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## Street Struggles: How Japan's 1960s and 1970s Social Movements Shaped Democratization

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**Abstract:** How do social movements contribute to democratization by expanding political participation, spreading democratic values, and shaping political culture? Tilly's extensive covariation theory posits that social movements can only promote democratization under certain conditions. Building on this theory, this paper examines three specific situations in which social movements advance democratization. In each of these situations, the additional effects generated by social movements must be converted into key factors that foster democratization through emotional, reinforcement, and bonding mechanisms. Using Japan as a case study, the paper argues that while post-1945 top-down reforms laid the foundation, grassroots movements in the 1960s and 1970s were crucial in driving the process. These movements influenced government policies, promoted democratic ideals, and created a cultural environment conducive to democratic development, adapting democratic practices to Japan's unique context.

**Keywords:** Social Movements; Japan; Democratization; Covariation Relationship

### 1. Introduction

After 1945, the General Headquarters (GHQ), led by the U.S. military, took full control of post-war Japan, implementing democratic reforms and establishing a democratic political system. These reforms fostered the emergence of peaceful and democratic ideas within Japanese society, leading to large-scale anti-war and peace movements in the 1950s and 1960s. In October 1955, the two major conservative parties, the Liberal Party and the Democratic Party, united to form the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), creating a new political structure known as the "55-year system". Under this "conservative-reformist divide" framework, the LDP prioritized economic development and implemented the "Income Doubling Plan" to mitigate public opposition to the domestic political climate, which subsequently facilitated Japan's rapid economic growth.

However, this economic development and the expansion of various industries also triggered a series of environmental issues, giving rise to social movements focused on consumer rights, food safety, residential concerns, and living conditions. These movements spread democratic values and concepts through cross-class alliances and regional linkages, fostering trust networks and promoting equality and justice within society. They became a significant force for checking and balancing political power.

In response to the citizens' increasing political engagement, the ruling authorities continually adjusted their strategies to maintain social stability and address public demands, ultimately forming a set of procedures and rules for resolving crises democratically. The social movements in Japan during the 1960s and 1970s significantly advanced the democratization process at both institutional and social value levels, playing a crucial role in the overall development of Japan's democracy.

## **2. The Varying Viewpoints on Japan's Path to Democratization**

Democratization and social movements are closely linked, but explaining a direct causal relationship between the two is highly challenging. Political participation, as a fundamental condition for establishing a democratic system, partially explains the connection between democratic development and citizen action. However, it remains essential to analyze and integrate the temporal and social relevance of social movements and democratization in order to further clarify the close relationship between them.

### **2.1 The Criteria for Democratization**

Scholars suggest that if democracy is seen as a target system, then democratization is the process of achieving that system. Huntington (1991), in his analysis of the third wave of democratization, followed the procedural definition of democracy, viewing democratization as the end of authoritarian regimes, the establishment of democratic regimes, and the consolidation of democratic systems. Procedural and substantive democracy offer two criteria for consolidating a democratic system. The first is that democracy becomes firmly established, with democratic values deeply embedded in the minds of most citizens. The second is that the democratic system faces no challenges to its legitimacy or systematic rule violations by political groups. These criteria encompass both the socialization process of embedding democratic ideals in the public and the establishment of a government's crisis management mechanisms. In Japan's democratization process, external pressures led to democratic reforms, and democratic procedures and systems were implemented. However, to further entrench democratic concepts in the public consciousness, avoid legitimacy crises, and promote the consolidation of democracy, Japan must rely on the internal forces within its society.

The 1960s and 1970s marked the peak of Japan's postwar social movements. The social forces driving these movements influenced Japan's democratization process at the institutional, policy, and societal levels. Consequently, this era was also a crucial period for the entrenchment of democratic ideas in Japan.

## **2.2 The Process of Democratization**

The academic explanation of the democratization process mainly focuses on four levels: system, economy, state capacity, and actors. At the system level, explanations highlight the complex logic behind the formation of constitutions and institutions, emphasizing the central role of constitutional design and institutional arrangements in democratization (John et al., 2009). Modernization theory suggests that economic development strengthens democracy's survival capacity, with changes in social structure and ideology brought by economic growth being key drivers of democratization (Adam & Michael, 2000). State capacity explanations argue that while state capacity provides order and responsiveness for democratic transitions, overly strong state power can also hinder social development and limit citizen participation (Guo & Wang, 2015). The first three approaches focus on political institutions and social conditions, while actor theory emphasizes the role of political actors in democratization. Traditional elitist views hold that politicians have more influence than ordinary voters. However, scholars of democratic process theory argue that the political participation and struggles of ordinary citizens can also activate key mechanisms and advance democratization (Charles, 2003).

