violation of women’s rights in Okinawa (Spencer 2003).

Fear of war also united some participants. They were concerned that the new base would turn Okinawa into a US base to launch a war against other countries (Anger Simmers over Okinawa 2010). A participant stated, “Okinawans know many Marines left for Iraq or Afghanistan from Okinawa … For Iraqi people, Okinawa is a fearful name … [Okinawans] know their island is connected with the war front. I always hear elders say they are against these bases that are used to wage wars in other countries” (Interview No. 7).

In sum, while various individuals and organizations participated in the anti-base movement for diverse reasons, their goals were aligned with the primary goal of stopping the construction of a new base. Based on their commitment to this shared goal, participants coalesced into a cohesive group.
Frequency of Interaction

A number of factors indicate that movement participants regularly interacted to exchange ideas and information. Numerous mass networking events gathered participants from all across Japan. In October 1997, a meeting held by the Futami Ten Ward Committee of Nago City was attended by five hundred people, which amounted to one quarter of the population of the Kushi district in Okinawa. Women’s organizations and environmental NGOs were particularly active in organizing activities. In 2000, representatives from Nago-based Jukunkai, Ginowan-based Meeting of the Kamados, and Naha-based Okinwan Women Act Against Military Violence traveled to Hawaii for a collective campaign against the Futenma base relocation (Spencer 2003). Environmental NGOs such as the World Wide Fund Japan and Dugong Campaign Center regularly met to share their research findings on the base construction’s effects on Okinawa’s environment and biodiversity (Tanji 2008). Routine protest activities also brought participants together. According to a participant in Naha, approximately seventy to three hundred people gathered at Henoko bay each day for daily sit-in protests and rallies (Interview No. 3). These regular interactions strengthened the movement’s internal cohesion by generating a sense of unity among participants.

Democratic Decision-Making

Generally speaking, decision-making processes within the movement were democratic (Interview No. 2). Leaders frequently consulted the opinions of ordinary participants through informal discussions and voting (Hein and Selden 2003). For example, in April 1997, 1,300 ordinary citizens attended a forum titled “Absolutely No to Heliport” held in Nago City in which they were encouraged to discuss what options should be included in the city-wide referendum (Hein and Selden 2003). Furthermore, the leaders of the anti-US base movement deliberately tried to keep large-scale political organizations away from the movement because of the fear that such groups might impede the democratic nature of the movement through their dominance. Citizen-based groups such as the Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport and the All-Nago Citizens’ Group against the Heliport asked trade unions and political parties to “step back and restrain themselves”
to retain the movement’s grassroots nature (Tanji 2007, 167). In response to such a request, Aragaki Shigeo, Secretariat of the Okinawa Socialist Masses’ Party, said “The main players [of the movement] are now individual citizens with their own motivation to participate in the process of decision-making about an important matter. We need to be careful not to dominate the movement” (Tanji 2007, 168). The democratic decision-making and grassroots nature of the movement contributed to the high degree of cohesion in the Okinawan anti-base movement.

**Collective Memory**

Finally, the movement participants were able to form a cohesive group based on their shared collective memory related to the islands’ history of oppression (Tanji 2008). When the Japanese government annexed the independent Ryukyu Kingdom and renamed it Okinawa in 1879, it banned the use of the native language and suppressed indigenous culture. Okinawans suffered continuous discrimination and marginalization (Inoue 2007). Okinawans who moved to the mainland, for instance, were often unfairly treated when seeking jobs and housing. One of the most telling examples was restaurant signs such as “No Okinawans Welcome” (Ayano, Michiko, and Gwyn 2014).

