The Structure of Protest Cycles: Contagion and Cohesion in South Korea’s Democracy Movement

Seminar by Professor Paul Y. Chang

Abstract
Although the concept of protest cycles has received much attention in the social movements literature, its empirical operationalization remains relatively crude compared to the rich theoretical discussion. We expand the application of the concept of protest cycles by reimagining movements as a population of interlinked protests and identifying events that play critical roles in historical outcomes. We demonstrate the usefulness of considering protest cycles as protest event networks with a novel dataset on South Korea’s democracy movement. In our conceptualization protest events play the role of network nodes and links are identified based on protesters citing prior events as sources of inspiration for mobilizing. Appropriating strategies for network analysis we ascertain the types of events that were more likely to be central events. By identifying the characteristics of events that contribute to the probability of protest contagion and movement cohesion, our novel approach to analyzing protest cycles sheds new light on dominant themes in social movement research.

Biography
Paul Y. Chang is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Harvard University. He is the author of *Protest Dialectics: State Repression and South Korea’s Democracy Movement, 1970-1979* (Stanford University Press 2015) and co-editor of *South Korean Social Movements: From Democracy to Civil Society* (Routledge 2011). Chang’s research on social and political change in South Korea has appeared in several disciplinary and area studies journals including *Social Forces*, *Mobilization*, and the *Journal of Korean Studies*. His current project explores the emergence of non-traditional family structures in South Korea, including single-parent households, single-person households, and multicultural families.

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