From the perspective of the actor-based approach, democracy often emerges through democratic revolutionary movements where political actors overthrow autocratic power and resist tyranny. However, in postwar Japan, democracy did not arise from local contention to the autocratic emperor system or from the lower classes fighting for their rights. Instead, it was a product of the top-down democratic reforms imposed by the U.S. occupation authorities.

## **2.3 A Literature Review of Studies on Japan's Democratization**

Due to the unique path of Japan's democratization, scholars have presented two differing views on the development of postwar Japanese democracy. On one hand, some scholars focus on Japan's institutional structure and socioeconomic background and take a positive view of Japan's democratic progress. For example, John W. Dower (1999) argues that the democratic reforms during the Allied occupation introduced key elements that promoted democratic development, such as the establishment of a new constitution, democratic institutions, an independent judiciary, a democratic education system, and restrictions on police power. Additionally, Japanese think tanks suggest that by imitating the Western political system model, Japan accelerated its democratization, often being referred to as a successful model of democratic transition (Sasaki-Uemura & Wesley, 2001). On the other hand, some scholars focus on Japan's political and cultural characteristics and are skeptical about the prospects for its democratic development. They argue that "even if laws provide institutional guarantees for democracy, this does not mean democratization is complete. Beyond this, democracy must establish principles and habits for realizing democratic reality." (Wang, 2011). The formation of such democratic principles and habits requires a "bottom-up" force, leading scholars to examine the role of political actors in postwar Japan.

Research on actors in Japan's democratization process generally follows two main directions: First, scholars focus on the development of various organizations and groups after the war, exploring the interplay between the state and social forces in democratization (Mary, 2010). Second, they emphasize the significant role of social movements in integrating democratic values and practices into Japan's political culture (Ando, 2020).

Social movements offer a platform for political participation beyond voting and enrich the channels for political communication. In terms of outcomes, Japan's postwar democratic reforms established a framework for democracy at the institutional and legal levels, reflecting a "top-down" approach. However, at the societal level, building a democratic value system and fostering democratic habits has posed a significant challenge to Japan's democratic development.

In most academic studies on Japanese democracy, scholars primarily focus on the institutional aspects of political parties and electoral procedures. While proving Japan's democratic nature through its party system is essential, understanding Japan's democratization process requires more than examining the strategic choices of its elite. The role of Japanese citizens and social groups in this process is equally significant. This paper will construct an analytical framework based on Tilly's concept of broad covariation, examining how the "bottom-up" force of social movements in Japan has driven democratization. This article focuses on the interaction between Japan's social structure and political actors, aiming to uncover the complex relationship between social movements and democratization.

### **3. Conditions Under Which Social Movements Promote Democratization**

The trajectories of democratization and social movements do not completely overlap. Generally, social movements focus on specific interests and are not directly aimed at democratization. In other words, the mutual influence between the two is conditional and limited, with a broad covariation relationship. This section discusses the basic conditions necessary for the continued development of democratization in Japan and outlines three common scenarios in which social movements contribute to democratization.

#### **3.1 The Broad Covariation Relationship**

Social movements originated in part from Western Europe and North America in the late 18th century. They consist of persistent interactions and political struggles, flourishing alongside the development of democratization. According to Tilly (2019), there is a broad covariation relationship between democratization and social movements, with their geographical distribution often overlapping significantly. Research on social movements and democratization highlights their mutual relationship, indicating that social movements can either hinder or promote democratization, depending on specific situational conditions.

Social movements provide a means for people to express their demands by coming together. They accommodate a diverse range of political actors and create new, competing centers of power. As

a result, certain characteristics of social movements demonstrate a universal affinity with democratization movements. From the perspective of their developmental processes, both democratization and social movements involve interactions between citizens and the government. Democratization represents a shift in the relationship between the populace and the agents of the existing government, while social movements are highly organized collective actions that occur outside the established system (Tilly, 2003). Through their activities, social movements inevitably impact the system, policies, and social networks.