In early 1945, Okinawa became a battleground in one of the bloodiest Asian Pacific War conflicts, lasting for three months. In order to protect the people of the mainland, Japan localized the violence in Okinawa. The war resulted in the death of a third of the Okinawan population (Kerr 2000). Some perished in the fighting, while others succumbed to the Japanese soldiers’ orders to commit suicide. To prevent spying, Japanese troops also executed about a thousand locals who used the Okinawan language (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). Between 1965 and 1972, Okinawa was used by the US to launch military operations against communists, including in North Vietnam (Havens 2014). During this period, Okinawa’s indigenous population felt discriminated against, as more than 50,000 US troops stationed on the island enjoyed privileges they were denied. Okinawans suffered from major accidents caused by the US military such as a chemical weapons leak in 1969, which caused significant damage to the environment and the health of the local people (Tanji 2007).

Moreover, contrary to the islanders’ belief that the US bases would be eliminated after
Okinawa came under Japanese rule in 1972, the Japanese government left most US bases concentrated in Okinawa (Interviewer No. 1).

The prolonged period of collective suffering and discrimination served to unite participants into a cohesive group. These shared memories partially explain the rise of a collective Okinawan identity. At least two interviewees identified themselves as Okinawans and expressed strong antagonism toward the Japanese government (Interviews No. 1 and No. 7). According to an interviewee, “Okinawans recognize the historical and modern forms of discrimination from mainland Japan. Especially now, there is almost blatant discrimination from the Abe administration, which I think is mobilizing more people. Also, the crimes and accidents by military personnel, including the several rapes during the Vietnam War era and the 1995 child rape, serve as a constant reminder of Okinawa’s marginalization” (Interview No. 7). The influence of collective memory was particularly strong among elderly Okinawans, who witnessed the Battle of Okinawa. This battle led them to strongly oppose the new base construction, which evokes memories of war (Interview No. 6). A leader of the Okinawa Association said, “I think history plays a huge role in the continued mobilization of the elderly, especially the tragic Battle of Okinawa and the tense history with mainland Japan” (Interview No. 6).

**Movement’s Influence on the Policy Outcome**

The anti-base movement in Okinawa was able to influence the implementation of the planned project largely due to its strong cohesion. Activists devised a variety of coordinated strategies to put pressure on the Japanese government. Soon after the announcement of the basing decision, various NGOs and citizens’ groups campaigned for a city-wide referendum in Nago. In July 1997, the Referendum Promotion Council managed to collect 19,735 signatures from Nago residents, successfully convincing the Japanese government to hold a referendum in December. In this referendum, 53.8 percent of Nago residents expressed opposition to the base construction (Tanji 2007, 173).

Various participants of the movement also formed a coalition to launch peaceful protests. For instance, the Okinawa Peace Movement Center, a coalition of 35 groups, coordinated daily protest activities, some as large as ten thousand participants (Tanji 2007, 173). The well-planned large-scale peaceful protests were perceived as legitimate by the general
public, putting heavy pressure on the Japanese government to reconsider the plan. Moreover, movement participants brought the issue to the international level through long-term collaboration. In 2000, Okinawa-based NGOs successfully lobbied the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to draw up a resolution urging the US and Japan to implement measures to protect the dugong during base construction (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). Without strong unity among these groups, these actions, which involved intensive cooperation and coordination, would not have not been possible (Tanji 2008). The resolution greatly hindered the Japanese and US governments’ ability to push the plan forward. In 2004, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that “with regard to construction of a Futenma relocation facility … the government will make efforts for minimizing negative impact on the natural environment.” Similarly, the US government stated, “We remain committed to a comprehensive and transparent environmental impact assessment on the proposed Futenma relocation” (IUCN 2005).

The movement participants also physically obstructed the government’s attempt at base construction through speedy mobilization when necessary. For example, when the Naha Defense Facilities Administration Bureau tried to undertake a preliminary survey for heliport construction in Henoko on November 24, 2004, approximately 60,000 protestors gathered at the site to stop the operation, including 10,000 people who engaged in life-risking protests at Oura Bay (Kikuno and Norimatsu 2010). Activists surrounded the buoy markers in canoes, wrapped their bodies with a chain, and climbed to the top of the tower to interrupt drilling. This rapid mobilization was possible due to the participants’ willingness to make personal sacrifices based on a strong commitment to the movement’s objective. A series of such protests led the government to withdraw its plan to construct an offshore air station on October 29, 2005. Prime Minister Koizumi announced that the government would not implement the initial relocation plan “due to the strong opposition” (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012, 98).

The anti-base movement lasted for twenty years despite various setbacks. More recently, the Japanese government attempted to suppress the protests through the use of force. According to Nago City’s US base Affairs Section, between November 2014 and February 2015, twelve demonstrators were injured by the Japan Coast Guard and police. An 85-year-old Okinawan protestor said, “Almost every day, demonstrators are being injured on land and sea, bloodied head and broken bones” (Mitchell 2015). Furthermore, pro-base activities, mostly by low-income groups who are attracted by the potential economic
benefits of base construction, have been organized to counter the anti-base movement. The
tension between the pro-base groups and anti-base groups was so high that the president
of Kushi District’s Futami Ten Ward Committee even attempted to commit suicide when
faced with criticisms from the pro-base groups. Despite these challenges, the anti-base
movement remains a cohesive group today. More than 90,000 Okinawans participated in
the anti-base rally held in April 2010, which outnumbered the 85,000 participants in the
1995 rally after the rape of a 12-year-old-girl. The daily sit-in protest at Oura Bay initiated
by a number of the elderly in 2004 has endured for more than a decade (Kirk 2013). An
Okinawan protester said, “the government keeps pushing us, but we will fight until we
die” (Interview No. 1).

Due to the strong opposition launched by a cohesive group of participants in the anti-
base movement, the Henoko base plan was revised four times, in 1997, 2002, 2005, and
2006 (Tanji 2007) and has remained stalled. Although the latest agreement between the US
and Japan envisioned the completion of the base construction in 2014, its implementation
has barely begun as of 2015. The anti-base movement stopped the government from
implementing the basing policy for nearly two decades based on its strong cohesion.

V. Pyeongtaek, Korea: A Case of a Movement Lacking Group Cohesion

Located in Gyeong-gi Province in Korea, Pyeongtaek City is home to two US military
bases, known as Osan Airbase and Camp Humphreys (Figure 2). Similar to the Okinawan
case, residents of Pyeongtaek routinely complained about the problems caused by the US
military bases such as oil leaks, illegal dumping of hazardous materials, and a high crime
rate (Assessment of the State of Environmental Pollution 2001). In March 2002, the US and
Korean governments signed the Land Partnership Plan, allowing the United States Forces
Korea (USFK) to expand the bases in Pyeongtaek in exchange for returning some old
bases to Korean control (Kwon 2012). This agreement was in line with the new US strategy
designed to concentrate US forces in two major locations (Moon 2012). In April 2003, the
US Department of Defense announced a plan to expand Camp Humphreys by 3,300 acres
and Osan Air Base by 820 acres, which would allocate about ten percent of Pyeongtaek’s
land to US military bases. Such a move would lead to the loss of homes and farmland for villagers in Daechuri and Doduri (Moon 2012; Figure 3), many of whom had already experienced forceful evacuation by US troops during the Korean War (Yeo 2007, 47). This base expansion plan thus angered many local residents, prompting the emergence of the anti-base movement in Pyeongtaek. As in the case of Okinawa, the same five dimensions of movement cohesion are examined in the case of the anti-base movement in Pyeongtaek before meaningful lessons can be drawn from the comparison.