Therefore, social movements and democratization mutually influence each other. However, regarding the goals of social movements, the topics they address are varied, and their demands do not always directly align with a universal democratization agenda. Consequently, the outcomes of such movements do not always contribute positively to the development of democracy. In essence, the evolution of social movements may not necessarily advance the democratization process. Often, social movements reflect changes in the relationship between citizens and government agents through repeated expressions of demands and public political participation.

Given that there is not a strong causal correlation between social movements and democratization, but rather a broad covariation relationship, it is essential to examine the premises and situational conditions under which social movements can promote democratization.

### **3.2 The Basic Conditions for Social Movements to Promote Democratization**

Tilly (2019) argues that for social movements to promote democratization, the political system must meet two essential conditions: first, the establishment of relatively effective direct rule through a central administration; and second, the existence of at least some democratic mechanisms. When these conditions are in place, “social movements can strategically mobilize and advocate their demands through existing, protected mechanisms for democratic consultation, thereby directly advancing the democratization process.”

#### **3.2.1 Promoting Democratic Reform as a Prerequisite for Japan’s Social Movements to Advance Democratization.**

After Japan’s defeat, the Allied forces implemented a series of “top-down” demilitarization and democratization reforms, providing legal and institutional foundations for the country’s democratic development. The drafting of the new Japanese constitution sparked the rise and spread of pacifist ideals, with the Japanese people undergoing a “baptism” of pacifism centered around the Peace Constitution, which renounces war and the use of force (Japan's Defense White Paper). This anti-war sentiment led to the formation of numerous mass groups across the country, focused on Japan’s future and committed to pursuing a path of peaceful development. Simultaneously, the GHQ urged the Japanese government to implement five major reforms: women’s liberation, workers’ rights to organize, democratic liberalization of education, abolition of the secret police, and democratization of the economic system (Asai, 1999). These reforms, along with the establishment of a democratic

constitution, guaranteed citizens' basic rights, awakened civic consciousness, and laid the constitutional and institutional groundwork for the growth of future social movements.

### **3.2.2 The Key Condition for Japan's Social Movements to Promote Democratization is the Establishment of a Pluralistic Decision-making System.**

From 1955 to 1993, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) maintained a dominant position for 38 years. However, this "one-party dominance" was not a "one-party dictatorship", as the party operated within a structure subject to constraints from both internal and external forces, all under the framework of legal electoral procedures. Externally, although the LDP held long-term dominance, opposition parties were still protected by the Constitution and had the legitimate right to participate in legal competition. Under the "1955 system", the LDP, facing pressure from opposition parties and public opinion, adopted a decision-making approach based on "consensus politics". In this process, the LDP remained responsive to opposition parties and alliances from various social sectors, which provided external checks and balances on its power. Internally, like other political parties, the LDP was not monolithic but a system of internal conflicts (Larry, 2001). The party was divided into multiple factions, with dispersed decision-making power and intense competition. The decision-making process was essentially a struggle and compromise among these factions. The existence of internal forces such as factions helped maintain the competitiveness of democratic politics and prevented the concentration of power. To gain public support, the LDP's decision-making was influenced by various forces, including group associations, interest groups, public opinion, opposition parties, and internal factions, creating a pluralistic decision-making system. This system prevented the ruling party from becoming autocratic and ensured the continued development of democratization.

### **3.3 Three Conditions Under Which Social Movements Promote Democratization**

From a global perspective, the goals of social movements are seldom aimed at promoting democratization, and the causal correlation between social movements and democratization is generally weak. However, examining the development of social movements in Japan reveals that the Peace and Democracy Movement in the 1960s, along with the Citizens' and Residents' Movements in the 1970s, influenced the policy preferences of the ruling authorities and provided a check on the Conservative Party within the one-party preference system. Overall, social movements in Japan have contributed to the democratization process in three key dimensions.

#### **3.3.1 The Alignment of Social Movements' Trajectories and Goals with the Democratization Process**

Democratization is the process of working toward a democratic system. It involves orderly public participation, fair political competition on a cyclical basis, and the dissemination of democratic values and ideas throughout society, all while avoiding destabilizing forces. These demands are broadly

aligned with the trajectories of action and popular aspirations during the development of social movements. The increased public political participation and resource reallocation brought about by social movements stimulate the public's quest for fairness and justice, ultimately leading to the incorporation of trust networks into public politics, which align with the value demands of the democratization process.

In Japan, the social movements of the 1950s and 1960s were centered around the concepts of “peace and democracy” and “anti-war”, opposing the conservative tendency to return to the pre-war system. These movements not only ensured the continuation of the democratic system but also spread the ideas of peace and democracy throughout society. Meanwhile, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s focused on regional life issues, emphasizing “individual participation” and citizen autonomy. The objectives of these two phases of social movements coincided with the need for democratic values in the democratization process, thereby enabling these movements to contribute significantly to democratization.

### **3.3.2 Transforming the Additional Effects of Social Movements into an Institutional and Cultural Environment Conducive to Democratization**

In some cases, even when there does not appear to be a close connection between the trajectory of action and the goals and demands of a movement, the collaboration among various actors and groups in organizing a social movement can produce additional effects. This transformative mechanism generates and amplifies these effects, creating an institutional environment conducive to the development of democratization and the advancement of the democratic process.

The mass media play a particularly important role in strengthening the connections between different groups. In Japan, the mass media have been crucial in countering the growing conservative ideological tendencies of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and in responding to neutral national preferences by providing weaker groups with a nearly equal right to freedom of expression alongside stronger groups (Ikuo, 2014). The media not only connect individuals and groups to political parties through mobilization but also enable these groups to influence the political system by spreading ideas and expanding the scope of the movement.

Through the interaction and cooperation of various groups, the ties between political participants are strengthened, the scope of participation in public politics is gradually expanded, and barriers between classes and groups are broken down. This promotes the formation of a relationship of rights and obligations that directly links the public to the government, allowing social movements to facilitate the development of democratization.

### **3.3.3 The High-pressure Political Environment Created during Social Movements Influences the Policy Choices of those in Power.**

The actions taken by those in power are particularly critical in situations where social movements continue to express their discontent. Daniel Treisman (2020) argues that democratization does not

stem from a subjective choice made by those in power; rather, it occurs because these leaders make mistakes in their attempts to halt the democratization process, ultimately weakening their grip on power. After entering the 55-year system, the conservative tendencies of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) often led it to use its superior power in the Diet to push through restrictive laws and regulations, adopting a heavy-handed approach against the forces of innovation. This intensified the confrontation between conservatism and innovation in society, fueling public anti-war sentiments and a desire for peace, which, in turn, triggered a large-scale contention movement across the country. In such a context, the ruling party was compelled to respond and compromise in order to appease the heightened sentiments of the masses involved in the movement. The compromising stance and policy adjustments adopted by the decision-making system in response to these actors played a crucial role in advancing social movements and facilitating democratization through the transmission of demands, responses, and compromises.

Based on the broad covariance between social movements and democratization, social movements can contribute to the democratization process under certain circumstances. It is important to note, however, that these three situations do not occur in a sequential manner; in some cases, they can coexist.

#### **4. Mechanisms through which Social Movements Contribute to the Democratization Process**

Based on the broadly covariant relationship between social movements and democratization, it is essential to further reflect on the intrinsic connection between the two. The process of social movements encompasses elements such as the repertoire of contention, discourse systems, personnel structures, expression of demands, and strategy choices, which, when combined, produce additional effects. To promote democratization, these additional effects generated by social movements must be transformed into specific elements conducive to democratization through the mechanisms of emotion, reinforcement, and connection.

##### **4.1 The Concept of Social Movements and Their Mechanisms for Promoting Democratization**

Regarding the concept of social movements, Japanese scholars have categorized the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s into “mass movements”, “National Reform Movement” “citizens’ movements”, and “residents’ movements”, based on the size of the movement, the identity of the actors, and the goals of participation (Oishi, 2020). Unlike mass movements, which are often seen as easily manipulated and loosely organized, citizens’ movements are typically characterized by non-partisanship and a lack of political ambition (Yasuda, 2002). Participants voluntarily engage in these movements with a sense of self-responsibility, and the concept of citizens’ movements often partially overlaps with that of residents’ movements.



Additionally, aboriginal movements are defined as territorially strong movements involving residents occupying a specific area. These movements focus on the living environment and question the rights of citizens to exist within it (Matsumoto, 2011). In terms of their localized characteristics, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s varied in the subjects involved, the scope of the movements, and the goals and methods employed. However, their overall characteristics can be defined as “organized actions (and sometimes collective actions) that transcend localization and aim to achieve changes in thought, action, and social relations” (Shiobara, 1963). Based on this understanding, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s were marked by a strong geographical orientation, which allows both aboriginal and civic movements to be regarded as forms of social movement.