*Figure 2* Major US Military Bases in Korea


*Figure 3* Camp Humphreys Base Expansion

Source: Yeo (2011, 132)
Demographic Composition

The anti-US base movement in Pyeongtaek consisted of participants from various dissimilar geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds and age groups. The movement was centralized under a national umbrella coalition of approximately 170 groups from across the country, called the Pan-South Korea Solution Committee Against US Base Extension in Pyeongtaek (KCPT) (Hook and Son 2013). As shown in Figure 4, two Pyeongtaek-based coalitions, the Residents’ Committee, known as the Pyeongtaek Action Committee, and the Pyeongtaek Anti-Base Coalition, constituted about one third of the total movement population. The rest came from various other regions, including Seoul, Pusan, and Kunsan (Park 2010). The movement began as a local campaign, but due to the local residents’ lack of interest in the issue and the lack of strong civil society in the city, the anti-base movement had only a limited local support base. This led movement leaders to mobilize participation from various nationwide civic organizations and student groups such as People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy and National Federation of Student Councils (Interview No. 11). NGOs advocating the closure of US military bases in other cities, such as the Kunsan-based Citizen Committee of Reclaiming Our Land, joined the movement as a result (Lee 2006).

<Figure 4> Main Members of the Pan-South Korea Solution Committee Against US Base Extension

In addition to this diversity in membership composition, educational and socioeconomic
backgrounds of the movement’s participants also varied. Participants included local farmers, university students, and experts from various political groups and national civic organizations (Moon 2012). In terms of age, while local participants were mostly from the older generation, a large proportion of those who came from outside were younger. This diversity of participants’ demographic features hampered the development of a sense of group unity and cohesion.

**Shared Goal**

Diverse groups of individuals and organizations participated in the anti-base movement in Pyeongtaek based on different goals. While members of the KCPT supported the movement’s overarching goal of preventing the base expansion in Pyeongtaek, many of them also had other pressing agendas, which hindered them from becoming fully committed to the movement’s core objective. Unlike NGOs in Okinawa, which agreed on a single primary goal, many organizations constituting the KCPT had several divided objectives. For instance, the top priority of the Kunsan Citizen Committee was the removal of Camp Wolfpack in Kunsan, whereas the members of the Korean Confederation of Trade Union were mainly concerned about labor-related issues. Moreover, pro-unification groups such as Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea work on multiple issues such inter-Korean summits and defector issues, along with campaigning for a reduction of the US military presence in Korea (Activities and Participation 2015). Some of these civil society organizations did not agree on the US military presence, as some envisaged an immediate withdrawal of US military form Korea, while other progressive NGOs called for an equal alliance partnership and gradual withdrawal. This dissimilar stance caused the moderate groups to distance themselves from more radical groups over time (Yeo 2011). While grassroots groups such as women’s, religious, and lawyers’ groups and associations advocated the use of non-disruptive and legal means of protests, labor unions and radical student groups believed that peaceful tactics were not always effective in bringing about policy change (Shin and Chang 2011). Thus, the movement was fragmented by several groups, which did not always agree on the movement’s objective and the strategies to achieve the goal.
Frequency of Interaction

The movement participants had a limited frequency of interaction. Only residents from the villages that would be affected by the plan and a small number of external activists communicated regularly with one another. Geographical proximity and rural village structure allowed residents and activists to engage in regular casual meetings. Daechuri elementary school served as a main gathering place for residents where they exchanged ideas. Residents also interacted in daily candlelight vigils, held in Paengsung town in Pyeongtaek since September 2004 (Park 2010). Apart from these meetings, few networking and interaction opportunities existed. Most communication was conducted through the Internet and via e-mails while face-to-face interactions were irregular and sporadic (Interview No. 13). The lack of interaction between the local resident activists and external organizations was mentioned by the village head of Daechuri, who said, “There was little interaction between villagers and external people. I was not aware that so many civic organizations participated in the movement” (Interview No. 1).