In terms of the trajectory of change in social movements, these movements exhibit different characteristics depending on the institutional environments and cultural backgrounds in which they occur. The variations in these characteristics reflect both domestic political and social issues, as well as the evolving landscape of social values and ideologies across different periods. The social movements of the 1950s and 1960s in Japan were generally marked by political demands for radical change. However, with the development of the economy and the maturation of civil society, the political nature of these movements began to diminish in the 1970s, shifting their focus primarily to the livelihood demands of residents. The details are shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1:** The Trajectory of Social Movement Change in Japan during the 1960s and 1970s

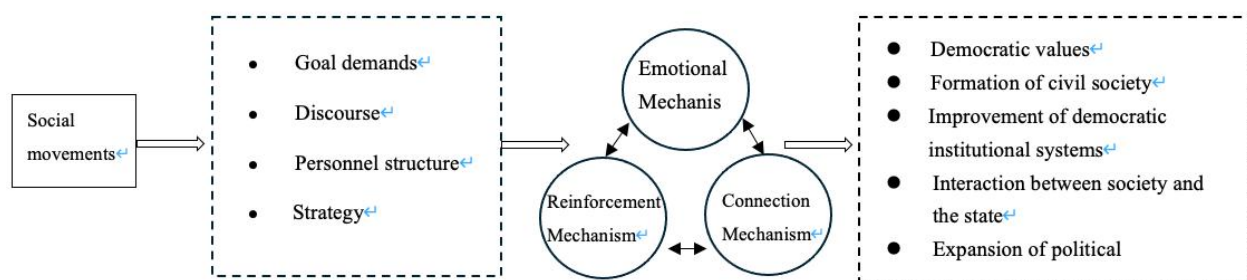
Characteristics time	Representative Movements	Participants	Target	Method of Contention	Scope of Activity, Influence	Nature
1950S	Anti-Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs Movement	Civil Organizations	Anti- American, Anti-Nuclear Weapons	Peace Petition Movement, Citizens Assembly	The movement expanded globally with the creation of Gensuikyo and Hibakusha, shaping anti-nuclear and anti-war sentiments.	Anti-War Peace Movement
	The Anti-Police Duties Execution Law Struggle	Socialist Party, General Council of Trade Unions, and Association Groups	Opposition to Conservative Backlash, Protection of The Constitution	Rallies, Marches, and Strikes	Nationwide Movement: Abandonment of the Police Duties Law Revision	Peace and Democracy Movement
1960s to 1970s	Anpo protests	Intellectual and Left-Wing Elite Groups	Anti-War, Opposition to Revising the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty	Marches, Demonstrations, Violent Clashes	Nationwide Scope, Resignation of the Kishi Cabinet, Spread of Peace and Democratic Ideals.	Peace and Democracy Movement

	The All- Campus Joint Struggle Movement	Student Organizations	Opposition to the Education System	Student's strike, Marches, Demonstrations	Limited Scope, intellectual Culture Becoming More Popularized, Decline of Elite Privileges.	Student Protest Movement
	Anti-Vietnam War Movement	Citizen Groups, Civil Organizations, and Left- and Right-Wing Elite Groups	Anti-War, Anti-American	Marches, Demonstrations	Nationwide Scope, Shift from "Victim" to "Perpetrator" Consciousness, Increased Citizen Autonomy.	Citizen Anti-War Movement
	Anti-Pollution Movement and Living Demand Movement	Farmers, Students, Resident Groups, Social ist Party, Communist Party, and Labor Unions	Opposition to Environmenta I Destruction, Demand for Health and Livelihood Protection	Violent Clashes, Legal Actions, Formation of Local Community Organizations	Regional Scope, Improvement of Legal Systems, Promotion of Local Autonomy System.	Resident Demand Movement

Source: Created by the author.

When considering the broad relationship between social movements and democratization, it becomes clear that social movements do not typically contribute directly to democratization. Instead, they exert influence through various forms of expression—such as rallies, marches, and demonstrations—during the course of their activities. From the perspective of political system theory, democratization is a gradual process; thus, the additional effects introduced by social movements must be integrated into the political system through mechanisms that translate into policy decisions, networks of relationships, cultural environments, and other factors that foster democratization. The details are shown in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1:** Mechanisms Through Which Social Movements Promote Democratization



Source: Created by the author.