Democratic Decision-Making

The movement did not have a democratic decision-making structure. The KCPT committee, consisting of seven influential activists, made important decisions with little consultation with ordinary participants. The latter were often informed of the committee’s decisions through e-mails (Interview No. 10). The head of the Pyeongtaek Anti-Base Coalition said, “We actively consulted residents’ opinions as we did not want to be like the Korean government, which violated democratic principles in carrying out its base project” (Interview No. 13). However, most of the decisions related to the movement were made by the leaders of the villages and participating organizations. Local residents were only informed later of their village leaders’ agreement with the Ministry of National Defense to relocate the villagers to new locations in March 2007 in return for the release of Kim Ji-tae, a key leader of the KCPT who had been imprisoned. Residents could only participate in the discussion regarding the details of the resettlement plan (Kim 2007). Moreover, due to the highly patriarchal culture in the villages, women were often excluded from meetings (Kim 2007).
Collective Memory

A common experience of suffering that often unites movement participants was also largely absent in Pyeongtaek’s anti-base movement. Although some participants of the movement shared memories of hardship, the majority, due to the diverse makeup of the movement, did not share common experiences of suffering. That is, different groups of the movement were bound by different sets of collective memories of suffering. For example, some KCPT members from older generations fought against the authoritarian regimes and experienced repressive crackdowns, imprisonment, and surveillance during the process of Korea’s democratization (Armstrong 2006). On the other hand, villagers in Pyeongtaek went through more localized collective hardship after the Korean War (Hastings 2010). After the Korean government transferred the military base used by the Japanese in Pyeongtaek to the US, the latter forcefully evicted people from many villages for base expansion. The Korean government did not provide much compensation, causing tremendous hardship for villagers before their settlement in the current villages (Park 2010, 17). So while some groups in the movement shared collective experiences and memories, there was no single collective memory, and the different collective experiences were not utilized by activists to promote group unity and cohesion for the successful mobilization of participants and for the ultimate success of the movement.

Movement’s Influence on the Policy Outcome

The lack of group cohesion partially explains why the movement was not able to prevent the policy implementation in Pyeongtaek. The lack of cohesion impeded the coordination of movement activities among various participating individuals and groups. As they had diverse backgrounds and frequently disagreed over goals and strategies, individual groups resorted to their own protest activities instead of interacting and cooperating with other groups. More progressive groups within the KCPT considered peaceful methods ineffective for inducing policy change and organized their own armed protests. For example, Vanguard for Reunification, a group consisting of laborers and students, organized an armed demonstration on August 8, 2005, in which they forcefully attempted to enter the US bases in Pyeongtaek (Pyeongtaek Movement Should Become
a Struggle 2006). When riot police turned up in large numbers in Daechuri to preempt the activity, local residents, who had not been informed of this movement, were appalled (Park 2010). Such uncoordinated and individualized actions were not only ineffective, but also were perceived as illegitimate by other participants. Such measures also failed to obtain broader public support, as they were seen as politicized struggles. In a nationwide survey conducted in May 2011, 81.4 percent of 1,000 Koreans criticized the use of violence to stop base expansion in Pyeongtaek. Moreover, 60.2 percent viewed the nature of the movement as ideological or political, while only 34.1 percent regarded the movement as a fight against injustice toward the locals (81% of South Koreans Opposed 2006). The use of aggressive tactics also provided strong justification for the government to use coercive intervention to suppress the movement (Kwon 2012).

The weak cohesion of the movement also hindered the timely mobilization needed for effective blocking of policy implementation. On May 3, the Ministry of National Defense revealed its plan for grand policy implementation, which involved setting up barbed wire around the proposed base site to prevent farmers’ access to the farmland. The leaders of the KCPT immediately requested through mass text messages and phone calls that its members gather at the village to resist the operation (Park 2010). Despite the movement’s large membership, only about 1,500 people attended the protest. Most of them were residents, and the rest were mainly students and members of trade unions. In contrast, more than 12,000 police were deployed to defend the implementation of the basing plan (Moon 2012). In the physical struggle between protestors and police, more than five hundred protestors were arrested and a hundred people were injured, leading to the government’s implementation of the planned operation (Jung 2006). The lack of timely mobilization was detrimental to the movement, as the government closed most roads to the proposed base construction site, isolating the village.

The base movement in Pyeongtaek lasted a relatively short time, as the participants’ commitment dissipated gradually. The initial high degree of mobilization was only possible because organizations under the KCPT utilized a large pool of resources. In 2005 and early 2006, the KCPT successfully organized three large rallies known as the Grand Peace Marches, including the one held in Daechuri on July 10, 2005, in which 12,000 people participated (Park 2010). In January 2006, farmers from Pyeongtaek drove tractors around the country holding signs reading “Stop base expansion at Camp Humphreys” (Park 2010). As these protests were orchestrated, the base expansion in Pyeongtaek
became a nationally salient issue, receiving wide media coverage between late 2005 and mid-2006 (Park 2010). Despite this initial success, the turnover rate increased rapidly as some organizational members drifted away to other issues that they deemed more important (Jung and Dong 2005). When the US and Korean governments negotiated the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 2007, for instance, a significant number of member groups joined the anti-FTA movement, diverting manpower and funding away from the anti-base movement in Pyeongtaek. The head of Daechuri recalled, “We had a lot of difficulty in terms of mobilizing people. There were voices within the KCPT that argued that the FTA issue was more important than the base expansion and that they should focus more on the former. There were some attempts to merge the two issues, but it was not very successful” (Interview No. 11).

The lack of cohesion also led many residents, the main constituents of the movement, to drop out of the movement. Many of them yielded to the government’s decision. A leader of the residents said, “The Ministry of Defense took out villagers, such as teachers and civil servants, and gave them positions related to the basing expansion in Pyeongtaek. Many people who initially opposed the base construction turned away from us” (Interview No. 11). Many residents also withdrew from the movement and moved out upon receiving government compensation. A participant from Seoul who stayed in Daechuri during the movement said, “Residents of Daechuri were divided into people who wanted to continue their struggle and those who argued that they should stop the fight and move out. Many did not see hope anymore” (Interview No. 9). At the end of 2006, the number of households in Daechuri decreased to 50 from 170 in 2004 (Interview No. 11).

There were some attempts to rekindle the movement’s original spirit. For instance, when the Pyeongtaek regional court sentenced Kim Ji-tae, the head of the Residents’ Committee, to two years in prison for disrupting policy implementation on November 3, 2006, the leaders of the KCPT attempted to mobilize people to revive the movement and demand Kim’s release, but they were unable to gather even one tenth of the number they hoped (Kim 2007, 115). The residents in Daechuri agreed to move out in return for Kim’s discharge and distanced themselves from the anti-base movement.

In sum, as a result of the weak commitment and cohesion among the participants, mobilization attempts failed repeatedly (Park 2010). The anti-base movement almost completely faded away by the end of 2007. Unhindered by strong opposition, the Korean
government was able to implement its base construction after a few years’ delay (Global Pyeongtaek City 2015).

VI. Conclusion

Existing studies of anti-base movements highlight such factors as security concerns, political opportunities, resource mobilization, and the strategic use of different framing as determinants of the movements’ success. These studies, however, tend to neglect the internal dynamics within movements and overlook the agency of movement participants as they focus on factors external to the movements. To address this gap, this research draws from studies on group cohesion and measures movement cohesion in terms of five dimensions: 1) demographic composition, 2) participants’ commitment to shared goals, 3) frequency of interaction, 4) democratic decision-making, and 5) collective memory. This study argues that cohesive movements are likely to influence policy outcomes through speedy mobilization, effective coordination of strategies, and sustainable mobilization.

This study applies this concept of movement cohesion to two anti-base movements that took place in Okinawa, Japan and Pyeongtaek, South Korea. In the case of Okinawa, participants coalesced into cohesive groups based on similar demographic backgrounds, strong commitment to the goal of stopping the base construction, and collective memory of suffering, all of which united members. Regular interactions and democratic decision-making processes further strengthened the bonds among participants and their loyalty to the movement and its goal. This strong cohesion facilitated effective coordination of strategies and speedy mobilization, which pressured the government to postpone the implementation of the base relocation project. The anti-base movement sustained itself for nearly two decades based on the strong group cohesion, forestalling the government’s unilateral action until today.