In Tilly's view (2019), social movements arise from a fundamental combination of three elements. These elements contribute to the uniqueness of social movements, which is expressed through the interplay among participants, directed objects, and institutional structures. This interplay within the social movement process produces additional effects on democratization, which are layered upon one another and transformed into key components for democratization through mechanisms of emotion, reinforcement, and connection.

## **4.2 Emotional Mechanisms: Shaping Identity and Building Relational Bonds**

Jasper (1998) argues that the emotional element plays a crucial role in explaining micro-behavior, as "through emotions we are embedded in a variety of environmental, physical, social, moral, and temporal contexts." Emotional mechanisms help address the dilemma of collective action by encouraging individuals to actively engage in the movement, influenced by their emotional identities and a sense of responsibility.

### **4.2.1 Social Movements as Catalysts for Political Engagement and Identity Formation through Emotional Mobilization**

During the course of a social movement, participants engage in a series of identity inquiries, such as "Who am I?", "Who might we become?", "Who are you?", and "Who are they?" The construction of identity is a complex process involving both conceptual and material activities, achieved through communication, negotiation, resolution, rituals, symbols, and icons.

In 1966, the "Vietnam Peace! Union of Citizens' Cultural Organizations" changed its name to the "Vietnam Peace! Citizens' Union." Under the banner of a non-partisan anti-war movement, the "Vietnam Peace!" movement called for popular participation based on the principle of free will: "Those who come will not be rejected, and those who go will not be pursued." As a result, various left-wing civil society groups, including the Labor Party, trade unions, student organizations, and even non-leftist groups such as right-wing factions, joined the movement (Ichihashi, 2014).

From the onset of the security struggle, these intellectual and student groups exhibited a certain moralistic streak—abandoning privilege and personal life to dedicate themselves to labor. This behavior was perceived by the public as "selfless" and was emotionally inspired. In terms of their repertoire of struggles, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s articulated their demands through marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, and strikes, while simultaneously defining membership and group boundaries and constructing a common identity. Intellectuals and the mass media played a crucial role in emotional mobilization by creating campaign slogans like "Protect the Constitution," "Peace," "Democratism," and "Protect the Natural Environment." They also founded newspapers, published literary works (such as *Science of Thought* and *Science Fiction Animation*), and established organizations (e.g., the "Voice of the Voiceless Society" and the "Mutual Aid Organization for Public Pollution Sufferers").

The call to action was made through various means. In expressing their demands, newly mobilized groups formed alliances with established actors, leading to an increase in political participation across social categories. Simultaneously, the addition of struggle repertoires, linguistic symbols, and emotional mobilization further promoted the construction of collective identity.

#### **4.2.2 Social Movements Shape Collective Memory and Build Relational Bonds through Repertoire Performances**

Identity becomes more deeply embedded in collective memory through the reflective engagement with material symbols and cultural concepts generated by the movement. In the formation of collective memory, the initial step is the “creation of collective memory,” whereby the details of an event are shared with members who did not directly experience it, enabling them to connect with and internalize the memory (Timothy, 2003). For example, a congress was held in Hiroshima City in August 1955, drawing over 5,000 participants from 15 countries to establish an association of victims' organizations. The congress aimed to raise awareness of the nuclear bombings' tragic legacy through survivors' stories and to advocate for reparations. Regardless of direct experience, such activities deepened society's aversion to war and helped disseminate peace and anti-war ideals.

On May 19, 1960, in a late-night session, the LDP forced a vote on the security treaty, intensifying a crisis for those haunted by the humiliations and regrets of wartime. This sentiment was symbolized in the “Kishi Nobusuke” campaign, which physically embodied the people's fears and anger. A second stage, the “maintenance of collective memory,” emerges when unity and identity are questioned and reconstructed through group interaction. As Kishi Nobusuke stepped down in the 1960s, a generation that had not experienced the war grew up, leading to a gradual fading of war memory. For the younger generation, the older generation's fixation on wartime memories became an obstacle to the creativity and activism needed in subsequent social movements. This led the youth to emphasize the wartime responsibility of the older generation, to critique the “victim” consciousness, and to prioritize an awareness of Japan as an aggressor. In the anti-Vietnam War movement, Japan's memory was reawakened through contrast with the United States, providing an opportunity to reshape national identity. This breakdown of the “public” sphere prompted intellectuals to reevaluate the meaning of the “private.”