Despite the fact that various high-profile civic organizations participated in the movement, the anti-base movement in Pyeongtaek failed to stop the Korean government’s policy implementation. Diverse demographic backgrounds among participants, a low frequency of interaction, limited democratic-decision making processes, and the
lack of a common set of collective memories explain the lack of strong cohesiveness of the movement. The low degree of cohesion caused by these factors hindered timely mobilization of participants and hampered the cooperation and coordination among them, leading to the gradual decline of the movement. The lack of cohesion stopped the anti-base movement from developing into a sustainable movement. As the anti-base movement dissipated, the Korean government was able to implement the base relocation project.

This comparative case study makes several contributions to the existing literature on social movements and anti-base movements. First, it highlights the importance of studying the internal dynamics of a movement, in particular, the degree of cohesion within a movement, in order to generate a more comprehensive understanding of movements’ impacts and influence. The concept of group cohesion and the five dimensions that help measure it can be combined with several factors external to movements to help analyze the factors that determine the success and failure of collective action more comprehensively. This study also examines social movements’ impacts on policy implementation, an often overlooked aspect of policy change, by revealing subtle policy variations across two anti-US base movements in Korea and Japan.

To broaden the validity and generalizability of the findings of this study, more empirical research on the relationship between different degrees of cohesion and their policy impact should be conducted across various types of social movements. Few studies of social movements pay attention to group cohesion, possibly due to the abstraction and complexity associated with the concept. Therefore, a more theoretically sophisticated study of group cohesion in relation to social movement and better operationalization of the concept will be helpful, as doing so can shed light on the internal dynamics of social movements.

Finally, this study has two broad practical implications. First, it suggests that the US and host governments need to engage various societal actors in making decisions regarding US overseas bases and their operations. Basing policies that do not take into consideration the diverse views of local communities might become ineffective and unpopular, and may lead to rising anti-US sentiments. Second, it suggests that activists and leaders of social movements can significantly improve a movement’s capacity to influence government decisions by enhancing its internal cohesion, using such steps as the deliberate facilitation of interactions among participants, the introduction of more democratic and deliberative
decision-making, and making efforts to align movement goals with participants’ goals in a coherent fashion. Developing practical methods and strategies to address various dimensions of group cohesion will be a daunting task, given the often complex and encompassing nature of social movements, but by doing so, leaders can make their movements more sustainable and effective.


Hein, Laura and Mark Selden. 2003. Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and


Culture Research Institute Public Opinion Research.


집단 응집력이 사회운동에 미치는 영향: 평택과 오키나와의 미군 기지 반대 운동 사례 비교 연구

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본 논문은 어떠한 유형과 특색의 미군기지 반대운동이 미군의 기지 관리 정책에 더욱 성공적으로 영향을 행사하는지 고찰한다. 기존의 연구들은 지정학적 안보 환경, 기지 반대운동의 정치적 기회와 자원의 보유와 유용 정도, 그리고 효과적인 프레이밍 등의 변수들로 기지 반대운동의 성공을 설명해왔다. 그러나 이 연구들은 기지 반대운동의 외부적 변수에 초점을 맞추어, 기지 반대운동이라는 사회운동에 참여하고 그를 주도하는 참가자들의 행위와 동기, 운동 내부의 역학 관계를 설명하기에 부족한 점이 있다. 이에 본 논문은 집단 응집력 (group cohesion)의 개념을 사용하여 대한민국의 평택시 미군기지 반대운동과 일본의 오키나와 기지 반대운동을 비교, 분석하여 기지 반대운동 내부의 구성원의 응집력의 정도가 어떻게 두 사례에 있어 각기 다른 결과를 가져왔는지 설명한다.

<주제어> 미군기지반대운동, 사회운동, 주한미군, 집단응집력