In building collective identity, collective memory connects present experiences with past ones. For the solidarity of social movements, the process of remembering——rather than the memory itself——is crucial. Emphasizing the act of remembering constructs solidarity and forges relational bonds through interactions based on the shared elements of collective identity.

#### **4.2.3 Japanese Mass Media Shape Public Opinion, Broaden Idea Dissemination, and Foster Emotional Resonance Among the Masses.**

The mass media in Japan encompass radio and television broadcasting, the press, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and other information dissemination channels. In the 1960s and 1970s,

Japan's mass media played a critical role in guiding public opinion during key historical moments, effectively fostering public empathy through the widespread circulation of "public opinion" across society. Japan's media industry was highly developed during this time, and print media was especially popular. For instance, during the Security Movement, seven major newspapers, led by Asahi Shimbun, issued a joint statement titled "Protect Parliamentaryism without Violence," urging the Prime Minister to step down amidst the hardline approach of the Kishi Nobusuke Cabinet and the intensifying student movements (Jin, 2018). Beyond newspapers, radio and television broadcasts amplified social movements through their visual power and vivid image reproduction. One example is Mako Isobe, a housewife, who recalled television coverage during the security struggle, stating, "Although I was in Osaka, I could see the vast crowds surrounding the Diet building... As I sat watching, others were there persistently fighting, and the guilt I felt at that moment made me even more agitated." (Women Questioning the Present Committee, 2020). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, mass media expanded human connections, spread the ideals of "peace and democracy," and gave rise to an "imagined community".

### **4.3 Reinforcement Mechanism: Integrating Networks of Trust and Strengthening Institutional Systems**

Social movements construct collective memories by shaping identities and ultimately form networks of social relations rooted in shared emotions through emotional mechanisms. According to Andrews (2006), the collective activities within social movements provide a reinforcing mechanism that achieves a liberation of people's mindsets, strengthens emotional bonds, and fosters collective identity through shared discourse. This collective identity can exert a lasting influence on certain groups. Through collaboration among various actors, the loose relationships formed in the course of a social movement can, via reinforcing mechanisms, transform into networks of social bonds and trust. These networks support democratization and contribute to the establishment of specific systems.

#### **4.3.1 Loose Relationships Formed during Social Movements Evolve into New Social Bonds through Reinforcing Mechanisms.**

In the 1960s and 1970s, Japan's rapid economic growth brought about urbanization and industrialization, leading to the emergence of a social group known as the "middle class." This "middle class" broadened the range of political participants and fostered new social bonds built upon previously loose relationships among individuals. In various movements, including the anti-pollution movement, peace movement, and the security struggle, the central roles were often held by the highly educated "new middle class" or by full-time housewives. This middle segment played a significant role in the democratization of post-war Japan (Andrew et al., 2006). Through these new social ties, Japanese society became gradually more open, enhancing social mobility from the "lower class" to the "middle class," which in turn stimulated social creativity (David, 2008). At the same time, the norms

and expectations formed within these new social ties exerted a moderating influence on individuals, reinforcing social stability and further encouraging social cohesion.

#### **4.3.2 Strengthening Interpersonal Relationships to Foster Trust Network Integration**

Trust networks consist of a web of interpersonal relationships made up of strong relational bonds. Due to the exclusionary and competitive nature of social relationship networks, groups within each specific trust network tend to be mutually exclusive, with most people being left outside the network, making it difficult for others to join and imposing high exit costs on members. In Japan during the 1960s and 1970s, social movements expanded these trust networks by widening participant identity and scope of involvement, integrating previously isolated trust networks into public political life. The inclusion of female actors, such as housewives and female student groups, into the movement process reduced the isolation of specific trust networks among participants and advanced gender equality in Japanese society. Through the growth of these social movements, Japan developed a complex and expansive network of social relationships based on reciprocity and trust, fostering resource exchange and cooperative, mutually beneficial interactions within these trust networks.

#### **4.4 Connection Mechanisms: Uniting Democratic Values with Institutional Elements**

In his theory of social control, Travis Hirschi (1969) introduced the concept of “connection”, viewing it as the continuous interaction between individuals and society. According to Hirschi, this connection requires individuals to form a psychological commitment to social values, follow social norms, take on social responsibilities, and participate actively in social activities. Connection represents both a tangible and intangible link between entities, emphasizing the closeness and stability of these bonds rather than mere association.

Within social movements, actors, supporters, and government agencies play multiple roles in a dynamic exchange. This interaction allows social movements to have both direct and indirect impacts on public policy, as well as on formal and informal institutions and social norms. Consequently, the democratization process within social movements involves the transformation and integration of elements from various actors and levels.

##### **4.4.1 Connection of Elements at the Societal and National Levels**

The affective mechanism transforms repertoire performances, discourses, and claims within social movements into collective memory and identity. Influenced by the mass media, intellectuals, political parties, and other actors, the reinforcement mechanism turns this collective memory and identity into relational bonds, expanding the scope of political participation and integrating networks of trust. However, the elements of the social dimension and the state dimension formed during the development of a social movement must be interconnected and work together to advance the process of democratization.

According to Linz (1996), democracy functions as an interacting system in which the state requires civil society to provide legitimacy, while civil society relies on the protection of the state apparatus and the law. The public political quality of regimes is largely determined by the relationship between the fundamental networks of trust within the population and the ruling strategies of those in power.

For example, the Living Demand movement of the 1970s and 1980s ostensibly embodied a combination of environmental and public issues, fundamentally representing a struggle between the basic power of ordinary citizens over social commons capital and the dominance of state monopoly capitalism. The interaction between society and the state, with the government, businesses, families, and civil society non-profit organizations (NGOs) constituting a “multifaceted collaboration” for environmental protection, ensured the autonomy of civil society while being effectively managed by the state.

#### **4.4.2 Connection of Democratic Values with Elements at the Institutional Level**

In social movements, social resources such as information, financial assets, and technology are exchanged and shared among actors, between actors and political parties, and among political parties. Such exchanges deepen the connections between these entities, allowing for a more balanced flow of resources within society. The connection mechanism aligns the elements of democratic values formed during the development of social movements with the components of democratic institutions. This facilitates the equalization of resources and relationships among political actors, promoting the establishment of effective and democratic mechanisms for addressing issues and providing channels for the expression of demands to the government.

In short, there is no single condition or element that can establish and promote democratization. The additional effects generated during social movements cannot directly influence the relationship between citizens and government institutions. Therefore, these additional effects must promote the democratization process by activating specific mechanisms. Within the entire system, the emotional mechanism builds identity, shapes collective memory, and disseminates the concept of democracy. The reinforcement mechanism creates new relational bonds, integrates the network of trust, and enhances the democratic institutional system. Meanwhile, the linkage mechanism connects and aligns the elements that facilitate the development of democracy through interactions among participants, target groups, and institutional structures, thereby promoting a continuous process of democratic interaction.

### **5. Conclusion**

Starting from the broadly covariant relationship between social movements and democratization, this paper examines the mechanisms through which social movements in Japan during the 1960s and 1970s contributed to the democratization process. The paper argues that while social movements do not always introduce elements conducive to the development of democracy, the covariation of specific

mechanisms helped prevent these movements from veering towards insurrection and instead promoted democratization.

Social movements in Japan played a crucial role in advancing the process of democratization. The 1960s and 1970s marked the climax of social movements in Japan, a period characterized by flourishing anti-war movements, peace and democracy movements, citizens' movements, and indigenous movements. The study found that, firstly, the goals of the social movements during this period overlapped with the value demands of democratization and development, establishing an ideological tone of peace and democracy at the social level. Influenced by this ideology, the peace and democracy movement, along with the citizens' movement, further fostered the formation of civil society, resulting in mutual reinforcement between social movements and democratization. Secondly, the additional effects generated by social movements needed to be transformed through specific mechanisms. Various struggle repertoires, discourse systems, personnel structures, and strategies initiated by these movements were transformed into democratic values and institutional environments through emotional, reinforcing, and associative mechanisms, facilitating the development of democratization. Through these two aspects, social movements in Japan during the 1960s and 1970s compensated to some extent for the lack of internal forces, such as popular struggles, in the post-war democratic changes. They enabled individuals to reevaluate the relationship between state power and individual rights, thereby contributing to the advancement of democratization in Japan.

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### **Author Contributions**

Ziwei Zhang: Writing, Original draft, Conceptualization, Methodology. Weiyong Xia: editing, Supervision. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

### **Availability of Data and Materials**

The data for this study are derived from publicly available literature and news reports, which have been listed in the references.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to report regarding the present study.

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